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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2024 BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection \$1.00

Southern Wells honors Top 10 students

By HOLLY GASKILL

Southern Wells honored its Top 10 students in grades 9-12 with a special breakfast program on Tuesday.

The program featured presentations from two school alumni, Andrew Pursifull ('04) and Zane Herr ('15), who shared their post-high school experiences and advice with the students.

Pursifull is an agricultural project manager for Maurer-Stutz, Inc., in Poneto. He received his bachelor's degree in agricultural engineering from Purdue University and has since worked at several companies within the greater Fort Wayne area. He also represents Chester Township on the district's board of trustees.

While admitting he didn't enjoy public speaking, Pursifull used the opportunity to talk with students about taking on difficult tasks. Pursifull has found that the "right thing and the hard thing are often the same thing," and that the risk is worth the potential for success.

"This world is starving for strong leaders right now," Pursifull said.

Pursifull then referenced his own experience choosing to run for school board and how it felt daunting to ask his peers

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Students with the Top 10 grade point averages in grades 9-12, shown above, were honored before school Tuesday. The students and their families also heard from two school alumni, Andrew Pursifull (far left) and Zane Herr (at left). (Photos by Holly Gaskill)



Pictured above is the media center, which will have an outdoor common area on the right and another student area in the hallway. (Photos by Holly Gaskill)

Norwell Middle School looks towards project completion by summer

By HOLLY GASKILL

Construction on the new Norwell Middle School is 2-3 months ahead of its original schedule, said representatives from Weigand Construction.

Crews will soon head into the next stage — the demolition of the old building.

The board for Norwell Community Schools toured the construction site prior to their meeting Tuesday. Since their last collective tour, the building has visually changed significantly, with lockers and some cabinetry in place, flooring in, and most painting completed, among numerous other items.

Teachers will begin transitioning into their new classrooms after the school year ends. Norwell's last student day is May 21.

Both the football and baseball buildings should also reach substantial completion by the end of May.

During the board's strategic planning meeting, the board, faculty, and community members discussed the district's test performance and plans for Indiana College Core. The group also drafted possible goals for student achievement, student enrollment, facilities and communication and marketing.

Among these goals were time-specific



Norwell school board members Gene Donaghy (left) and Angie Topp look around the new band room.

expectations to increase I-READ and SAT scores, improving elementary school playgrounds and addressing internet connectivity issues. Superintendent Mike Springer said the administrators would review the

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Downtown project receives \$16K from Bluffton NOW!

By JONATHAN SNYDER

Bluffton NOW's Community Reinvestment Program application for 101 North Main St. was approved by the Board of Public Works and Safety on Tuesday.

Jerry Flack applied on behalf of the group to turn the main floor of the building from a storage area and small office space to a place that fits more offices and a conference room. The project costs \$32,348.45 total. Bluffton NOW! will invest \$16,174.22.

Board member Josh Hunt asked about the new budget for the CRP program and Bluffton NOW! President Mike Lautzenheiser stated that they are "significantly far from empty." With the previous investment of \$25,000 for BAF Investments, the remaining budget is estimated at \$58,825.78.

"This project is taking space that's not being used and making it active," Hunt said. "That's the point of the program."

Additionally, the board granted a request for more time to get training and obedience lessons for a nuisance dog. Anita Ybarra's seven-year-old dog attacked another at a boarding facility in Ossian, which led to the death of the other dog. Wells County Animal Control Officer Kyle Morphew reviewed the video and stated the attack was unprovoked.

Ybarra stated that the dog currently lives with three other smaller ones, two of which

have been around his whole life. Ybarra further noted that she has never seen any aggressive behavior from the dog before and he has not attacked any workers or strangers.

Bluffton requires a dog under nuisance animal orders to get mandatory training and are only allowed to leave their home when transport is necessary, without a muzzle.

Ybarra stated she understood the requirements and is willing to do all she can and "make some hard decisions" but since the dog is having trouble taking to the muzzle, she requested for more time on getting the mandatory training.

The board gave Ybarra until the end of May to get mandatory training for the dog, but held firm on the dog needing the muzzle when he goes out.

Additionally, a parking request from Amanda and Jenna Frauhiger was cleared up by the board. The Frauhiger's stated they have people who use their Airbnb in the upper level of 107 West Market St. As the police department has begun reinforcing parking spot limits downtown again, the Frauhigers shared concerns that the public lots are blocks away from the location. The Frauhigers noted that the nearest public parking lot is at the Mt. Fuji restaurant, but the lot there is filled for most of the day.

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Zoning board approves variance for Solid Rock Rentals

By JONATHAN SNYDER

Solid Rock Rentals received a variance for a reduced overhead door setback from the Wells County Board of Zoning Appeals on Tuesday.

The Owner of Solid Rock Rentals, Drew Gerber, wants to put a garage on the corner of West South Street and South Union Street in Bluffton to attract tenants. The Board of Zoning Appeals' only concern was potential tenants parking just outside of the garage and interfering with the sidewalk.

Gerber and BZA Secretary Mike Lautzenheiser estimated that there would be 24 ft. of space between the door of the future garage and the sidewalk. Additionally, Gerber would need to discuss with the Street Department on how close the driveway for the garage can be to the stop sign. The initial belief from Lautzenheiser is that the driveway has to be 20 ft. away.

The BZA approved the variance with a condition that the sidewalk is marked with paint to designate the area where tenants cannot park.

"Won't be a problem one bit," Gerber said.

The board also approved a variance petition from Dustin and Melissa Kelly for an increase in size allowance for an accessory structure.

The Kellys, who reside at 538 West Washington St. in Bluffton, plan to house an indoor basketball and pickleball court, as well as a game room, kitchenette area and a residential storage space. The variance allows the Kellys to build a 2400 square foot, two-story structure. Lautzenheiser noted that there are other structures of a similar height, and other two-story homes near the area.

All members of the BZA were present at Tuesday's meeting.

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Outside

Partly sunny today, but still cold and windy

Today	Thursday	Friday
High 52	High 58	High 67
Low 33	Low 37	Low 58

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Online

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April 24, 2024

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Top 10 Students

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to support his leadership and speak in a candidate forum. However, he highlighted that because of the risk, he's now had the opportunity to better serve and connect with the community.

Herr also attended Purdue, receiving his degree in agricultural systems management. He has since returned to his family farm, which has also opened Dash 90 Wines. Herr also serves on the Wells County Convention and Visitors Commission, which aims to sup-

port local tourism efforts. Referencing the several vacant rows in the front of the cafetorium, Herr encouraged the students to take initiative in the high school and continued education. Herr said he often found himself in those front few rows, prioritizing his education and new opportunities.

Herr also encouraged students to continue investing in the community, noting that the community in Wells County is not something to overlook.

"It's really resonated with

the older I've gotten how fantastic everybody in this community is," Herr said.

Students honored at the breakfast were considered the "top 10" in their respective classes by their grade point averages. They were, in alphabetical order: freshmen Kinley Allred, Joshua Aulbach, Cash Banter, Gavin Howell, McKenna King, Carson Liddy, Sophia Meeks, Gunner Murray, Lillia Paxson and Elisabeth Penrod; sophomores Kolbie Beavans, Peyton Ellis, Keith Gartin, Shaylinn Geesa-

man, Gracie Reeves, Adeline Sabinske, Dannicka Sorensen, Emily Steffen and Braden Yencer; juniors Quinten Darling, Avery Gaskill, Alyssa Green, Ashlie Needler, Alaina Nusbaumer, Kenzie Paxson, Dominic Ramirez, Collena Reeves, Caroline Ripperger and Derek Rockwell; and seniors Joshua Bricker, Malaina Culbertson, Perrin Gates, Caleb Johnson, Ella Lahr, Peyton Long, Tessa Maul, Evan Pennington, Keith Plummer and Tristen Worster.

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Norwell Middle School

(Continued from Page 1)
mentioned items and develop a clear, attainable outline of goals.

The board's regular agenda included approval of the following items:

- An agreement with Erin's House for Grieving Children for grief counseling services. Services will be available at no cost to families. Springer said Erin's House has been previously used by the district, and the district saw a need for additional support.
- Resignations from Theresa Delaney, former Norwell High School teaching assistant, and Debra Long, formerly in food service.
- Employment recommendations for Hannah Hewson as Lancaster Elementary School 3rd grade teacher and Madison Casey as LES 4th



Pictured is a locker hallway in the Norwell Middle School building. The locker size has increased by several inches from the largest lockers in the current building. (Photo by Holly Gaskill)

grade teacher, both beginning in the 2024-25 school year, Suzanne Cyrus as NMS year-book adviser, beginning Aug. 7, Angelia Piatt as LES pre-

school teacher and Katelyn Feldheiser as speech pathologist.

- Easement and right-of-way for electrical work

along the east side of State Road 1.

- A support staff benefits manual.

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Downtown project

(Continued from Page 1)
While the board took no official action, they clarified that the rule applied only during business hours and street sweepings, so someone

could park in that road from 6 p.m. to 10 a.m. and still be in compliance. Additionally, the downtown pathways project, which revitalizes some alleyways in downtown

Bluffton, is meant to help connect the public lots to businesses and other properties on Market Street.

The board also:

- Gave Water Filtration Operator Zach Smith a \$1

hourly merit raise

- Accepted Paid On-Call Firefighter Kelly Thompson's resignation, ending a 39-year tenure in the department.

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Aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan advances in Senate with big bipartisan vote

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to move ahead with \$95 billion in war aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, bringing the bill to the brink of passage after months of delays and contentious internal debate over how involved the United States should be abroad.

The vote to end a filibuster drew the support of 80 senators — 10 more than supported the bill when the Senate first passed it in February -- virtually guaranteeing that the bill will soon reach President Biden's desk. A final vote could come as soon as Tuesday evening.

The \$61 billion for Ukraine comes as the war-torn country desperately needs new firepower and as Russian President Vladimir Putin has stepped up his attacks. Ukrainian soldiers have struggled to hold the front lines as Russia has seized the momentum on the battlefield and gained significant territory.

Bidentold Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday the U.S.

will send badly needed air defense weaponry as soon as the legislation is passed. The House approved the package Saturday in a series of four votes, sending it back to the Senate for final approval.

"The President has assured me that the package will be approved quickly and that it will be powerful, strengthening our air defense as well as long-range and artillery capabilities," Zelenskyy said in a post on X.

In fact, U.S. officials said about \$1 billion of the aid could be on its way shortly, the bulk following in coming weeks.

The legislation also would send \$26 billion in wartime assistance to Israel and humanitarian relief to citizens of Gaza, and \$8 billion to counter China in Taiwan and the Indo-Pacific. In an effort to gain more votes, Republicans in the House majority also added a bill to the package that could ban the social media app TikTok in the U.S. if its Chinese owners do not sell their stake within a year.

The foreign aid portion of the bill is similar to what

the Senate passed in February with some minor changes and additions, including the TikTok bill and a stipulation that \$9 billion of the economic assistance to Ukraine is in the form of "forgivable loans."

Those changes appears to have brought nine additional Republicans on board, meaning a clear majority of the Senate GOP conference supports the legislation. The February vote on an earlier version of the bill was 70-29.

Opening the Senate Tuesday morning, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said the coming vote was "six months in the making."

"Let us not keep our friends around the world waiting for a moment longer," Schumer said.

The package has had broad congressional support since Biden first requested the money last summer. But congressional leaders had to navigate strong opposition from a growing number of conservatives who question U.S. involvement in foreign wars and argue that Congress should be focused instead on

the surge of migration at the U.S.-Mexico border.

The growing fault line in the GOP between those conservatives who are skeptical of the aid and the more traditional, "Reagan Republicans" who strongly support it may prove to be career-defining for the two top Republican leaders.

Senate GOP Leader Mitch McConnell, who has made the Ukraine aid a top priority, said last month that he would step down from leadership after becoming increasingly distanced from many in his conference on the Ukraine aid and other issues. Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson, who put the bills on the floor after praying for guidance, faces threats of an ouster after a majority of Republicans voted against the aid to Ukraine.

Weather

Wednesday, April 24, 2024
(24-hour observations at 10:12 p.m. Tuesday)
High: 55; Low: 49; Precipitation: 1.03 inches of rain
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 3.45 feet at 7:45 p.m. Tuesday

Wells County forecast

Today: Partly sunny, with a high near 52. North wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.
Tonight: Areas of frost after 1 a.m. Otherwise, partly cloudy, with a low around 33. East wind around 5 mph.
Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 58. East wind around 5 mph.
Thursday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 37. East wind 5 to 10 mph.
Friday: A 50% chance of showers after 2 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 67.
Friday Night: A chance of showers and thunderstorms, then showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm after 8 p.m. Cloudy, with a low around 58. Breezy. Chance of precipitation is 70%.
Saturday: A 40% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 77. Breezy.
Saturday Night: A 30% chance of showers and thunderstorms, mainly after 2 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 64. Breezy.
Sunday: A chance of showers, with thunderstorms also possible after 2 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 80. Breezy. Chance of precipitation is 40%.
Sunday Night: Showers and thunderstorms likely. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 63. Breezy. Chance of precipitation is 60%.
Monday: Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 74. Breezy. Chance of precipitation is 60%.
Monday Night: A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 53.
Tuesday: A chance of showers. Partly sunny, with a high near 67.

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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
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Public Sale Calendar

BIDDING ENDS 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.

BIDDING ENDS 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 25 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 102 S. Jefferson St., Ossian. Pat Carter, sale manager, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, 260-824-3006, www.steffengrp.com.

BIDDING STARTS ENDING APRIL 28 - 6 p.m. EST - 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, Chrane 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. *Krueckeberg 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 9 & 10 - 9 a.m. - Secured creditors & various consignors, owners. Two day truck & equipment auction. Day 1 online bidding only: 100+ various skid loader attachments, tool boxes, workbenches, iron gates, chains & binders, 1 trip 40' high side shipping container w/side doors, dome shelter containers, various truck take off parts, plumbing, electrical and mechanical surplus including urinals, toilets, electrical components, more! Day 2 onsite and online bidding offering 700+ lots! 100+/- municipal units! Cars, SUV, 1/2 ton & 3/4 ton pickups, cargo & passenger vans, large group of Chevy Impalas, Tahoes & Dodge Chargers, Harley-Davidson motorcycles, dump trucks, 2012-2014 Freightliner M2106 box trucks, day cabs, sleepers, utility trucks, bucket trucks, utility & semi trailers, SUV's, pickups, 100+ various skid steer attachments, more! *Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC*, 260-724-7402, kjauction.com.

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, salesman 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.

MAY 19 - 4 p.m. - Multiple consignors, owners. Online only consignment auction. 1,000+ lots! Furniture, oak kitchen table, large assortment of household items, tools, 100+ lots of collectible glass including Fostoria, Fenton, Candlewick, Pyrex and much more! Preview May 16, 3-5 p.m., 812 Elm Street, Decatur. Pick up May 20, 1-6 p.m. & May 21, 9 a.m.-noon. *Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC*, 260-724-7402, kjauction.com.

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OBITUARIES

Mahala R. Hopkins, 82

Mahala R. Hopkins, 82, of Bluffton, passed away Monday evening, April 23, 2024, at her residence, surrounded by her family. She was born May 15, 1941, in Willets, Calif. to Arthur Woodall and Rosetta Glaze. Survivors include her children, Tonya Albers of Bluffton, Timothy Edward Daskam of Portland, Ore.; and four grandchildren. Mahala was preceded in death by her parents; a daughter, Zina G. Daskam; and a son, David Michael Daskam. As Mahala requested, there will be no formal service at this time. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the care of the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton. Friends can send online condolences to the family at www.thomarich.com.

Wells Court Docket

Reports of receipts and expenditures of political committees have been filed with the Wells County Clerk's office for the pre-primary period of Jan. 1 through April 12 by:

- Vicki Andrews, County Council At-Large; Vicki Andrews, Republican for County Council, At-Large

The committee showed \$320.24 in cash on hand, \$100 in unitemized expenses and ended the period with \$220.24 in cash on hand. The committee had no debt.

- Committee to Elect Tamra Boucher; Tamra Boucher, Republican for County Commissioner, District 3.

The committee showed \$995.06 in itemized contributions, \$675.23 in itemized expenditures and concluded the reporting period with \$319.83 cash on hand. The committee had no debt.

Itemized contributions were from John Legge, Markle, \$20; Trent Bucher, Bluffton, \$250; Boucher, \$155.55 in sign lumber, \$369.56 in yard signs and an additional \$20.

Itemized expenditures were \$155.55 to Lowe's for lumber, \$3669.56 to Signs on the Cheap for printing and \$150.12 to Build a Sign for printing.

- Scott J. Burke for County Council At-Large; Scott Burke, Independent for County Council At-Large (not yet filed).

The committee showed \$2,000 in contributions, \$2,000 in itemized expenditures and ended the period with zero dollars in cash on hand. The committee had no debt.

The sole itemized expenditure was \$2,000 to Treeboy Productions for videography.

- Friends of Jeff Stringer; Jeff Stringer, Republican for County Commissioner, District 3.

(Continued on Page 3)

Ossian Psi Iota announces annual scholarship

Ossian Psi Iota Xi Gamma Zeta chapter are giving its annual \$500 scholarship for any Wells County graduates who are now at least in their junior year of college, with a field of study in art, music, literature or hearing impaired. Applications can be sent direct to you by emailing ossianguammaze@yahoo.com or calling for a form to be mailed to you. Requirements are listed on the application and are due by July 1, 2024 for consideration for the fall semester. For additional questions, email or call/text Carolyn Johnson (317) 696-8505.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City:
 Monday, 3:25 p.m., Montalto LLC. Report of weed violation — not a Jack and the Beanstalk situation yet, however, taller than 8 inches.
 Monday, 5:50 p.m., 600 block of Creek Drive. Report of two teens tormenting geese.
 Monday, 6:08 p.m., South Johnson and West Arnold streets. Report of 14-year-old male running around screaming. Juvenile was hurt but is fine now.
 Monday, 7:17 p.m., Pretzels. Caller reported issue with ex-boyfriend using car.
 Tuesday, 2:12 a.m., 300 block of West Dustman Road. Report of a man on a bike yelling and screaming to call police. Man kicked out for the night.
 Tuesday, 9:33 a.m., Lions Park. Report of an abandoned pop-up camper.
County:
 Monday, 7:11 a.m., 5100 North 100 West, Uniondale. Subject was locked out of vehicle due to power locks, advised to call GM or locksmith.
 Monday, 10:28 a.m., Wells County Jail. Subject reported cyberbullying.
 Monday, 11:46 a.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Joseph Roth-Bradley.
 Monday, 1:36 p.m., 200 East and East 200 South, Bluffton. Caller advised he hit a stop sign with farm equipment.
 Monday, 3:15 p.m., West Cherry and South Oak streets, Bluffton. Report that something struck the back bumper of a school bus.
 Monday, 4:16 p.m., 6300 South S.R. 1, Bluffton. Officer requested to help wrangle two hogs trying to cosplay as cars.
 Monday, 4:29 p.m., 1000 North Washington Street, Bluffton. Caller reported issues with grass clippings in roadway.
 Tuesday, 1:11 a.m., West Wabash and North Marion streets, Bluffton. Driver registration returned as unlicensed. Traffic stop revealed marijuana between floor board and passenger seat. Jimmy Perkins Jr. taken to the Wells County Jail.

Ossian:

Monday, 2:50 p.m., 3800 East 1200 North, Ossian. Hunter Butts charged with multiple possession charges and failure to register as a sex offender. When officers questioned Butts, he had multiple drug-related items on his person. He also said he had left employment in December and was working with property owner now.
 Tuesday, 11:07 a.m., 3600 East 1200 North, Ossian. During incident with Hunter Butts, officer learned two involved parties that he spoke with had a no contact order between them in a domestic battery case. Sean Foughty charged with invasion of privacy.

ACCIDENTS

City:
 Monday, April 15, 10:30 p.m., Cherry Street at Adams Street. Faylynn C. Stein, 22, Bluffton, was driving a 2016 Chevrolet Cruze and went through a stop sign and off the roadway. Stein reported she had been traveling a "little fast" after passing a car and then had seen a deer, and did not notice the road came to a T. Stein was transported to Bluffton Regional Medical Center with report of ankle pain. Damage exceeded \$10,000.
 Tuesday, April 16, 5:48 p.m., S.R. 1 at Margarets Road. A 2019 Ford Ranger driven by Marty K. Grover, 67, of Bluffton, was turning westbound into a private drive and did not see a 2007 Honda CBR600 motorcycle driven by Brayden M. Rolston, 20, Markle. The bike struck the vehicle, and Rolston rolled off the bike. Rolston was transported to Bluffton Regional Medical Center for evaluation of friction wounds. The bike had disabling damage. Damage did not exceed \$10,000.
 Wednesday, 10:15 a.m., S.R. 124 at Elm Grove Road. A 2001 Ford Escape driven by Rose L. Moser, 71, Bluffton, was turning west onto S.R. 124 from Elm Grove Road and failed to yield the right of way to a 2023 Kia Forte driven by Kareena M. Reza, 37, Berne. Damage did not exceed \$50,000.
 Thursday, 12:27 p.m., Main Street near Sewage Plan Drive. Donald D. Heshner, 73, Bluffton, was driving a 2003 Chevrolet Silverado pickup truck and collided with a sign. Heshner reported general illness and said he may have fallen asleep before leaving the roadway. Damage did not exceed \$2,500.
 Saturday, 2:23 a.m., Main Street at C.R. 300N. Megan R. Prater, 24, Ossian, was driving a 2016 Chrysler 200 and left the roadway and into the grass area of ITOWN Church. Prater said she had been recently diagnosed with dry eyes and hadn't been wearing her contacts, so she didn't see the curb. Investigating officer observed the smell of alcohol, and Prater admitted to drinking earlier in the evening. Prater blew .157 and was arrested. Damage did not exceed \$2,500.

FIRES

Thursday, 3:34 p.m., 8922 S 450W, Poneto. Smoke coming from structure. Liberty Township, Chester Township and Bluffton fire departments responded.
 Thursday, 6:36 p.m., W 900S and S 475W, Montpelier. Report of diesel smell coming from drainage pipe. Bluffton and Chester Township fire departments and Emergency Management responded.
 Sunday, 5:31 p.m., Wabash Village. Fire alarm.
 Monday, 12:27 p.m., S.R. 218 and C.R. 500 E. Grass fire. Fire extinguished at 12:47 p.m.
Ossian:
 Thursday, 8:48 p.m., Ossian Health and Rehabilitation. Fire alarm.

ARRESTS

Joseph James Roth-Bradley, 28, Berne; obstruction of justice and invasion of privacy, both Level 6 felonies. Bond set at \$30,000.
 Kyle Allen Peterson, 45, Bluffton; domestic battery, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$25,000.
 Justin James Foss, 26, Bluffton; intimidation with a deadly weapon, a Level 5 felony, possession of methamphetamine, a Level 6 felony, invasion of privacy,

a Class A misdemeanor, and battery, a Class B misdemeanor. Bond set at \$17,500.

Caleb Lee Tungate, 34, Bluffton; resisting law enforcement, a Class A misdemeanor, disorderly conduct, a Class B misdemeanor, and deception — identity, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$3,000.
 Joshua Louis Morlan, 35, Bluffton; neglect of an animal, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$1,500.
 Mason Bradie Boomer-shine, 20, Craigville; minor possession of an alcoholic beverage and operating while intoxicated, both Class C misdemeanors. Bond set at \$1,000.
 Amanda May Douitt, 32, Kendalville; resisting law enforcement and operating while intoxicated — endangerment, both Class A misdemeanors, and operating while intoxicated, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$3,000.
 Megan Renee Prater, 24, Ossian; operating a vehicle with an ACE of .15 or more, and operating a vehicle while intoxicated — endangerment, both Class A misdemeanors. Bond set at \$1,500.
 Jennifer Lynn French, 42, Marion; driving while suspended, a Class A misdemeanor.
 Rose Marie Bay, 47, Bluffton; operating without ever obtaining a license, a Class C misdemeanor.
 Troy Lee Eugene Snider, 36, Ossian; driving while suspended, a Class A misdemeanor.
 Hunter James Butts, 24, Markle; failure to register as a sex offender and possession of a narcotic drug, both Level 6 felonies, possession of marijuana, a Class Misdemeanor, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$12,000.
 Jimmy Perkins Jr., 20, Liberty Center; marijuana cultivation, a Class A misdemeanor, possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor, and operating with a controlled substance in body and possession of paraphernalia, both Class C misdemeanors. Bond set at \$2,000.



Students share RYLA experience with Bluffton Rotary
 Students from Southern Wells and Bluffton high schools participated in the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards over the weekend. Tuesday they shared their experience with the Bluffton Rotary Club during their weekly meeting. Pictured in the photo from left are Rotary President Jordan Arnold, Ali Migrant (Bluffton High School), Braden Yencer (Southern Wells) and Jackson Affolder (Bluffton High School). At the conference students participated in an intensive leadership experience designed to improve them as leaders and develop their skills. (Photo provided)

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Some thoughts on the 'Caitlin Clark Effect' in Indiana

It is a safe bet that almost no one in Indiana knows less about basketball than me, but only a recluse could miss the hype over the Indianapolis Fever's draft of Iowa phenom Caitlin Clark.

Clark is the all-time NCAA Division I-leading scorer and leading 3-point scorer — for both men's and women's basketball. She was two-time national player of the year and holds a slew of other records and accolades. By almost any measure, she's the most dominate player, male or female, to ever enter a professional draft. This makes the economics of Caitlin Clark interesting.

I recently conducted a traditional analysis of the effect Clark could have on the Indianapolis economy. To do so, I used previous studies on the effect of superstar basketball players on game attendance. This analysis assumes Clark would have roughly the same proportional effect on WNBA games that Michael Jordan had on NBA games, which yielded pretty decent effects for the team and city.

By that estimate, the Fever could expect about 26,000 more visitors to games this season. Their total annual spending would be more than \$6 million on the games and lodging. That's a big number for an individual player, but it doesn't count the endorsements, or what's known as 'name, image and likeness' (or NIL) in today's jargon. Nor did it account for potential changes to televised game revenue.

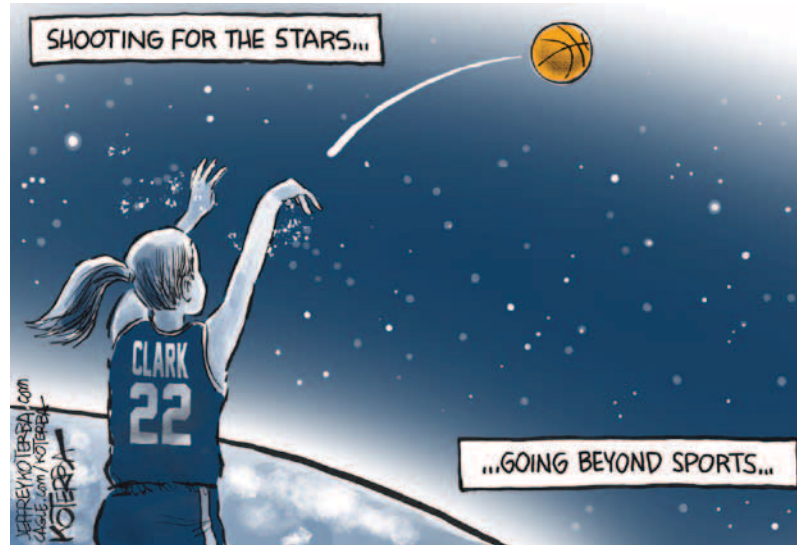
Having watched the past two weeks, though, I think a conventional economic analysis is insufficient to judge the Caitlin Clark effect on women's basketball — and to women's sports in general. Her fandom, and its effects, are moving well past traditional analysis.

A few data points will make this clear. A typical WNBA game attracts 4,000-plus attendees. This puts them in line with mid-level college game attendance. Advance ticket sales in Indianapolis are at record levels — and record prices. Season tickets are sold out. The team is even offering a new system where you can electronically line up each day to get tickets for the upcoming game. This clever process is doubtless done to broaden the number of folks who can attend home games. Clark's away games are also selling briskly,



Michael Hicks

Hoosier Opinions



so expect an excellent sales boost to teams across the league in 2024.

Right now, the Caitlin Clark effect on ticket sales and likely game attendance appears to exceed that of any male superstar basketball player of the past four decades. However, the real money, and the real benefit to the WNBA, comes from TV.

The typical WNBA game receives about a half-million viewers. But, out of a 40-game regular season, only four or five games will likely be televised. For the 2024 season, 36 out of 40 Fever games will be televised across seven networks.

The analytics teams across these networks have concluded that the WNBA is a potential money maker for them. They're almost surely correct.

About 1 in every 700 Americans watched those rarely televised WNBA games last year. But, a whopping 1 in 20 Americans watched the NCAA women's championship game between Iowa and South Carolina, more than double that of the previous season.

Networks don't broadcast sporting events because they like sports. They broadcast sporting events because the sports economists and marketers have models telling

WNBA players and teams. Caitlin Clark is already a multimillionaire and has inked deals with Nike, Gatorade and dozens of other brands. The increase in TV spots makes every other player more likely to pick up deals both nationally and locally. So, this is a big boon to WNBA players who are paid very little through the league's collective bargaining arrangement.

The WNBA pays athletes a starting salary in the mid-\$70,000s per year range, with modest bonuses. The lowest-paid NBA player this year earned almost \$290,000 from the team, and only 20 earned less than \$1 million. The NIL compensation makes this sport financially viable for most WNBA players.

The WNBA's low pay is primarily a result of low TV ratings. Although NBA players share more TV revenues than the WNBA, available revenues for players are modest. If the WNBA collective bargaining agreement had the same revenue share as the NBA, the women would still only be paid a bit more than \$250,000 per year.

This season is likely to change that calculation significantly.

Amid all the hype, the advance sales tickets and sold-out jerseys, there are surely many women, especially former professional athletes, who might feel they were treated unfairly by circumstance. I think particularly about Chamique Holdsclaw and Tamika Catchings, who should be household names.

Let me put those feelings into some perspective. The greatest running back of all time, Jim Brown, never earned more than \$600,000 per year in inflation-adjusted dollars from the NFL. He got rich via acting, but he also helped propel the NFL into the revenue-generating behemoth it is today.

Clark benefits from those who went before her, and her presence is already influencing the game for a generation to come. If you doubt me on that issue, try ordering a Clark jersey in girls' sized small.

Clark is also that rare athlete whose advertisements will cross over into other sports. Fans will get to see her on ads during MLB, NFL, NBA and most NCAA games this year. Again, that boosts every WNBA player.

It is also difficult to gauge what Clark's cultural significance may be. After all, her boyfriend is transferring to Butler University to play his final year of basketball for the Bulldogs. Clark might be the type of feminist icon who Hoosiers come to love and respect.

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

Letters to the Editor

Boucher's background right for the county

I wish to whole heartedly add my support to the candidacy of Tamara Boucher for County Commissioner. I have known and worked with Mrs. Boucher for more than 20 years and in fact she was the person who was most responsible for recruiting me to Bluffton Regional Hospital and was most instrumental in facilitating the development in the first hospital-based ob-gyn practice that I was able to establish for the community.

Wells County is growing in size, diversity and community needs and it is obvious from Mrs. Boucher's background that she is the most qualified candidate to meet the challenges of the Wells County community for the future. The Health First Indiana Grant is an outstanding opportunity for the county to grow and expand all manner of health care opportunities and access for residents and elevate our standing in achieving national health care goals. Success will require more than just business skills.

Mrs. Boucher has an extensive background in healthcare management and program development which I think will be very important in successfully managing these healthcare dollars in addition to her many other roles in local government.

DR. KAY F. JOHNSON-KEYS, MD, MPH
Bluffton

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 24, 1995, the final bomb linked to the Unabomber exploded inside the Sacramento, California, offices of a lobbying group for the wood products industry, killing chief lobbyist Gilbert B. Murray. (Theodore Kaczynski was later sentenced to four lifetimes in prison for a series of bombings that killed three people and injured 29 others.)

Election Letters Policy

The News-Banner accepts Letters to the Editor concerning local election candidates and issues. All letters must be signed; the writer's address and phone number must be included in case verification is desired. Letters are subject to editing for brevity, clarity and length; letters are limited to 500 words.

• There is a limit to one letter per writer per campaign period. • The editor reserves the right to refuse publication of any letter at all times. • An appearance of a letter-writing campaign will be deemed as such and discontinued. • Letters pertaining to the May 7, 2024 election must be received by Sat., Apr. 27, with the exception of appropriate responses by a candidate to any letter published on or after that date.

Submit your Letters to the Editor via: • Our website link (Submit Your Letter) • E-Mail: miller@news-banner.com • Mail: PO Box 436, Bluffton IN 46714 • Drop-off: 125 N. Johnson St., Bluffton. (There is a 24-hour drop-slot available.) Please mark your correspondence as a "Letter to the Editor."

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

The reality of migrant crime

There's been an ongoing political debate lately about crimes committed by migrants who entered the United States illegally. Actually, there's not much to debate about their first unlawful act — entering the United States without authorization — but much disagreement about how many illegal border crossers commit crimes after that.

In recent weeks, Republicans have publicized the murder of Laken Riley, the Georgia nursing student who police say was abducted and killed by Jose Antonio Ibarra, a Venezuelan migrant who entered the United States illegally in September 2022, only to be quickly released into the country. Ibarra was one of millions of illegal crossers who rushed into the United States after the implementation of virtually open-border policies by President Joe Biden. In response to Republicans highlighting the murder, some Democrats argued that the "immigrant crime narrative is racist," in the words of California Democratic Rep. Robert Garcia.

The issue popped up in the State of the Union address, when some Republicans tried to goad Biden into saying Riley's name. Biden did say the name — although he got it wrong — and then referred to the alleged killer, Ibarra, as an "illegal." Democratic activist groups reacted in anger, not at the murder but at the use of the word "illegal" to describe an illegal immigrant. Biden swiftly apologized, saying he should have called Ibarra "undocumented" instead.

Now there is another migrant crime in the news, this time in New York City. Last week police raided a house in the Bronx that had been taken over by migrant squatters who had entered the U.S. illegally. In addition to arresting eight of them, police confiscated several firearms, extended magazines, ammunition, plus the drugs ketamine and cocaine. The cops moved in, the New York Post reported, after one of the migrants "allegedly flashed a pistol at someone on the property March 27, leading to a 911 call and the discovery of the squatter gang."

In true New York fashion, a judge quickly freed most of the suspects without bail. At that point, the Enforcement and Removal Operations office of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) that three of them. How did they do that? Officers just went back to the house in the Bronx, where the suspects had returned to keep doing what they were doing before their arrests. Now, it appears four others have also been picked up by ICE.

In response to inquiries by Fox News' indefatigable reporter Bill Melugin, ICE has released some background information on each suspect. Accord-



Byron York

ing to ICE, Suspect No. 1, Yoessy Pino Castillo, entered the U.S. illegally near Brownsville, Texas, on May 6, 2023, and was "released into the United States as an alternative to detention." On Jan. 6 of this year, she was arrested for shoplifting. Then, on March 27, at the house in the Bronx, New York police arrested her for "criminal possession of a weapon, second degree; loaded firearm on school grounds; criminal possession of a controlled substance with intent to sell; and acting in a manner to injure a child." She was immediately released without bond.

Suspect No. 2, Yojairo Armando Martinez, entered the United States illegally near El Paso, Texas, on Sept. 22, 2022. He was immediately released into the country "as an alternative to detention." He never reported to immigration authorities, as his release required.

Suspect No. 3, Hector De Sousa Vilalta, entered the United States illegally near Brownsville, Texas, on May 3, 2023. He was given a notice to appear before immigration authorities at a later date and was immediately released into the country. On Aug. 28, 2023, he was arrested in Yonkers, New York, and charged with attempted murder and assault with intent to cause serious injury. He was released from jail again. Last week, he was arrested at the Bronx

States illegally near Eagle Pass, Texas, on Oct. 3, 2022. He was immediately released "as an alternative to detention." The March 27 arrest at the Bronx house, for gun and drug crimes, was apparently his first arrest in the United States.

Suspect No. 6, Johan Jose Cardena Silva, entered the United States illegally near Del Rio, Texas, on Oct. 3, 2022. Exactly what happened then is not clear, but he was ultimately ordered removed from the country. Then, he either was removed and got back in, or he never left, because he ended up in the Bronx house on March 27, facing gun and drug charges.

Less is known about the last two suspects, but you get the idea. All the suspects entered the United States during the frenzied rush across the border that began when Biden took office. Nearly all were quickly released into the country. It is fair to say that the problems they are now causing are directly attributable to the president and his policies.

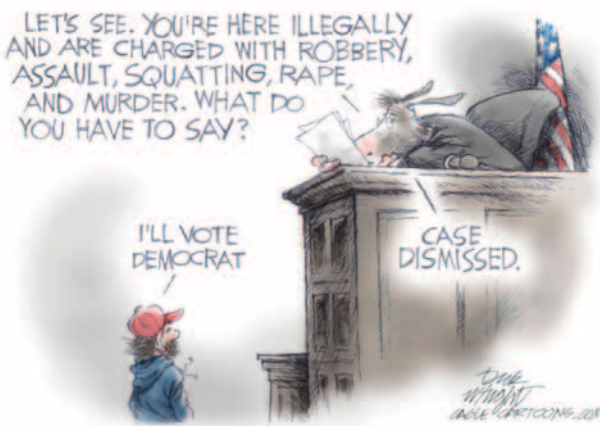
Millions of illegal crossers responded to Biden's policy changes. Among them were all the suspects above, plus the man who is accused of murdering Laken Riley. There have been many reports of other crimes, too, being committed by those who crossed illegally into the U.S. in the last three years.

Nevertheless, many Democrats and their allies in the press argue that Republicans are exaggerating the problem. Recently, Fox News' Guy Benson responded to an NBC report that claimed, "The data does not bear out the fact that undocumented immigrants kill Americans at any greater rate than legal Americans." That is true, Benson noted, but: "Whether that holds up after we get our arms around the impact of the 10 million illegal border crossings during the Biden crisis remains to be seen."

Also: Illegal immigrants don't have to be disproportionately criminal or violent as a group in order for Americans to feel extra, righteous disgust over violent crimes being committed by perps who have

no right to be in the country in the first place — many of whom have amassed significant rap sheets before committing their most serious attacks."

In New York, we are seeing the results of the confluence of two Democratic policies — one, the arrival of large numbers of illegal border crossers who were allowed, unvetted, to remain in the United States, and two, the practice of releasing many suspects accused of serious crimes without bail. It's a mess, and it will continue to be a mess. And that is on top of all the other social dislocations and financial burdens created by massive influx of unvetted illegal crossers. It's an issue that is not going away, especially in a presidential election year.



house and charged with various gun and drug charges. He was released yet again and was later picked up by ICE.

Suspect No. 4, Javier Jose Albornoz Marchan, entered the United States illegally near El Paso, Texas, on May 6, 2023. He was immediately released into the country "as an alternative to detention." He soon had multiple arrests, including for shoplifting in both New York and New Jersey. On Sept. 26, 2023, he was arrested in New York for criminal possession of a loaded firearm and "ammunition feeding devices." He was quickly released. On Jan. 6, 2024, he was arrested again for shoplifting. And on March 27, he was arrested at the Bronx house.

Suspect No. 5, Yerbin Benjamin Lozado Munoz, entered the United

Wah-wah-wah. Blah-blah-blah: communication is a science and an art

If you were asked to define communication, where would you begin? In the past several years, I have heard people, often parents, bemoan that their teenage kids no longer know how to communicate. They fear that staring at the phone, playing video games, and watching YouTube constantly has rendered their teens incapable of carrying on any level of communication beyond a few “uh-huhs,” garbled mumbles, and maybe a slight head nod. I cannot argue with anyone that communication has taken a real turn when it comes to anyone 35 or younger. Whether it is better or worse or just different, will be a topic another day.

Today, I am thinking that it is not the younger generation I am troubled with in regards to the whole concept of communication. Communication is a science and an art. All living entities have differing methods, modes, and procedures for communicating. Think about it. Birds do it, bees do it, butterflies do it, wolves do it, pigs do it, heck fire, even trees do it! Don't take my word for this phenomenon – trees communicating with each other – read the book *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben,

and prepare to be fascinated. If trees communicating among themselves is a too otherworldly and esoteric for a spring Wednesday, then let's stick strictly to human communication. There are a bazillion techniques we utilize in the science aspect of communication. Words, written or spoken, gestures (yep, I thought of that finger also), body language and posture, codes, like the Morse code, watching TV, scanning the internet, FB, reading the thoughts of others, tone of voice, braille, sign language, eye contact, group and organization communication, memos, touch, listening...well, I think we have the idea.

Of all of these, while each and every one is intriguing, I choose to focus on the use of verbal communication. Words are definitely a component of the “science of communication.” They are extremely beneficial much of the time, but words can also be problematic. An example of this is words very often do not carry the same meaning or even similar weight when spoken and heard. Let's say, for instance, that I say the word “mom.” OK, unless you are one of my brothers, when I say “mom,” you probably do not visualize or think of my mom. If I say “freedom,” we may not have the same meaning. If I say “home,” we probably do not



have the same visual, thought, or even emotional response. Depending on how our lives have gone so far, we usually “see” those words in our own lens.

Those are simplistic examples. Imagine how complicated and convoluted sharing thoughts, information, or feelings can become when we meander into the realm of words such as: compassion, equality, right, wrong, meaning of life and death, politics, philosophy, history, winners, losers...the list is exhaustive.

It is true that almost any word we can think of can be used in whatever way the speaker intends or the listener receives. Probably that contributes to so many misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Now using language to intentionally be obtuse, pejorative, offensive, or just your plain basic annoying is not what I am referring to at this particular moment. I refer to people who genuinely and sincerely want to communicate.

What a privilege it is to discover how others view this world and this life. How limiting it would be if we chose only to communicate or hear those who think and believe exactly the same way we do. Think about all that is sacrificed when we do not encourage or even acknowledge others who have a different idea or a thought

that is opposite to what we think. Imagine, for a moment, what we miss if we do not hear, consider, discern what is being said by someone who even thinks something we have never even considered before in our whole entire lives!

Hearing, questioning, contemplating – none of these require accepting. We can encounter differences without accepting them. We can learn about what others are thinking without incorporating their thinking into our own. We can question, deny, disagree, discard the very notion, become upset, angry...we can do any or all of these. The simple truth is: we cannot do any of those things legitimately until we understand what is being said. Lack of understanding renders productive communication not only ineffective, but impossible. That is the basis of the science of communication.

We are fortunate to reside in a country where we also can think for ourselves about virtually every single thing. We not only can think, but we can believe and accept what makes the most sense to us. This is why a primary component of the science of communication is critical thinking. Just because I hear it or read it does not necessarily equate to truth (another one of those slippery words). Sometimes recognizing or even finding truth can be difficult. Guess it depends on how badly we want it.

Now, that is a very cursory look

at the science of communication; how about the art of it? Well, that is maybe a bit simpler. The art involves the 7 Cs: clear, concise, concrete, correct, coherent, and courteous. If we desire honest and meaningful communication, each of those words will help us get there. A person can try really hard to cover all 7 Cs in his discourse, but if he is speaking to someone who already “knows exactly what I think” or one who hears but does not listen, then attempting honest discourse is in vain.

Here's the thing: Communication is always a two-way venture – at minimum one speaker (writer) and one listener (reader). If I merely want to state what I think, or force another to think exactly like I do (that might be a somewhat scary proposition), I can choose that route. I can repeat ad nauseam, I can yell and drown out any other voice, I can browbeat, threaten, coerce, or shun you, but I cannot refer to that as communication. And about those 7 Cs, the last one is courteous. How about if we cannot be courteous, let's agree to never accept or settle for anything less than being civil.

bkreigh@adamswells.com

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

Lunch & Learn focuses on Loblolly Marsh

By BARBARA BARBIERI

Those attending the Friends of Ouabache State Park's Lunch & Learn gathering on April 18th not only learned all about the Loblolly Marsh at nearby Geneva, from Limberlost State Historic Site Naturalist Curt Burnette, they also were introduced to Ouabache Naturalist for the summer Lydia Ade.

Jody Heaston also spoke about the coming Junior/Teen Indiana Master Naturalist camp to be held at Ouabache from June 10-14, where Ouabache friends will be volunteering as helpers.

Naturalist Ade spoke about the weekend activities she will lead, including Bison Feeding on Saturdays and Fire Tower Climbs on Sundays.

Heaston then introduced Burnette, who has been the Naturalist at the Limberlost Cabin and Loblolly Marsh for 12 years and leads hikes through the marsh. He proceeded to tell, using slides, how the marsh was drained in 1848, at the beginning of the Swamp Act enactment to gain farmland. When the wildlife that Gene Stratton Porter wrote about left with the draining of the swamp she moved to Rome City.

The restoration of the Loblolly Swamp began in 1997 as it was realized it was a



Speakers discussed both Ouabache and the Loblolly Marsh by Geneva. Left to right are Jody Heaston, Lydia Ade and Curt Burnette. (Photo by Barbara Barbieri)

needed part of the environment. Burnette reported some struggling farmers were even glad to sell their acreages for the restoration.

This has brought back a lot of animals including deer, beavers, turtles and nesting eagles. The area often hosts migrating birds. (Burnette explained he knew of 8 eagles nests in this area.) It also has brought back wild flowers and the chance for hiking and bird watching.

Corner Depot Catering furnished the pies for the event. In May LaNae Abbot will talk about her “Kayaking the Wabash Experience” on May 9.



BHS senior artists ready for high school art exhibit

Art by Wells County high school artists will be on exhibit from April 28 to May 1 at the Wells County Commerce & Visitors Center, with an public Open House on Sunday, April 28, from 1 to 4 p.m. Hosting the event and providing prizes will be the members of the Beta Phi chapter of Tri Kappa. Bluffton High School seniors having items in the exhibit left to right in the front row are Zach Pemberton, Taylor McFarren, Jordan Troyer, Jacob Chenard, Issiah San Juan, Allyeha Brubaker and Madison Smith while behind them are Katelyn Bedwell, Caleb Dailey, Elsie Schaden, Keturah Bradford, Isa Rhoderick, Zoe Morrison and Tyrah Shaw. Vicki VanMatre is their instructor. (Photo by Barbara Barbieri)

Jefferson Homemakers Club holds April meeting at Ossian Library

President Mary Ann Ripperger opened the meeting by thanking Judy Kaehr and Carol Baker for hosting the April meeting at the Ossian Library.

The thought of the month was: When a person offends you, climb over to his side of the fence. The exercise will do you good and the view will be different.

The inspiration was given by Carol reading from “God's Little Devotion Book for Women” on the subject of “Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves” as based on Galatians 6:7.

The pledge to the American Flag was recited by all as well as the Homemakers Creed.

Thirteen ladies responded to “What Spring flowers are blooming in your yard?” Nearly all had something blooming – even dandelions!

Mary Ann asked how many saw the eclipse and each was amazed at this full eclipse.

Sharon Jump gave a short lesson on how much each adult should drink in water per day regarding eight glasses which is normal. Her information made it very clear that other liquids can count toward the eight glasses.

Carol Baker read the March minutes and they were accepted. Margie Huss gave the treasurer's report and it also was accepted. The club collection was taken for paying five cents for each letter in ECLIPSE and a voluntary collection was taken for Nickels for Leadership/Coins for Friendship.

Mary Ann read “Six Little Stories With Lots of Meaning”. They illustrated

faith, trust, hope, confidence, love, and attitude.

Cards were signed and sent to four club ladies having varied health issues.

Lesley Tillman was wished Happy 63rd Anniversary which was on April 1.

Cultural Arts Happening in the Area: April 27 there will be a Dan's Fish Fry for Bethlehem Lutheran Church, and the Ossian Baptist Church will host a free Ladies Brunch on Saturday, May 4, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Church. All ladies of all ages of the community are welcome to attend.

Mary Ann thanked Jean Reef for leading the March meeting in her absence.

New Business: Mary Ann went over some of the business which took place at the last Executive Board meeting of the County.

Mary Ann has information on the Home and Family Conference to be held June 10-12 at Noblesville, IN. You may see her or use the website, or she will give you a copy.

Homemaker's Festival

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Unsung Hero
Thursday, April 25th 6pm
Friday, April 26th 6pm & 8:40pm
Saturday, April 27th 2:30pm, 5:15pm & 8pm
Sunday, April 28th 2pm & 4:40pm

Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire
Thursday, April 25th 6:20pm
Friday, April 26th 8:50pm
Saturday, April 27th 7:45pm
Sunday, April 28th 4:50pm

Kung Fu Panda 4
Friday, April 26th 6:20pm
Saturday, April 27th 2:45pm & 5:30pm
Sunday, April 28th 2:20pm

www.abcinmainc.com

is May 6, with registration at 5:30 p.m. and the program beginning at 6 p.m. The menu will be meatloaf, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, rolls, and poke cake at a cost of \$15. Reservation deadline is May 9 by sending \$15 payable to Wells County Extension Homemakers, Treasurer, Jean Reef, 604 N. Melching, Ossian, IN 46777.

Mary Ann reminded us that Homemaker of the Year nominations was due recently to the Extension Office.

Molly will also be giving a free lesson on air frying on May 6 at 2 p.m. at Washington Park Pavilion which you must register for also by calling 824-6069.

Mary Ann gave a travel lesson on Ireland as she

and her daughter Rhonda recently toured. The terrain is basically full of stones and lots of hills which are a rich green. They were there on St. Patrick's Day which was special with a parade, etc. The people are friendly, everything is very clean, no trash, they recycle everything. The richest land is in Northern Ireland. The average farm is 10 acres. The Cliffs are at the ocean side, the land is rocky and the fences are made out of all this rock. The houses are in high rise, next to each other, and each home has a different colored door and houses are brightly colored – very pretty and unique!

One-half of the citizens live in Dublin, poor people live off the land. They use

double deck buses, and horse drawn carriages. Pubs and restaurants serve a lot of fish – mostly cod and haddock. They walked up seven stories in a castle where the Blarney Stone is (kissing the Blarney Stone is supposed to bring you good luck). Rhonda did it but it is a very hard maneuver to be able to

do it. They had a great time and a wonderful vacation! Mary Ann gave a great travelogue!

The next meeting of the Jefferson Club will be Wednesday, May 8, at 1 p.m. at the Library in Ossian. Guests are welcome to attend!

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UN calls for investigation into mass graves at Gaza hospitals raided by Israel

By EDITH M. LEDERER
Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United Nations called Tuesday for “a clear, transparent and credible investigation” of mass graves uncovered at two major hospitals in war-torn Gaza that were raided by Israeli troops.

Credible investigators must have access to the sites, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters, and added that more journalists need to be able to work safely in Gaza to report on the facts.

Earlier Tuesday, U.N. human rights chief Volker Türk said he was “horrificed” by the destruction of the Shifa medical center in Gaza City and Nasser Hospital in the southern city of Khan Younis as well as the

reported discovery of mass graves in and around the facilities after the Israelis left.

He called for independent and transparent investigations into the deaths, saying that “given the prevailing climate of impunity, this should include international investigators.”

“Hospitals are entitled to very special protection under international humanitarian law,” Türk said. “And the intentional killing of civilians, detainees and others who are ‘hors de combat’ (incapable of engaging in combat) is a war crime.”

U.S. State Department spokesman Vedant Patel on Tuesday called the reports of mass graves at the hospitals “incredibly troubling” and said U.S. officials have asked

the Israeli government for information.

The Israeli military said its forces exhumed bodies earlier as part of its search for the remains of hostages captured by Hamas during its Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war. The military said bodies were examined in a respectful manner and those not belonging to Israeli hostages were returned to their place.

The Israeli military says it killed or detained hundreds of militants who had taken shelter inside the two hospital complexes, claims that could not be independently verified.

The Palestinian civil defense in the Gaza Strip said Monday that it had uncovered 283 bodies from a temporary burial ground inside the main hospital in

Khan Younis that was built when Israeli forces were besieging the facility last month. At the time, people were not able to bury the dead in a cemetery and dug graves in the hospital yard, the group said.

The civil defense said some of the bodies were of people killed during the hospital siege. Others were killed when Israeli forces raided the hospital.

Palestinian health officials say the hospital raids have destroyed Gaza’s health sector as it tries to cope with the mounting toll from over six months of war.

The issue of who could or should conduct an investigation remains in question.

For the United Nations to conduct an investigation, one of its major bodies

would have to authorize it, Dujarric said.

“I think it’s not for anyone to prejudge the results or who would do it,” he said. “I think it needs to be an investigation where there is access and there is credibility.”

The chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim Khan, said after visiting Israel and the West Bank in December that a probe by the court into possible crimes by Hamas militants and Israeli forces “is a priority for my office.”

The discovery of the graves “is another reason why we need a cease-fire, why we need to see an end to this conflict, why we need to see greater access for humanitarians, for humanitarian goods, greater protection for hospitals” and

for the release of Israeli hostages, Dujarric said Monday.

In the Hamas attack that launched the war, militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted around 250 hostages. Israel says the militants are still holding around 100 hostages and the remains of more than 30 others.

In response, Israel’s air and ground offensive in Gaza, aimed at eliminating Hamas, has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, around two-thirds of them children and women. It has devastated Gaza’s two largest cities, created a humanitarian crisis and led around 80% of the territory’s population to flee to other parts of the besieged coastal enclave.

Wells Court Docket

(Continued from Page 3)

The committee showed \$13,450 in contributions, \$198 in unitemized contributions, \$5,619.256 in itemized expenditures and ended the period with \$8,028.75 in cash on hand. The committee had no debt.

Itemized contributions were from Brandon Harnish, Bluffton, \$500; Trout Moser, Bluffton, \$300; Steve Huggins Bluffton, \$1,000; Jordan Stogdill, Bluffton, \$400; Tim and Lisa McCormick, Bluffton, \$200; Greg O’Brien, Evansville, \$200; Kurt Heidenreich, Fort Wayne, \$200; Kerry and Laura Roberts, Bluffton, \$100; Josh and Stacy Hunt, Bluffton, \$100; Dr. Bart Hott, Bluffton, \$800; Jill Shelton, Markle, \$400; Lesley Gaskill, Bluffton, \$200; Phillip Beer Noblesville, \$1,600; Ryan and April Schisler Bluffton, \$200; Ibrahim Y. Swidan, Indianapolis, \$1,600; Clayton Hamilton, Poneto, \$250; Todd Fiechter, Bryant, \$200; Ron Turpin, Fort Wayne, \$1,000; Conor Jackson, Bluffton, \$400; Denny Fry, Bluffton, \$250; Yergy’s State Road BBQ, Bluffton, \$500; RTZ Services, Ossian, \$800; Hiday Automotive, Bluffton, \$800; Midstates Energy Solutions, Bluffton, \$400; Fiechter Farms, Bluffton, \$400; Working Every Night and Day for You PAC, Bethesda, Maryland, \$250; and

Indiana Technical Installations Bluffton, \$400.

Itemized expenditures were \$38.35 to First Bank of Berne for checks, \$2,000 to Treeboy Productions for videography, \$491 to Tera Nuttle for bar tending services, \$600 to Yergy’s State Road BBQ, \$200 to Hunt Club for venue rental, \$1,000 to the Wells County GOP for a Lincoln Day ad and \$1,290 to A.G.E. Graphics for printing services.

• Seth Whicker for County Council; Seth Whicker, Republican for County Council, At-Large.

The committee showed \$5,798 cash on hand, \$1,857.28 in contributions, \$6,981.56 in expenditures and concluded the reporting period with \$674.72 in cash on hand. There was one outstanding debt of \$500.

Itemized contributions were from John Whicker for Mayor of Bluffton, \$1,857.28.

Itemized expenditures were \$283.65 for New Haven Print for printing, \$300 for Facebook advertising, \$350 to Parlor City Apparel for t-shirts, \$22.20 to Farmers and Merchants State Bank, \$5,500 to Carrie and Seth Whicker for the repayment of personal campaign expenses and \$48.56 to Vista Print for printing services.

The following committees filed reports showing no cash on hand, receipts or contributions, expenditures, or outstanding debt:

• Committee to Elect Scott Elzey; Scott Elzey, Republican for County Council, At-Large.

• Hoosiers for Blake Gerber; Blake Gerber, Republican for County Commissioner, District 2.

• The Committee to Elect Pam Gregory; Pam Gregory, Republican for Treasurer.

• Committee to Re-Elect Hahn for Surveyor; Jarrod Hahn, Republican for Surveyor.

• Brian Hollingsworth for Council; Brian Hollingsworth, Democrat for County Council, At-Large.

• Heath Schlagenhaut for County Council; Heath Schlagenhaut, Republican for County Council, At-Large.

• Rina Stuck for Recorder; Rina Stuck, Republican for Recorder.

For the pre-primary period, the committee showed no cash on hand, no receipts or contributions and no expenditures. The committee had no outstanding debt and concluded the reporting period with no cash on hand.

• Cliff for Coroner; Cliff Thomas, Republican for Coroner.

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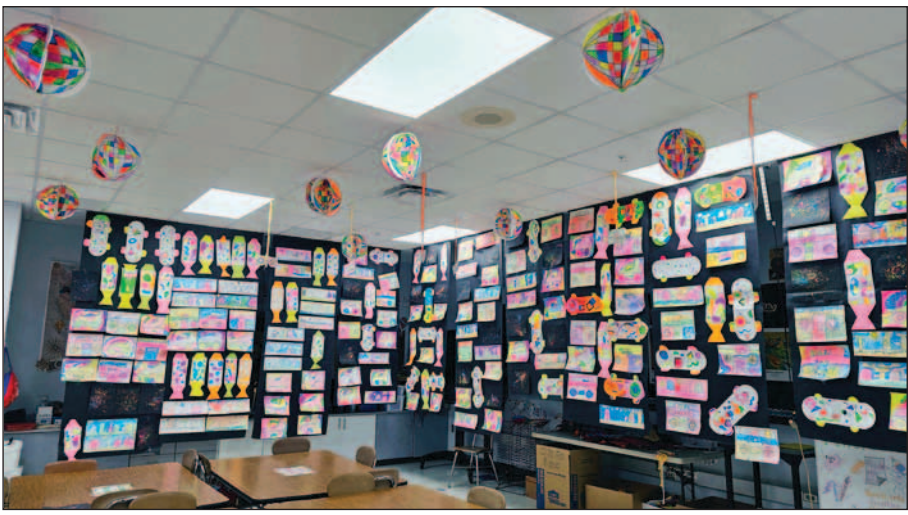
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Celebrating arts

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Both bodies found five days after kayaks capsized going over a dangerous dam in Indianapolis

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — The body of a second man has been found in the White River, five days after he and another kayaker capsized in turbulent waters at the remnants of a dam, authorities said Tuesday.

The body of Marcus Robinson, 30, was recovered near Indianapolis' 10th Street Bridge, several hours after a passerby spotted the body of Solomon Shirley, 22, near the city's Michigan Street bridge, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources' law enforcement division said.

A witness saw both Indianapolis men being thrown into the river on April 17 when they traveled over the remnants of the 16th Street dam. These "low-head" dams

run all the way across a waterway and are designed so that the water constantly flows over them. They're known as "drowning machines" because the water is deceptively calm upstream, but a turbulent circular backwash can form on the downstream side, particularly when water levels are high.

"We had just had a ton of rain, and so the water was very high. They got too close to the dam, got caught in the current and went over," said Lt. Angela Goldman, a state conservation officer.

Conservation officers had searched the river and its shoreline while also conducting aerial searches with drones and a helicopter, the DNR said.



CHOICE HOTELS 2024 GOLD AWARD WINNER!

The Comfort Inn Hotel in Bluffton, Indiana Wins Prestigious 2024 Gold Award from Choice Hotels

Las Vegas, NV May, 1, 2024 – The Comfort Inn hotel of Bluffton, Indiana has been recognized with a prestigious 2023 Gold Award by Choice Hotels International, Inc. (NYSE: CHH), one of the world's leading lodging franchisors.

The Gold Award designation is awarded to the top 10% of hotels within the brand, representing a tremendous accomplishment. As one of the top tier properties operating under the Comfort Inn flag, the hotel has demonstrated an exceptional focus on guest satisfaction and dedication to superior service. Award criteria are evaluated by Choice Hotels through its official property ranking reports.

Justin Osborn GM

The Comfort Inn hotel participates in Choice Privileges, the award-winning rewards program where members earn points on eligible charges during their stay, which can be redeemed for reward nights at nearly 7,500 hotels across 22 brands located in 47 countries and territories worldwide. With the Choice Privileges Mastercard and Choice Privileges Select Mastercard, members can earn more points faster, including on everyday purchases.

Choice Hotels, with a franchise-first focus and an industry-leading retention rate, has been committed to providing its hotel owners with the support they need to succeed since it launched the country's first hotel chain in 1941. Today, Choice offers franchisees a suite of cutting-edge cloud-based solutions, including the **choiceEDGE** guest reservation platform and the **choiceADVANTAGE** property management system to help franchisees effectively manage room rates, distribution channels, and inventory. Additionally, **Choice University**, the most widely awarded learning program in the hospitality industry, delivers customized and always evolving learning and development resources. From pre-opening to grand opening and every day forward, Choice provides hotel owners with best-in-class resources to help them maximize the return on their investment.

For more information or to make a reservation at this award-winning hotel, visit www.choicehotels.com/in388.

About Choice Hotels®

Choice Hotels International, Inc. (NYSE: CHH) is one of the largest lodging franchisors in the world. The challenger in upscale and a leader in midscale and extended stay, Choice® has over 7,500 hotels, representing more than 630,000 rooms, in 46 countries and territories. A diverse portfolio of 22 brands that range from full-service upper upscale properties to midscale, extended stay and economy enables Choice® to meet travelers' needs in more places and for more occasions while driving more value for franchise owners and shareholders. The award-winning Choice Privileges® rewards program and co-brand credit card options provide members with a fast and easy way to earn reward nights and personalized perks. For more information, visit www.choicehotels.com.

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April 20, 6 p.m.

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May 4, 6 p.m.

Tribute Quartet



Open Seating: \$15 at door, plus an offering

May 18, 6 p.m.

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Open Seating: \$20 at door, plus an offering

June 22, 6 p.m.

Jeff & Sheri Easter

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July 13, 6 p.m.

Guardians Quartet

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September 7, 6 p.m.

Mark Trammell Qt.

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Additional Info: General admission/Open Seating Tickets are \$15 or \$20 each at the door, plus an offering. Premier concerts: *The Hoppers*, *Greater Vision*, *Gold City* and *the Christmas Concert/Banquet* are priced as indicated above in the schedule. To order by phone, call Jim at 651.269.2120. To order by mail, send a check to The Gospel Barn of Bluffton, PO Box 4, Delphi, IN 46923. Sorry, no refunds. Schedule may change. Visit our web site: www.thegospelbarnofbluffton.com. The Gospel Barn of Bluffton is located in Hope Missionary Church at 429 E. Dustman Road in Bluffton, IN 46714. (Please do not contact the church. Use PO Box 4 or the 651.269.2120 for all inquiries.) ALL CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

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Respecting boundaries and bridging gaps

Dear Annie: We have neighbors who reside in a cul-de-sac that is at the rear of our property. Our property is located on a U-shaped half-mile neighborhood, which is ideal for walking. Over time, these neighbors have chosen to repeatedly cut through our property on an almost daily basis to facilitate their walking routine. It's gotten to the point where these neighbors act as if they are "entitled" to treat our property as a public gateway from their neighborhood to ours.

I would note that there was a time when we had friendly interactions with these neighbors; but today, they cut through our property and avoid any acknowledgment of us, even when we are outside doing work on our property.

Please give us direction as to how we can politely convey that our property is not a public walkway. — Not a Cut Through

Dear Cut Through: The real issue here is that they are not asking for your permission to walk on your property. Besides being rude, there is always the possibility that if they are on your property and something happens to them, you could be held liable.

The best way to stop them from walking on your property is to ask them politely not to walk through. You could also do some gardening and plant some nice spring flowers and say you don't want them messed up with foot traffic.

Had they asked in the first place, you probably would have been neighborly, but their sense of entitlement makes you not want to. If they ignore your requests, then you should consult an attorney.

Dear Annie: I am a grandma, mam-

aw and granny to six amazing grandchildren. Two of my three sons have these children. My sons are constantly ignoring me. They treat me like I do not exist.

I raised them by myself after their father tragically passed away. I did my best to give them a great life. They all mean the world to me. I just need a little advice from you on how to find a way to see my grandchildren.

Any suggestions would be greatly appreciated. — Heartbroken Mammaw.

Dear Heart Broken Mammaw: Be patient and continue to reach out to your sons and find out what their needs are. Do they need help with the kids, or are there sporting events you could attend? Tell your sons how much you desire a relationship with your grandchildren.

Grandparents can be a very positive influence on grandchildren's lives, but the parents have to allow it. Grandparents tend to be more patient and have a little more life experience than parents who are with their children every day.

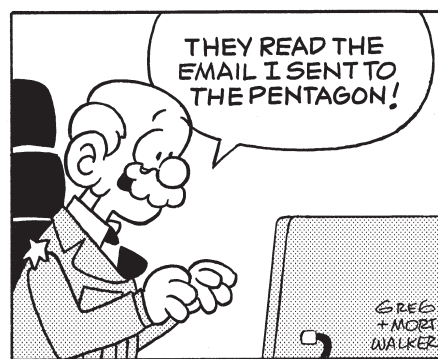
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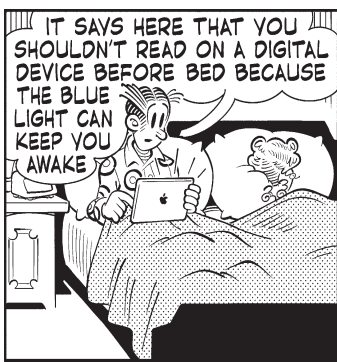
Dear Annie by Annie Lane



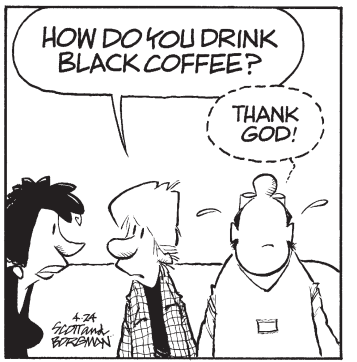
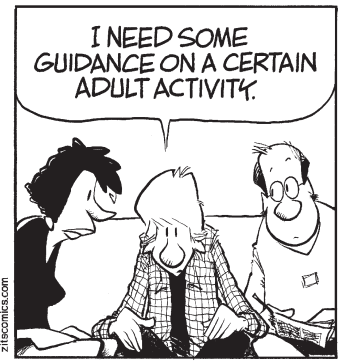
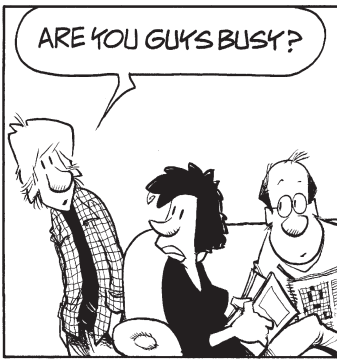
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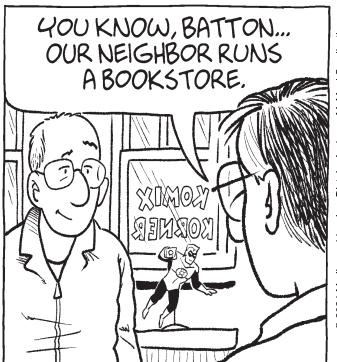
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God gives us the courage to pray and ask Him to search our hearts

to walk in His ways and be pure instruments in His hands to do His will.

Consider King David who said, "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24, ESV).

It must have been difficult for David to pray this prayer. We don't know if he prayed these words before or after his sin with Bathsheba (see 2 Samuel 11-12). But either way, David knew he was capable of terrible sin — and that often his first impulse when he had sinned was to deny it or try to hide it from God. To ask God to search out the darkest, most secret corners of our minds and hearts takes

courage. When we're not willing to do this, the sins we know about remain unconfessed, and our fellowship with God grows cold and distant. Perhaps more important, the hidden sins we may not even realize we have — sins like pride, suppressed anger, lack of love, jealousy — remain firmly in place, manipulating us and eventually destroying us.

God gives us the courage to pray and ask Him to search our hearts — He knows them better than we do.

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

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My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham

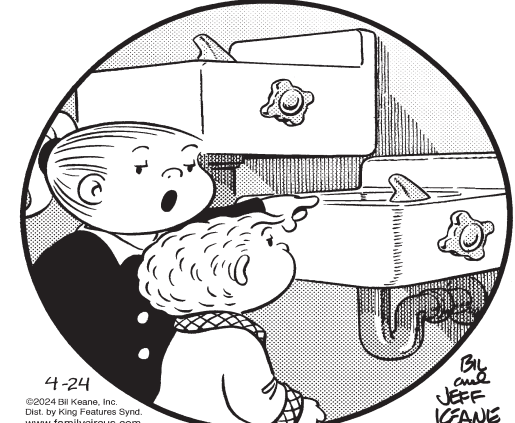


Question: I'm confused. I became a Christian and God forgave my sins and helped me start over again. My pastor keeps preaching that Christians must confess their sins and turn away from them so that we can be effective in our faith. I thought that's what makes people become Christians — that their sins are forgiven past, present, future. Are we supposed to confess them continually? — C.C.

Answer: Those who receive God's forgiveness of sin and His salvation are secure in their relationship to Christ, but sin still creeps in and we should quickly acknowledge our sins to God and thank Him that He hears our prayers. This helps us

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



"This one's the fountain of youth."

The LOCKHORNS



"LORETTA AND I HAVE BEEN THROUGH THICK AND THIN... BUT NOT IN THAT ORDER."

Table with columns for date, time, and various TV channels and programs.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Table with columns for crossword puzzle grid.

