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SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2024

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Spring on the Rivergreenway

The Rivergreenway reopened on River Road in time for bike riders and birds alike to enjoy the trail. (Photos by Sydney Kent)

Paddlefish Solar offers electricity credit

By HOLLY GASKILL

Paddlefish Solar has announced plans to credit a portion of electrical bills for neighbors of its prospective solar development.

Jesse Laniak, project manager, said 49 properties directly adjacent to the development were offered \$750 annually toward their electricity bills for the first 15 years of the project life. The development reportedly has leases for over 3,000 acres in Wells County.

According to a letter sent to residents, this credit would begin 30 days after the company begins construction. The credit will be pro-rated quarterly to utility bills, and unused credit will roll over.

Laniak said the company is partnering with an existing non-

profit to manage this offer. Should all properties participate, this would be over \$550,000 in total. He stated that the nonprofit does not want to be named publicly at this time, but provides similar services nationwide.

Residents were asked to opt in by June 1 to receive this benefit.

The company is currently awaiting a ruling from the Wells County Commissioners, who have until June 6 to approve a zoning request from Paddlefish. Should the zoning be approved, they will then be required to submit a development proposal. The company hopes to break ground on the development in 2026-27, their website states.

holly@news-banner.com

Governor Holcomb talks final months

By WHITNEY DOWNARD
Indiana Capital Chronicle

In a virtual press call from Mexico City Thursday, Gov. Eric Holcomb talked economic development in the final months of his administration and reacted to reports of an Indiana National Guard member involved in a border shooting on Sunday.

Holcomb is in Mexico on an economic development trip after visiting Brazil earlier in the week in his first trip to the countries as governor. Just over two dozen Brazilian and Mexican companies have a presence in Indiana but Holcomb hinted there could be more to come.

"... we've made some progress on some projects that we've been working on while we were at home but we've made more progress here. Details yet to be shared but I'm growing in confidence that they will be realized. And we have some new prospects and some new possibilities," Holcomb shared, summarizing the trip. "Obviously this trip was centered on agriculture and agbioscience

... over 1,000 international companies are growing roots in the state of Indiana. We want to continue to watch that number grow."

As to the guard shooting, he said "This incident shows just how dangerous the mission can be. It shows, or highlights, that there are criminals attempting to illegally enter our country. The investigation is still ongoing but they're willing to murder in doing so," Holcomb continued. "I have full faith in our military justice system and process to investigate and get all the details in the case nailed down."

The trip and Holcomb's future

Even with roughly 270 days left in his term, he said that discussions with stakeholders haven't changed. But he also acknowledged there was work to be done by his eventual successor.

"Folks that I'm sitting across the table with — knowing that I have that 6,480 hours left — they want to make sure that the trajectory is moving in the right direction and it's going to continue. So

(Continued on Page 2)

GOP gubernatorial hopefuls talk Indiana's dormant death penalty

By NIKI KELLY

Indiana Capital Chronicle

Indiana's death penalty law exists in name only. What would Indiana's GOP candidates for governor do differently?

In recent years some public defenders have suggested it's time to repeal the law, which hasn't been used to execute someone since 2009. That's because Indiana — along with other states — has struggled to obtain the drugs necessary to carry out a lethal injection.

Alabama recently carried out the nation's first execution by nitrogen hypoxia. An AP reporter who viewed the execution described Kenneth Smith thrashing and gasping as prison officials administered the gas. Ohio is con-

sidering adding the new method to its law.

None of the six candidates immediately backed changing methods. They spoke mostly in generalities.

"I don't think it's time to get rid of the death penalty. I believe in it. I support it in the sense that there are certain levels of crime in our code that they require, they call for the death penalty. I think it's necessary in that sense," said Curtis Hill, a former state attorney general.

But he said it has become "somewhat irrelevant" because procedural issues cause cases to linger too long.

"That's a pretty good incentive, if you will, for staying away from major crimes of that nature. If you

have a crime today and it takes 20 years to carry out the sentence — it definitely doesn't become as important in our current justice system as it would have been had the sentence been carried out more quickly," Hill said.

Indiana has eight men on Death Row and at least four of them have exhausted all their appeals. One man has been waiting 31 years. But the Indiana Department of Correction doesn't have the three drugs it would use for the lethal injection cocktail: methohexital, pancuronium bromide and potassium chloride.

There also are fewer death penalty cases making it through the system, partly due to cost. Four death penalty cases statewide are

(Continued on Page 2)

Ukraine, Israel aid advances in House vote as Democrats help Republicans

By STEPHEN GROVES,
LISA MASCARO
and KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With rare bipartisan momentum, the House pushed ahead Friday on a foreign aid package of \$95 billion for Ukraine, Israel, Taiwan and humanitarian support as a robust coalition of lawmakers helped it clear a procedural hurdle to reach final votes this weekend. Friday's vote produced a seldom-seen outcome in the typically hyper-partisan House, with Democrats

helping Republican Speaker Mike Johnson's plan advance overwhelmingly 316-94. Final House approval could come this weekend, when the package would be sent to the Senate.

It was a victory for the strategy Johnson set in motion this week after he agonized for two months over the legislation. Still, Johnson has had to spend the past 24 hours making the rounds on conservative media working to salvage support for the wartime funding, particularly for Ukraine as it faces a critical moment battling Russia, but

also for his own job as the effort to remove him as speaker grew.

"Ukrainians desperately need lethal aid right now. ... We cannot allow Vladimir Putin to roll through another country and take it," Johnson told the conservative host of The Mark Levin Show about the Russian president's invasion of Ukraine. "These are very serious matters with global implications."

Johnson said after the vote that while it wasn't "perfect legislation," it was the "best possible

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Israel, Iran play down apparent Israeli strike

By JOSEF FEDERMAN
and JON GAMBRELL
Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel and Iran on Friday both played down an apparent Israeli airstrike near a major air base and nuclear site in central Iran, signaling the two bitter enemies are ready to prevent their latest eruption of violence from escalating into a full-blown regional war.

But the indecisive outcome of weeks of tensions — which included an alleged Israeli strike that killed two Iranian generals, an unprecedented Iranian missile barrage on Israel and the apparent Israeli strike early Friday in the heart of Iran — did little to resolve the deeper grievances between the foes and left the door open to further fighting.

"It appears we're closer than ever to a broad regional war, despite the fact that the international community will most likely

make a great effort to de-escalate tensions," wrote Amos Harel, the military-affairs commentator for the Israeli daily Haaretz.

Israel has long considered Iran to be its greatest enemy — citing the Islamic Republic's calls for Israel's destruction, its controversial nuclear program and its support for hostile proxies across the Middle East.

These tensions have risen since Hamas and Islamic Jihad, Iranian-backed Palestinian groups, attacked Israel on Oct. 7, sparking a devastating Israeli offensive in Gaza that has continued for more than six months. Hezbollah, an Iranian-backed proxy in Lebanon, immediately began striking Israeli targets, opening up tit-for-tat fighting along a second front, while Iranian-backed militias in Iraq, Syria and Yemen have also fired missiles and drones at Israel throughout the war.

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Outside



Sunny and bright today with wind gusts, cloudy tonight

Today	Sunday	Monday
High 50	High 56	High 62
Low 35	Low 36	Low 46

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SATURDAY
April 20, 2024

PADDLEFISH
solar project

Susan Popper - Local Representative
201 E. Market St., Suite No. 3
Bluffton, IN 46714
Office Hours: By appointment only

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

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OBITUARIES

Mona L. Brown, 73

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

Mona was born in Dunkirk on Jan. 6, 1951, to Earl E. and Flora W. (Geiger) Adkins, both parents preceded her in death. She married Billy E. Brown in Tennessee on March 24, 2006, he survives in Bluffton.

She was a graduate of Dunkirk High School class of 1969. Mona worked for Franklin Electric in Bluffton for 24 years, retiring in 2012. She enjoyed camping, spending time with her children and grandchildren, working with her flowers around her home and sharing her strong faith in God.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by her four sons, Paul (Dana) Shoemaker of Greenwood, Craig (Cara) Shoemaker of Russiaville, Ind., Matt (Ashlee) Shoemaker of Bluffton and Josh (Jessica) Shoemaker of St. Louis, Mo.; thirteen grandchildren; a brother, Gerald Adkins of California; and a niece, Sherri Zook of Bluffton.



Mona was preceded in death by her parents; a brother, Richard Adkins; and a sister, Elaine Boyle.

Visitation will be Wednesday, April 24, 2024, from 12:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m., at Goodwin - Cale & Harnish Memorial Chapel in Bluffton, followed immediately by a funeral service at 3:00 p.m. Burial will follow at Elm Grove Cemetery in Bluffton.

Memorials can be made to Heart to Heart Hospice in Ft. Wayne, IN. Online condolences can be made to www.goodwincaleharnish.com.

Tonya S. Buzzard, 73

Tonya S. Buzzard, 73, of Warren, passed away Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at her home in Warren.

Tonya was born March 14, 1951, in Huntington, to William Otto and Edna Irene (Wall) Swain. She married Gary Buzzard on Aug. 23, 1969.

Tonya was preceded in death by her parents, Bill and Edna Swain; son, William Paul Buzzard; brother, Paul Swain; sister, Vickie Bickel; and beloved dog, Betsy.

Loving survivors include her husband, Gary Buzzard; daughter, Taya (Terry) Buzzard Holmes; son, Andy (Angie) Buzzard; eight grandchildren; siblings, Trudy K. Swain, Cindy (Bob) Dillahay and Cindy

Carter; sister-in-law, Vickie Swain; many nieces and nephews; and her loving dog, Tippy.

Friends and family may gather to share and remember at the First Baptist Church of Warren, located at 727 N Wayne St. Warren, IN 46792 on Sunday, April 21, 2024 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. and again on Monday, April 22, from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. A celebration of life service will be held on Monday at 10:30 a.m. with Pastor Rusty Strickler officiating. Burial will follow at Gardens of Memory in Marion.

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

Bluffton Parks & Rec News & Notes



By Brandy Fiechter

Destination Recreation

This morning at 9 a.m. is our **Earth Day 5K**. Check-in and race start is at the Bluffton City Gym (128 E Market St.). Join us for a race, walk, or jog to celebrate Earth Day. We are minimizing our footprint on this event as we reduce waste, reuse old race bibs, and recycle past event shirts; even our awards are live plants and trees.

The **City-Wide Garage Sale** weekend is fast approaching. This event is May 2-4, typically from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The list of participants will be advertised in the newspaper and on the city's website at www.blufftonindiana.net. If you would like to register your sale, drop off an ad of 20 words or less to the mayor's office in City Hall no later than April 25 to be included on the printed list or fill it out online at https://blufftonindiana.net/city-wide-garage-sale. If you plan to shop that weekend, you can pick up the paper sales listing at City Hall. Remember, sale signs are not permitted in the parks, and hanging signs on utility poles is illegal and subject to fines.

It's time to register for the annual **Stuff and Fluff** event. Bring that special child in your life for a memorable day they will never forget. Watch their eyes light up as the two of you make an adorable stuffed animal to take home. This event is held June 24, from 10-10:30 a.m., at the Roush Park Pavilion. The cost to participate is only \$15 per child (pay day of the event, exact change preferred) and is open to both boys and girls. Call 824-6069 or email events@blufftonindiana.gov to register and pick out your animal (please check to see if the animal that you would like is still available when registering) by May 31 or until supplies last.

Calling all Volunteers! The Bluffton Parks Department needs volunteers to bring their animals (kittens, reptiles, pigs, cows, puppies, and any animals that are

good around kids) to our **Animal Explorers** event. Animal Explorers is a fun drop-in event for all ages to see animals up close and even pet a few. The event is Tuesday, June 18, from 9-9:30 a.m. at Roush Park (925 W Silver). We are looking for a variety of pets for the children to see and interact with. If you have any kid-friendly pets you would be willing to bring to our event, contact the Bluffton Parks Department at events@blufftonindiana.gov or call 824-6069.

Registration for Summer Swim lessons is next Saturday, April 27, in the foyer of City Hall (128 E Market) from 9-11 a.m.

Early swim lessons set a positive foundation for a lifetime of participation and enjoyment in and under the water. Swim lessons for children who have just finished grades K-11 are held Monday through Friday, June 3-14 at either 10-10:50 a.m. or 11-11:50 a.m. OR June 24-July 5 at 11-11:50 a.m. at the Wells Community Pool. Diving lessons are only offered at the June 24-July 5 class for students who have passed all the swim levels. The cost is \$20, due at registration.

Pee Wee Swim Lessons for ages 4 through pre-K will run M-W-F the week of June 17. Swim time is from 11-11:45 a.m.; a parent must get in the water with each child. The cost is only \$6 per child.

NEW! Tot Swim lessons for ages 2-3 will be M-W-F the week of June 17 from 10-10:45 a.m. An adult must get in the water with each child.

If your child would benefit from one-on-one lessons, call the Wells Community pool starting May 25 to schedule private lessons at 824-1550. Dates and times vary according to the rental calendar. Lessons cost \$25 per half hour, and openings fill up fast!

Have a great week!



Cleaning up the park

The Southern Wells girls and boys track teams worked at the 4-H Park cleaning up leaves, grass clippings and pulling weeds Friday night. (Photo provided)

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

County:

Thursday, 3:51 a.m., U.S. 224 and North 600 East, Craigville. Driver cited for speeding 88 in a 55 mph zone.

Thursday, 5:26 a.m., North 100 East and East 800 North, Uniondale. Driver cited speeding for speeding 72 in a 45 mph zone.

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

Thursday, 7:57 p.m., East 350 South and South 600

East, Bluffton. Caller reported two horses running loose in a field.

Thursday, 10:11 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Zachary Osborn at the jail.

Thursday, 11:10 p.m., South 300 West and West 1000 South, Keystone. Caller reported she lost her service dog in training.

Friday, 12:00 a.m., North 300 West and West 200 North, Bluffton. Car vs. deer.

Friday, 9:24 a.m., 5900 North Miller Street, Union-

dale. Report of electrical wires cut.

Ossian: Thursday, 7:27 a.m., U.S. 224 and North 100 East, Ossian. Driver cited for speeding.

Thursday, 5:21 p.m., 5100 North 100 East Ossian. Caller reported a white truck parked in his lot during the night.

ARRESTS Zachary Andrew Osborn, 32, Ossian; contempt of court - civil. Bond not set.

Local Roundup

Bluffton Board of Works to meet Tuesday afternoon

The Bluffton Board of Public Works and Safety will meet at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 23, in the meeting room on the first floor of City Hall, 128 E. Market St.

- Topics on the agenda include:
- Continued discussion of the sidewalk program.
 - CRP application from Bluffton NOW!
 - Nuisance animal discussion.
 - A parking request.
 - A personnel request from Derrick Deiningner.

Norwell school board will meet Tuesday evening

The board of the Norwell Community Schools will meet at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 23, at Norwell Middle School, 1100E. U.S. 224 in Ossian, for a tour of the construction site.

The board's regular meeting will follow at 5:30 p.m. in the high school.

- Items on the agenda include:
- Personnel and financial matters.
 - A superintendent's report of the NMS

project and football and baseball facility improvements.

- Recommendation to approve easement and right-of-way.

Recommendation to approve 2024-25 support staff benefits manual.

The regular meeting will be directly followed by a strategic planning meeting. This meeting is also open to the public.

Wells County BZA will meet Tuesday evening

The Wells County Board of Zoning Appeals will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 23, in Room 214 on the ground floor of the Wells Carnegie Government Annex, 223 W. Washington St. in Bluffton.

- Topics on the agenda will include:
- A request from Solid Rock Rentals to reduce the setback from 20 ft. to 14.5 ft. on the corner of South and Union streets in Bluffton. The property is zoning R-3.
 - A request from Dustin and Melissa Kelly to increase the size allowance for an accessory structure from 1,500 sq. ft. to 2,400 sq. ft. at 538 W Washington St. in Bluffton. The property is zoned R-2.

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.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Dan's Fish Dine-In or Carry-Out

Date: Saturday, April 27, 2024
Time: 4:30 to 7:00 pm
Place: Lighted Gardens - 10794 N St. Rd. 1, Ossian, IN
Dine-In Menu: Fish, Cheesy Potatoes, Green Beans, Applesauce, Roll, Dessert and Drink
Carry-Out Available
Tickets: Adult, \$14.00 pre-sale thru April 21st / \$15.00 at the door
Children ages 5 to 10, Dine-In only, \$7.00 pre-sale / \$8.00 at the door
Children age 4 and under are free
Contact: Cheryl Louison 260-414-5526 / clouison@gmail.com
 Pat Meyer 260-227-0400 / spmeyer82@gmail.com

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Yahoo. Another tax article (sarcasm alert)

After writing another lengthy paean (sarcasm alert) a couple weeks ago about property taxes, I planned on putting that horse to bed for a while and getting back to a friendlier version of retirement. However, three things popped up which I cannot let pass ...

Saturday's Sub



Mark Miller

- The Tax Foundation, a noteworthy think tank in Washington D.C. focused on all things taxes, say they are non-partisan, which I think they are. But they definitely tend to encourage and focus on fiscal responsibility, which unfortunately is not non-partisan. But after typing that, I am not encouraged about that perspective's continued viability at the national level. But I digress.

I signed up for a weekly email from them a while back. The one that showed up two weeks ago as I was formulating that last lengthy discourse contained 43 charts of updated data: "Facts and Figures 2024: How Does Your State Compare?" Of course, I had to dig into it. How does Indiana compare nationally? And just as important, how do we compare to our neighbors?

If you'd like to see the 43 charts, send me an email and I'll send you the link. Meanwhile, a few highlights:

- Total State and Local Tax Burden as a Percent of Income. New York leads this category at 15.9%. Michigan has a slightly lower number than Indiana (8.6%), Ohio and Illinois are significantly higher — 10.0% and 12.9% respectively. Indiana's 9.3% is the 12th lowest in the country.

- State Business Tax Climate. This ranking has been referenced in earlier writings here. Indiana is very competitive, providing the 10th best tax climate for business. But we used to be 9th, which was cited as a concern during the November meeting of the State and Local Tax Review task force that our local State Sen. Travis Holdman is chairing. Michigan is nipping at our heels at 11th place. Ohio and Illinois are way down the list in 36th and 38th place.

In the property tax sub-category of this ranking, Indiana's property tax climate for business is third best in the country. Which is good except somebody has to pay that freight. Guess who?

- An interesting one: State Gas Taxes (per gallon). No surprise that California leads this race at \$0.68 per gallon. Illinois is No. 2 at \$0.665; Indiana has the 5th-highest gas tax in the country, \$0.517. If you drive much into Ohio, you have surely noticed they almost always have lower prices. They should. Their gas tax per gallon is \$0.385 yet their roads seem at least as nice as ours. Alaska is the lowest at just under 9 cents per gallon, but then they don't have very many roads.

- One more: Property Taxes as a Percent of Owner-Occupied Housing Value. Our research has revealed that despite the increases homeowners have seen in Wells County the last several years, we are doing better in this statistic than our neighboring counties. How does the state rate? The state average of 0.71% (which I find surprising and which also means we are a bit higher than that state average) is the 30th highest in the country, just a few notches below the national average of 0.91%. Illinois is 2nd highest at 1.95%; Ohio and Michigan are well above the Indiana number. New Jersey gets the prize for first at 2.08% while the lowest is somewhat of a surprise. Hawaii property taxes are just 0.26% of assessed values, but — a big but — the value of land and homes there is astronomical.

- A couple of the Indiana gubernatorial candidates are now mentioning property taxes in their TV commercials. They say they can fix it. Just like, I am certain, other candidates have vowed to end government waste.

One is proposing to freeze property taxes for seniors. Sounds good, but it would be a lawsuit waiting to happen. The basic tenet of our property tax system — now enshrined in the state constitution — is that it is market-driven and equitable, the result of a lawsuit about 20 years ago that brought about the assessment process which recognizes that in our current market, homes are selling a lot with higher prices while business real estate is not, resulting in stable assessments.

It is all, of course, much more complicated than the candidate purports. But it sounds good on TV. And it strikes me as not unlike President Biden's efforts to forgive student loan debt in order to buy some votes.

- And then the latest episode of the aforementioned State and Local Tax Review task force was streamed live from Room 130 of the Indiana Statehouse Wednesday morning. While the interim committee was originally created to look at perhaps eliminating the state income tax, the entire focus of this meeting was on property taxes. It is encouraging to observe that these people are taking this seriously.

"Where there is simplicity, there is accountability," task force member Rep. Jack Jordan, (R-Nappanee) said. "Where there is complexity, there is no accountability."

But they also recognize the obstacles. "We're not going to solve this in a single session," House Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Jeff Thompson (R-Danville) told the group. "But if we're not making an effort fix this, we're not doing our job."

There were other new insights from the session, enough for another paean (sarcasm alert) for another day.

miller@news-banner.com

Today in History

By The Associated Press
Today is Saturday, April 20, the 111th day of 2024. There are 255 days left in the year.

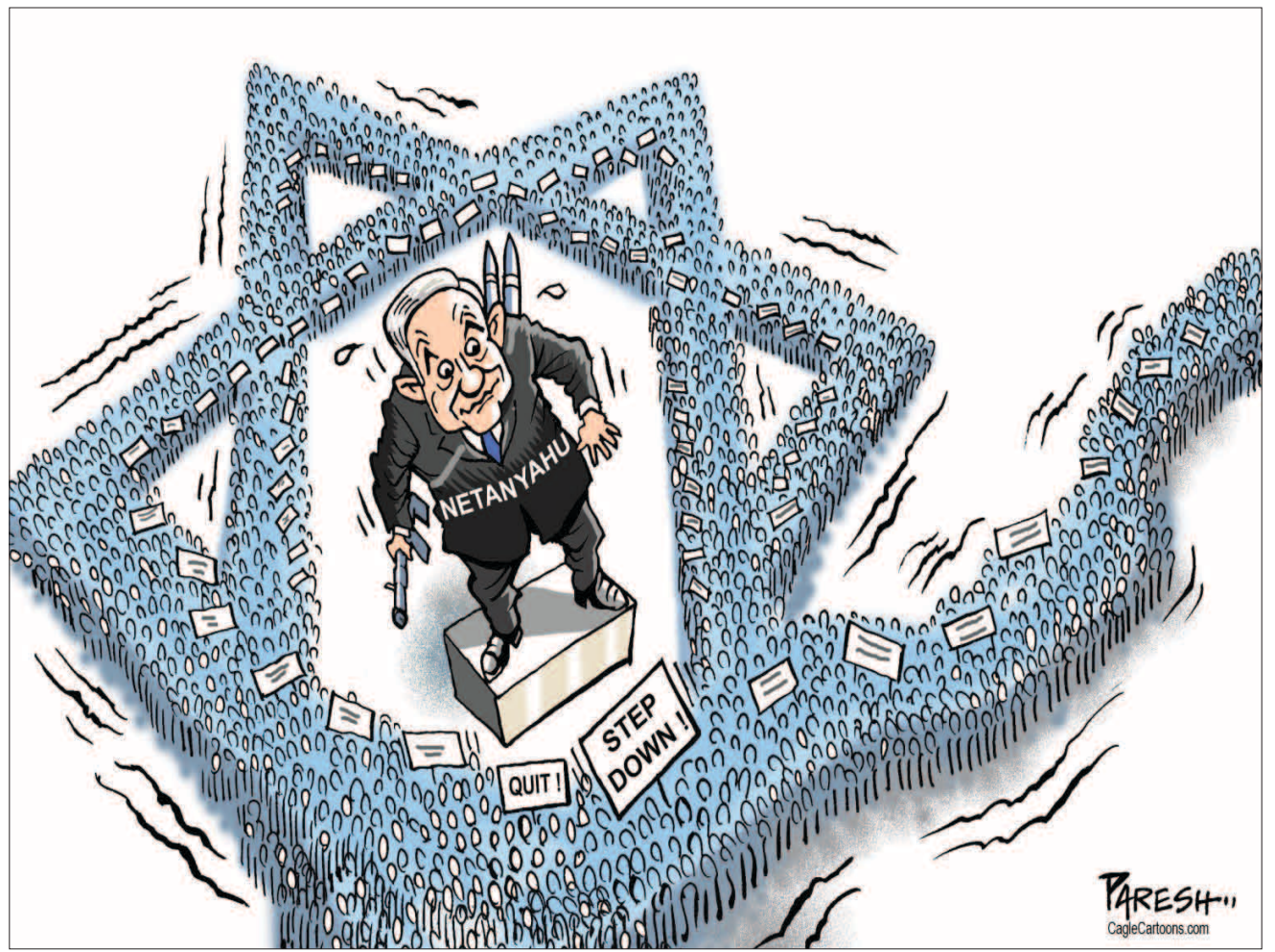
Today's Highlight in History: On April 20, 1999, the Columbine High School massacre took place in Colorado as two students shot and killed 12 classmates and one teacher before taking their own lives.

On this date:
In 1812, the fourth vice president of the United

States, George Clinton, died in Washington at age 72, becoming the first vice president to die while in office.

In 1861, Col. Robert E. Lee resigned his commission in the United States Army. (Lee went on to command the Army of Northern Virginia in the Civil War, and eventually became general-in-chief of the Confederate forces.)

In 1912, Boston's Fenway Park hosted its first professional baseball game.



The anti-Israel delusion

Surely, you've heard of the brutal conflict that has displaced millions of people and killed more than 14,000, while aid convoys have trouble getting where they need to go?

No, the Sudanese civil war hasn't been on your radar screen?

OK, but how about the crisis that has led to more than half the population of a country needing humanitarian assistance amid constant turmoil and war?

You haven't heard much about the conflict in Yemen lately, either?

Perhaps, then, the war that has forced large numbers of people to flee the fighting multiple times, while as much as a quarter of the population is facing hunger or illness?

Actually, the fight between the military and armed opposition groups in Myanmar also isn't top of mind?

These are terrible situations that garner very little or almost no attention, in contrast to the overwhelming level of focus on Israel's war in Gaza, almost all of it through a hostile lens.

This is nothing new. The Jewish state has long been singled out for opprobrium and held to a standard different than that of other societies. Some of this is justified. As an advanced Western-style democracy and ally of the United States, Israel should be better than whatever armed faction is preying on people in some Third World country -- and, indeed, Israel is better.

International organizations, the media and left-wing activists create exactly the opposite impression, though. Given the amount of time and energy devoted to condemning Israel, one would be forgiven for thinking that the world would be a much more peaceful, just place if only it weren't for the existence of a Jewish state.

There are important distinctions between the war in Gaza and the other conflicts mentioned above. Israel isn't staging a coup or fighting a civil war. It was perfectly content -- indeed, in retrospect, much too content -- to live with a Gaza controlled by Hamas, until it was subjected to a heinous attack that no other society today or in any other period in history would tolerate.

Israel also fights differently. It seeks to honor the rules of war while operating in a dense urban environment against a merciless enemy that wants as many civilians to be killed as possible. In other conflicts around the world, there are no rules. In Myanmar, people aren't just fleeing the fighting, but "executions and killings, forced recruitment, torture, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances and persecution," according to the European Union.

Nonetheless, it is Israel that is accused of committing genocide. The people braying about Israel's alleged crimes against humanity apparently never spare a thought for the Uyghurs, subject to a massive ongoing campaign of repression by the Chinese government; or the Rohingya people, viciously targeted by the government of Myanmar; or the Baha'i in Iran, the Hazaras in Afghanistan or the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh.

There are all sorts of candidates for a list of the most oppressive countries in the world, from North Korea to Equatorial Guinea, from Turkmenistan to Venezuela, from Russia to China. Yet, practically all we hear about is Israel.

The old Soviet Union was long at the forefront of propagandizing against Israel, a cause readily taken up by the so-called non-aligned countries and the left around the world. This tendency has been rife with antisemitism and hypocrisy, exemplified back in the 1970s by the brutal tinpot dictator of Uganda, Idi Amin, denouncing Israel at the United Nations.

Since then, the names and the players have changed, but the tendency -- to single out Israel for special obloquy and lie about and obsess over the world's only Jewish state -- has remained the same.

A common lament in commentary about other conflicts is that they aren't getting enough attention. An official with the World Food Programme lamented recently, "The people of Sudan have been forgotten." The EU noted, "In a world of growing humanitarian emergencies and fleeting media attention, Myanmar is getting ignored."

There's a reason for that.

Rich Lowry is on Twitter @RichLowry



Rich Lowry

Growing Latino support for border wall, strict enforcement

A new poll by Axios and Noticias Telemundo finds that 42% of Latino Americans support building a wall or fence along the entire U.S.-Mexico border. When pollsters asked the same question in December 2021, the number was 30%. That's a significant increase as the border crisis created by President Joe Biden's policies worsens.



Byron York

It's also a more severe action than virtually anyone is now proposing. The border is about 2,000 miles long, but some of that is physically impassable and does not need a wall. Former President Donald Trump proposed building a wall on about 1,000 miles. That was enough for many Democrats to unite in hysterical opposition. Now, the Latino voters polled say they would like to see a wall or fence along the entire 2,000-mile border.

The new poll also finds that 64% of those surveyed support "giving the president the authority to shut U.S. borders if there are too many migrants trying to enter the country." And 38% of those surveyed support "sending all undocumented immigrants in the U.S. back to their country of origin." In 2021, that number was 28%.

In all, the poll marks a real shift in the direction of stricter border enforcement. It's a significant change. One explanation for the

change is that the context in which Latino voters consider the question has changed, too. At various times in the past, the majority of illegal border crossers came from Mexico or Central America, especially the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Now, with Biden's virtually open border, the situation is much different. People are coming from all over the world, in large numbers, to cross illegally into the United States.

On Feb. 22, Fox News' Bill Melugin posted on X, "Internal [Border Patrol] data we've obtained reveals more Chinese nationals have crossed illegally into Border Patrol's San Diego sector in recent months than Mexican nationals." Melugin published the top 10 nationalities apprehended in the San Diego sector since Oct. 1, 2023. Four of them were not from Mexico, Central America or South America — China, Turkey, Guinea and India. In the period Melugin listed, 28,000 people from Colombia crossed illegally into the United States, while 21,000 came from China, 6,100 from Turkey, 5,000 from Guinea and 5,000 from India.

Given that, if the point of polling Latino voters is to gauge their views on people coming illegally to the

United States from Latin American countries — that's not the way things work today. These days, illegal crossers are entering the U.S. from everywhere. Perhaps that is contributing to the changing views of Latino Americans toward border security.

In any event, Latino Americans are an important voting bloc, and in the 2024 presidential election, it appears they are moving more toward Trump than Biden.

In 2016, Hillary Clinton beat Trump among Hispanic voters by a whopping 38 points, 66% to 28%. In the 2020 election, Biden beat Trump among that group by 21 points, 59% to 38%. Now, a New York Times-Siena poll in March found Trump leading Biden by 6 points, 46% to 40%. That's a huge change in eight years.

Of course, the first two examples are actual election results, while at this point in the 2024 race we're relying on polls that might not be accurate and, in any event, might change before the election. But there have been many, many surveys suggesting movement of Latino voters away from Biden and toward Trump.

Shifting Latino views on border security are part of that, but remember that the top issue for Latino voters, as it is for everyone else, is the economy and inflation. Put it all together, and it appears falling Latino support will be a major problem for Biden's reelection effort.

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Smile!

Dear Annie: I notice many readers have problems and anxieties. Maybe something my mother taught me will help them.

She lost two husbands to illness and had a chronic illness herself. We almost lost my brother on the same day my dad died. She raised three boys in a small town taking any job available. Through all these hard times, she always found something to make us laugh. People loved her laugh and smiling face. There is a fine line between laughing and crying, of course. I know she crossed it many times, but few knew.

I was married for 62 years. Our disagreements were short-lived because one of us would make the other laugh. There is a side benefit to this type of lifestyle. When she died at age 82, neither of us had any wrinkles.

In business, I printed small yellow cards with the word SMILE and gave them away. Many people told me they put it on their bathroom mirror and always started their day with a smile.

Whatever your problem is today you won't remember it in six months. Why ruin a beautiful day feeling miserable. There are other things to think about. If life deals you a hard blow, and you don't know what to do, remember this.

You don't drown by falling in the water; you drown by staying there. — Larry T.

Dear Larry: Thank you for the big smile and big perspective. I'm grateful to people such as yourself, who find little ways to make the world a brighter place.

Dear Annie: About one year ago, I ended my very first relationship. We were together for about six months. He was a horrible boyfriend, but that was only the beginning of it. He sexually violated me the entire time we were together. He didn't listen to a single thing I asked him to either do or not do. He would kiss me even when I told him I didn't want to kiss him, sit close by me when I told him I wasn't comfortable with it, and touch my legs no matter

what I did. When it was happening, I pinned the blame on myself. I thought I was just scared to do all of this stuff because I'd never done it before. But now I realize it wasn't my fault. I haven't seen or talked to him since I broke up with him. But since then, I've been tortured by the thought of him. Everything reminds me of him and makes me feel anxious. I told myself things would get better and in a month I'd be back to normal. But it's been a year and I still feel tortured remembering what happened. Every night, I'm scared to fall asleep because my dreams are filled with him sexually abusing me. What do I do? — Desperate

Dear Desperate: It is horrendous that your ex-boyfriend treated you so poorly. Intimate relationships are premised on the idea of feeling safe enough around one another to be vulnerable. He turned that on its head. I'm sorry this happened. But I promise you won't feel this way forever. With the help of the right people, you can process what happened, seek justice and begin to experience life again. Call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-4673 or visit rainn.org to connect with trained specialists who can help you identify the next steps in the path toward healing.

"How Can I Forgive My Cheating Partner?" is out now! Annie Lane's second anthology — featuring favorite columns on marriage, infidelity, communication and reconciliation — is available as a paperback and e-book. Visit <http://www.creatorspublishing.com> for more information. Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com. © 2024 CREATORS.COM

Dear Annie

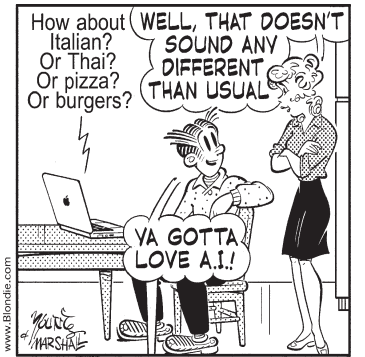
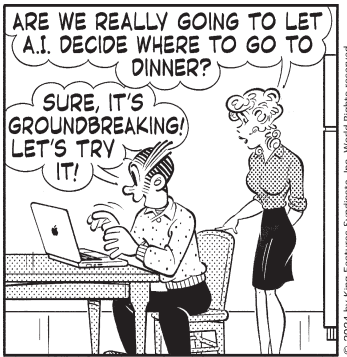


by Annie Lane

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By Bil Keane



The LOCKHORNS



My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



Young children ask the most amazing questions about God

Question: Children amaze me with their questions. I protect my children from listening and watching the wrong things, so I make sure they are looking at wholesome books and watching good programs carefully selected to instill in them the right values. When they ask questions, is it wise to try and find a Bible verse for them to understand, or should I wait until they have a more mature understanding of spiritual things? — I.M.

A: Young children can ask the most amazing questions about God and Heaven! And when they do, we shouldn't ignore them or act like their questions aren't important — because they are.

When children ask

about God, we must do our best to answer simply and honestly in terms they can understand. Of course, they don't need deep and complicated answers, but just because they can't understand everything about God doesn't mean they can't understand something about Him. We may not understand electricity, but it doesn't mean we can't turn on a light switch.

Adults need to ask God for patience also, because children have a way of asking questions until we run out of answers! We should be thankful for their interest in spiritual things and do all we can to encourage them, making it fun and challenging to choose a Bible

verse to memorize, or a particular Bible story to read and help them retell it. We should do all that is possible to let them know that the things of God are important in life. They can begin to sense the love of Jesus through our love for them.

Jesus told His disciples to let the children come to Him (see Mark 10:14), and He continues to open His arms to them centuries later. Jesus cares; we must encourage them in their learning of Him.

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

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Table with columns for time slots (04:20 to 12:30) and rows for various TV channels (WINM, CBS, Antenna, ABC, NBC, etc.) listing programs and their descriptions.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes a solution time of 26 mins and a 'Yesterday's answer' section with a 1006 score.

Table with columns 1-11 and rows 1-54, representing the crossword puzzle grid.

Victims of Columbine shooting to be remembered at 25th anniversary

DENVER (AP) — The 12 students and one teacher killed in the Columbine High School shooting will be remembered Friday in a vigil on the eve of the 25th anniversary of the tragedy.

The gathering, set up by gun safety and other organizations, is the main public event marking the anniversary, which is more subdued than in previous milestone years.

Former Arizona Congresswoman Gabby Giffords, who began campaigning for gun safety after she was nearly killed in a mass shooting, will be among those speaking at the vigil. So will Nathan Hochhalter, whose sister Anne Marie was paralyzed after she was shot at Columbine. Several months after the shooting, their mother, Carla Hochhalter, took her own life.

The organizers of the vigil, which will also honor all those impacted by the shooting, include Colorado Ceasefire, Brady United Against Gun Violence and Colorado Faith Communities United Against Gun Violence, but they say it will not be a political event.

Tom Mauser, whose son

Daniel, a sophomore who excelled in math and science, was killed at Columbine, decided to set up the vigil after learning school officials did not plan to organize a large community event as they did on the 20th anniversary. Mauser, who became a gun safety advocate after the shooting, said he realizes that it takes a lot of volunteers and money to put together that kind of event but he wanted to give people a chance to gather and mark the passage of 25 years since the shooting, a significant number people can relate to.

“For those who do want to reflect on it, it is something for them,” said Mauser, who is on Colorado Ceasefire’s board and asked the group to help organize the event at a church near the state Capitol in Denver. It had been scheduled to be held on the steps of the Capitol but was moved indoors because of expected rain.

Mauser successfully led the campaign to pass a ballot measure requiring background checks for all firearm buyers at gun shows in 2000 after Colorado’s legislature failed to change

the law. It was designed to close a loophole that helped a friend of the Columbine gunmen obtain three of the four firearms used in the attack.

A proposal requiring such checks nationally, inspired by Columbine, failed in Congress in 1999 after passing the Senate but dying in the House, said Robert Spitzer, professor emeritus at the State University of New York-Cortland and author of several books on gun politics.

Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore ran on a gun safety agenda against Republican George W. Bush the following year, but after his stance was mistakenly seen as a major reason for his defeat, Democrats largely abandoned the issue for the following decade, Spitzer said. But gun safety became a more prominent political issue again after the 2012 Sandy Hook shooting, he said.

Without much action nationally on guns, Democrat-led and Republican-controlled states have taken divergent approaches to responding to mass shootings.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre on Friday called on Congress to do more, including ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, require safe storage of guns, enact universal background checks and and pass a national red-flag law.

“Since Columbine, there have been hundreds of school shootings, exposing hundreds of thousands of students to the horrors of gun violence. As the president has said, this is not normal, and it must end,” Jean-Pierre said.

Colorado lawmakers on Sunday advanced a bill banning semiautomatic firearm sales and transfers. The measure would bring Colorado in line with 10 other states — including California, New York and Illinois — with prohibitions on semiautomatics. It still must get through the Senate, and Democratic Gov. Jared Polis has indicated he’s wary of such a ban.

Those killed at Columbine included Dave Sanders, a teacher who was shot as he shepherded students to safety during the attack. He lay bleeding in a class-

room for almost four hours before authorities reached him. The students killed included one who wanted to be a music executive like his father, a senior and captain of the girls’ varsity volleyball team, and a teen who enjoyed driving off-road in his beat-up Chevy pickup.

Sam Cole, another Colorado Ceasefire board mem-

ber, said he hopes people will come out to remember the victims and not let the memory of them fade. The students killed would now be adults in the prime of their lives with families of their own, he said.

“It’s just sad to think that they are always going to be etched in our mind as teenagers,” he said.

Biden administration restricts gas, oil leasing in 13M acres of Alaska’s petroleum reserve

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — The Biden administration said Friday it will restrict new oil and gas leasing on 13 million acres (5.3 million hectares) of a federal petroleum reserve in Alaska to help protect wildlife such as caribou and polar bears as the Arctic continues to warm.

The decision — part of a yearslong fight over whether and how to develop the vast oil resources in the state — finalizes protections first proposed last year as the Democratic administration prepared to approve the contentious Willow oil project.

The approval of Willow drew fury from environmentalists, who said the large oil project violated President Joe Biden’s pledge to combat climate change. Friday’s decision also completes an earlier plan that called for closing nearly half the reserve to oil and gas leasing.

A group of Republican lawmakers, led by Alaska U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan, jumped out ahead of Friday’s announcement about the new limitations in the National Petroleum-Reserve Alaska before it was publicly announced. Sullivan called it an “illegal” attack on the state’s economic lifeblood, and he predicted lawsuits.

“It’s more than a one-two punch to Alaska,” Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski said, “because when you take off access to our resources, when you say you cannot drill, you cannot produce, you cannot explore, you cannot move it — this is the energy insecurity that we’re talking about.”

The decision by the Interior Department doesn’t change the terms of existing leases in the reserve or affect currently authorized operations, including Willow.

The Biden administration also Friday recommended the rejection of a state corporation’s application related to a proposed 210-mile

road in the northwest part of the state to allow mining of critical mineral deposits, including copper, cobalt, zinc, silver and gold. There are no mining proposals or current mines in the area, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management determined the road-building alternatives analyzed “would significantly and irrevocably impact resources,” the agency said in a statement. A final decision on the recommendation is pending.

Brian Ridley, chief of Tanana Chiefs Conference, an Alaska Native nonprofit corporation, said the administration’s “choice to reject the Ambler Road Project is a monumental step forward in the fight for Indigenous rights and environmental justice.” The tribes of the Tanana Chiefs Conference had expressed concerns a road would harm their communities, land and wildlife.

Sullivan accused the administration of undermining U.S. national security interests with both decisions. Alaska political leaders have long accused the administration of harming the state with decisions limiting the development of oil and gas, minerals and timber.

“Joe Biden is fine with our adversaries producing energy and dominating the world’s critical minerals while shutting down our own in America, as long as the far-left radicals he feels are key to his reelection are satisfied,” Sullivan said Thursday at a Capitol news conference with 10 other GOP senators. “What a dangerous world this president has created.”

Biden defended his decision regarding the petroleum reserve.

Alaska’s “majestic and rugged lands and waters are among the most remarkable and healthy landscapes in the world,” are critical to Alaska Native communities and “demand our protection,” he said in a statement.

Nagrak Harcharek, presi-

dent of Voice of the Arctic Inupiat, a group whose members include leaders from across much of Alaska’s North Slope region, in a statement said the decision “does not reflect our communities’ wishes.” The group’s board of directors previously passed a resolution opposing the administration’s plans for the reserve, and Harcharek expressed frustrations that local leaders were not consulted before details of the administration’s proposal were released last September.

“From our perspective, essentially what you’re doing is you’re taking the economic potential and shrinking it to a point where, we don’t know,” he said in an interview regarding Friday’s announcement. “There’s a lot of unknowns associated with that.”

The American Petroleum Institute, the oil industry’s top lobbying group, called the rule “misguided” and said it sharply limits future oil and natural gas development in the petroleum reserve, “a region explicitly intended by Congress to bolster America’s energy security” and generate revenue for Alaskan communities.

“At a time when the world is looking for American energy leadership, this is yet another step in the wrong direction,” said Dustin Meyer, an API senior vice president.

The petroleum reserve, about 100 miles west of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, is home to caribou and polar bears and provides habitat for millions of migrating birds. It was set aside around a century ago as an emergency oil source for the U.S. Navy, but since the 1970s it has been overseen by the Interior Department. There has been ongoing, longstanding debate over where oil and gas development should occur.

Most existing leases in the petroleum reserve are clustered in an area that’s

considered to have high development potential, according to the Bureau of Land Management, which falls under the Interior Department. The development potential in other parts of the reserve is lower, the agency said.

The rules announced Friday would place restrictions on future leasing and industrial development in areas designated as special for their wildlife, subsistence or other values and call for the agency to evaluate regularly whether to designate new special areas or bolster protections in those areas. The agency cited as a rationale the rapidly changing conditions in the Arctic due to climate change, including melting permafrost and changes in plant life and wildlife corridors.

ConocoPhillips Alaska, which has leases and projects in the petroleum reserve, is reviewing the decision “to determine its scope and effect,” according to a company statement.

Environmentalists were elated by Friday’s decision.

“The Biden administration’s actions for America’s Arctic shows a commitment to conservation that meets the needs of the region’s outsized vastness and ecological value,” said Kristen Miller, executive director at Alaska Wilderness League. “Our nation’s public lands are an essential part of addressing the climate and biodiversity crisis, and this decision could not come at a more critical time.”

Activist Bill McKibben called the decision a “massive win,” adding: “We lost the fight over Willow, but the huge outcry meant that some real good came of that debacle.”

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A Talk with Tego



Luke is an eight-month-old, Border Collie/Blue Heeler mix male.



Lucy is an eight-month-old, Border Collie/Blue Heeler mix female.



Lady is an eight-month-old, Border Collie/Blue Heeler mix female.



Tego

Tego’s Tips: The Wells County Animal Shelter has many puppies for adoption!

These are just a few pets available for adoption at the Wells County Animal Shelter, 1613 W. Cherry St., Bluffton. For more information call 824-6063.

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