

# The News - Banner

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2024

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## Wells County commissioners settle insurance issue

**By HOLLY GASKILL**  
In a special session Tuesday morning, the Wells County Commissioners approved an insurance renewal that increases their liability coverage on several county buildings.

The approved policy covers a \$25 million replacement for the jail, up from \$5 million, and a \$3 million replacement for the Carnegie Annex for a \$98,843 premium. The commissioners had twice delayed action on a renewal to increase these building valuations, criticizing the back and forth for

quotes. However, Dann Lipp of WalkerHughes told the commissioners Tuesday that they needed to have increased communication about county needs. He emphasized that he only heard updated numbers about highway assets and the new salt storage building last

week. "In the future, I don't want to have conversations where we show up to a meeting, and we don't know what's insured on what value ... we've got to pay very close attention to what we have in the jail, what we have in

the annex — and if you don't feel it's the right coverage, we have to be notified as soon as possible, because we don't want to be in this situation at all," Lipp said. "And if (you) feel that (value needs to increase) from a jail renovation

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### Walking and praying for Bluffton and Wells

Pastor Neil Ainslie hosted a public prayer walk, where people could pray in front of different nonprofits and city departments for wisdom and a heart to serve on Tuesday. Above, pictured left to right, Holly and David Wittbrodt, Ainslie, Carey and Sarah Collins, and Judy LaPeer prayed for Indiana Child Services, Community Care, The Garage, county/city government, fire and police, among other organizations. At right, Holly prays with Christine Walker of Community Care. Below, the walk ended with the singing of hymns. (Photos by Jonathan Snyder)



## City, county working interlocal agreement for economic development

**By HOLLY GASKILL**  
There may soon be an interlocal agreement for Wells County's economic development commission. On Tuesday, County Attorney Ted Storer told the County Commissioners that he and Tony Crowell, attorney for the city of Bluffton, are continuing to work on an agreement. Storer was unsure of a specific timeline, but said he may have a draft by the commissioners' next regular meeting, 5 p.m. May 6.

Bluffton Common Council member Scott Mentzer, the city's point person on the matter, further told The News-Banner that a temporary fee for service agreement may be necessary due to time constraints, but that an interlocal agreement is the long-term goal. Cheryl Morphew of Johnson County has taken the helm in the meantime. The county and city of Bluffton have each contracted Morphew for economic development consulting for up to 10 hours

monthly at \$150 per hour. During the commissioners' special meeting Tuesday, Commissioner Blake Gerber asked about the county's stake in READI 2.0, where Gov. Eric Holcomb has awarded \$45 million for economic development in northeast Indiana. Commissioner Jeff Stringer stated Morphew was handling that matter but that the funds had not yet been divided between all 11 counties. Stringer claimed Allen County has made arguments for the lion's share of the funding.

The mayor's office also announced a READI workshop at 8 a.m. on May 9 for potential project owners via a Facebook post on Tuesday. Ryan Twiss and Michael Galbriath will discuss regional efforts and strategies for the funding.

Morphew's contact information is also now listed on the Wells County Economic Development Commission website, wellsedc.com.

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## Interurban project receives approval for additional expense

**By JONATHAN SNYDER**  
An additional \$10,000 expense for construction observation on the Interurban Trail project was approved by the Bluffton Board of Public Works and Safety Tuesday. Engineering Resources Incorporated out of Fort Wayne will help oversee the project. Engineering Resources will respond to contractor requests for information, review pay applications, hold construction progress meetings, issue change orders if need be, summarize information about ground

conditions in regards to the native material underneath the pavement and complete a punch list when the project is completed. Parks Department Superintendent Brandy Fiechter stated that donated funds will cover the additional expense. Additionally, the board announced that Josh Barkley withdrew his request for funding assistance for his sidewalk. Barkley came to the board on April 16 asking if the program would

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## Democrats will save Johnson's job if Republicans try to oust him

**By KEVIN FREKING**  
**Associated Press**  
WASHINGTON (AP) — House Democrats will vote to save Republican Speaker Mike Johnson's job should some of his fellow Republican lawmakers seek to remove him from the position, Democratic leaders said Tuesday, likely assuring for now that Johnson will avoid being ousted from office like his predecessor, former Rep. Kevin McCarthy. Johnson, R-La., has come under heavy criticism from some Republicans for moving forward

with aid for Ukraine as part of a \$95 billion emergency spending package that passed this month. It would take only a handful of Republicans to remove Johnson from the speakership if the Democratic caucus went along with the effort. But Democratic leaders took that possibility off the table. "At this moment, upon completion of our national security work, the time has come to turn the page on this chapter of Pro-Putin Republican obstruction," said a statement from the top three House Democrats, Reps.

Hakeem Jeffries, Katherine Clark and Pete Aguilar. "We will vote to table Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene's Motion to Vacate the Chair. If she invokes the motion, it will not succeed." The announcement from Democrats ensures that Johnson will survive the most difficult stretch of his tenure so far, which saw him struggle through internal GOP divisions to pass government funding, the renewal of a key surveillance program and aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan. To do so, Johnson was often forced to rely on votes from

Democrats, creating an unusual governing coalition that has angered hard-right members who say their majority is being squandered. Greene, R-Ga., filed a resolution with the House clerk last month — called a motion to vacate — that would remove Johnson from office if approved by the House. And while Greene did not force the resolution to be taken up immediately, she told reporters she was laying the groundwork for future consideration. She had two co-sponsors, Reps. Thomas Massie, R-Ky.,

and Paul Gosar, R-Ariz. Johnson was quick to distance himself from Democrats on the issue, saying he had no conversations with Jeffries or anyone else about saving his job. "I was laser-focused on getting the supplemental done," Johnson said, referring to the aid package. "I've had colleagues from both parties come up to me on the floor, of course, and say we won't stand for this. ... I've not requested assistance from anyone. I'm not focused on that at all."

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**Outside**



April showers are over, so where are the May flowers

Today	Thursday	Friday
High 79	High 81	High 76
Low 51	Low 62	Low 55

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## Insurance issue

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that was done in 2022, and we don't know about it until we show up with numbers to discuss the renewal — we've got to have something better in place."

The commissioners agreed that communication needed to be better and

expressed that fine-tuning insurance needs would be considered an ongoing process. Commissioner Jeff Stringer noted that building costs have increased significantly and Commissioner Blake Gerber added that the courthouse and annex are unique buildings

to quote since their historic construction would be irreplaceable.

Also during the meeting, commissioners stated that Nate Rumschlag, former Wells County engineer, has dropped from two county projects. Rumschlag, now working for

Adams County, had been assisting Wells through an interlocal agreement, which expired earlier this month. Stringer said an agreement is still in the works, but there has not been progress in filling the role full-time.

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## Interurban project

(Continued from Page 1)  
assist landowners for rental properties in addition to homeowners. Mayor John Whicker stated that during a conversation involving Barkley, Street Commissioner Tim Simpson and Building Commissioner Richard Triplett, it was determined that a few items needed to be cleared up on Barkley's end.

Furthermore, Utility Director Jon Oman stated that the wastewater treatment plant project has run into a debate

about the proper variable speed drive motors to get for the project. These drives help control the speed and torque of electric motors and the company wants to ensure they get the right ones for the plant.

Oman clarified that a meeting tomorrow will discuss the proper specifications for the drives, while noting that the debate will not delay the project's completion. Oman also noted that all the other aspects of the project are moving

on schedule.

The board approved a raise for Dispatcher Dallas Creager. Creager, who has now worked one year in the department, will be getting a \$1.00 per hour raise. The board also approved an SRF Claim for James S. Jackson Construction company, totaling \$1,439,256.65. This claim covers the cost for the whole month of April, with the project still needing \$18,396,011.95 to be paid in full.

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## Speaker Mike Johnson

(Continued from Page 1)  
Many House Republicans are eager to move past the divisions that have tormented their ranks ever since taking the majority last January. At a closed-door session Tuesday morning, much of the discussion focused on how to create unity in the party heading into the November elections.

Rep. Andy Barr, R-Ky., said Republicans heard from Michael Whatley, the new chairman of the Republican National Committee, who emphasized that Donald Trump, the presumptive GOP presidential nominee, wants to unify the majority in the House. He said that's a message that certainly helps Johnson.

"What he wants is a unified Republican majority, so my message is singing from the same song sheet as President Trump," Barr said.

Still, Greene indicated she may move forward with the effort to remove Johnson, tweeting on X that she believes in record-

ed votes to put "Congress on record." She also called Johnson "officially the Democratic Speaker of the House" and questioned "what slimy deal" he made for Democratic support.

"Americans deserve to see the Uniparty on full display. I'm about to give them their coming out party!" Greene tweeted. "Uniparty" is a derisive term some Republicans use to describe cooperation between some fellow Republicans and Democrats.

Greene announced a press conference on the issue for Wednesday. During votes Tuesday, she held an extensive conversation with House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, R-La., who said afterward that he had stressed the work Republicans were trying to accomplish as she weighs her next move.

"In the end, it's her decision, but we had a conversation about it," Scalise said.

The removal of McCarthy in October left the House adrift for nearly a

month, unable to take up legislation as Republicans struggled to select a replacement. Republicans were anxious to avoid a repeat going into November.

"It's huge, it's huge, especially for the presidential election but all of us up and down the ballot," said Rep. Vern Buchanan, R-Fla. "They don't want another 30 days of a dysfunctional Congress, and that's what you would get."

Many Democrats, even before Tuesday's announcement, had said they would consider helping Johnson, but they were also looking for direction from their leadership and emphasized that in order for Johnson to gain their support, he would need to allow for the vote on an emergency aid package focused on Ukraine and Israel.

Democrats made clear that their approach would be to table Greene's motion, rather than take an affirmative vote for Johnson, particularly because

of his role leading Trump's 2020 election challenge in the runup to the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

Democrats were also wary of repeating the disorder that occurred during McCarthy's removal. The Democratic leaders in their statement of opposition to Greene's effort, emphasized their willingness to work across party lines on national priorities.

"We're not looking for chaos. We're the adults in the room," said Rep. Ann Kuster, D-N.H.

Some Republican lawmakers, however, said the Democratic change in tactics was a sign of remorse over helping to oust McCarthy.

"I think that Democrats are realizing that they voted with the wrong, small group of individuals last time around," said Rep. Anthony D'Esposito, R-N.Y. "Mike Johnson has shown he's a leader. He has the ability to garner support from both sides of the aisle on issues that matter most to the American people."

## Mammograms should start at 40 to address rising breast cancer rates at younger ages, panel says

By CARLA K. JOHNSON  
AP Medical Writer

Regular mammograms to screen for breast cancer should start younger, at age 40, according to an influential U.S. task force. Women ages 40 to 74 should get screened every other year, the group said.

Previously, the task force had said women could choose to start breast cancer screening as young as 40, with a stronger recommendation that they get the exams every two years from age 50 through 74.

The announcement Tuesday from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force makes official a draft recommendation announced last year. The recommendations were published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

"It's a win that they are now recognizing the benefits of screening women in their 40s," said Dr. Therese Bevers of MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. She was not involved in the guidance.

Other medical groups, including the American College of Radiology and the American Cancer Society, suggest mammograms every year — instead of every other year — starting at age 40 or 45, which may cause confusion, Bevers said, but "now the starting age will align with what many other organizations are saying."

Breast cancer death rates have fallen as treatment continues to improve. But breast cancer is still the second-most common cause of cancer death for U.S. women. About 240,000 cases are diagnosed annually and nearly 43,000 women die from breast cancer.

The nudge toward earlier screening is meant to address two vexing issues: the increasing incidence of breast cancer among women in their 40s — it's risen 2%

annually since 2015 — and the higher breast cancer death rate among Black women compared to white women, said task force vice chair Dr. John Wong of Tufts Medical Center in Boston.

"Sadly, we know all too well that Black women are 40% more likely to die from breast cancer than white women," Wong said. Modeling studies predict that earlier screening may help all women, and have "even more benefit for women who are Black," he said.

Here are more details on what's changed, why it's important and who should pay attention.

Age 40 is when mammograms should start for women, transgender men and nonbinary people at average risk. They should have the X-ray exam every other year, according to the new guidance. Other groups recommend annual mammograms, starting at 40 or 45.

The advice does not apply to women who've had breast cancer or those at very high risk of breast

cancer because of genetic markers. It also does not apply to women who had high-dose radiation therapy to the chest when they were young, or to women who've had a lesion on previous biopsies.

It's not clear whether older women should continue getting regular mammograms. Studies rarely include women 75 and older, so the task force is calling for more research.

Bevers suggests that older women talk with their doctors about the benefits of screening, as well as harms like false alarms and unnecessary biopsies.

Mammograms don't work as well for women with dense breasts, but they should still get the exams.

The task force would like to see more evidence about additional tests such as ultrasounds or MRIs for women with dense breasts. It's not yet clear whether those types of tests would help detect cancer at an earlier, more treatable stage, Wong said.

## Weather

Wednesday, May 1, 2024  
(24-hour observations at 11:40 p.m. Tuesday at the Fort Wayne International Airport)

High: 75; Low: 54; Precipitation: None  
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 5.00 feet at 7:45 p.m. Tuesday

### Wells County forecast

**Today:** Partly sunny, with a high near 79. South wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

**Tonight:** Partly cloudy, with a low around 51. Northwest wind 5 to 10 mph becoming northeast after midnight.

**Thursday:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 81. East wind around 10 mph.

**Thursday Night:** A 30% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 62. Southeast wind around 10 mph.

**Friday:** A chance of showers and thunderstorms, then showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm after 2 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 76. Chance of precipitation is 70%. New rainfall amounts between a tenth and quarter of an inch, except higher amounts possible in thunderstorms.

**Friday Night:** Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm before 8 p.m., then a chance of showers and thunderstorms between 8 p.m. and 2 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 55. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

**Saturday:** A slight chance of showers between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m., then a slight chance of showers and thunderstorms after 2 p.m. Mostly sunny, with a high near 77. Chance of precipitation is 20%.

**Saturday Night:** A 30% chance of showers and thunderstorms, mainly before 2 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 55.

**Sunday:** A 10% chance of showers before 8 a.m. Mostly sunny, with a high near 75.

**Sunday Night:** Partly cloudy, with a low around 56.

**Monday:** A 40% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny, with a high near 76.

**Monday Night:** A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 62.

**Tuesday:** A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny, with a high near 79. Breezy.



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With the primary election only a few weeks away I thought it was a good time to share a little about myself.

I've been married to my high school sweetheart, Tim Andrews, for 47 years. We are blessed with 3 daughters & 7 grandkids. I was born & raised on a farm in Southern Wells County to Dean & Pat Mounsey. I previously worked in the Wells County Clerk and Treasurer's Office for 7.5 years and then 22 years at Southern Wells Community School as the Corporation Treasurer.

**Community engagement:** Southern Wells Community Church, CADA board, Solid Waste Board, Purdue Extension Board, SW Construction Trades board, Junior Achievement, Justice Reinvention Advisory Board, Wells County Drug Task Force.

**My expertise in government budgeting & finance makes me the right choice.** Under my tenure, we've achieved significant milestones: new highway garage, jail renovations, and payroll matrix system implementation.

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## Me and my sparrows and finches and spiders

There's a bird on the back porch. More specifically, there is a female red finch with a nest on the back porch. She made it out of jasmine clematis that Mom planted around 10 years ago. The flowers smell divine in the summer, but the vine can quickly take over if you're not careful. The bees love it too.



Carrie Penrod

The finch's home is nestled behind the porch light, between the wall and the glass of the light. On the other side is the downspout, and a few feet away is a large lilac tree at least 40 years old. It's not a bad spot for a home, in my opinion. That said, the bird and I are struggling to find harmony. It's dark when I come home and most of the natural world is sleeping — including Mrs. Finch. I approach quietly, keeping an eye on the area of the nest because I know two things will happen. First, I am going to startle the finch. Second, the finch is going to startle me by being startled.

Last night, she watched me approach from the edge of the nest. "Don't freak out. If you don't freak out, I won't freak out, and everyone will be fine," I told her quietly. She didn't listen. She freaked out and flapped towards me; I freaked out and dropped my keys while apologizing to a bird.

Thinking about it, I have that conversation a lot with wild animals — big and small. Sometimes, I'll even throw a please in there. "Please don't freak out. Because if you freak out, I am going to freak out, and it will end badly for all parties."

When the bird isn't making a home, the back porch at night usually has a copious amount of spiders. I'm not really afraid of spiders, but I generally don't like them in my vicinity. I avoid killing them if I can because they are helpful to the ecosystem. I repeat the same conversation with them that I have with the bird. They usually listen. Unlike the bird.

When I was a kid, my mom's dad, Paps, put up nets around all the cherry trees in the front yard to keep the birds from eating the cherries. I was playing outside and came across a bird tangled up in one, flailing about wildly. I pulled an old white table over to the tree so I could reach it and, as carefully as I could, untangled the bird. It was a sparrow. Mom and Mams, mom's mom, often used to say to each other while watching the birds, "God loves his little sparrows, doesn't he?" I found Paps sitting in his chair under the tree and yelled at him about the nets and how the bird could have died. I told him they were just hungry. He took the nets down and never put them back up. But that didn't stop him from sitting outside with a BB gun. (I don't think he ever shot any, but the sound was enough to scare them off.) You can't win them all.

Around the same time, I found a baby bird on the ground under the lilac tree. We couldn't find a nest, so Paps helped me take care of it. It stayed in a cage in the backroom on top of the washer for a good while. He taught me how to feed it and how to handle it. I remember coming over after school one day to find the bird gone. Paps said it was ready to be released, but part of me wonders if the bird didn't die, and he was just sparing my hopeful heart.

Last year, around Easter, someone visiting tore down the finch nest and smashed the eggs.

I don't think I'll ever understand the cruelty of man. There's a poem by Rudy Francisco called "Mercy." In it, he writes about a woman asking the speaker to kill a spider. The speaker says instead, they find the most peaceful weapons they can — a cup and a napkin. The spider is caught and placed outside. He writes, "If I am ever caught in the wrong place/ at the wrong time, just being alive/ and not bothering anyone/ I hope I am greeted/ with the same kind of mercy." Althea Davis wrote a poem called "Kinder than man." She writes about deer hit by cars, moths to porch lights, and mice in traps. The last stanza reads, "If I am ever killed/ for simply living/ let death be kinder/ than man."

I've noticed that we humans tend to kill things just because we can. Because they're a nuisance, because they're scary, because we don't like them, because we're afraid, because we want to tell the world we killed a bear. Maybe we do it because it's easy. The life isn't human, so it doesn't matter. I'm not sure I have it in me to live that way. After all, I get sad when I see roadkill.

Nature can already be so cruel; why would I want to be?

Contact Carrie at: [newsroom@news-banner.com](mailto:newsroom@news-banner.com)

## Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, May 1, the 122nd day of 2024. There are 244 days left in the year.

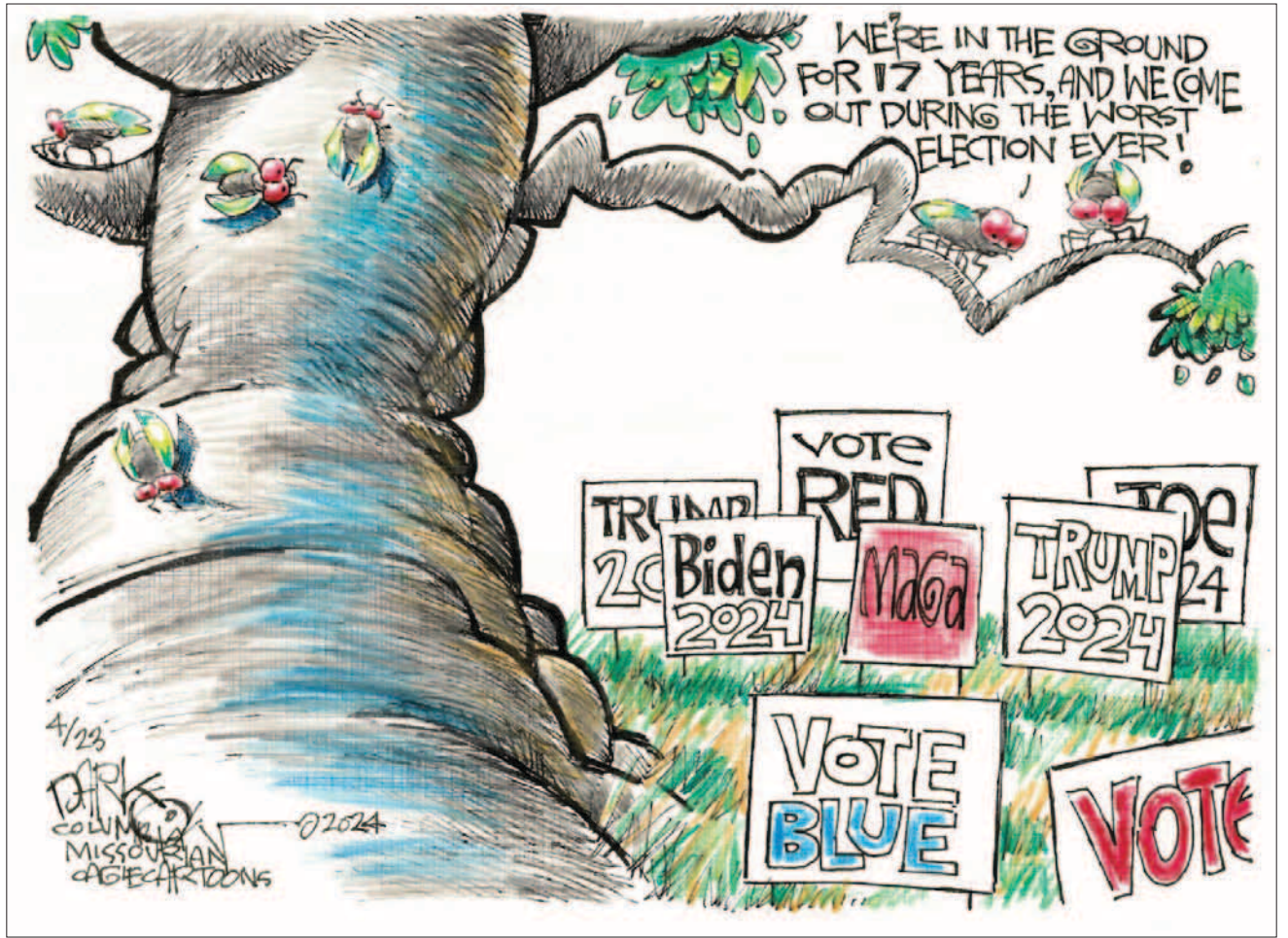
Today's Highlight in History: On May 1, 2011, President Barack Obama announced the death of Osama bin Laden during a U.S. commando operation. (Because of the time difference, it was early May 2 in Pakistan, where the al-Qaida leader met his end.)

On this date: In 1707, the Kingdom of Great Britain was created as a treaty merging England

and Scotland took effect.

In 1866, three days of race-related rioting erupted in Memphis, Tennessee, as white mobs targeted Black people, 46 of whom were killed, along with two whites. (The violence spurred passage of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution defining American citizenship and equal protection under the law.)

In 1960, the Soviet Union shot down an American U-2 reconnaissance plane over Sverdlovsk and captured its pilot, Francis Gary Powers.



## A Republican and a Democrat confront our era of bad vibes

Are you skeptical of bipartisan dialogues and commissions that pretend away differences in a chase after a lowest-common-denominator "center"? Me, too.

Yet there is good reason to be weary of a political culture so saturated with negative partisanship and mutual mistrust that it makes discussing our nation's most intractable problems impossible. That's especially true of challenges that defy easy ideological categorization: social disconnection, loneliness, the damaging side effects of social media, the shattering of families, the curse of drug addiction.

Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), who has made it a personal crusade to move these challenges to the forefront of politics, told me he sees "a lot of room between right and left to work hard" on these questions.

This has now taken the form of an alliance with Republican Gov. Spencer Cox of Utah to convene "a national conversation" under the rubric "restoring the common good." A small group of prominent intellectuals and activists ranging from progressive to conservative held its first meeting in Utah on Friday.

It is worth briefly interrupting the news about a certain trial in New York and ludicrous claims that presidents don't have to obey the law to celebrate this effort to do politics differently.

Their initiative matters as a signal that parts of both the left and right are reconfiguring politics around communitarian themes. By focusing on deep personal dissatisfactions, they are also offering an explanation for the disconnect between the good news of a nation where "the unemployment rate is low, crime is going down, GDP is growing," as Murphy put it, and the unhappiness so many Americans express.

Murphy and Cox initially came together because of their mutual desire to respond to the damage that cellphones and social media are doing to children and teens. In the process, Murphy told me, they realized they shared a "common worry that this country feels like it's falling apart at the seams emotionally and spiritually."

If that sounds grand or even theological, the specific forms of suffering that alarm Murphy and Cox are tangible and heartbreaking - from "deaths of despair" caused by suicide and drug overdoses to the collapse of communities that lost their economic purpose. "We had more opioid prescriptions than people in some of these counties," Cox said in an interview, referring to rural parts of his state.

Murphy is emphatic in distinguishing their effort from the usual bipartisan confab. "This is not intended to be some milquetoast, moderate, let's-all-get-along conversation," he says. "This is about trying to push right and left into a ... conversation about why so many Americans are feeling bad and some of the real-

ly big things we may have to do together to fix that."

What could turn this conversation into a larger challenge to the status quo are the links Murphy and Cox draw between the social breakdown often highlighted on the right and the economic injustices that engage the left.

Ian Marcus Corbin, a philosopher at Harvard Medical School and architect of the initiative, says the emphasis on the material roots of personal struggles distinguishes this era's communitarians from their forebears. "You pull out the economic foundation of a community," he told me, "and family formation goes haywire, and all sorts of social pathologies - drug abuse, loneliness, alienation and anti-social behavior - emerge."

Murphy speaks of how "concentrated power is driving Americans crazy," the need to "grow bipartisan coalitions around breaking up monopolies and big companies that have way too much power in our economic lives," and the imperative to recognize that there are "some sacred places where efficiency and profit shouldn't govern."

Cox has pioneered a call on Americans to "disagree better" - meaning to argue substantively without holding each other in contempt - and he expects to have some disagreements with Murphy about "the proper role of government" in the economy. But, Cox added, "I think he and I will find agreements that when there are major economic changes to a community, that does lead to some of these deaths of despair, this hopelessness that we're seeing." Repairing the social damage will require public action to "help build more resilient neighborhoods and economies."

Murphy and Cox also have different (but not diametrically opposed) perspectives on the fiercely contested presidential campaign in the backdrop of their dialogue. Murphy is a staunch supporter of President Biden, whom he credits with pushing "transformational policies." Cox is critical of both Biden and former president Donald Trump. "We should be nominating different people," Cox said earlier this year.

Yet both insist the nation needs to pay attention to the discontent Trump has exposed. "I guess we can thank him for that, and nothing else," Murphy said. Cox said that to move forward, the country must figure out why so many voters used Trump as an opportunity "to throw a brick through the window."

Democracies can founder when they fail to address festering social wounds. These bipartisan partners are standing up for the democratic project by insisting that we can't ignore them any longer.

Follow E.J. Dionne Jr. @EJDionne on X



E.J. Dionne

## No, don't rush the Trump J6 case

When the Supreme Court said it would hear Donald Trump's immunity claim in the Jan. 6 case brought by Special Counsel Jack Smith, the former president's enemies erupted in anger.

It was delay for delay's sake. It was a rank political favor for an ally. It was utterly gratuitous in legal terms, since it's a slam dunk that a former president doesn't enjoy immunity for acts during his time in office.

MSNBC's Rachel Maddow accused the Court of "doing this as a dilatory tactic to help your political friend." And, she added, "for you to say that this is something that the Court needs to decide because it's something that's unclear in the law is just flagrant, flagrant bullpucky."

This interpretation didn't survive first contact with the oral arguments, which were fascinating, complex and raised all sorts of knotty and consequential issues.

Does the threat of criminal prosecution run the risk of chilling presidents in the performance of their duties, as Trump's lawyer argued? Or does immunity run the risk of creating an incentive for executive lawlessness, as the Special Counsel's representative argued? Would politicized lawsuits against presidents threaten our "stable, democratic society," as Justice Samuel Alito suggested? Or would immunity make the presidency "the seat of criminality," as Justice Ketanji



Rich Lowry

Brown Jackson worried?

Should a president have immunity for official presidential acts and not private acts, and where do we draw the line? Do the criminal statutes that Trump is accused of violating in the J6 case even apply to him? What role do a series of court precedents play in this case?

All of this and more featured in the oral arguments. They were so interesting and fraught because the court is grappling with fresh questions raised by an unprecedented circumstance, namely, the prosecution of a former president.

As for the sweeping, unanimous decision of the D.C. Circuit that denied Trump's claim of immunity and Trump's critics considered dispositive, Chief Justice John Roberts, who is not a MAGA extremist, made it clear that he thinks it's desperately flawed.

Trump's critics are putting partisan considerations (the belief that a trial in of itself and, even more so, a conviction will hurt Trump politically) and their hatred of Trump and his post-election conduct before everything else in their demand for the fastest possible ruling most damaging to Trump.

This is a very bad impulse when asking the Court to create a precedent that will affect all presidents going forward.

As Justice Brett Kavanaugh said, "I'm not as concerned about the here and now. I'm more concerned about

the future." Usually, we value such long-term thinking, but it's extremely inconvenient to Jack Smith and his cheerleaders.

A rush is understandable from their point of view. There is about a 50% chance that Trump will win election again and, if he's not tried before November, he'll shut down the prosecutions of him.

But the idea that a complicated case relying on novel use of federal statutes and involving a former president should, or could, be slammed through the courts like a case about an overdue parking ticket was always ridiculous.

If timing was such a worry (and Trump's criminality so obvious), the Justice department could have appointed Jack Smith much sooner and Smith could have indicted Trump much faster. Hoping to short-circuit careful judicial review of all the weighty legal issues raised by the case just to meet the inherently political deadline of getting to trial before the election is foolish and shortsighted.

As it is, it seems the Court will almost certainly reject Trump's extravagant claims of immunity, while quite possibly blessing a more limited version. The Court also may ask the judge in the J6 case to determine which of Trump's acts were official and which private. That would take time and be hateful to Trump's enemies, who can't bear the thought that the judiciary might be judicious in its handling of a truly momentous court case.

Rich Lowry is on X @RichLowry

## The News-Banner

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Mark Miller, Opinion Page Editor





# Sports Roundup

(Continued from Page 6)

• Drayvin Shoemaker second in the discus at 135-1.

**Girls**

- Rylynn Penick second in the 100m with a time of 13.41.
- Olivia Schreiber third in the 200m with a time of 29.66.
- Maryn Schreiber third in the 400m with a time of 1:05.89.
- Addison Yates second in the 800m with a time of 2:45.05.
- Sophie Schwartz third in the 100m hurdles with a time of 188.10.
- Dakota Lee third in the 300m hurdles with a time of 53.80.
- The 4x100m relay team of Haley Gibson, Olivia Schreiber, Lee and Penick third with a time of 54.85.
- The 4x400m relay team of Yates, Lee, Maryn Schreiber and Madelyn Funk third with a time of 4:47.78.
- Corina Rader third in the discus at 93-3.

Bluffton will host the ACAC championship meet at 5:30 p.m. Friday, May 3.

## Tigers drop by one run against Jets in softball

Bluffton fell at Adams Central in an ACAC softball game 7-6 Tuesday.

The loss brings the Tigers' record to 6-7 on the season and 0-3 in the conference.

Of the nine hits, Marly Drayer led the way with three hits and an RBI along with two stolen bases. Tyrrah Shaw went 2-4 with two RBI, and Madyson Sonnigson went 2-4 with a double. Averi Petty had an RBI.

Sonnigson received the loss despite only one earned run. She went six innings, allowing seven hits and seven total runs, two walks and three strikeouts.

Bluffton will host Jay County at 5 p.m. Thursday, May 2.

## Tigers fall to Starfires in ACAC girls tennis match

Bluffton hosted and lost to South Adams 3-2 in ACAC girls' tennis play Tuesday night.

**Individual results:**

- Chloe Summersett (SA) defeated Hazel Pfister 6-4, 6-2 at No. 1 singles.
- Ava Kinsey (SA) defeated Eve Corkwell 6-2, 6-2 at No. 2 singles.

- Gretchen Crist (B) defeated Abby Claghorn 6-0, 6-2 at No. 3 singles.
- Emma Schwartz and Kinzie Fiechter (B) defeated Sam Wiegel and Grace Barkley 6-4, 2-6, 6-3 at No. 1 doubles.
- Malina Mawhorr and Ayla Loshe (SA) defeated Emily Drayer and Sophie Eisenhut 7-6 (7-1), 6-4 at No. 2 doubles.

Bluffton also lost the junior varsity game 7-2.

### Results for JV:

- Olivia Oswalt (SA) defeated Gissel Martinez 8-2.
- Makenzie Miller (SA) defeated Zoey Schmidt 8-4.
- Lamie Bryan (SA) defeated Briell Coratti 8-1.
- Calah Hill and Ginamarie Summersett (SA) defeated Alexis Grover and Avery Hunt 9-7.
- Hannah Scott and Emerson Wanner (SA) defeated Zara Eisenhut and Mary Beth Zurcher 8-2.
- Aleeah Grover and Isla Gibson (B) defeated Elysia Gonsowsky and Kyleigh Habegger 8-6.
- Calah Hill and Leah Summersett defeated Anna Zurcher and Madison Duncan 8-3.
- Zainab Ameen and Charos Anorboeva (B) defeated ShaFinga Chiagi and Zahira Rani 8-4.

Bluffton will host Northfield at 5 p.m. Wednesday, May 1.

## Green Valley Tuesday Senior Golf League results

The Green Valley Tuesday Senior Golf League kicked off its 2024 season on Tuesday. The winning team was Tom Nahlword Steve Folk, Mike Allred and Ron McDonald at -6.

Folk had the low gross of 39, Nahword had the low net of 31 Bruce Warner had the closest to pin and the longest putt.

## Knights mercy Bulldogs in JV baseball

Norwell earned a 10-run mercy rule victory over New Haven in home baseball Tuesday night.

The Knights won 11-1 and compiled 10 hits in the game. Of the 10 hits, Will Case led the way with three hits. Jaxson Dohrman went 2-2 with a double and two RBI, while Palmer Krug had two hits and an RBI. Cade Thornton and Trey Privett had a double and an RBI.

Privett got the win, throwing six innings, allowing two hits, one unearned run, two walks and seven strikeouts.

## Tigers pour 19 runs on Jets in JV softball

Bluffton defeated Adams Central at home in junior varsity softball Tuesday night.

The Tigers splashed an 11-run first inning to take home a 19-3 win over the Jets.

Jillian Phillippe led the team with three triples in the game. Sy'Annha Jordan-Turner, Kierstynn Reed, and Addison Kauffman also all had 3 hits. Reed's was a double. Addison Gehring had two triples. Ella Borrer and Reese Turnbull had two hits each, one of Turnbull's was a double.

Kinlee Taylor threw four innings, striking out two. Sierra Holmes threw the final inning.

## Knights fall to Chargers in JV softball

Norwell fell in junior varsity softball at Carroll 17-7 Tuesday night.

The Knights had two hits, one being from Ayla Nem, and Madison Mashuda had the other for two RBI. Kaitlee Reinhard had an RBI.

Carli Fausz got the loss, throwing three innings and allowed 16 runs (only one was earned, six errors). Bridget Wilson allowed one run on two hits in one inning.

## Norwell Middle School sweeps New Haven in soccer

The Norwell Middle School soccer teams competed Monday night and won both games at New Haven.

The boys' team won 3-1. Goals were scored by Marvin Keller, Blake Fuess and Cooper Nagel.

The girls won 2-0. Bailynn Messman and Vivian Branham scored the goals for the Knights.

## Norwell Middle School falls to East Noble in middle school golf

The Norwell Middle School golf team lost to East Noble on Monday.

The Knights lost 270-270. Gracie Hulvey had the lowest score at a 53.

# News-Banner Scoreboard

## BASKETBALL

**NBA**

**FIRST ROUND Sunday, April 28**

New York 97, Philadelphia 92  
L.A. Clippers 116, Dallas 111, series tied 2 - 2

Indiana 126, Milwaukee 113, Indiana leads series 3 - 1  
Minnesota 122, Phoenix 116, Minnesota wins series 4 - 0

**Monday, April 29**

Boston 102, Miami 88, Boston leads series 3 - 1  
Oklahoma City 97, New Orleans 89, Oklahoma City wins series 4 - 0  
Denver 108, L.A. Lakers 106, Denver wins series 4 - 1

**Tuesday, April 30**

Philadelphia 112, New York 106, OT, New York leads series 3 - 2  
Cleveland 104, Orlando 103, Cleveland leads series 3 - 2  
Indiana at Milwaukee, 9:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, May 1**

Miami at Boston, 7:30 p.m.  
Dallas at L.A. Clippers, 10 p.m.

**Thursday, May 2**

x-Milwaukee at Indiana, TBA  
New York at Philadelphia, TBA

## HOCKEY NHL

**FIRST ROUND Sunday, April 28**

Colorado 5, Winnipeg 1, Colorado leads series 3 - 1  
Vancouver 4, Nashville 3, OT, Vancouver leads series 3 - 1  
N.Y. Rangers 4, Washington 2, N.Y. Rangers wins series 4 - 0  
Edmonton 1, Los Angeles 0, Edmonton leads series 3 - 1

**Monday, April 29**

Florida 6, Tampa Bay 1, Florida wins series 4 - 1  
Dallas 4, Vegas 2, series tied 2 - 2

**Tuesday, April 30**

Toronto 2, Boston 1, OT, Boston leads series 3 - 2  
Carolina 6, N.Y. Islanders 3  
Colorado at Winnipeg, 9:30 p.m.  
Nashville at Vancouver, 10 p.m.

**Wednesday, May 1**

Vegas at Dallas, 7:30 p.m.  
Los Angeles at Edmonton, 10 p.m.

**Thursday, May 2**

## BASEBALL

**MLB**

**AMERICAN LEAGUE Monday's Games**

Baltimore 2, N.Y. Yankees 0  
Toronto 6, Kansas City 5  
Tampa Bay 1, Milwaukee 0  
Minnesota 3, Chicago White Sox 2  
Oakland 5, Pittsburgh 1  
Seattle 2, Atlanta 1  
L.A. Angels 6, Philadelphia 5  
St. Louis at Detroit, p.p.d.

**Tuesday's Games**

St. Louis 2, Detroit 1, 1st game  
Baltimore 4, N.Y. Yankees 2  
Kansas City 4, Toronto 1  
Detroit 11, St. Louis 6, 2nd game  
Boston 4, San Francisco 0  
Texas 7, Washington 1  
Milwaukee 8, Tampa Bay 2  
Minnesota 6, Chicago White Sox 5

Houston 10, Cleveland 9  
Philadelphia at L.A. Angels, late  
Atlanta at Seattle, late  
Pittsburgh at Oakland, late

**Wednesday's Games**

St. Louis (Mikolas 2-3) at Detroit (Maeda 0-1), 1:10 p.m.  
Tampa Bay (Eflin 1-3) at Milwaukee (Rea 2-0), 1:10 p.m.  
Minnesota (Ober 2-1) at Chicago White Sox (Flexen 1-3), 2:10 p.m.  
Kansas City (Lugo 4-1) at Toronto (Bassitt 2-4), 3:07 p.m.  
Pittsburgh (Priester 0-1) at Oakland (Stripling 0-5), 3:37 p.m.  
Atlanta (Sale 3-1) at Seattle (Hancock 3-2), 3:40 p.m.  
Philadelphia (Wheeler 2-3) at L.A. Angels (Sandoval 1-4), 4:07 p.m.  
N.Y. Yankees (Gil 1-1) at Baltimore (Burnes 3-0), 6:35 p.m.  
San Francisco (TBD) at Boston (Crawford 1-1), 7:10 p.m.  
Washington (Williams 2-0) at Texas (Heaney 0-3), 8:05 p.m.  
Cleveland (McKenzie 2-2) at Houston (Verlander 1-0), 8:10 p.m.

**Thursday's Games**

N.Y. Yankees at Baltimore, 1:05 p.m.

San Francisco at Boston, 1:35 p.m.  
Washington at Texas, 2:35 p.m.  
Cleveland at Houston, 8:10 p.m.

**NATIONAL LEAGUE Monday's Games**

Washington 7, Miami 2  
Chicago Cubs 3, N.Y. Mets 1  
Tampa Bay 1, Milwaukee 0  
Oakland 5, Pittsburgh 1  
Cincinnati 5, San Diego 2  
Seattle 2, Atlanta 1  
L.A. Angels 6, Philadelphia 5  
L.A. Dodgers 8, Arizona 4  
St. Louis at Detroit, p.p.d.

**Tuesday's Games**

St. Louis 2, Detroit 1, 1st game  
Miami 7, Colorado 6, 10 innings  
Detroit 11, St. Louis 6, 2nd game  
N.Y. Mets 4, Chicago Cubs 2  
Boston 4, San Francisco 0  
Texas 7, Washington 1  
Milwaukee 8, Tampa Bay 2  
Philadelphia at L.A. Angels, 9:38 p.m.

Atlanta at Seattle, late  
Cincinnati at San Diego, late  
L.A. Dodgers at Arizona, 9:40 p.m.  
Pittsburgh at Oakland, 9:40 p.m.

**Wednesday's Games**

St. Louis (Mikolas 2-3) at Detroit (Maeda 0-1), 1:10 p.m.  
Tampa Bay (Eflin 1-3) at Milwaukee (Rea 2-0), 1:10 p.m.  
Pittsburgh (Priester 0-1) at Oakland (Stripling 0-5), 3:37 p.m.  
Atlanta (Sale 3-1) at Seattle (Hancock 3-2), 3:40 p.m.  
Philadelphia (Wheeler 2-3) at L.A. Angels (Sandoval 1-4), 4:07 p.m.  
Cincinnati (Ashcraft 3-1) at San Diego (Musgrove 3-3), 4:10 p.m.  
Colorado (Hudson 0-4) at Miami (Muñoz 0-0), 6:40 p.m.  
Chicago Cubs (Imanaga 4-0) at N.Y. Mets (Buttò 0-1), 7:10 p.m.  
San Francisco (TBD) at Boston (Crawford 1-1), 7:10 p.m.  
Washington (Williams 2-0) at Texas (Heaney 0-3), 8:05 p.m.  
L.A. Dodgers (Yamamoto 2-1) at Arizona (Gallen 3-2), 9:40 p.m.

**Thursday's Games**

Colorado at Miami, 12:10 p.m.  
Chicago Cubs at N.Y. Mets, 1:10 p.m.  
San Francisco at Boston, 1:35 p.m.  
Washington at Texas, 2:35 p.m.

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# Navigating wedding etiquette

Dear Annie: I have a question I hear many people ask about wedding gifting. The old rule of thumb was the gift should cover the plate. Others say it's a gift and you're not responsible for paying for the couple's wedding.

Recently, my husband and I attended a family member's wedding; we put \$200 in an envelope and gave them a lovely wedding frame. We couldn't afford a hotel so we drove 2.5 hours each way.

We truly couldn't afford what we gave as it was. And we never heard a word after the wedding.

It was lovely talking to friends and family, but I truly wished I hadn't attended.

Is it a gift, or must we pay for all expenses for each of us? When our children got married, many people were very generous, and some were not. — Confused

*Dear Confused: As far as the amount to give, it varies. Cultures have different ways of handling important events like a birth, a wedding or a funeral. You mentioned an "old rule of thumb" stating that "the gift should cover the plate." That sounds fine for some people, but perhaps not for you. It sounds like your gift was as generous as it could be. In other words, it was clearly your intention to honor the couple the best way you could. The \$200 gift you gave, along with the frame, sounds very generous in view of the circumstances you described. The fact that you had a good time at the wedding with your family and friends would seem to indicate that they had a good time with you, too. Clearly, your presence was enough. You mentioned that the couple did not acknowledge your gift. That might not be a reflection of your gift but perhaps a reflection on the couple.*

Dear Annie: I'm writing in response to "Love My Mother-in-Law," who was being rudely interrupted and chalked it up to somebody that wanted to hear themselves speak.

As a woman in my late 30s, I started

to seek out mental health support because I wasn't the person I wanted to be. One of the behaviors I wanted to change was always feeling like I was interrupting others, but I truly cared about what they were saying and wanted to show them that. Listening, for me, was waiting my turn to speak, not hearing what was being said. I thought it was a flaw in my personality.

After much digging and many other behaviors that seemed related, my therapist recommended I be evaluated for ADD. I come from a generation where ADD/ADHD seemed to be a buzzword and a condition that was over-diagnosed to explain troubled behaviors in kids, so I wasn't necessarily on board.

Fast forward through research and an evaluation, and I have been diagnosed with ADD. It is such a relief to know I am not a bad person, but I have an imbalance of neurotransmitters that creates many of these behaviors I am trying to change, including interrupting. There are so many thoughts in my head that I feel, in order to contribute to the conversation, I have to get them out or I will forget due to the incessant raving thoughts I have.

So while she may love her MIL, she should also know that there are many reasons for people that interrupt and some are not within their realm of control. — ADD Adult

## Dear Annie



by Annie Lane

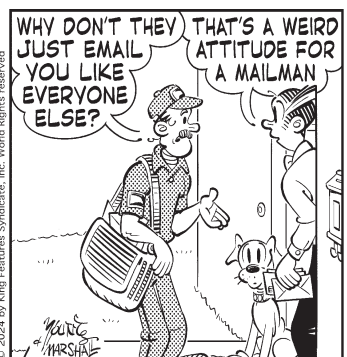
*Thank you for giving another possible explanation for interrupting. When we know better, we do better.*

Send your questions for Annie Lane to [dearannie@creators.com](mailto:dearannie@creators.com). © 2024 CREATORS.COM

## BEETLE BAILEY



## BLONDIE



## ZITS

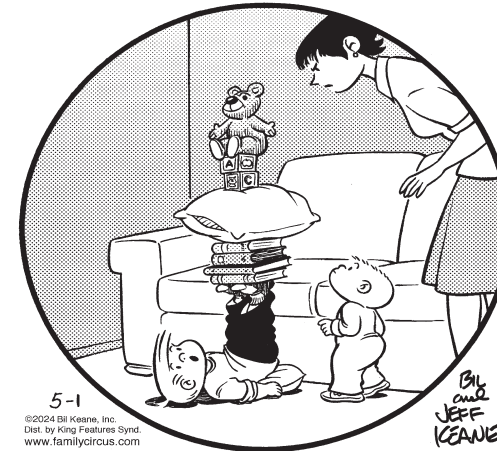


## CRANKSHAFT



## THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



## The LOCKHORNS



## My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



# God created us free to choose how we would live

*Question: I am searching for an answer to this question: If two Christians are at odds with one another concerning a moral issue and both believe they are right based on the Scripture, how can they be in unity as Jesus desires? Who is the one who should give in and go the way of the other for the sake of unity, even though they still believe they are right? Doesn't it seem that the narrow-minded person should compromise with some grace and the other broader party consider the consequences? — N.B.*

*Answer: From the beginning of time until the present moment, man's ungodly determination*

to use his gift of free choice for his own selfish ends has brought him to the brink of doom. Moral living sometimes demands difficult choices. When there are disagreements between two parties, both may be wrong. But God's Word is never wrong. The Bible has a great deal to say about right and wrong, good and evil.

Not a day goes by that we do not have a chance to choose between the devil's clever promises and God's sure Word. God created us free to choose how we would live, but leaves us free to pursue our own ends, though we will reap the consequences of bad moral decisions.

We are called to be a

holly people — separated from the moral evils of the world. God will never lead contrary to His Word. When we take all things to Him in prayer, asking for His wisdom, He will direct us in His righteousness. "Who is the man who fears the Lord? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose" (Psalm 25:12, ESV). Test everything in the light of God's Word, for it is the only place we can find a clear, unmistakable message.

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

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## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

1 Sentry's cry  
5 Switch positions  
8 Herring's kin  
12 "Lucky Jim" author  
13 "Yo!"  
14 Marathoner's tempo  
15 Place of origin  
17 Diminutive suffix  
18 Mountain crest  
19 Basketball position  
21 Cheeky back talk  
24 Dime portrait  
25 Dull pain  
28 Boost  
30 "— show-time!"  
33 Marseilles monarch  
34 Mila of "Black Swan"  
35 Spy org.  
36 Director  
37 Coral formation  
38 Fine  
39 "West-world" network

**DOWN**

1 "Funny!"  
2 Roman god of love  
3 Rickey flavor  
4 Dangerous fly  
5 "So that's it!"  
6 Up-to-date  
7 Harmonization  
8 Shell out  
9 Hockey coup  
10 Part of a French play  
11 Woodland grazer  
16 Earl Grey, e.g.  
20 Newscasts  
22 Pivot

**23 Tendon**  
**25 Par-seghian of football**  
**26 Swindle**  
**27 Like the latest computing equipment**  
**29 Poodle's name, perhaps**  
**31 Aunt, in Acapulco**  
**32 Utter**  
**34 Ray of McDonald's**  
**38 Pearl producer**  
**40 Low voices**  
**42 Scepter**  
**43 Mosque VIP**  
**44 Asta's feeder**  
**45 Dull sound of impact**  
**47 Woody Guthrie's son**  
**48 Narc's measure**  
**49 Tarzan's clique**  
**52 Rock producer**  
**53 Brian Goal**

**Solution time: 23 mins.**

**Yesterday's answer 5-1**

CH	5 PM	5:30	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30	12 AM	12:30			
WJMN	News	Washington Watch With Tony Perkins	Watch With Tony Perkins	Creflo Dollar	Joseph Prince	Morris	TCT Today	Joyce Meyer	Love Worth	James Robison	Dr. Robert Jeffrey	Jewish Jesus	Andrew Womack	Ask the Pastor	Foundation				
CBS WANE	News (N)	Inside Edition (N)	News at 6 (N)	CBS News (N)	Wheel of Fortune (N)	Jeopardy! (N)	Survivor (N)			The Amazing Race (N)		Nightcast (N)	(35) Late Show-Colbert	(35) After Mid.					
Antenna WANE-2	106	20	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14			
ABC WPTA	21	4	3	21	ABC21 News at 5 (N)	ABC21 News (N)	ABC21 News (N)	Ent. Tonight (N)	Jeopardy! Masters "Games 1 & 2" (SP) (N)	Abbott (N)	Connors (N)	The \$100,000 Pyramid	ABC21 (N)	(35) Jimmy Kimmel	(35) Nightline				
NBC WPTA-2	7	8	14	14	Family Feud	25 Words or Less	News (N)	NBC News (N)	Family Feud (N)	Family Feud (N)	Chicago Med (N)	Chicago Fire "The Wrong Guy" (N)	Chicago P.D. "Buried Pieces" (N)	News (N)	(35) Tonight Show (N)	(35) Seth Meyers (N)			
MNT WPTA-3	10	9	56	34	King "Lost Vegas"	King "No Retreat"	Modern Family	News (N)	Last Man Standing	Last Man Standing	Dateline	Dateline	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Mom	Mom	Goldbergs "Airplane!"	The Goldbergs	
FOX WISE	8	4	33	33	The Steve Wilkos Show "She Stole My DNA!" (N)	TMZ Live (N)			Dish Nation (N)	TMZ (N)	Walker "We've Been Here Before" (N)	Sight Unseen "Matt" (N)	Dish Nation (N)	TMZ (N)	Family Guy	Family Guy	Bob's Burgers	Bob's Burgers	
PBS WFWA	13	5	39	39	A Brief History of the Future "Human"	PBS NewsHour (N)			BBC News America	LIFE Ahead (N)	Nature "Season of the Osprey" (N)	A Brief History of the Future "Together" (N)	NOVA "Making North America: Human"	Amanpour and Company (N)	Nature "Season of the Osprey"				
PBS WFWA-2	48	3			A Brief History of the Future "Human"	Context			PBS NewsHour (N)	PBS NewsHour (N)	Nature "Season of the Osprey"	A Brief History of the Future "Together" (N)	NOVA "Making North America: Human"	Amanpour and Company (N)	Common "Democracy in Danger: Tipping Point"				
FOX WFFT	55	6	55	55	WFFT Fox News at 5 (N)	WFFT Fox News at 6 (N)	Big Bang	Big Bang	The Masked Singer (N)	Animal Control (N)	Family Guy	Family Guy	FOX 55 News First at 10 (N)	Young Sheldon	Young Sheldon	Neighbor	Neighbor		





# Netanyahu vows to invade Rafah 'with or without a deal' as cease-fire talks with Hamas continue

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged Tuesday to launch an incursion into the southern Gaza city of Rafah, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are sheltering from the almost 7-month-long war, just as cease-fire negotiations between Israel and Hamas appear to be gaining steam.

Netanyahu's comments came hours before U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken was to arrive in Israel to advance the truce talks — which appear to be one of the most serious rounds of negotiations between Israel and Hamas since the war began. The deal is meant to free hostages, bring some relief to the population and avert an Israeli offensive into Rafah and the potential harm to civilians there.

Netanyahu said Israel would enter Rafah, which Israel says is Hamas' last stronghold, regardless of whether a truce-for-hostages deal is struck. His comments appeared to be meant to appease his nationalist governing partners but it was not clear whether they would have any bearing on any emerging deal with Hamas.

"The idea that we will stop the war before achieving all of its goals is out of the question," Netanyahu said, according to a statement from his office. "We will enter Rafah and we will eliminate Hamas' battalions there — with or without a deal, to achieve the total victory."

The U.S. has repeatedly said it opposes the Rafah operation until Israel presents a credible plan for evacuating and protecting the estimated 1.5 million people seeking shelter there.

Blinken, speaking in Jordan before flying to Israel, said the "focus" right now is on improving the humanitarian situation and reaching

a cease-fire deal that brings Israeli hostages home. He said Israel has offered a "strong proposal" and called on Hamas to respond.

"No more delays. No more excuses. The time to act is now," he said. "We want to see in the coming days this agreement coming together."

Netanyahu has faced pressure from his governing partners not to proceed with a deal that might prevent Israel from invading Rafah. His government could be threatened if he agrees to a deal because hardline Cabinet members have demanded an attack on Rafah.

Netanyahu met on Tuesday with one of those partners, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, according to the minister's office, who said Netanyahu promised him that "Israel will enter Rafah, promised that we are not stopping the war and promised that there won't be a reckless deal."

With more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million people sheltering in Rafah, the international community, including Israel's top ally, the United States, has warned Israel against any offensive that puts civilians at risk.

Netanyahu on Tuesday was addressing the Tikva Forum, a small group of families of hostages that's distinct from the main group representing the families of captive Israelis. The forum has indicated that it prefers to see Hamas crushed over the freedom of their loved ones. Most families and their supporters have demonstrated in the thousands every week for a deal that would bring the hostages home, saying it should take precedence over military action.

Netanyahu's coalition is made up of ultranationalist and conservative religious parties, and critics of the Israeli leader say his decision-making during the war

has been driven by political considerations rather than national interests, a charge Netanyahu denies. His government could collapse if one of the parties opposed to a deal pulls out, a scenario Netanyahu would try to avoid considering his support has plummeted in opinion polls since the war began, although it has seen a slight gradual uptick.

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who heads the ultranationalist Religious Zionist party, said Monday that he was seeking "total annihilation" of Israel's enemies, appearing to refer to Hamas, in a recorded portion of his remarks at an event marking the end of the Passover holiday which were aired in Israeli media.

"You can't do half a job," he said.

The current deal being discussed, brokered by the U.S., Egypt and Qatar, would see the release of dozens of hostages in exchange for a six-week halt in fighting as part of an initial phase, according to an Egyptian official and Israeli media. Hundreds of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel would also be released, including some serving long sentences.

Blinken, who was meeting with regional leaders in Saudi Arabia and Jordan before landing in Tel Aviv later Tuesday, urged Hamas on Monday to accept the latest proposal, calling it "extraordinarily generous" on Israel's part.

But a sticking point remains over what happens next. Hamas has demanded assurances that an eventual release of all hostages will bring a complete end to Israel's nearly seven-month assault in Gaza and a withdrawal of its troops from the devastated territory. Israel has offered only an extended pause, vowing to resume its offensive once the first phase of the deal is over. The issue has repeat-

edly obstructed efforts by the mediators during months of talks.

The Israel-Hamas war was sparked by the unprecedented Oct. 7 raid into southern Israel in which militants killed around 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.

The war in Gaza has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials. The war has driven around 80% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million from their homes, caused vast destruction in several towns and cities and

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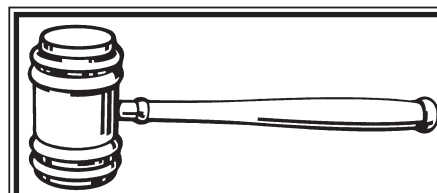


\*Average annual per household savings based on a 2021 national survey by State Farm of new policyholders who reported savings by switching to State Farm.

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## Public Sale Calendar

**MAY 4 - 9 a.m. - Multiple consignors.** 6632 N. 500 W., Decatur. Personal property: Vehicles, jewelry (gold, silver, costume), toys, collectables, furniture, household, antiques, tools, appliances. Preview May 3, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. **Wiegmann Auctioneers**, [wiegmannauctioneers.com](http://wiegmannauctioneers.com), 260-447-4311.

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

**BIDDING NOW OPEN & STARTS CLOSING MAY 5 - 6 p.m. - James Koons, owner.** Online only personal property auction! 100+ lots that include general household items, glassware, furniture, Samsung washer, Basset bedroom suite, solid oak table, garden items, Stihl chainsaw, Yard Machine snow blower & much more! Pick up May 6, 2-6 p.m., 808 N. Jefferson St., Ossian. **Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC**, 260-724-7402, [kjauction.com](http://kjauction.com).

**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](http://kjauction.com).

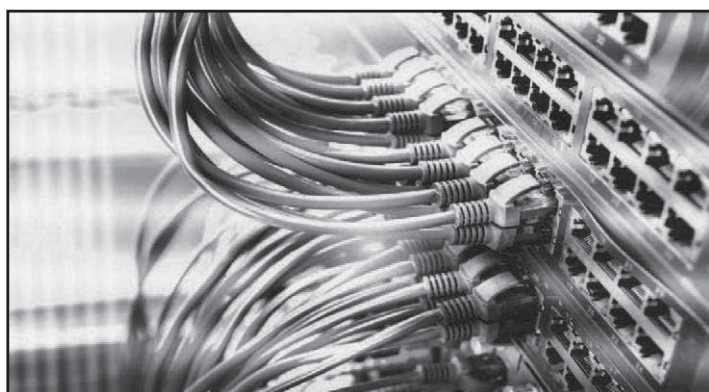
**MAY 12-MAY 19 - (Online Only Auction) - Phyllis Montgomery, Seller.** Major auction of fine antiques and collectables. "An Auction of the Year." Extensive cast iron skillet collection, early candy scales, primitives, salesman samples, early rare gum dispenser, De Laval signs, beer signs, firearms, 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](http://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](http://kjauction.com).

**MAY 21 - 6 p.m. - Patricia Mossburg & Joyce Shady, owners.** Wells County 4-H Park, 1240 4-H Rd., Bluffton. Property location: 100S & 200W, Bluffton. 90+/-A, Zoned Agricultural, Liberty Township, Wells County. To be sold in individual tracts or any combination. Tract 1: 54+/-A tillable, frontage on both CR 100S & CR 200W. Tract 2: 12+/-A, 8+/-A tillable, 4+/-A woods, frontage on 100S & 200W. Tract 3: 24+/-A, mostly woods, 6+/-A tillable, frontage on CR 200W. **Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC**, 260-724-7402, [kjauction.com](http://kjauction.com).

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