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FRIDAY, APRIL 19, 2024 BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection \$1.00

Health Board recommends Health First Indiana

By HOLLY GASKILL
 In a unanimous vote Thursday, the Wells County Board of Health has recommended the county opt-in to Health First Indiana. The County Commissioners have until June to decide whether or not the county will participate in the health funding program in 2025. A motion recommending the program to the commissioners passed 4-0; board members Chris Esterling, Molly Hoag, Ann McNabb and Dr. Mary Donley were in favor, and Dr. Bart Hott, Tamara Troutt and Steve Bales were absent. Health Officer Dr. Brandon Huggins, appointed in March, was also absent. Wells County was one of six counties that did not join the program in its flagship year. At the time, the commissioners cited multiple reasons for their decision, including the department's understaffing and their skepticism over the new program. During the health board's meeting on Monday, Public Health Nurse Lynn Blevins recognized this was the best decision at the time. "In hindsight, thank you," Blevins said, gesturing toward Commissioner Blake Gerber. "It would have been a (mess)." According to the HFI website, Wells County is eligible for at least \$549,510 through the program. The county will be

required to submit a budget proposal for the funds to address a list of key performance indicators like chronic disease prevention and food protection. The department has until September to submit this budget, Blevins said. He has worked with local officials and other county health departments to determine critical needs and purposes. While Blevins expects to use a large portion of funding toward local grants, he and officials are first and foremost hoping to address internal needs within the department. "We need to get the health department healthy," Blevins said. Specifically, additional refrigerated storage and a generator are needed for vaccines and samples. Blevins also expressed the department needs additional staffing support; there are currently three full-time employees and one part-time. Esterling recommended Blevins prioritize other needs first and consider asking for an additional position from the County Council. There has been hesitation in supporting an individual's salary through HFI funding, currently only guaranteed through 2025. However, Blevins noted the program has received bipartisan support and believed it is not likely to disappear. The County Council had also approved



Pictured above, Public Health Nurse Lynn Blevins (left) shows the Health Board one of the AEDs recently purchased by the county. Blevins said he will maintain the defibrillator kits placed the county courthouse, annex, highway building and 4-H park monthly. Health Department Administrator Sahara Wall is pictured at right. (Photo by Holly Gaskill)

raises for two full-time positions with the apparent understanding that the department would not fill its vacancy for a second environmental specialist. Administrator Sahara Wall advised that Ryan Bennett, the department's sole environmental specialist, is currently managing (Continued on Page 2)



Curb work moves across South Johnson Street

E&B Paving installs the framework for sidewalks around South Johnson Street. Above, from left to right, Eric Ballschmidt, Luis Cardenas and Kyle King work to line up and connect the frames.

At right, King cuts the frame to the correct length.

Below, Ballschmidt and Cardenas ensure the support posts and road signs are steady. (Photos by Jonathan Snyder)



Three are arrested after meth and fentanyl found

By SYDNEY KENT
 Three Bluffton residents were arrested after a search warrant revealed methamphetamine, fentanyl and paraphernalia on the property — as well as an unattended infant in a vehicle.

Marissa Deanne Elliott, 31, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, a Level 5 felony, two counts of possession of cocaine or narcotic drug, both Level 6 felonies, possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor. Joshua Louis Morlan, 35, was charged

with possession of methamphetamine, a Level 5 felony, two counts of possession of a narcotic drug, both Level 6 felonies, and possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor. (Continued on Page 2)



Marissa Deanne Elliott



Joshua Louis Morlan



Elbert Lee Marshall

Property taxes are in the tax reform spotlight

School referendums, levies and ag land discussed

By WHITNEY DOWNARD
Indiana Capital Chronicle
 The chief budget architect for the Indiana House of Representatives outlined property tax concerns Wednesday for the next legislative session, with a focus on school referendums and the use of excess levy appeals. Other topics included: remonstrance petitions, the maximum levy growth quotient formula and debt thresholds. Many were issues Rep. Jeff Thompson, the chair of the fiscal-minded Ways and Means Committee, attempted to address during the 2023 session but couldn't come to an agreement with senators.

"I'm working toward simplicity," Thompson said after his presentation before the State and Local Tax Review Task Force. "(But) I don't think we can solve it all in a single session. I've come to the conclusion that it is so massive that you've got to take ... (a) series of steps."

Warning on ag land
 Thompson warned members of the panel that "we're going to have a significant increase in the assessed value of farm ground."

To determine the agricultural base rate for a given assessment year, the Department (Continued on Page 2)

U.S. vetoes resolution backing full UN membership for Palestine

By EDITH M. LEDERER
Associated Press
 UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United States vetoed a widely backed U.N. resolution Thursday that would have paved the way for full United Nations membership for Palestine, a goal the Palestinians have long sought and Israel

has worked to prevent. The vote in the 15-member Security Council was 12 in favor, the United States opposed and two abstentions, from the United Kingdom and Switzerland. U.S. allies France, Japan and South Korea supported the resolution. The strong support the Pales-

tinians received reflects not only the growing number of countries recognizing their statehood but almost certainly the global support for Palestinians facing a humanitarian crisis caused by the war in Gaza, now in its seventh month. The resolution would have recommended that the 193-member

U.N. General Assembly, where there are no vetoes, approve Palestine becoming the 194th member of the United Nations. Some 140 countries have already recognized Palestine, so its admission would have been approved, likely by a much higher number of countries. U.S. deputy ambassador Rob-

ert Wood told the Security Council that the veto "does not reflect opposition to Palestinian statehood but instead is an acknowledgment that it will only come from direct negotiations between the parties." The United States has "been very clear consistently that pre- (Continued on Page 2)

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Outside

 Mostly sunny and cooler today, cloudy tonight

Today	Saturday	Sunday
High 56	High 51	High 55
Low 39	Low 39	Low 36

 More Weather on Page 2

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Health First Indiana

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food and septic inspections, and hiring isn't an immediate need. She said they had internally discussed hiring a part-time environmental specialist or vital records clerk, intending to make the position full-time.

Blevins also mentioned the department had interviewed a part-time medical assistant but was unsure if there had been any progress.

"I don't know how 3.5 people can do all that you guys are doing in running this county," said McNabb.

"I mean, we have good leadership," Blevins replied. He later recognized that the department employees cannot cover for each other in

the event of sick leave or time off.

Regarding the potential for grants, McNabb asked Blevins to outline an application and approval process in a proposed budget. Gerber indicated the health board would take responsibility for applications. Blevins added that he had already received inquiries from local organizations.

"So are we going to get this done with meetings every two months?" asked Donley.

"I doubt it," Blevins replied.

The board again discussed increasing the frequency of their meetings, at least while submitting plans

for HFI, and possibly changing their regular meeting times. The board has been meeting at 6:30 a.m. on the third Thursday of every other month.

Esterling, the board's president, indicated it's difficult coordinating schedules. While meeting a quorum on Thursday, the meeting was notably missing three board members and the department health officer due to schedule conflicts, as well as Bennett due to a conference.

"When they responded to when they can or cannot be (here), is it like they can never do that because their schedule is always set?" Hoag asked. "If it's quarter-

ly, you can make adaptations to make it work, because that's essentially what I think a lot of us are doing."

Esterling advised he would again reach out to everyone about their availability.

While Huggins was not present Thursday, Blevins reported Huggins had been checking in during lunch nearly every Monday.

"He comes, just kind of gets an update, asks the right questions — so kudos to him," Blevins said. "And it's, you know, it's a situation where we've had this communication, and it's been lacking for a long time. So, it's good."

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Property taxes

(Continued from Page 1)
ment of Local Government Finance calculates a rolling average using six years of capitalized net operating income and net cash rent. The highest value of the six is dropped from the formula, and the remaining five years are averaged to determine a base rate.

For 2024, the base rate was determined to be \$2,280 per acre, which is \$380 per acre higher than for the 2023 assessment year.

An increase in assessed value doesn't automatically mean an increase in a farmer's property tax bill but it can.

Thompson said he estimates that base rate for agricultural land could soon jump to \$3,100 because of the nature of the rolling average.

"And so we're going to see a shift to farm ground. It's on its way based upon the current formula. And so I just think it's a policy issue. Do we want to allow that to happen or not to happen?" he asked.

Excess levy appeals and school funding

Thompson also examined the last three years of growth in excess levy appeals. Indiana communities can seek property tax levies beyond traditional caps when property values increase at a faster rate than the state average.

A boom in assessed values during the COVID-19 pandemic drove up maximum levy appeals as local government units sought to pay for schools, fire protection and more. But while the number of appeals didn't change much between 2022 and 2023, Thompson noted that the amount approved

nearly quadrupled.

"... what these levy appeals really do, a lot of times, is just shift around who receives the money. The taxpayers don't pay any more," Thompson said.

That's partly because a large portion of payers, 90% in some areas, are already at their caps. But Thompson said he didn't consider this growth to be one of the biggest areas of concern.

Instead, he pointed to rate-based school operating referenda that aren't subject to maximum levy growth limitations nor curbed by circuit breaker limitations.

This means that when a homeowner's assessed value increases, schools will see a funding bump unless they decrease their tax rates — and taxpayers will see their referendum property tax bills increase.

"In most cases, that's worked pretty well until we hit 2022 (taxes paid in) 2023 ... we had a significant increase in the amount of the statewide levy," Thompson said. "Part of it was tied to — not all of it, now — was the huge amount of increase in assessed value."

Such referendums are approved by taxpayers, Thompson acknowledged, but homeowners don't always anticipate double-digit jumps in assessed values that will drive up tax bills when voting to approve a referendum.

A slide from Rep. Jeff Thompson's property tax presentation illustrates why capping some school referenda is needed.

A 2023 bill authored by Thompson implemented a cap that limited increases to a "typical" 5-6%. Follow-

up action in 2024 extended that for some but allowed more flexibility for growing school corporations.

But Thompson warned that if the cap wasn't extended out to 2030, property owners were projected to see a 14.2% jump in 2025 taxes paid in 2026.

Rep. Greg Porter, an Indianapolis Democrat, wondered if some voters approved referenda on a more conceptual basis, rather than the line item, to prioritize better teacher wages and educational advancement in their communities.

"I think people don't necessarily try to sit back and calculate your assessed values — unless you're trying to sell your home — but they're just looking at the overall situation in regards to educational attainment or outcomes," Porter said. "I understand what you're saying but the argument on the other end is what the intent of that said voter (was)."

Thompson repeated his concern about a 15% increase for homeowners but said that, as a former teacher, even he understood that sometimes the standard 6% increase wasn't enough for some schools.

Proposals for change

Cris Johnston, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, said he personally thought that maybe the referenda should be levy based instead of rate based.

"But the average taxpayer, I don't think, understands property tax levies. So the rate is something they can understand a little bit better..." Johnston said.

Adding so much more context to educate a voter

on the complexity might make a ballot question about approving a referendum "pretty wordy," Thompson said.

Another problem, Thompson said, occurred when corporations resorted to bonding debt due to "poor governance," which hurt taxpayers.

But Indianapolis Democrat Sen. Fady Qaddoura said he saw issues as more systemic and the result of decades-long plans to divert public school funding to other areas, like charters or private school vouchers.

"I (can't) help but think this is a very complex problem and I feel that we are dealing with the symptoms. All of this discussion today has been dealing with symptoms of the problem," he said.

Indeed, Qaddoura urged pulling away from property taxes as a source of local funding for schools. Property taxes from wealthier communities can generate more funding than those in low-income areas, for example. Indiana adopted a hybrid approach that combines state dollars with local property taxes to offset that disparity but some say it doesn't do enough.

"I hope that there will be a day that there are no property taxes in the state of Indiana used to fund our schools and we can look at state-level funding," he said. Qaddoura said referendums were "a symptom of unfunded needs" for school corporations.

The two-year task force is working overall to reform Indiana's tax system with a particular focus on income, sales and property taxes.

a Palestinian state and to make sure that the Palestinian people are exiled away from their homeland or remain under its occupation forever," he said.

He demanded of the council and diplomats crowded in the chamber: "What will the international community do? What will you do?"

Israeli-Palestinian negotiations have been stalled for years, and Israel's right-wing government is dominated by hard-liners who oppose Palestinian statehood.

Israeli U.N. Ambassador Gilad Erdan called the resolution "disconnected to the reality on the ground" and warned that it "will cause only destruction for years to come and harm any chance for future dialogue."

Six months after the Oct. 7 attack by the Hamas militant group, which controlled Gaza, and the killing of 1,200 people in "the most brutal massacre of Jews since the Holocaust," he accused the Security Council of seeking "to reward the perpetrators of these atrocities with statehood."

Israel's military offensive in response has killed over 32,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's health ministry, and destroyed much of the territory, which speaker after speaker denounced Thursday.

After the vote, Erdan thanked the United States and particularly President Joe Biden "for standing up for truth and morality in the face of hypocrisy and politics."

He called the Palestinian Authority — which controls the West Bank and the U.S. wants to see take over Gaza where Hamas still has sway — "a terror supporting entity."

The Israeli U.N. ambassador referred to the requirements for U.N. membership — accepting the obligations in the U.N. Charter and being a "peace-loving" state.

"How can you say seriously that the Palestinians are peace loving? How?" Erdan asked. "The Palestinians are paying terrorists, paying them to slaughter us. None of their leaders condemn terrorism, nor the Oct. 7 massacre. They call Hamas their brothers."

Weather

Friday, April 19, 2024

(24-hour observations at 6:54 p.m. Thursday At the Fort Wayne International Airport)

High: 68; Low: 49; Precipitation: None

Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 5.59 feet at 9:45 p.m. Thursday

Wells County forecast

Today: Mostly sunny, with a high near 56. Northwest wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Tonight: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 39. West wind around 10 mph.

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 51. West wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Saturday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 35. West wind 5 to 10 mph.

Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 55.

Sunday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 36.

Monday: Sunny, with a high near 62.

Monday Night: A 20% chance of showers after 2 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 46.

Tuesday: A chance of showers, then showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm after 2 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 62. Breezy. Chance of precipitation is 70%.

Tuesday Night: Showers and thunderstorms likely. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 40. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

Three arrested

(Continued from Page 1)
meanor, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$11,500.

Elbert Lee Marshall, 58, was charged with possession of methamphetamine and two counts of possession of a narcotic drug, all Level 6 felonies, possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$10,500.

All three subjects were taken into custody following a search of a residence in the 1000 block of North Oak Street last Friday. Elliott and Morlan reportedly share the home. Upon arrival, officers located four individuals inside, as well as a child between four and six months of age inside of a car unattended.

The child's father was later determined to be one of the four individuals, who did not live on the property or sustain charges.

According to a probable cause affidavit, police located a clear zip-top bag containing a large crystal rock and loose rocks weighing 9.68 grams, various straws and pen casings that field tested positive for methamphetamine, burnt pieces of aluminum foil and addi-

tional paraphernalia in the residence. Elliott reportedly was also in possession of a "joint," or a rolled marijuana cigarette when police arrived.

Marshall told police that he lived inside of a construction site trailer on the property. Inside the trailer, police found a brand new digital pocket scale, which field tested positive for fentanyl, as well as an additional pocket scale, a clear glass vial containing six pills that field tested positive for fentanyl, a clear jeweler bag with a white substance that weighed 3.45 grams, and additional paraphernalia.

Elliott pleaded not guilty to the charges during her initial hearing on Tuesday. She is scheduled for a pretrial conference at 1 p.m. on June 5 in the Wells Circuit Court.

Morlan posted bond on Tuesday. He is scheduled for a pretrial conference at 1 p.m. on June 5, also in the Wells Circuit Court. Morlan has an active warrant for his arrest for an additional charge involving animal cruelty.

Marshall, whose case is being tried in the Wells Superior Court, is scheduled for a status hearing at 1 p.m. on June 11.

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U.S. vetoes resolution

(Continued from Page 1)
mature actions in New York — even with the best intentions — will not achieve statehood for the Palestinian people," deputy State Department spokesman Vedant Patel said.

His voice breaking at times, Palestinian U.N. Ambassador Riyad Mansour told the council after the vote: "The fact that this resolution did not pass will not break our will and it will not defeat our determination."

"We will not stop in our effort," he said. "The state of Palestine is inevitable. It is real. Perhaps they see it as far away, but we see it as near."

This is the second Palestinian attempt for full membership and comes as the war in Gaza has put the more than 75-year-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict at center stage.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas first delivered the Palestinian Authority's application for U.N. membership in 2011. It failed because the Palestinians didn't get the required minimum support of nine of the Security Council's 15 members.

They went to the General Assembly and succeeded by more than a two-thirds majority in having their status raised from a U.N. observer to a non-member observer state in 2012. That opened the door for the Palestinian territories to join U.N. and other international organizations, including the International Criminal Court.

Algerian U.N. Ambassador Amar Bendjama, the Arab representative on the council who introduced the resolution, called Palestine's admission "a critical step toward rectifying a long-standing injustice" and said that "peace will come from its inclusion."

In explaining the U.S. veto, Wood said there are "unresolved questions" on whether Palestine meets the criteria to be considered a state. He pointed to Hamas still exerting power and influence in the Gaza Strip, which is a key part of the state envisioned by the Palestinians.

Wood stressed that the U.S. commitment to a two-state solution, where Israel and Palestine live side-by-side in peace, is the only path for security for both sides and for Israel to establish relations with all its Arab neighbors, including Saudi Arabia.

"The United States is committed to intensifying its engagement with the Palestinians and the rest of the region, not only to address the current crisis in Gaza, but to advance a political settlement that will create a path to Palestinian statehood and membership in the United Nations," he said.

Mansour, the Palestinian U.N. ambassador, reiterated the commitment to a two-state solution but asserted that Israel believes Palestine "is a permanent strategic threat."

"Israel will do its best to block the sovereignty of

a Palestinian state and to make sure that the Palestinian people are exiled away from their homeland or remain under its occupation forever," he said.

He demanded of the council and diplomats crowded in the chamber: "What will the international community do? What will you do?"

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Israeli U.N. Ambassador Gilad Erdan called the resolution "disconnected to the reality on the ground" and warned that it "will cause only destruction for years to come and harm any chance for future dialogue."

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OBITUARIES

Larry Hoffman, 79

Larry L. Hoffman, 79, of Bluffton, passed away Tuesday morning, April 16, 2024, at Stillwater Hospice Home in Fort Wayne, following an extended illness.

Larry was born in Berne on Sept. 22, 1944, to Ralph and Evelyn (Biberstein) Hoffman; both parents preceded him in death. He married Marlyce "Mickie" (Crump) in Franklin, Indiana, on Oct. 20, 1968; she survives in Bluffton.

Larry was a 1962 graduate of Adams Central High School and was a member of Calvary Lutheran Church in Bluffton. Larry was a truck driver for Supervalu-Food Marketing, retiring in 2006. He worked part-time following retirement, driving for local farmers and businesses and helping his brother with Hoffman Sales in Monroe. Larry enjoyed attending his grandchildren's sporting events and his morning breakfast club with friends at various local restaurants.

In addition to his wife of 55 years, Larry is survived by two sons, Jason Hoffman of Bluffton and Jeff (Tonya) Hoffman of Decatur; two grandchildren, Jace Hill of Decatur and Dane (Alyssa) Hoffman of New Haven; one great-grandson due in May; one brother, Bryce (Carol) Hoffman of Monroe; and 2 sisters, Lou Ann (Merlin) Frank of Berne and Donna (Randy) Beber of Decatur.

Larry was preceded in death by his parents, one grandson, Drake Hill, and two brothers, Jim Hoffman and a twin brother Gary Hoffman.

In accordance with Larry's wishes, no public services will be held. Burial will take place at a later date.

Memorials can be made to Friends Who Care Cancer Relief Foundation in care of the funeral home.

Online condolences can be made at goodwincaleharnish.com.

Goodwin - Cale & Harnish Memorial Chapel in Bluffton have been entrusted with funeral arrangements.



David R. Masterson, 71

David R. Masterson, 71, of La Fontaine, passed away at 5:11 pm on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at Rolling Meadows Health & Rehabilitation Center in LaFontaine. He was born in Wells County Hospital in Bluffton, on Thursday, March 26, 1953, to Marlin and Shirley (Arnold) Masterson.

David graduated in 1971 from Southern Wells High School. He played drums all through his high school years and had once been a member of the band known as Earth Water.

Back in the day, David started out working as a semi-driver. He went on to work for the Wells County Sheriff's Department for many years and then retired from Peyton's Northern in Bluffton.

David enjoyed going to air shows, as well as to air bases on tours.

Survivors include his ex-wife, Cynthia McVay; daughters, Beth (Bobby) Fuller of Marion and Christina Masterson of Bluffton; four grandchildren, Robin Russell of Marion, Skye Russell of Marion, Alexis Jade Eckelbarger of Lima, Ohio, and Jordan Eckelbarger of Bluffton; sisters, Debrah (Kevin) Smith of Florida and Sandra (Rick) Nine of Roanoke; and brother, Paul (Lora) Masterson of Poneto.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his twin sister, Paula Masterson.

There will be no public visitation or funeral service.

Arrangements are entrusted to Needham-Storey-Wampner Funeral & Cremation Service, North Chapel, 1341 N. Baldwin Ave., Marion, IN.

Memories may be shared online at nswcares.com.



Mary Jane Trent, 80

Mary Jane Trent, 80, formerly of Craigville and Berne, passed away Wednesday, April 17, 2024, at Ossian Health & Rehabilitation Center.

She was born May 28, 1943, in Powell County, Kentucky to Albert and Ethel Mae (White) Adams.

Mary Jane retired from the United States Postal Service, where she started working at the Post Office in Craigville and worked for many years at the Decatur Post Office. She was a former member of the Bluffton First Church of the Nazarene and a longtime faithful member of the Faith Baptist Church in Berne.

On Jan. 26, 1962, in Waltersville, Ken., Mary Jane and Fred "Sonny" Trent were married. They shared 61 years of marriage before he preceded her in death on Feb. 18, 2023.

Survivors include a daughter, Tracye Dawn Trent-Cashdollar; and two grandchildren, Chase and Luke Cashdollar, all of Fort Wayne. She is also survived by in-laws and longtime caregivers, Jim and Treva Betz of Poneto; along with extended family.

Mary Jane is preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Fred "Sonny" Trent; a son, William Fred Trent; three brothers, Gene, Harry and Willie Adams; and two sisters, Francis and Betty.

Funeral services will take place at noon Friday, April 26, 2024, at the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton with Pastor Ryan Marsh officiating. Burial will follow at Six Mile Cemetery in Bluffton.

A visitation will be held from 10 a.m. to noon, Friday, prior to the service at the funeral home.

Memorials may be made in Mary Jane's memory to the Faith Baptist Church in Berne.

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



Karen L. Blinn, 86

Karen L. Blinn, 86, of Warren, passed away April 14, 2024.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Glancy-H. Brown & Son Funeral Home in Warren, IN.

Mona L. Brown, 73

Mona L. Brown, 73, passed away Thursday afternoon, April 18, 2024, at Bluffton Regional Medical Center in Bluffton.

Funeral arrangements are pending with Goodwin - Cale & Harnish Memorial Chapel 3220 East SR 124 Bluffton, IN.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City: Wednesday, 2:09 p.m., Walmart. Caller reported being verbally harassed by a DoorDash driver.

Wednesday, 2:22 p.m., Budget Inn. Caller reported subjects keeping him awake and bothering him.

Wednesday, 3:02 p.m., 100 block of North Oak Street. Report of junk and trash around the side of the house.

Wednesday, 3:28 p.m., Kroger. Caller reported they found a wallet. Owner contacted.

Wednesday, 5:36 p.m., 100 block of North Main Street. Caller reported unwanted subject.

Wednesday, 8:34 p.m., 600 block of Creek Drive. Report of a jeep parked

by the pond. Subject lived nearby and was on the phone.

Wednesday, 8:58 p.m., 70 block of Sunset Drive. Caller reported that it appeared someone used a screw driver on their door.

Wednesday, 9:23 p.m., Hardee's. Management requested trespass warning for two individuals.

Thursday, 9:01 a.m., Bluffton High School. Officer received truancy report.

County: Wednesday, 11:59 a.m., S.R. 116 and East 100 North, Bluffton. Report of a semi stuck in the roadway

Wednesday, 7:43 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Shane Fletcher.

Wednesday, 8:39 p.m., 1000 South Meridian Road, Bluffton. Report of fire-

works.

Thursday, 2:27 a.m., West 1000 South and Jeff Road, Warren. Report a stop sign that was knocked down by semi. Temporary sign placed.

Thursday, 8:58 a.m., Wells County Courthouse. Subject detained by courthouse security.

ACCIDENTS

County: Thursday, 9:13 a.m., U.S. 224 and C.R. 100 East. Johnathon Baxter, 17, Fort Wayne, was driving straight when he collided with a GMC Sav that was proceeding into the intersection from a stop sign. The front left side of Baxter's Ford F-150 collided with the passenger side of the GMC Sav, driven by Kory Crump, 29, Liberty

Center. The GMC continued off the roadway, striking a state highway marker post and cement survey marker before coming to rest in the yard of Norwell High School. Crump was taken to the hospital for injuries to the left shoulder and knees. Damages did not exceed \$25,000.

ARRESTS

Shane Michael Fletcher, 42, North Manchester; sex offender registration violation, a Level 6 felony. Bond set at \$10,000.

Terry Allen King, 53, Bluffton; possession of methamphetamine, a Level 6 felony. No bond set.

Alexander Michael Collier, 19, Fort Wayne; minor consumption of alcoholic beverage, a Class C misdemeanor.

Wells County Briefs

Jail to re-do isolation cell

The Wells County Jail's one isolation cell will soon need to be refinished, said Sheriff Scott Holliday.

The 10 ft. by 12 ft. cell is completely padded to prevent any self-inflicted harm by an inmate. Holliday said this cell has been repaired multiple times, and last time the contractor had said it would next need to be refinished for safety purposes.

Holliday reported preliminary quotes ranging between \$30,000 and \$50,000 and intends to request a portion of this amount through an additional appropriation with the Wells County Council.

Additionally, the commissioners 3-0 approved \$71,000 in remaining American Rescue Plan Act funds for buying patrol vehicles.

As of Monday, Holliday reported 79 inmates in the Wells County Jail. Of this total, 41 were pre-trial holds for the Wells County Circuit Court, 24 for the Superior Court, eight from the Department of Correction and four Level 4 felons.

County to host free shred event on May 4

A free paper shredding event will be offered by the Recycling Center from 9-11 a.m. on Saturday, May 4, at the Washington Commons in Bluffton.

Residents can bring up to six paper-sized boxes for free paper shredding, sponsored by the Solid Waste Management District. Staples, rubber bands and paperclips are OK, but newspapers, phone books, carbon papers or magazines will not be accepted.

During its meeting Monday, the district board also approved a six-month CD investment with Flagstar Bank in Bluffton. The district received a 5.34% rate on their investment of \$100,000.

Supervisor Kevin Poling also advised operations were overall running smoothly, jokingly noting that a light bulb had recently gone out. "I don't know how many Bluffton recycling supervisors it takes to change a light bulb," he quipped.

The board's next meeting is at 4 p.m. on May 20 at the Carnegie Annex.

All board members were present.

Rain leads to drainage questions

The recent spring rain has led to an uptick in questions for Surveyor Jarrod Hahn. Since the Wabash River in Bluffton flooded to its highest level since 2019, he said some people have never encountered drainage issues. That said, several inquiries have also come from private drain issues, which Wells County is not responsible for.

All board members were present.

— Compiled by Holly Gaskill

Sheriffs' Association offers Youth Leadership Camp

The Indiana Sheriffs' Association announced and will be celebrating their 44th Annual Indiana Sheriffs' Association Youth Leadership Camp will be held in June and July again this year.

There will be two camp sessions this year, the first session will be held June 17-June 20, at Pine Creek Camp in Pine Village, Indiana, serving the northern part of the state.

The Indiana Sheriffs' Association

Youth Leadership Camp is a program provided by the Indiana Sheriffs' Association for boys and girls who are currently in the seventh or eighth grade of school and are interested in learning more about a possible career in law enforcement. The camp provides a very meaningful experience and relationship with other campers from throughout the state and sheriff officers who serve as counselors and instructors.

Any boy or girl currently in the sev-

enth or eighth grade of school interested in attending the camp should contact the Sheriff's Office or your school counselor for an application and additional information. The Sheriff announced that arrangements can possibly be made to provide the camp registration fee through a local business or civic organization for anyone interested.

For more information please contact the local Sheriff's office or the Indiana Sheriffs' Association.

Higher education commission updates progress

By WHITNEY DOWNARD

Indiana Capital Chronicle

Indiana's higher education czar celebrated some early wins in an address Monday but acknowledged the work still to be done to improve enrollment and completion of higher education degrees.

"With the combined efforts of policy, partnerships, and programming, driven by clear strategy and goals, underpinned by a strong strategic management process, and with an understanding of and service to students at the heart, we are working to create a culture in Indiana around the importance of higher education

and more broadly training and education beyond a high school diploma," said Indiana Higher Education Commissioner Chris Lowery.

Progress includes an uptick in higher education enrollment and Indiana now placing 11th in the nation for its college completion rate.

College enrollment increased by nearly 5,000 students, or two percent, compared to the fall 2022 school year making 2023

the first year enrollment in Indiana has increased in the past 13 years. Over 244,000 students, both undergraduate and graduate, enrolled in one of Indiana's public higher education institutions during the fall 2023 school year.

Both improvements are part of the goals set by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education's HOPE agenda, or Hoosier Opportunities and Possi-

bilities through Education, launched last year. Additional address remarks included wins from the 2024 legislative session.

The commission's Partnership Pentagon, composed of business and education leaders along with government and community stakeholders, is tasked with understanding those goals and proposing solutions to Indiana's higher education challenges.

Corrections and clarifications

Thursday's News-Banner misstated that there was no communication between the town of Markle and Wells County about the Economic Development Commission. Markle Town Council President Matthew Doss has since clarified that Bluffton Common Council Scott Mentzer asked him to participate in the hiring process for a new director.

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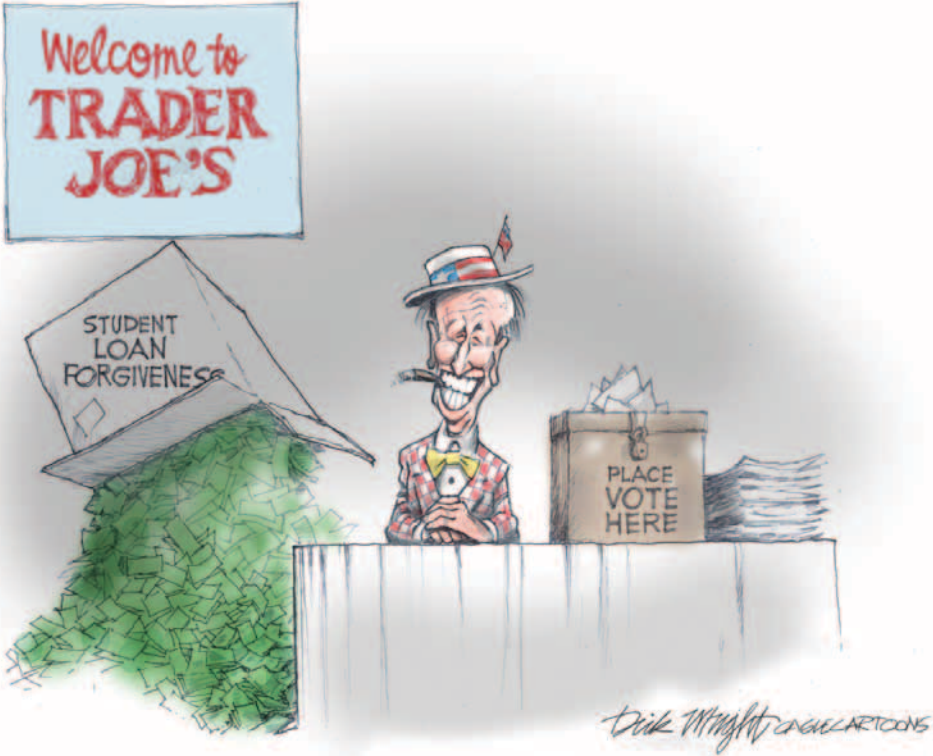
Obituary Policy

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.

Biden and Student Loan Debt - a look through cartoonists' eyes...



Letters to the Editor
A letter to the community of Bluffton

We are writing to you as residents and/or property owners of River Road in Bluffton, Indiana. We have all admired the Wabash River's aesthetic charm for Bluffton and River Road.

Recently concern has grown over the proposed street light poles along River Road.

Between Thursday, March 28, and Monday, April 1, numerous wooden street light poles were strewn along the south side of River Road from Orchard Ridge Drive to Bill's Creek. On Tuesday, April 2, all the poles were removed because of the rising flood waters of the Wabash River.

We did not learn of the plan to install street lights for the purpose of lighting the River Greenway, which is located along the north side of River Road, until the weekend of March 30 and 31. And we didn't learn this through any formal, written communication from the City.

This project has potential to drastically change the look and feel of our community. We are concerned for the aesthetics of River Road and River Greenway, maintenance of land, land owner consideration, and reevaluations of our land value.

The decision-making process for this project seems to be happening behind closed doors without adequate public input or consultation. This is not how decisions should be made in a democratic society that values transparency and public participation. We have not been informed of the purpose, scope, timeline, or budget of this project.

We are especially concerned about the placement of street light poles along River Road, which Mayor Whicker, in a letter dated April 2 or 3, depending on to whom the letter was mailed, would be in the city street right-of-way. We would like to see documentation for the legal "right-of-way."

According to the data from the National League of Cities (2019), 70% of local government believes that citizen engagement in local government decisionmaking is crucial for successful urban planning. Yet it appears that we are being left out of this important discussion about our own community.

We believe it is essential for us and other community members to voice our concerns and suggestions about the River Road Project before any final decisions are made and to have an opportunity to influence decisions that will impact our daily lives and environment.

While we aren't opposed to lighting the River Greenway, we request a halt to installations of the street light poles along River Road until our concerns have been addressed.

THE RIVER ROAD NEIGHBORHOOD
Jennifer Brink, Dan Brink, Cindy Gagle, Phillip Gagle, Nathan Clem, Carrie Boots, Braden Boots, Barry Duncan, Constance Duncan, Doug Sundling, Steve Gerber, Rebecca Steury, Jennifer Folder, Tiffany Smith, Jason Smith

This defiant Ukrainian general has no smile – and surprising remarks on Trump

KYIV — Lt. Gen. Kyrilo Budanov's glowering face is barely visible in the half-light of his office. He likes to work in the dark, as befits the chief of Ukraine's military intelligence service, the GUR. Behind him in the gray gloom, you can see a painting of a giant owl, the symbol of his service, savagely devouring a bat that is the motif of its Russian counterpart.

Budanov is the dark prince of the Ukraine war. His drop-dead stare has become an icon for Ukrainians — a symbol of bravery and defiance in this third year of conflict with Russia. Ukraine's NV news outlet calls him the man "without a smile." A meme that circulates on the internet shows nine identical pictures of his scowling face, labeled "happy," "angry," "troubled," "excited" and so on.

Budanov spoke with me for 90 minutes last month in his forbidding office on what Ukrainians call "the Island," a derelict string of buildings on a peninsula on the Dnieper River. He was, as always, the voice of resistance — promising to take the fight into Russia with drones and special operations, confirming reports that he's battling with Wagner mercenaries in Africa and scoffing at a Korea-style negotiated settlement.

With the House of Representatives nearing a final vote on additional military aid to Ukraine, Budanov delivered a clear, emphatic message to the United States: "You should keep helping us, and you should, at last, deliver the assistance we need. We will have a common victory together."

War always has an element of theater, and Budanov might be this conflict's most colorful character. He's just 38, and he's famously courageous in battle. He fought behind Russian lines between 2014 and 2016 in Donbas and was injured three times, including taking shrapnel in his heart, neck and back. In 2016, he led a raid that killed a lieutenant general from Russia's Federal Security Service, or FSB.

Budanov predicted that Russia will launch a big offensive starting in June to try to capture all of Donetsk and Luhansk, the two provinces known as the Donbas region, which Russia has claimed but doesn't control. The Russians will then focus on the November elections in the United States and the aftermath. "Until the inauguration of your president, they will try to get as much as possible of the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk," perhaps hoping that a reelected President Donald Trump can ratify their gains.

To counter the Russians, Budanov plans more

cross-border attacks by the "Russian volunteers" who operate inside Russia with support from his service, along with more drone attacks. He explained: "We've offered a plan aimed at reduction of Russian potential. It encompasses a lot of aspects, like the military industry ... critical military targets, their airfields, their command-and-control posts."

When I asked if Ukrainian attacks inside Russia would continue, Budanov offered a rare trace of a smile. "I hope so," he said. A cartoon circulating on the internet shows Putin meeting Budanov in a park and asking if his dog bites. Budanov answers no, and Putin pets the animal. The dog takes a gun and shoots Putin dead.

The Russians have tried to assassinate Budanov at least 10 times, according to Ukraine's count, including at least two missile strikes on his headquarters at the Island. A Moscow court issued a warrant for his arrest

last year for allegedly plotting to destroy the Kerch Strait bridge. His wife, Marianna, was poisoned by heavy metals, according to Ukrainian reports last year.

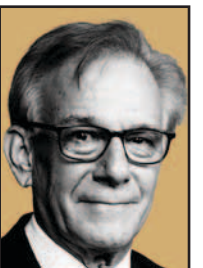
Budanov doesn't appear fazed. If anything, he seems to relish the danger. Some friends worry that he can be reckless. "Kyrilo has succeeded in so many risks, he doesn't have good risk assessment," one told me.

Near the end of our conversation, I asked Budanov if he was worried that if Trump were elected, he might try to impose a settlement. His answer surprised me, but perhaps it underlined what a canny intelligence operator he is. He's already recruiting a potential asset.

"I have a huge respect for the personality of Trump," Budanov said. He noted that the former president had attended a military academy, and he lauded his tenacity. "There have been nine instances in his life when he went to the top, fell to the very bottom of life, and went back again." But as for any Trump peace plan, he said: "Even a person like him won't be able to resolve this issue in one day."

My visit to the Island was a reminder that Ukraine survives in part on mythic, galvanizing personalities such as Budanov and President Volodymyr Zelensky. Last year, Budanov's fans posted what became known as the "silent video," which showed him sitting wordlessly for 33 seconds in his office, glaring at the camera. At the end of this half-minute of unspoken defiance, the screen displayed the words: "To be continued."

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David Ignatius



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Opinions expressed on this page do not necessarily represent the views of this newspaper.

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, April 19, the 110th day of 2024. There are 256 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On April 19, 1993, the 51-day siege at the Branch Davidian compound near Waco, Texas, ended as fire destroyed the structure after federal agents began smashing their way in; about 80 people, including two dozen children and sect leader David Koresh, were killed. Then on the same date in 1995, Timothy McVeigh, seeking to strike at the

government he blamed for the Waco deaths, destroyed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people. (McVeigh was convicted of federal murder charges and executed in 2001.)

On this date:

In 1775, the American Revolutionary War began with the battles of Lexington and Concord.

In 1865, a funeral was held at the White House for President Abraham Lincoln, assassinated five days earlier; his coffin was then taken to the

U.S. Capitol for a private memorial service in the Rotunda.

In 1897, the first Boston Marathon was held; winner John J. McDermott ran the course in two hours, 55 minutes and 10 seconds.

In 1912, a special subcommittee of the Senate Commerce Committee opened hearings in New York into the Titanic disaster.

In 1943, during World War II, tens of thousands of Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto began a valiant but ultimately futile uprising against Nazi forces.

Finding love in all the wrong places

Dear Annie: I have let myself get involved with a significantly younger guy. To make matters worse, I'm married. In my defense, before I even started talking to this other guy, my husband and I had come to a place in our marriage where we were more like roommates than husband and wife.

of your marriage. You and your husband took vows, and that still means something, even if you've grown apart. You owe it to yourselves to try bridging the gulf. Tell him how you're longing for intimacy and affection; commit to marriage counseling together.

Dear Annie by Annie Lane



If you've completely moved on and are going to continue seeing other men, OK, fine. But at least first give your husband the courtesy of a divorce — and don't give new suitors your credit card numbers, passwords, Social Security number, birthdate or other personal data.

Read on for a few additional tips, courtesy of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Beware if the individual seems too perfect or quickly asks you to leave a dating service or social media site to communicate directly.

Beware if the individual requests inappropriate photos or financial information.

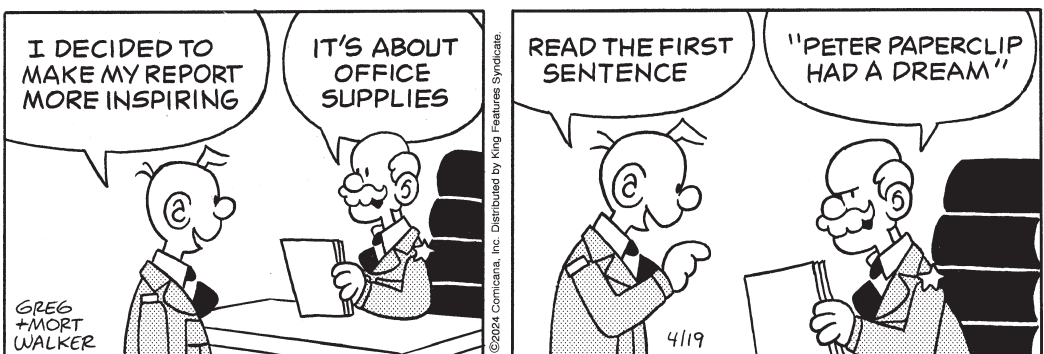
Beware if the individual promises to meet in person but then always comes up with an excuse why he or she can't. If you haven't met the person after a few months, for whatever reason, you have good reason to be suspicious.

Never send money to anyone you have only communicated with online or by phone.

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

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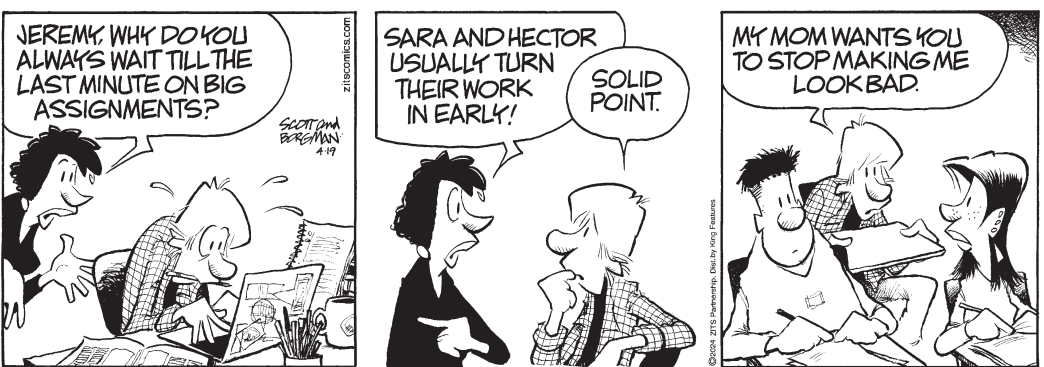
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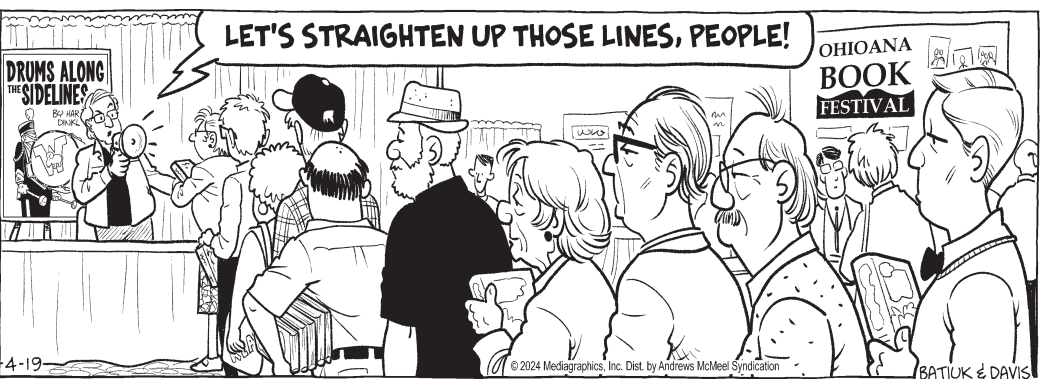
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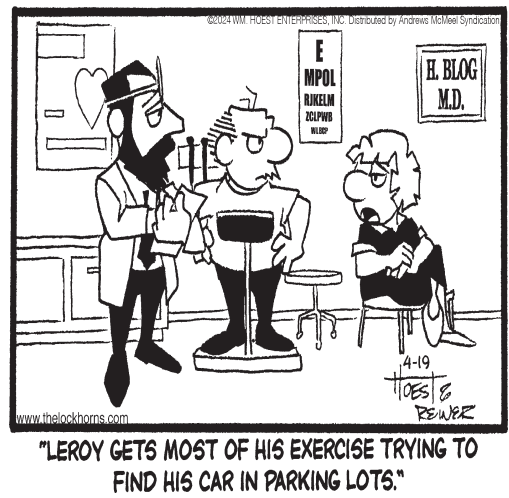
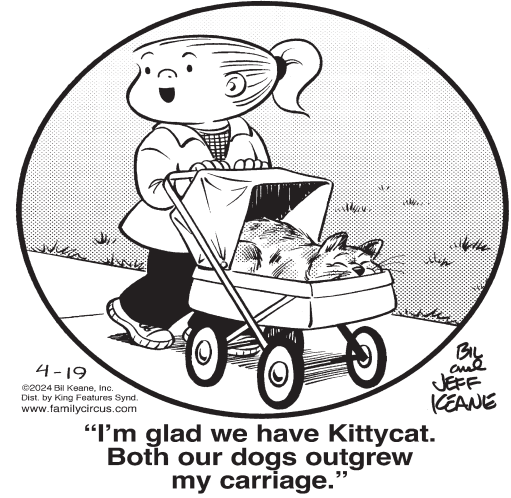
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THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane

The LOCKHORNS



My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



Jesus bridged the gap between God and us

Question: While attending a conference on joy, I heard a speaker challenge those in attendance to commit themselves to God. I've been in church all my life but I've never heard that said. The speaker passed out a little card with a prayer on it, asking us to read it and sign. I am careful about what I put my signature on, so I left without doing so; however, I am curious if there is anything in the Bible that says we should commit ourselves to God. — C.A.

Answer: Suppose you are walking along the road and you come to a deep gorge. The bridge has been

washed away, and jumping across the gorge is not an option. Seemingly, you have no hope of reaching your destination. But off in the distance you notice another bridge that people are crossing. What would you have to do to get across?

First, go to that bridge believing it will hold you. Then commit yourself to it; put your full weight on it and walk across to the other side. It isn't enough to say you believe it can hold you — you must step out in faith believing it will hold you and guide you to safety.

This illustrates what it means to commit your life to Jesus Christ. By His death and resurrec-

tion, Jesus bridged the gap between God and us — a gap caused by sin. But simply believing intellectually that He has done this is not enough. Like that bridge across the gorge, we must trust Him and commit our lives to Him, asking Him to forgive our sin and trust in Him. When we do, we will discover that He can be trusted to save us, because He truly is the bridge between God and us.

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

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Television schedule table with columns for time slots (5 PM to 12:30) and rows for various channels (WJMN, CBS, etc.).

Starfires mercy Tigers to open ACAC softball play

By RYAN WALKER

When it rains, it pours, and South Adams made a splash early to defeat the Bluffton Tigers on the softball diamond Thursday night.

It was the first game of the ACAC season for both clubs, and the No. 9 in 2A Starfires (6-1, 1-0 ACAC) made it count in a 14-2 win in six innings.

South Adams opened the contest with a three-run blast to deep centerfield from catcher Sofia Schwartz, who hit the first of three home runs in the game. Then, after Bluffton (3-4, 0-1 ACAC) starting pitcher Madyson Sonnigsen responded with a 1-2-3 second inning, South Adams put up seven runs in the third.

The first six batters reached base, and the speed of Macy Pries (Lake Land College commit), Shea Alberson and Bekah Peterson caroueled around the bases. The trio combined for three stolen bases by that point, and were driven in by Alberson's double, Patterson's single, and Avery Brown's single. A walk with the bases loaded and a sacrifice fly finally ended the dreadful third for the Tigers at a 1-0 score.

"One through nine, it's a solid lineup," Bluffton head coach Tyler Sonnigsen said. "Probably the best team we're going to see all year and not just by a little bit, I mean, a substantial amount and there's really no weaknesses on their defense."

"I try to tell our kids that we want to go create chaos on the base paths and get bounced down steal bases," South Adams head coach Jessie O'Dell said. "It's no secret that's what we like to do. But when we can hit bombs like that, then it opens up the bunt. When we can bunt, then it opens up when we can throw strikes and we can hit, so it's definitely a major contribution. I mean, they both work well together."

Madyson Sonnigsen's counterpart on the mound was dealing. Addie Baker, who entered the game with a 1.79 ERA in six

appearances, mowed down Bluffton's lineup one by one.

In Baker's four innings, the junior held the Tigers scoreless and picked up her fifth win of the season, allowing only three bases runners in the game, one being an infield bunt single from Averi Petty. She finished with eight strikeouts and only one walk.

"She is great," Tyler Sonnigsen said of Baker. "Taking nothing away from Baker — She kept us off balance through the first three innings, and after that, she didn't have to really throw too much of a changeup. She was just throwing the ball by us. Location, location, location, and we just didn't adjust."

All of Bluffton's damage was done in the fifth inning when O'Dell brought in his other starting pitcher Gracie Bixler.

The Tigers immediately had success: Madison Smith and Petty picked up base hits and later scored on Marly Drayer's sacrifice fly and Tyrah Shaw's infield single. That placed the score at 10-2, and the inning ended with Madyson Sonnigsen and Konley Ault going deep to centerfield, but the speed of Patterson halted any harm.

"(We) started putting hits together a little too late," Tyler Sonnigsen said. "You've got to hit the ball sooner. I mean, one through four innings and then coming alive in the fifth, we're not going to win too many ball games."

Madyson Sonnigsen held the Starfires in check during the fourth and fifth innings, going back-to-back times without allowing a baserunner. She allowed a leadoff double to Brown and got taken out for Shaw out on the mound to end her start.

That would lead into a four-run sixth inning, capitalized by a two-run shot by Patterson and a solo one by Tessa Bernard. Bernard's tallied the Starfires' 10th home run of the season.

Bluffton will be at Oak Hill at 5:30 p.m. Friday, April 19.

ryan@news-banner.com



Bluffton catcher Madison Smith rips a single the opposite way off of South Adams' pitcher Gracie Bixler Thursday at home. Smith was one of the two Tigers to have two hits in the game in which the Tigers scored only two runs and had five total hits. (Photos provided)



Tiger hitter Averi Petty slaps at a high pitch during the Starfires game. She went 2-3 on the day.

Sports Roundup

Tigers rout Starfires to open ACAC baseball play

Bluffton got win No. 1 in ACAC play in a 10-0 rout over South Adams in baseball Thursday night at home.

The Tigers improved to 6-5 on the season and are now winners of five of their last six games. Their ACAC record is 1-0.

Of Bluffton's five hits, A.J. Streveler's was the only one that went for extra bases to go along with an RBI. Brody Lewis went 1-1 with two walks, and Griffin Morgan, Eli Garrett and Easton Blair had singles.

In the five-inning game, Braxton Betancourt pitched the full length, allowing no runs on three hits, three walks and 12 strikeouts.

Bluffton will visit Southern Wells at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 23.

Tigers beat Bulldogs in road girls tennis match

Bluffton picked up a win on the tennis courts at New Haven 4-1 Thursday night.

Individual results:

- Malee Snodgrass (NH) defeated Emma Schwartz 6-4, 6-4 at No. 1 singles.
- Eve Corkwell defeated Nakia Capers 6-1, 6-0 at No. 2 singles.
- Gretchen Crist defeated Alex Buchanan 6-3, 6-2 at No. 3 singles.
- Hazel Pfister and Sophie Eisenhut defeated Brooke Thornhill and Aaliyah Casiano 6-0, 6-0 at No. 1 doubles.
- Alexis Grover and Kinzie Fiechter defeated Emily Gordillo and Jessica Didion 6-0, 6-0 at No. 2 doubles.

Bluffton swept the junior varsity match 6-0.

Results for JV:

- Emily Drayer defeated MArison Baltazar 8-1.
- Avery Hunt defeated Alyssa Billman 8-2.
- Gissel Martinez defeated Maggie Lauer 8-0.
- Isla Gibson and Aleeah Grover defeated Grace Galloway and Ella Wilson 8-3.
- Anna Zurcher and Madison Duncan defeated Lucy Graves and Ciera Casiano 8-1.
- Briell Coratti and Kenley Falk defeated Elia Doust and Gabi Dishong 8-4.

Bluffton will be at the Argyll Invitational at Madison-Grant this weekend starting at 9 a.m. Saturday, April 20.

Bluffton boys win, girls fall to Yorktown in track and field

Bluffton split with Yorktown Thursday night at home in track.

The boys' team won 80-43, while the girls lost 77-46.

Event winners were:

- Boys**
- Jude Baumgartner in the 400m with a time of 52.4.
- The 4x400m relay team with a time of 3:39.3.
- Tyler Godwin in the 800m with a time of 2:10.9, in the 1600m with a time of 4:57.7 and in the 3200m with a time of 11:22.4.
- Andrew Hunt in the 110m hurdles with a time of 16.1 and in the 300m hurdles with a time of 42.8.
- Eli Bertsch in the high jump at 5-6.
- Maksym Laishevkin in the long jump

at 19-1.50.

- Johnny Cruz in the shot put at 51-7.50.
 - Girls**
 - Maryn Schreiber in the 400m with a time of 1:05.0.
 - Dakota Lee in the 100m hurdles with a time of 17.6 and in the 300m hurdles with a time of 52.9.
 - Rori Drayer in the shot put at 30-4.75.
- Bluffton will host Woodlan/Adams Central at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 23.

Raiders drop opening ACAC game to Jets in softball

Southern Wells fell 11-1 at Adams Central to begin ACAC play Thursday.

The Raiders fell to 1-5 on the season with the loss.

The Raiders got their only run in the fifth inning with an RBI single by Collena Reeves. Kenzie Paxson, Kaylea Coffel and Gracie Reeves had the other hits.

Coffel picked up the loss. Southern Wells will be at home next against South Side starting at 5:30 p.m. Monday, April 22.

Southern Wells falls in golf to Wapahani

Southern Wells lost at Wapahani in golf Thursday night.

The Raiders shot a 204 compared to the 167 by the hosting school.

Southern Wells was led by Gabe McElhaneey with a 48, followed by Chandler Oswalt (50), Tristen Worster (51), Cash Banet (55) and Dirk Frauhiger (57).

Southern Wells will be at the South Adams Invitational at 9 a.m. Saturday, April 20.

Green Valley Golf League sign ups begin

The Green Valley Tuesday Senior Golf League is set to begin on April 30. Last year, the league had 45 players. For more information on how to sign up, contact Steve Folk at 260-530-7005.

Knights top Spartans in junior varsity baseball

Norwell defeated Homestead in junior varsity baseball on the road Thursday night.

The Knights were led by Josiah Ray with a 2-2 day at the plate with two RBI and a double. The other hits went to Nick McBride, Jaxson Dohrman and Adam Mahensmith.

Mahensmith got the win, throwing five innings and allowing one run, six hits and two walks.

Tigers defeat Starfires in ACAC JV softball game

Bluffton earned a junior varsity softball win over South Adams 8-4 at home Thursday.

The Tigers had six hits, two by Jillian Phillippe including a double. Addison Gehring, Addison Kauffman, Kiertynn Reed and Kinlee Taylor had one hit each. Reese Turnbull picked up two RBI in the game. Phillippe, Kauffman, and Sierra Holmes each had one RBI.

Kinlee Taylor got the win, throwing five innings and striking out five.

High School Calendar

- FRIDAY, APRIL 19**
BASEBALL: Angola at Norwell, 5:30 p.m.
GIRLS TENNIS: Wayne at Norwell, 5:30 p.m.
SOFTBALL: Norwell at Homestead, 5 p.m.; Bluffton at Oak Hill, 5:30 p.m.
SATURDAY, APRIL 20
BASEBALL: Mississinewa at Southern Wells, 10 a.m.
BOYS GOLF: Norwell, Bluffton, Southern Wells at South Adams Golf Invitational, 9 a.m.
GIRLS TENNIS: Norwell at Concordia, 10 a.m.; Bluffton at Argyll Invitational, 9 a.m.
SOFTBALL: Bluffton at Northfield, 10 a.m.
TRACK & FIELD (CO-ED): Southern Wells at Eastern, 10:30 a.m.



Elliott ends 42-race winless streak with OT victory in NASCAR

By STEPHEN HAWKINS
AP Sports Writer

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — Chase Elliott had to get through a few extra laps after 18 months since last winning a race.

Elliott pulled ahead and cleared Ross Chastain on the first lap after the second restart in overtime Sunday at Texas Motor Speedway, ending a 42-race winless streak for NASCAR's most popular driver.

"A lot of things went on our way today, I'm not naive to that," Elliott said. "You have to be in the mix and you've got to be up front to even have things go your way. And we were close enough to do that."

The race ended on the 16th caution after Elliott had taken the white flag for the 276th lap in a race scheduled for 267 laps. Chastain got bumped from behind by defending race winner William Byron, who finished third and was just behind Brad Keselowski when the final yellow flag came out.

It was the fifth win this season for Hendrick Motorsports, the 306th for NASCAR's winningest team, but the first for Elliott in the No. 9 Chevrolet since Talladega in October 2022.

"The longer it goes and the more ways you find to either not run good or lose races, you know it can make it tougher," Elliott said. "It's been an extremely important thing to me ... to try to climb this mountain again together and try to get back to where we need to be as a group."

Elliott and Denny Hamlin were at the front of the field after a restart with two laps left in regulation, and they were racing all-out when Hamlin got loose on the outside going into Turn 4 and went hard into the wall, bringing out the 14th caution and sending the race to overtime.

"Trying go for the win ... got loose and spun out," said Hamlin, the only driver to lead laps in all nine races this season.

That was the second restart in the last 10 laps of regulation, with Hamlin leading on the previous one before Elliott edged ahead about the same time that another caution came out when pacesetter Kyle Larson wrecked after a crowded four-wide jumble back in the field.

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Billiard signs with Trine for football

By RYAN WALKER

Norwell's senior offensive lineman will be taking his talents to Trine University next fall.

Ayden Billiard signed his national letter of intent with the Thunder Thursday morning at the high school — among one of the largest supporting casts there's been during a signing.

"It's great having this many people here," Billiard said. "Most of them football players — I love them all. It was great having my family and coaches here supporting me."

On his visit, he met with some of the football players and coaches, and mentioned how nice the campus was — one of the best he's seen. It's no question that he values team comradery with several teammates posing behind him to take a photo after he put pen to paper.

"I met with a few of the guys," Billiard said. "They all seemed pretty nice and they love football and all the coaches were great, too."

Billiard spent his time as an offensive guard for the Knights, receiving second-team all Northeast 8 in his final campaign. He was one of four Knights to be on the all-conference award list.

The Thunder have had winning seasons in all nine years with head coach Troy Abbs. In 2023, they had a 6-4 record. Abbs, who is now 55-23 at Trine, got the attention of Long in his relatability and enthusiasm.

Billiard is also the second offensive lineman in Wells County to sign with Trine this month. Southern Wells lineman Peyton Long inked with the Thunder last week

ryan@news-banner.com



Norwell's Ayden Billiard (bottom row, second from left) poses with his family during his football signing with Trine University Thursday morning. His family members from left to right in the bottom row are Tracy Billiard, Ayden Billiard, Lynn Billiard and Sierra Billiard. His Norwell coaches are Cale Grzych, Josh Gerber, Adam Wagner and Eric Morgan. (Photo by Ryan Walker)

Coyotes officially leaving Arizona for Salt Lake City in NHL relocation

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) — The Arizona Coyotes are officially headed to Salt Lake City.

The NHL Board of Governors voted unanimously Thursday to approve a \$1.2 billion sale from Alex Meruelo to Utah Jazz owners Ryan and Ashley Smith, clearing the way for the franchise's move to Utah next

season. The deal includes a provision for Arizona to get an expansion team if a new arena is built within the next five years. The deal will be facilitated through the NHL, with \$200 million going to league owners as a relocation fee.

"We expressed our interest publicly with the NHL," Ryan Smith told The Associated Press. "It's probably been two years where we've said, 'Hey, look, we really believe Utah can be an incredible hockey town.' You look at all the demographics, we were just talking about the Olympics and you think

about the Olympics coming back. It all kind of made sense."

Smith will take over the franchise's hockey operations and Meruelo will maintain his business operations in Arizona in an effort to secure and develop a tract of land for a new arena in north Phoenix.

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EMPLOYMENT

Help Wanted

THE CITY OF Bluffton is accepting applications for a paid internship at the Animal Shelter. Applicants must have a high school diploma or equivalent. The City of Bluffton utilizes E-Verify and follows EEOC guidelines. Applications may be obtained from the Clerk Treasurer's Office, 128 E. Market St, Bluffton, IN Mon-Fri 8 am-4:30 pm or online www.blufftonindiana.net. Deadline for applications is May 3, 2024.

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. 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.

HELOISE HINT: When researching companies that you may want to work for. Contact people who work for them to get the inside dish on the company culture. Fax Heloise @ 210-HELOISE (435-6473).

This Week's Garage Sales
Clip & Save

APRIL 18, 4-7 p.m., April 19, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Everything 1/2 price on Saturday, April 20, 9 a.m.-noon, 0511 E. 100 N, Bluffton. Clothes: girls 6-14, boys 10-14, ladies XS-XL, mens, shoes, baby crib, toys, games, books, shower curtains, lamps, area rugs, home decor, holiday items.

119 W CENTRAL AVE Men's and women's clothing & shoes, furniture, kitchen items, rugs, yard tools, misc items, everything must go! Apr. 20 8:00 AM-4:00 PM

RUMMAGE AND BAKE sale plus queen size quilt raffle THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 1 TO 7 P.M., FRIDAY, APRIL 26, 9 A.M. TO 7 P.M., SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 9 A.M. TO 1 P.M., McNatt Church, 9183 W 800 S -90, Warren (Wells County), one mile west of State Road 3. Bake sale and food will be available on Friday and Saturday only!

Help Wanted

LOOKING FOR EMPLOYEES?

Place a 20 word line classified ad for a month for \$52. Add a graphic or photo for an additional \$5. Contact the Bluffton News-Banner, 260-824-0224, 125 N. Johnson St., or online at www.news-banner.com and click on classifieds.

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Lottery Numbers

Thursday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY
Cash 5 — 05-10-27-29-40
Cash4Life — 05-36-38-45-59, Cash Ball: 01
Quick Draw Midday — 01-12-13-17-18-21-23-36-40-44-45-47-48-51-54-62-65-69-77-80, BE: 01
Daily Three-Midday — 03-02-05, SB:09
Daily Three-Evening — 04-01-03, SB: 01
Daily Four-Midday — 00-08-04-04, SB: 09
Daily Four-Evening — 06-02-07-00, SB: 01
Quick Draw Evening — 08-10-14-17-27-28-31-32-34-42-44-45-49-50-56-57-62-65-68-75, BE: 42
Hoosier Lotto — Estimated jackpot (for Saturday): \$10.3 million
MEGA MILLIONS Estimated jackpot (for Friday): \$178 million
POWERBALL Estimated jackpot (for Saturday): \$98 million

Lancaster Township, Wells County Indiana

The Lancaster Township Board will be having a meeting on Monday, April 29, 2024 at 6:00 PM at the Lancaster Township Office located at 915 N Main Street, Bluffton Indiana.

Agenda: Approval of Minutes
Update On Fire Territory
Township Investments
Oakland Cemetery Update
Accounting software Update
Review of SBOA Audit for Lancaster Township
Other business related to Lancaster Township

David Rigney
Lancaster Township Trustee
915 N. Main Street
Bluffton, IN 46714
260-824 9501 Office
260-760-0501 Cell

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Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE 4/18/2024

Liberty Township Trustee's Office
Jack Chase Gentis - Trustee
Email: libertytownship90@gmail.com
Office Address: 2365 S 300 W, Liberty Center, IN 46766
Phone: 260-694-6300

Liberty Township Trustee Advisory Board meeting will take place on Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at 6:00 pm at the Liberty Center Fire Department location at 2600 S 300 W, Liberty Center, IN 46766. Meeting agenda: Policies and Contracts, Quarter Review, Future Meeting Schedule, and other Township matters

Dated this 18th day of April, 2024

Liberty Township Trustee of Wells County, IN
Jack Chase Gentis,
Liberty Township Trustee
nb 4/19
hspaxlp

SUDOKU ANSWER

6/17 *****601801181
1 7 8 6 9 5 2 3
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8 9 6 3 1 7 2 5 4
4 5 7 6 9 8 3 2

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STATE OF INDIANA)
COUNTY OF WELLS) SS:
IN THE WELLS)
CIRCUIT COURT)
CAUSE NUMBER:)
90CO1-2403-JC-000015

IN THE MATTER OF:
ML - DOB 8/30/2022
A CHILD ALLEGED TO BE
A CHILD IN NEED OF SERVICES
AND
CHRISTOPHER BUSHEE
(FATHER)
HALEY ANN BUSHEE (MOTHER)
AND
ANY UNKNOWN ALLEGED
FATHERS

SUMMONS FOR SERVICE
BY PUBLICATION & NOTICE
OF CHILD IN NEED OF
SERVICES HEARING

TO: Any Unknown Alleged Father
Whereabouts unknown
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN
to Any Unknown Alleged Fathers, whose whereabouts are unknown, that the Indiana Department of Child Services has filed its Verified Petition Alleging the child to be in Need of Services, in accordance with I.C. 31-34-9-3, and that an adjudication hearing has been scheduled with the Court.

YOU ARE HEREBY COMMANDED to appear before the Judge of the Wells Circuit Court, 102 Market Street, Bluffton, IN 46714 - 260-824-6485 for a(n) Fact Finding Hearing on 6/6/2024 at 1:30 PM.

At said hearing, the Court will consider the Petition and evidence thereon and will render its decision as to whether the above named minor child is child in need of services and shall enter adjudication accordingly. Your failure to appear after lawful notice will be deemed as your default and waiver to be present at said hearing.

UPON ENTRY OF SAID ADJUDICATION, A DISPOSITIONAL HEARING will be held in which the Court will consider (1) Alternatives for the care, treatment, or rehabilitation for the child; (2) The necessity, nature, and extent of your participation in the program of care, treatment, or rehabilitation for the child; and (3) Your financial responsibility for any services provided for the parent, guardian or custodian of the child including child support.

YOU MUST RESPOND by appearing in person or by an attorney within thirty (30) days after the last publication of this notice, and in the event you fail to do so, an adjudication on said petition, judgment by default may be entered against you, or the court may proceed in your absence, without further notice.

Beth Davis
Clerk
Holly N Smith, 31840-49
Attorney, Indiana Department of Child Services
c/o Wells Co DCS
221 W Market St
Bluffton, IN 46714
Office: 260-824-3530

nb 4/12, 4/19, 4/26
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SUDOKU

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

King Classic Sudoku

Sudoku grid with some numbers filled in:
3 6 4
7 1 8
9 4
3 1 6 9
9 1 6
2 6 5
2 7 1 8
7 5 8 4

Difficulty: ★★ ★ ★

4/19

Public Sale Calendar

BIDDING ENDS APRIL 19 - (Online Only Auction) - The Estate of Dr. Hugh and Rhea Gidewell, 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. The Steffen Group Inc., 260-824-3006, www.steffengrp.com.

APRIL 20 - 10 a.m. - (Live Auction) - Marc and Valerie Hamman, seller. 6530 S. 300 E., Hamilton, IN. Three lots adjacent to Hamilton Lake with 2 car 26'x28' garage. This is the perfect property to build a new home, extra storage and parking. The Steffen Group Inc., 260-824-3006, www.steffengrp.com.

BIDDING ENDS APRIL 20 - (Online Only Auction) - The Estate of Dr. Hugh and Rhea Gidewell, 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. The Steffen Group Inc., 260-824-3006, www.steffengrp.com.

APRIL 20-APRIL 27 - (Online Only Auction) - By order of the secured creditor, seller. Over 400+ designer wedding and bridesmaid dresses, designed by Christina Wu, Morilee, Allure Bridal, Maddison James, Maggie Sottero, and more, all size and styles. Preview: April 24 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 215 E. Market St., Bluffton, IN. The Steffen Group Inc., www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006.

APRIL 21-APRIL 28 - (Online Only Auction) - The estate of Loring and Sandra McCay, seller. Huge antique and primitive auction. Outstanding collection of antique furniture including primitive cupboards, dry sinks, pie safes, large qty. of country primitives, feather light sewing machines, early quilts, 100's of fabric bolts, crocks, vintage Christmas, costume jewelry. Preview: April 18 and April 25 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 102 S. Jefferson St., Ossian. Pat Carter, sale manager, The Steffen Group Inc., www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006.

APRIL 22 - 6 p.m. - Kevin Reinhard, seller. Wells County 4-H Park, 1240 4-H Park Rd., Bluffton. Property: From Bluffton travel 3 miles southwest on Hoosier Highway. Online bidding available. 75+-A offered in 5 tracts or any combination, Wells County, Harrison Township. Buyer will have 2024 farming rights. Productive farmland in great location (southwest of Bluffton). Development potential. Truck farm opportunity. Auction manager Al Pfister, 260-760-8922, Schrader Real Estate and Auction Company, Inc., 800-451-2709, schraderauction.com.

BIDDING STARTS ENDING APRIL 28 - 6 p.m. - Phil Vorhees, owner. 2005 Homiers Farm Pro 2425 4x4 tractor w/ loader & backhoe, Massey Harris 44 Special tractor, 1995 Coachman Catalina 5th wheel camper, several 3 pt attachments, Husqvarna Z248f zero turn mower, yard & garden, hand tools, power tools, muzzleloader pistols .41 cal, household, glassware, furniture, China bedroom suite, WWII video reels, 1960 Roy Smeck steel guitar Gold Edition, more! Preview April 25, 3-5 p.m., 2414 W 1100 S., Geneva. Pick up April 29, 2-6 p.m. Krueckberg Auction & Realty LLC, 260-724-7402, kjauction.com.

APRIL 28-MAY 5 - (Online Only Auction) - Various consignors, sellers. Over 4,000+ older and newer comic books, sports trading cards, vintage toys including Cabbage Patch dolls, vintage toys, 45 records, much more. Preview: April 30 and May 2 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 118 E. Craig St., Ossian. Rod Fetters, sale manager, The Steffen Group, Inc., www.steffengrp.com 260-824-3006.

MAY 12-MAY 19 - (Online Only Auction) - Phyllis Montgomery, Seller. Major auction of fine antiques and collectables. "An Auction of the Year." Extensive cast iron skillet collection, early candy scales, primitives, beerman samples, early rare gum dispenser, De Laval signs, beer signs, firearms, butter churns, large Westmorland glass collection, much more. Preview: May 9 and 16 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 1556 Shadow Run Trail, Bluffton. Steffen Group, www.steffengrp.com, 824-3006, Pat Carter, sale manager.

nb 4/19
hspaxlp

12 jurors have been picked for Donald Trump's hush money trial

NEW YORK (AP) — A jury of 12 people was seated Thursday in former President Donald Trump's history-making hush money trial, propelling the proceedings closer to opening statements and the start of weeks of dramatic testimony.

The court quickly turned to selecting alternate jurors, with the process on track to wrap up by the end of the week. Prosecutors could begin presenting their case early next week.

The jury of Manhattanites includes a sales professional, a software engineer, a security engineer, a teacher, a speech therapist, multiple lawyers, an investment banker and a retired wealth manager.

The first-ever trial of a former American president is unfolding in New York during this year's race for the White House, meaning the presumptive Republican nominee will spend his days in court confronted by salacious and unflattering testimony about his personal life while simultaneously campaigning to reclaim the office he held for four years.

He's made clear his determination to use his legal jeopardy, already a central issue in the race

against Democratic incumbent Joe Biden, to his advantage. After a full day of jury selection, he complained to reporters that he should have been out campaigning but was in court instead for what he said was a "very unfair trial."

"Everybody's outraged by it," he said. "You know the whole world's watching this New York scam."

Jury selection proceeded at a plodding pace earlier Thursday when two jurors were dismissed, one after expressing doubt about her ability to be fair following disclosure of details about her identity and the other over concerns that some of his answers in court may have been inaccurate.

But lawyers who began the day with only five jurors settled on the remaining seven in quick succession, along with one alternate. Judge Juan Merchan has said his goal is to have six alternates.

The process of picking a jury is a critical phase in any criminal trial but especially so when the defendant is a former president and the presumptive Republican nominee. Prospective jurors have been grilled on their social media posts, personal lives and political

views as the lawyers and judge search for any bias that would prevent them from being impartial.

Inside the court, there's broad acknowledgment of the futility in trying to find jurors without knowledge of Trump. A prosecutor this week said lawyers were not looking for people who had been "living under a rock for the past eight years."

To that end, multiple jurors chosen for the panel acknowledged having personal opinions of Trump or his presidency.

One juror, a man who works in investment banking, earlier described himself as "ambivalent" about Trump, adding, "I might not like some of his policies, but there has been some good" for the country.

A woman picked for the jury said she thought Trump seemed "very selfish and self serving," adding, "I don't really appreciate that from any public servant." Defense lawyers were out of peremptory strikes, which would allow them to dismiss a juror without giving a reason.

The trial centers on a \$130,000 payment that Michael Cohen,

Trump's former lawyer and personal fixer, made to porn actor Stormy Daniels to prevent her claims of a sexual encounter with Trump from becoming public in the final days of the 2016 race.

Prosecutors say Trump obscured the true nature of the payments in internal records when his company reimbursed Cohen, who pleaded guilty to federal charges in 2018 and is expected to be a star witness for the prosecution.

Trump has denied having a sexual encounter with Daniels, and his lawyers argue that the payments to Cohen were legitimate legal expenses.

Trump faces 34 felony counts of falsifying business records. He could get up to four years in prison if convicted, though it's not clear that the judge would opt to put him behind bars. Trump would almost certainly appeal any conviction.

Trump faces four criminal cases, but it's not clear that any others will reach trial before the November election. Appeals and legal wrangling have caused delays in the other three cases charging Trump with plotting to overturn the 2020 election results

and with illegally hoarding classified documents.

The jury selection process picked up momentum Tuesday with the selection of seven jurors. But on Thursday, Merchan revealed in court that one of the seven, a cancer nurse, had "conveyed that after sleeping on it overnight she had concerns about her ability to be fair and impartial in this case."

And though jurors' names are being kept confidential, the woman told the judge and the lawyers that she had doubts after she said aspects of her identity had been made public.

"Yesterday alone I had friends, colleagues and family push things to my phone regarding questioning my identity as a juror," she said. "I don't believe at this point that I can be fair and unbiased and let the outside influences not affect my decision making in the courtroom."

A second seated juror was dismissed after prosecutors raised concerns that he may not have been honest in answering a jury selection question by saying that he had never been accused or convicted of a crime.

House toils to advance Ukraine, Israel aid; threats to oust speaker grow

WASHINGTON (AP) — House congressional leaders were toiling Thursday on a delicate, bipartisan push toward weekend votes to approve a \$95 billion package of foreign aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, as well as several other national security policies at a critical moment at home and abroad.

Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson this week set in motion a plan to advance the package, which has been held up since October by GOP lawmakers resistant to approving more funding for Ukraine's fight against Russia. As the Republican speaker faced an outright rebellion from his right flank and growing threats for his ouster, it became clear that House Democrat Leader Hakeem Jeffries would have to lend help to Johnson every step of the way.

"This is a very important message we are going to send to the world this week, and I'm anxious to get it done," Johnson said earlier Wednesday announcing his strategy.

The growing momentum for a bipartisanship dynamic, a rarity in the deeply

divided Congress, brought rare scenes of Republicans and Democrats working together to assert U.S. standing on the global stage and help American allies. But it also sent Johnson's House Republican majority into fresh rounds of chaos.

Johnson's Republican leadership team, seizing on the opportunity to outflank hardline conservatives with Democratic support, raised the idea of quickly changing the procedural rules to make it harder to oust the speaker from office.

But ultra-conservatives reacted with fury, angrily confronting Johnson on the House floor in a tense scene on Thursday morning. Several suggested they would join the effort to oust Johnson if the rule was changed. By the afternoon, Johnson backed away from the idea.

"We will continue to govern under the existing rules," the speaker said on the social platform X.

Meanwhile, a rare image of bipartisan statesmanship was on display as the procedural Rules committee began debate launching the steps needed to push the foreign aid package forward toward weekend voting.

The Republican chairmen of the powerful Appropriations and Foreign Affairs committees alongside their top Democratic counterparts spoke in evocative language, some drawing on World War II history, to make the case for ensuring the U.S. stand with its allies against aggressors.

Chairman Michael McCaul of the Foreign Affairs Committee cast this as a "pivotal" time in world history, comparing the current images of people fleeing the conflict in Europe to the situation in 1939 as Hitler's Germany rose to power.

"Time is not on our side," he told the panel.

The top Democrat on the Foreign Affairs Committee, Rep. Greg Meeks of New York, shared McCaul's urgency: "The camera of history is rolling."

Johnson is trying to advance a complex plan to hold individual votes this weekend on the funds for Ukraine, Israel and allies in the Asia-Pacific, then stitch the package back together.

The package would also include legislation that allows the U.S. to seize frozen Russian central bank assets to rebuild Ukraine;

impose sanctions on Iran, Russia, China and criminal organizations that traffic fentanyl; and potentially ban the video app TikTok if its

China-based owner doesn't sell its stake within a year.

President Joe Biden is emphatically pushing Congress to pass the legislation

to buttress what has been a cornerstone of his foreign policy — halting Russian President Vladimir Putin's advance in Europe.

Online Directory

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

Genesis Pest Services genesispestservices.com	MR. KOOL Heating and Cooling mrkoolheatingandair.com	DAZEY'S SUPPLY dazeys.com/bluffton-in
INDIANA FARM BUREAU INSURANCE Bluffton Office (260) 824-2234 infarmbureau.com	JC'S GARAGE DOOR SALES & SERVICE jcsgaragedoor.com	Daniel's JEWELERS daniels-jewelers.net
ABOVE & BEYOND Vehicle Reconditioning abovebeyondrecon.com	WELLS COUNTY 4-H GROWS HERE extension.purdue.edu/wells	3 RIVERS 3riversfcu.org
Myers FUNERAL HOMES myersfuneralhomes.com	KELLY'S COLLISION CENTER, INC. kellysautocollision.com	THEGMCFAMILY.COM thegmcfamily.com
RiverStone DENTAL riverstonedental.net	Bluffton Tire blufftontire.com	MOSER & SON Heating & Air Conditioning moserandsonheatingandair.com
INNOVATIVE CONCEPTS AUDIO VIDEO SECURITY NETWORKING icav.us	HIDAY AUTOMOTIVE GROUP hidaymotors.com	Edward Jones EdwardJones.com
Erin Daugherty 260.827.0527 MyBlufftonSFAgent.com	State Farm myblufftonsfagent.com	Lengerich MEATS lengerichmeats.com
Jerry Flack & Associates jerryflackinsuranceandinvestments.com	La Fontaine Center A RHF Community lafontainecenter.org	HOMECOURT HOME CARE homecourthomecare.com
Still Waters FAMILY DENTISTRY stillwatersfamilydentistry.com	bi-countyservices.com bi-countyservices.com	Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home thomarich.com
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