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THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2024 BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection \$1.00



Redbuds in bloom at Ouabache

Now might be the right time for an afternoon drive out to Ouabache State Park to view the redbuds in bloom throughout the park. (Photo by Barbara Barbieri)

Unloaded firearm located in Bluffton student's bag

By **HOLLY GASKILL**

An unloaded firearm was located in a Bluffton High School student's bag Wednesday afternoon.

In a statement that afternoon, Bluffton-Harrison MSD Superintendent Brad Yates said administrators had been alerted that a student may have had a firearm in their possession. Administrators and the school resource officer conducted a secure, private search, and found the unloaded firearm in the student's bag. Ammunition was found in the student's locker.

Yates said the student was "fully cooperative and made no threats or intent to harm anyone in the building." The district's communications specialist, Jessica Bricker, said the school did not have to lockdown or evacuate due to the incident.

The Bluffton Police Department stated they are continuing to investigate the incident.

Yates told The News-Banner he was unable to discuss the student's specific disciplinary actions, but student handbook procedures were being followed. According to the handbook, penalties could range from suspension to expulsion depending on circumstances.

Students were alerted of the incident shortly before the public statement was released, Yates said. After-school activities were not affected.

Yates concluded by thanking the individuals who reported the threat and the responsiveness of school staff and SRO.

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Job market for engineers pushes Bluffton into nearly three month search

By **JONATHAN SNYDER**

Bluffton is still searching for a new city engineer. Mayor John Whicker stated that the demand for private businesses to have engineers is a major hurdle in the process.

The search started after former engineer Kelly White resigned on Feb. 2. Whicker noted that White's hiring process took about three months to finish.

"A lot of communities are doing projects involving either water or wastewater and so there's a lot of demand for engineers," Whicker said. "And these engineering companies need the jobs and are protecting the employees they have."

Whicker said the city learned it does not need a professional engineer since White's hire. Since the contractors and other companies the city hires have professional engineers on their payroll, having a knowledgeable engineer representing the city side is enough.

Whicker also stated that one of White's

strengths was putting processes in place so projects could get done in a timely and cost-effective fashion, something that the city will look for in its future candidates.

Since her resignation, White's responsibilities have been divided between various department heads, according to Utility Director Jon Oman. Oman is currently the designated email contact for city engineer-related questions.

Oman stressed that the various department heads have been trying to continue the methodology that White integrated while she was involved. Oman stated that Kelly's approach to the projects was more analytical and calculated, which the department heads look to continue using.

Despite the shared responsibilities, Oman recognized the need for a new engineer. Since White's departure, department heads have focused on corresponding with contractors and spending more time

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Five GOP candidates attended the final gubernatorial debate of the season Tuesday, April 23, 2024. (Screenshot from livestream)

Indiana GOP gubernatorial candidates focus on moderator, not Braun, during final debate

Economic development, taxes and education were among the issues discussed by candidates Tuesday evening

By **CASEY SMITH**

Indiana Capital Chronicle

Five of the six Republicans hoping to be Indiana's next governor squabbled more with the moderator than they did over policy issues during their last pre-primary debate on Tuesday — just two weeks before the May election.

And although U.S. Sen. Mike Braun, largely considered to be the frontrunner in the race, was absent from the debate, he was sparsely mentioned by his competitors.

The candidates met at IUPUI's Hine Hall Auditorium at the 90-minute debate hosted by the nonpartisan Indiana Debate Commission.

On the stage were former Secretary of Commerce Brad Chambers, Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch; former Indiana Economic Development Corp. leader Eric Doden, former Attorney General Curtis Hill and conservative activist Jamie Reitenour.

Braun pulled out of the debate unexpectedly Monday evening, however, saying he needed to be in Washington, D.C. to vote.

Although Braun submitted a statement to

the commission before the debate, it was not read before the audience Tuesday evening. Cindi Andrews, the Indiana Debate Commission president, said that's because his statement didn't follow guidelines.

"I told him that he could submit a statement of two to three sentences about why he was unable to send. What he sent ... was about politics," Andrews said. "So, we opted not to use that, but to simply rephrase."

Braun said in the debated statement that, "I was looking forward to sharing my vision with Hoosiers at tonight's debate, but Chuck Schumer has called the Senate into session."

"Tonight, I am in D.C. voting 'no' on a bill to send \$95 billion of your money overseas instead of securing our open southern border, which puts Hoosier families in danger every day," he continued, referring to a foreign aid package passed by the U.S. Senate late Tuesday. "I'm proud to stand up for you and vote against the Biden spending spree making life unaffordable for so many Hoosiers."

Even so, Braun's competitors did little

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Biden says U.S. is rushing weaponry to Ukraine as he signs a \$95B war aid measure

By **AAMER MADHANI**

and **SEUNG MIN KIM**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden said Wednesday that he was immediately rushing badly needed weaponry to Ukraine as he signed into law a \$95 billion war aid measure that also included assistance for Israel, Taiwan and other global hot spots.

The announcement marked an end to the long, painful battle with Republicans in Congress over urgently needed assistance for Ukraine, with Biden promising that U.S. weapons shipment would begin making the way into Ukraine "in the next few hours."

"We rose to the moment, we came together, and we got it done," Biden said

a White House event to announce the bill signing. "Now we need to move fast, and we are."

But significant damage has been done to the Biden administration's effort to help Ukraine repel Russia's invasion during the funding impasse that dates back to August, when the Democratic president made his first emergency spending request for Ukraine. Even with a burst of new weapons and ammunition, it's unlikely Ukraine will immediately recover after months of setbacks.

Biden immediately approved sending Ukraine \$1 billion in military assistance, the first installment from about \$61 billion allocated for Ukraine. The package includes

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Outside

Sunny and cool today, showers tomorrow

Today	Friday	Saturday
High 58	High 69	High 77
Low 37	Low 57	Low 63

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Gop gubernatorial candidates

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to point out his absence outside of a few small jobs at his record. Specific references were made to the senator's support for increased state gas taxes, "lack" of action on illegal immigration and his rejection of the CHIPS and Science Act, which was authored by Indiana's senior U.S. Sen. Todd Young.

Reiterating their stances

The participating candidates answered questions posed primarily by the public; the commission invited Hoosiers to submit queries online and received more than 200 questions. Jon Schwantes, host of PBS's "Indiana Lawmakers," moderated the debate.

Among those questions was one about the Indiana Economic Development Corp. and how each of the candidates might transform the quasi-government agency that was formerly led by Doden.

Later, under Chambers' helm, the IEDC launched the ambitious LEAP project in Boone County and bought thousands of acres of farmland while navigating water shortages.

Doden said the IEDC shouldn't be "buying up land and moving water around the state," emphasizing that wouldn't happen under his administration. Crouch said she seeks to empower local economic development officials and limit income tax to grow the state's economy.

Reitenour said the IEDC overpaid for land in Boone County, while Hill referred to the agency as a "shadow government" that lacks transparency.

In his defense, Chamber said tens of thousands of high-wage jobs are coming from the project. He said, too, that Indiana has "plenty of water" if we use

it strategically.

Separately, on property taxes, Reitenour said referendum rates are growing too fast and homeowners can't keep up. She said Indiana needs a statewide conversation at the county level to identify the best solutions.

Chambers also said property taxes need to be addressed and promised to focus on making the assessment process more uniform. Hill agreed that assessments are an issue and called for a comprehensive, longterm plan to make a fix.

Doden additionally made reference to his campaign plan, which limits growth of property taxes to about 5% a year.

Crouch — whose plan to "axe" the state's personal income tax has repeatedly come under attack but her competitors — said she is open to property tax cuts, as well.

The night's single question directed at education asked candidates how they would improve dismal K-12 test scores.

Doden said he supports parental choice and is a "big fan" of private school vouchers and "competition." He also pointed to his plan to invest in teachers by reducing their income and property taxes.

Crouch wants a lifetime education system focused on reading, writing, "rithmetic" and reasoning. Retienour, meanwhile, said Indiana is in the midst of an educational "crisis." A comeback will require more trades training for younger Hoosiers and removing social emotional learning from classrooms, she said.

Chambers called Indiana's current educational attainment rates "unac-

ceptable" and said more Hoosiers need skills training. It also requires more parental involvement and investing in work-based learning, rather than buildings and administration

Hill further positioned that federal dollars have no place in Indiana education. "The federal government acts like a crack dealer — dangling money out in front of you," he said. He would instead urge local districts to turn down the money and direct their own programming.

Candidates unhappy with debate format

Multiple questions posed by Schwantes, the moderator, drew pushback from the Republican hopefuls, though.

That included a series in which candidates were asked to raise their hands — signaling yes or no — about whether they would have voted for the CHIPS Act; if they are confident in the integrity of Indiana elections; and if they agree that the 2020 election was "stolen" from former President Donald Trump.

Schwantes additionally asked if they would accept the results of the 2024 Election. Reitenour specifically spoke out, saying there's "no way to know what will happen before now and then."

At one point, Schwantes even gave Braun's reasoning for supporting a gas tax increase when he was a state representative.

Speaking to reporters after the debate's conclusion, candidates largely took issue with which questions were selected — and how they were asked. They also complained that many of the debate topics were centered around national issues, not state ones.

Weather

Thursday, April 25, 2024

(24-hour observations at 10:37 p.m. Wednesday)
High: 52; **Low:** 40; **Precipitation:** None
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 3.46 feet at 8:45 p.m. Wednesday

Wells County forecast

Today: Widespread frost before 9 a.m. Otherwise, sunny, with a high near 58. East wind around 5 mph.

Tonight: Mostly clear, with a low around 37. East wind 5 to 10 mph.

Friday: A 40% chance of showers after 2 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 69. Southeast wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Friday Night: A chance of showers and thunderstorms, then showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm after 2 a.m. Cloudy, with a low around 57. South wind 15 to 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

Saturday: Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm before 8 a.m., then a chance of showers and thunderstorms, mainly between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 77. Windy. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

Saturday Night: A slight chance of showers before 8 p.m., then a slight chance of showers and thunderstorms after 2 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 63. Breezy. Chance of precipitation is 20%.

Sunday: A slight chance of showers and thunderstorms before 8 a.m., then a slight chance of showers and thunderstorms after 2 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 81. Breezy. Chance of precipitation is 20%.

Sunday Night: A 30% chance of showers, thunderstorms, mainly after 2 a.m. Partly cloudy, with a low around 64.

Monday: A chance of showers and thunderstorms, then showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm after 2 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 76. Breezy. Chance of precipitation is 70%.

Monday Night: Showers and thunderstorms likely. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 56. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

Tuesday: A 30% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny, with a high near 70.

Tuesday Night: A slight chance of showers. Mostly clear, with a low around 51.

Wednesday: Sunny, with a high near 77.

Biden signs aid measure

(Continued from Page 1)

air defense capabilities, artillery rounds, armored vehicles and other weapons to shore up Ukrainian forces who have seen morale sink as Russian President Vladimir Putin has racked up win after win.

Meanwhile, Ukraine for the first time has begun using long-range ballistic missiles provided secretly by the United States, bombing a Russian military airfield in Crimea last week and Russian forces in another occupied area overnight, American officials

confirmed Wednesday. The U.S. is providing more of the Army Tactical Missile System, known as ATACMS, in the new military package, according to one official who was not authorized to comment and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Still, longer term, it remains uncertain if Ukraine, after months of losses and massive damage to its infrastructure, can make enough progress to sustain American political support before burning through the latest influx of

money.

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan cautioned that even as new U.S. aid flows into Ukraine, it's possible that Russia will continue to make tactical gains in the weeks ahead.

"The fact is that it's going to take some time for us to dig out of the hole that was created by six months of delay," he said.

Tucked into the measure is a provision that gives TikTok's Beijing-based parent company, ByteDance, nine months to sell it or face

a nationwide prohibition in the United States. The administration and a bipartisan group of lawmakers have called the social media site a growing national security concern, which ByteDance denies.

The bill includes about \$26 billion in aid for Israel and about \$1 billion in humanitarian relief for Palestinians in Gaza as the Israel-Hamas war continues. Biden said Israel must ensure the humanitarian aid for Palestinians in bill reaches the Hamas-controlled territory "without delay."

City engineer

(Continued from Page 1)

on the supervision side of projects. Oman stated it is "hard to put an amount" on the additional workload the department heads have gotten.

"It's certainly not a long-term solution, but we are making the best of it in the interim," Oman said. "I don't know of anybody that's taken on more than anybody else. Hopefully, it's, to my knowledge, a pretty equal division of the

duties."

Whicker stated that while the process will take time, the city must ensure that it gets the right person to progress the city forward.

"It's important we take their take our time and get the person that we feel fits best for the city of Bluffton," Whicker said. "I would rather take time and get the right person versus rushing in and getting someone that is not a good fit."

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Historical society re-elects officers, hears history of county bridges

By BARBARA BARBIERI

Members of the Wells County Historical Society held their annual meeting Monday at the Wells County Public Library where they re-elected officers for 2024, announced program plans for the year and heard historical facts about the county's bridges.

Re-elected officers for 2024 were Jim Sturgeon, president; Connie Burbaker, vice president; Lynn Elliott, treasurer; and Marsha Hotopp, secretary. Board members include Sam Aeschliman, Rebecca Behning, Pat Wall, Paul Griner, Larry McAfee, Samantha Acosta, Susan Price, Roger Scherer and Ben Jones.

During the reading of the minutes by Hotopp, it was noted that the major projects over the past year have been replacing the museum's back steps and the paneling of the annex and the beginning of the Carriage House roofing project.

Sturgeon began his talk about bridges by explaining the first were probably logs or fords. These were replaced by more stur-



Program presenters were Larry McAfee, left, who spoke about The Cover covered bridge and the book he compiled about it, and Jim Sturgeon, who told about the county's other bridges. (Photo by Barbara Barbieri)

dy timber bridges that often were covered to protect the wood, keep snow off, calm animals into thinking they were entering a barn and give shelter during rain showers.

Bluffton's Main Street bridge was once a covered bridge, replaced by an iron bridge and then replaced by the current Crosby

bridge in 1934. A re-fresh of the bridge in 2004 brought restoration to the lighting system.

McAfee spoke about The Cover Bridge, which was a covered bridge located near Markle that burned down May 28, 1966. At the time the Huntington Reservoir was being built and the bridge had been scheduled to be torn down.

Efforts to save it by Paul Bender and Ralph Higman had just brought the news that the bridge was to be saved and raised eight feet, when it burnt down.

It was built in 1870, was 207 ft. long, had 10 ft. overhangs on either side and cost \$7,576.50 to build. The river bed below the bridge was solid limestone.

The road made a curve as it came to the bridge to make sure animals slowed down before crossing. The reason most covered bridges were red was that the paint was cheaper being made of skim milk, wine and rust.

McAfee gifted all in attendance one of his booklets about The Cover bridge titled "The Kissing Bridge." Also, everyone

received a postcard of the bridge.

The dinner was catered by Corner Depot Catering. A list of coming events at the museum was shared by Scherer and follows:

Coming Events

- May 1, 10 a.m.: Local History: Miller Airport by Jim Sturgeon.
- May 8, 10 a.m.: Local History: Grover Sheets American Legion Post 111, Bluffton, by Connie Brubaker.
- May 9, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.: Wells County Senior Expo, 4-H Community Building.
- May 15, 10 a.m.: Local History: "Ghost of the Bluffton Waterworks" by Connie Brubaker.
- May 19, 2 p.m.: Museum History Series with Alan Daugherty telling about his book about Edward Bruce Williamson. (Program in the Annex)
- July 21, 2-5 p.m.: Ice Cream Social.
- Aug. 18, 2 p.m.: Museum History Series about local artist Harry Lindstrand.
- Museum is now open every Sunday and Wednesday afternoons from 1 to 4 p.m.

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Gloria recalls the splendor of the total solar eclipse

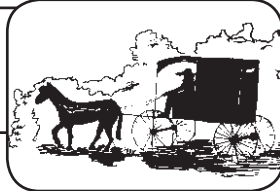
What a day to be remembered! When I first heard about the eclipse, I pictured something like the one we had seven years ago. As the days came close I thought of the nearby towns flooded with thousands and even millions of people. Though I knew better, I imagined what it would be like, should there have been a mistake and no eclipse would come to capture the attention of spectators across the line of fire.

We as a church planned a fish fry in the evening, after watching the rare event of total alignment of sun, moon, and earth. Monday morning dawned beautiful and sunny, I couldn't help but feel for those in neighboring states where the weather proved to be cloudy, thus less informative of the precise process of the events at hand.

By 1:00 in the afternoon we all gathered on the school playground with our camp chairs and eclipse sunglasses. Taking a seat I borrowed one of the children's glasses. Sure enough, it was coming to reality, it was no scheme. A gentleman from the large Amish community in Arthur Illinois demonstrated the function of the sun, moon, and earth, and exactly what was about to happen. Two lower graders were summoned to carry the 'moon' and 'sun' as they walked in circles, creating patterns similar to the sun and

The Amish Cook

by Gloria Yoder



moon. At about that moment I glanced down toward the schoolhouse. What should I see but Mr. Strutter? I hesitated for a moment, then instructed the children to stay where they were, I headed toward our intruding pet which had obviously trailed us. I scooped up the big black strutting turkey and carried him off to our pasture in the woods on the other side of schoolhouse.

Relieved, I joined the others watching the moon/sun demo. By now the eclipse was half covering the sun and it was getting cooler and slightly darker across the countryside.

Intrigued we watched the half moons shining through the perfect circles of the stainless steel colander. Using a pin, Cousin Judith poked holes into her handout with eclipse info. Even these tiny round holes had teeny slivers of sunbeams shining through. What a mighty God we serve!

Totally was getting closer. We were only minutes away, soon it was down to seconds. Elijah, who was sitting on my lap snuggled up close; the 16 degree drop in temper-

ature certainly made a difference! And then it happened. A deeper level of darkness settled over the countryside as the last bit of light from the sun was covered by the moon; a silver ring flashed. Exclamations of awe and delight were sounded on all sides, the splendor being too rich for mere description.

Seven years ago gave us a good taste of the earlier stages, now the totality blew my expectations. The diamond ring caught me off guard. The wonder of our Creator and Provider went to the deeper parts of my being.

Surely hearing about it is one thing, seeing it is altogether different. Amazing. Simply super amazing. The diamond ring, lasting only a few seconds, was faded by flaming gasses of the sun shining around it.

Someone started the old familiar hymn, How great thou art. I wanted to help, and I did, still the moment was almost too precious for words.

"There are the two planets," someone pointed out. "And look at that star!" pointed another. By now

Baily's Beads were forming on the lower edge of the eclipse, marking the evidence of the valleys along the moon's horizon. Someone from the back corner suggested, "Let's all be quiet for 30 seconds."

We did. I loved it. A nearby rooster crowed his early morning call; we smiled, it was obvious that his instincts were setting in.

In a couple short minutes the diamond ring flashed, and the first glimmer of the sun could be seen on the bottom.

Even after the initial darkness had lifted it took some time until the lighting was back to normal. As one of my friends had stated, "The lighting made you feel funny, as if it could affect even your balance."

Soon the ball players were ready to have the ball diamond cleared and wind out with soft ball. Us mothers shuffled to the side with the children as we chatted with out of state guests and watched ball games. Though our ball games are not professional, we have lots of fun. The second time the teams numbered off the lower graders even got to help.

At one point Mr. Strutter was summoned back to school where he entertained the children for a while.

By 5:30 supper aromas were sweeping across the yard as Uncle Vernon and Cousin Josh, along

with the help of a couple other men in church, deep fried hush puppies, fish, and french fries. The taste and quality of the food proved to match the smell. Vernon's wife makes the most amazing hush puppies, these were no exception. Homemade bread, potato salad, fresh veggies, and frozen cheese cakes finished off the meal. Yummy. Yummy memories, too.

It was 7:30 when we walked into the house. Tired and dirty children marked the reality of a good day of hard play.

At 9:20 they are now all sound asleep. Good night to one and all!

HOMEMADE HUSH PUPPIES

- 1 cup corn meal
- 1/3 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup creamed corn
- 2 tablespoons milk (more milk may be added if mixture seems to thick)

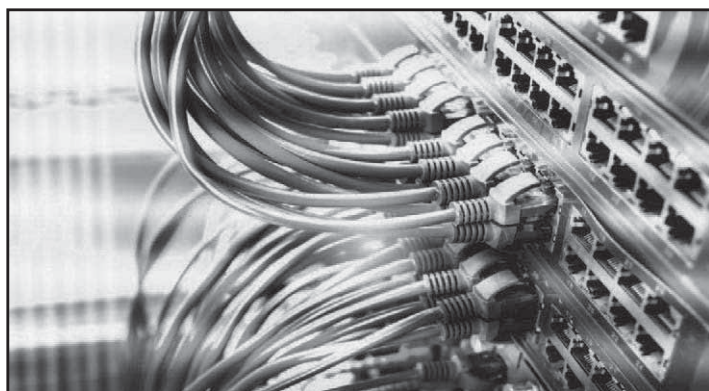
Mix altogether and drop onto a cookie sheet with a small cookie scoop.

Heat oil to 300 degrees. Place hush puppies in hot oil and fry until golden.

Serve with ketchup, barbecue sauce, or any dips of your choice.

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Tigers take care of business against Raiders

By RYAN WALKER

Bluffton took advantage of errors and walks and smacked the ball around against its rival down the road Wednesday night.

Southern Wells (1-7, 0-2 ACAC) coughed up five errors and seven walks in the contest that contributed to a 15-1 win for the Tigers (6-6, 2-0 ACAC), now winners of five of their last six games.

Of the 15 runs, only seven of them were earned. But stand-out freshman pitcher for the Raiders, Landon Johnson, tossed three full innings without allowing an earned run and gave up

only two hits and struck out three. After two innings, the Raiders and Tigers were deadlocked at 1-1 with Johnson getting out of back-to-back jams and keeping the team within striking distance.

But with the mistakes and four walks, it was too much to overcome that night.

"It started off well, and that's the team that we are," Southern Wells head coach Evan Huffman said after the game. "When we got Landon on the mound, we knew he was going to be around the zone. It's just what we have to do when he is in the zone that people are going to hit him a little bit. We've got to make the plays."

On the other hand, Bluffton played clean defensively and starting pitcher A.J. Strevler pounded the strike zone for five solid innings. He allowed one unearned run, one hit with two walks and 10 strikeouts.

"We took advantage of some of the mistakes that they made, which is always a positive, and we didn't shoot ourselves in the foot when they didn't put the ball in play," Bluffton head coach Jason Pierce said.

Griffin Morgan got the Tigers on the board first with a fielder's choice ground ball, but the Raiders would respond with a bases loaded walk by Johnson.

After a swift second inning by both teams, the Tigers put up a four spot in the third inning when Lukas Gehrett drilled a two-RBI base hit to left field with two outs. The Tigers scored two more times walking with the bases loaded.

The fourth frame was where Bluffton made its biggest mark, scoring eight runs. Morgan smoked an RBI double to deep left field and Nick Pastore followed with a double of his own. Braxton Betancourt and Strevler drove in runs on their base hits. On a few throwing errors and walks,

the Tigers completed the inning with a 15-1 cushion.

An inning later, the game was over with the 10-run mercy rule after the fifth inning.

The win got the Tigers back to .500 on the season after falling to 1-4 to start it. They've won five of their last six games going into the game against Woodlan Thursday night, one of the top teams in the conference.

Pierce said that the rough stretch to open the season has been used as a teaching moment. He mentioned plate discipline has been better, pitch selection and defense seeing

improvements too.

In the first five games, Bluffton averaged six runs per game and allowed 11.6. In the last six games, the team has scored a whopping 13.1 runs per game and allowed only 2.5. The team has also had just four errors in that stretch compared to 18 in the first five games.

"Those were valuable, valuable moments for us as unfortunate as they were," Pierce said. "I think we've done a really good job of trying to recover from that and understanding that we are in total control of balls that are hit to us, and we have got to make routine plays, and I think that's been our biggest uptick."

Southern Wells still has some things to improve on during the season, but has had a positive outcome with some of their younger players on the roster.

The Raiders' top four batting average leaders are all freshmen or sophomores. Johnson, who threw against Bluffton, is hitting .438 on the season with four extra-base hits and is tied for the team lead in RBI.

Sophomore Peyton Bertsch is also hitting .400 on the squad, while sophomore Robby Freimuth and freshmen Jakob Gearheart are over .333 thus far.

Johnson also has a 3.65 ERA entering the Tigers' contest in three appearances and has established himself as a cornerstone piece to Southern Wells' future.

"He's an incredible leader," Huffman said. "(He) leads by example. Like I said, every time he's on the mound, we have a chance. He's going to pitch to strikes and he's going to challenge hitters to hit him. He's been very impressive."

Bluffton will host Woodlan at 5 p.m. Thursday, April 25.

Southern Wells will be at Heritage at 5 p.m. Thursday, April 25.

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Tigers' starter A.J. Strevler dishes out a pitch during the first inning against the Raiders. He threw a complete five-inning game, allowing one unearned run, only one hit and 10 strikeouts.



Southern Wells' starting pitcher Landon Johnson (left) throws a pitch to Bluffton batter Griffin Morgan during Wednesday night's contest between the two Wells County foes. The Tigers got the best of the Raiders 15-1. (Photos by Ryan Walker)

High School Calendar

THURSDAY, APRIL 25
BASEBALL: Belmont at Norwell, 5:30 p.m.; Woodlan at Bluffton, 5:30 p.m.; Southern Wells at Heritage, 5 p.m.
BOYS GOLF: Southern Wells at Wabash, 5 p.m.
GIRLS TENNIS: Belmont at Norwell, 4:30 p.m.; Bluffton at Wayne, 5 p.m.
SOFTBALL: Woodlan at Bluffton, 5:30 p.m.; Southern Wells at Heritage, 5:30 p.m.
TRACK & FIELD (CO-ED): Northfield at Southern Wells, 5 p.m.; Adams Central, Jay County at Bluffton, 5:30 p.m.
FRIDAY, APRIL 26
BASEBALL: Carroll at Norwell, 5:30 p.m.
GIRLS TENNIS: Blackhawk Christian at Norwell 4:30 p.m.; Southwood at Bluffton, 5 p.m.
SOFTBALL: Heritage at Norwell, 5:30 p.m.; Bluffton at Southern Wells, 5 p.m.
TRACK & FIELD (CO-ED): Norwell, Bluffton at South Adams Invitational, 5:30 p.m.
SATURDAY, APRIL 27
BASEBALL: Southern Wells at UC Dylan Williams Memorial at Union City, 9 a.m.; Nor-

well at Heritage, 10 a.m.
BOYS GOLF: Canterbury Invitational, 8:30 a.m.
GIRLS TENNIS: Bluffton at DeKalb, 9 a.m.
SOFTBALL: Bluffton at Daleville, 10 a.m.; Southern Wells at Dylan Williams Memorial at Union City, 10 a.m.
MONDAY, APRIL 29
BASEBALL: Norwell at Delta, 6 p.m.; Bluffton at Churubusco, 5:30 p.m.; Southern Wells at Randolph Southern, 5 p.m.
GIRLS TENNIS: Norwell at Carroll, 4:30 p.m.; Bluffton at Belmont, 4:30 p.m.
SOFTBALL: New Haven at Norwell, 5:30 p.m.
TUESDAY, APRIL 30
BASEBALL: Norwell at New Haven, 5:30 p.m.; Bluffton at Adams Central, 5 p.m.
BOYS GOLF: East Noble at Norwell, 4:30 p.m.; Woodlan at Bluffton, 5 p.m.; Southern Wells at South Adams, 4:30 p.m.
GIRLS TENNIS: Norwell at New Haven, 5 p.m.; South Adams at Bluffton, 5 p.m.
SOFTBALL: Bluffton at Adams Central, 5 p.m.; Southern Wells at Monroe Central, 5 p.m.

Sports Roundup

Tiger boys win home track meet with Jets, Patriots

Bluffton's boys team won the home track meet over Jay County and Adams Central, while the girls got second Wednesday night.

The Tiger boys won by a score of 100, topping the Patriots in second at 39.5 and the Jets at 16.5. The girls had a score of 46 to the Patriots' 76, and topped the Jets at 34.

Top Placers were:

Boys

- Andrew Hunt in the 110m hurdles with a time of 15.57 and in the 300m hurdles with a time of 43.90.
- Alex Mechling in the 100m with a time of 11.30.
- Tyler Godwin in the 1600m with a time of 4:44.49 and in the 800m with a time of 2:08.07.
- Elijah Kerner in the 400m with a time of 55.30.
- Jude Baumgartner in the 200m with a time of 23.29.
- Levi Johns in the 3200m with a time of 10:33.14.
- Austin Geimer in the high jump at 5-8.
- Maksym Laishevkin in the long jump at 19-5.
- Johnny Cruz in the shot put at 47-1.50.
- The 4x800m relay team of Godwin, Ayden Teeple, Jackson Rockwell and Aidan

Graves with a time of 8:46.46.

- The 4x100m relay team of Mechling, Ben Ramseyer, Trey Bustos and Khamel Moore with a time of 46.22.

- The 4x400m relay team of Kerner, Laishevkin, Hunt and Baumgartner with a time of 3:42.16.

Girls

- Maryn Schreiber in the 400m with a time of 1:05.90 and Madelyn Funk second in the 400m with a time of 1:05.90.
- Corina Rader in the discus at 92-9 and Rori Drayer at 87-2.50.
- Dakota Lee second in the 100m hurdles with a time of 17.26.
- Funk second in the long jump at 14-2.

Bluffton will be at the South Adams Invitational starting at 5:30 p.m. Friday, April 26.

Raiders fall to the Broncos in softball

Southern Wells fell to Daleville on the road 10-0 Wednesday.

The Raiders tallied three hits in the contest, one each by Gracie Reeves, Collena Reeves and Remi Holmes. Holmes also stole two bases in the game.

Emma Parks was charged with the loss. Maddy Sutton threw 2.2 innings, allowing one run and struck out four.

Southern Wells will be at Heritage at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, April 25.



Norwell's Milanna Pepper (second from left) signs with Saint Mary's College at Notre Dame with her family and cheer coach present Wednesday morning. Pepper will be a part of the first class of athletes to participate in stunt at the school. From left to right are Dave Pepper, Milanna Pepper, Yolanda Pepper and cheer coach Breanna Clifton. (Photo by Ryan Walker)

Norwell's Pepper joins first Saint Mary's recruiting class for stunt

By RYAN WALKER

Norwell stunt cheerleader Milanna Pepper signed with Saint Mary's College at Notre Dame Wednesday morning.

Pepper signed alongside many friends and family to witness her achievement, which she was warned by.

"I'm so appreciative for them for everything," Pepper said. "They've always come to my games and supported me. Just seeing them here today felt amazing because it's exciting that they're willing to come out and see something that I'm excited about."

Pepper will now be a part of the first recruiting class Saint Mary's have ever had for stunt cheer, a sport that has been recently added and will compete for the first time next school year. It's also the first NCAA Division III school in Indiana to add the sport.

Stunt is an athletic form of cheerleading where teams will compete in a four-quarter style format against other schools. Pepper said she was excited to be on the first team at the school.

According to the school website, Jillian Humphrey will be leading the stunt team as head coach. She's spent the past several months preparing a team for next year, which included the Norwell Knight.

Pepper enjoyed visiting campus and getting to know Humphrey and her future teammates.

"When I talked with the coach, she seemed really sweet and the other girls that are committed are really sweet too and have reached out to me and talked to me about stuff."

Pepper plans to study nursing.

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New love amid grief: navigating timelines

Dear Annie: I am a 45-year-old man, and I was married for 17 years to my lovely wife until her untimely death a year ago.

Recently, an old girlfriend from my teenage years reached out and was a great friend to me. She helped me through my grief, helped me reconnect with God and was always there for me.

I want to ask her to marry me, but my question is: Is there a time limit on moving on? Or should I mourn my wife because I do not want to disrespect her?

Dear Widowed Husband: The pain of losing a spouse is profound, and navigating grief is a deeply personal process. The fact that you're considering love again is a testament to your capacity for love and a sign of healing.

The reaction of your children and step-child, however, is an important consideration. Their behavior suggests they may be struggling with their own grief and possibly feeling like moving on could be a betrayal of their mother's memory.

There's no universal timeline for mourning or for when it's "appropriate" to find new love, and marrying again doesn't mean you disrespect your wife. If this relationship feels right, it's OK to embrace it.

Dear Annie: I know this topic has been beaten to death, but still I am asking for advice. For more than 25 years, I have

been designing and making all of my greeting cards by hand, with rubber stamps, dyes and coloring tools. It takes me a long time to do one card, and I enjoy the process very much.

I have two children who each have two children. One is a son, the other a daughter. My daughter's kids, who are teens, always thank me for the cards. My son's kids, who are slightly younger, never have, and I mean that "never" literally.

Dear Sad and Hurting Grandma: Being open about your feelings is often the best route. Share with your son how much joy you find in creating those cards and how you've noticed the difference in responses.

"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.

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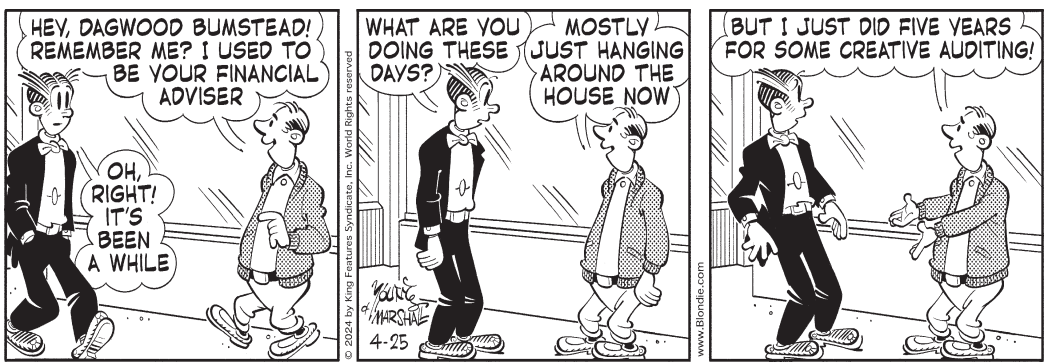
Dear Annie by Annie Lane



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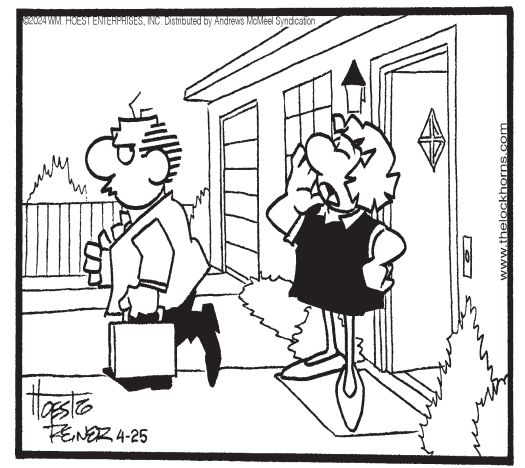
CRANKSHAFT



THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane

The LOCKHORNS



My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



God empowers us to speak according to His will and His word

Question: What does the Bible mean when it says that when we are weak, we are strong? Seems contradictory to me. — W.S.

Answer: The Apostle Paul wrote, "When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10, NKJV). How is it possible to be both?

Paul was stating a very important truth: When we attempt to do God's work in our own strength instead of God's strength, we will fail. Only when we acknowledge our weakness and look to the Holy Spirit for the wisdom and strength we need will God bless our efforts.

It is true that we can prepare ourselves to teach, to counsel, to volunteer for a mission, or to serve others; but when God empowers us to speak according to His will and His word, we accomplish His purpose. Only God can prepare the hearts of those we witness to.

There is no greater strength, no greater assurance that He is with us, than when we go forth equipped and nourished by

His instruction. The Bible tells us that the Lord will be our strength when our hearts trust in Him, and He helps us (see Psalm 28:7). We must be honest before God about our weaknesses and ask Him to help us overcome them, so that we can serve Him more effectively — with purpose.

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

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"Poems are like rap without music."

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TV schedule grid with columns for time slots (4:25 to 12:30) and rows for various channels (WINM, CBS, Antenna, ABC, etc.)

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Yesterday's answer 4-25 crossword grid with filled-in letters.

