

# The News - Banner

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FRIDAY, MAY 10, 2024 BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection \$1.00



## 'Not reinventing the wheel'

Health board talks Health First Indiana grants

By HOLLY GASKILL  
 With Wells County officially opting into Health First Indiana, the county's Board of Health kickstarted conversations about a potential grant process during a special meeting Thursday.  
 HFI increases state funding through the state's Local Health Maintenance Fund from \$51,777.15 to \$549,510 to address health issues like immunizations, vital records and chronic disease prevention. Wells County, as well as many counties throughout Indiana, will use a portion of funds to support local entities that already have infrastructure to address

health needs.  
 By joining HFI in its second year, the board recognized that there is no need to invent new processes for distributing grants. Public Health Nurse Lynn Blevins said he's begun developing plans based on the Allen County Health Department's application process. Board member Molly Hoag also referred to her experience with the Citizens Against Drug Abuse board's grant process for applications.  
 However, the board buffered in discussing more specific issues, like grant deadlines, an approval  
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### Senior Expo

Over 60 vendors arrived for the Wells County Senior Expo at the 4-H Community Building. Breakfast and lunch were served during the event, along with free blood pressure checks, discounted pet vaccinations and various drawings were held from some vendors. Above, the King's, Rick, Kathy and Judy, along with Sharon Chaffins enjoyed lunch. At right, Mary-Alice Denney is getting her blood pressure checked by Traci Heller. Below, Kirk Wolfe, left, and Marcia Hotopp talk about the Wells County Historical Society. (Photos by Jonathan Snyder)



## Parks, APC discuss refreshment area and pool updates

By JONATHAN SNYDER  
 A potential designated outdoor refreshment area involving Kehoe Park was discussed by the Bluffton Park Board and Wells County Area Plan Commission Executive Director Mike Lautzenheiser.  
 The DORA area would allow for holding and consumption of alcoholic beverages in designated cups only inside the DORA boundary. The DORA area proposal is currently in its infancy and while it is being considered in multiple parts of downtown Bluffton, other alcoholic-serving establishments would need to opt into the area.  
 Lautzenheiser gave two potential ideas for what the DORA could look like, but stressed that since the plan is so young, the area could change dramatically. One

idea is for two separate DORA districts, which would prevent patrons from downtown bars from walking into the Kehoe Park area. Lautzenheiser also proposed one district that includes both downtown and Kehoe Park.  
 If this plan goes into action, it would remove the need for state permits for the sale of alcohol in a public area for the Parks Department, which would be a savings on time and money. The Parks Department allows for temporary vendors to sell alcohol at various events. Hours for carry out alcohol sales range from noon until 8:00 p.m.  
 Any temporary vendors looking to sell alcohol would still need approval from the Board of Works. The park board showed concern  
 (Continued on Page 2)

## Highway garage completion drags out

By HOLLY GASKILL  
 Numerous fixes are still needed at the new Highway Department building, Supervisor Shawn Bonar told County Commissioners Monday.  
 Bonar rattled off half a dozen unresolved items with the facility, including multiple roof leaks, new pipework needed in the vehicle wash bay, and an unfinished HVAC.  
 Bonar said the project managers went so far as to email about "owners training" with the building and said it didn't need to be finished for training. "I never responded," Bonar stated. Commissioner Blake Gerber shook his head in disappointment at this report.  
 Commissioner Jeff Stringer said he would soon visit the site and confirm with project managers what needed to be resolved, noting that the project was still not considered to be at substantial

completion.  
 Bonar also reported that the department had also received a complaint from Clarence Ostrander about mowing a company property next to his residence on Cherry Street in Bluffton. Ostrander had previously asked the commissioners to release the property to him, saying he had maintained it for a significant time; the commissioners said they would look into the matter. Ostrander has since stopped maintenance of the property, Bonar said.  
 The commissioner advised the Highway Department could proceed with mowing the property.  
 Bonar also told commissioners the department has been pushing ahead with their summer projects, using some of the overtime that was not needed in the winter. Bonar also planned to present an annual report at the commissioners' May 20 meeting.  
 holly@news-banner.com



### Nerf War at the City Gym

Nerf bullets were flying across the city gym as the parks department held a nerf war for kids and teenagers. Above left, Khaysin Guin sneaks up behind Judah Owen to make a surprise shot. Above, Aiden Kaehr takes aim at Owen. (Photos by Jonathan Snyder)

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**Outside**

Sunny and cool today, chance of showers tonight

Today	Saturday	Sunday
High 63	High 63	High 73
Low 48	Low 43	Low 56

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Health First Indiana

(Continued from Page 1)

process and criteria. The board was quite wary of being flooded with applications...

To this effect, Stringer emphasized the grant process should prioritize local organizations with clear, specific and measurable plans for the funding.

Refreshment area

(Continued from Page 1)

that this could allow vendors to circumvent the park board's approval, but Parks Department Superintendent Brandy Fiechter acknowledged that this is a very early conversation to see if the Park Board is interested in being involved with the plan.

"It does usurp any past ordinances that would be in conflict with it, so whatever rules are set here would be the rules," Lautzenheiser stated.

Once the review process starts, it will go to the Wells County Area Plan Commission, then to City Council, then it goes to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms for approval.

Projects for the Parks Department have been going well according to Fiechter. The pool house has been resided, with Barn Builders by LS Construction donating \$14,000 of their own money to get equipment and material that could last a long time.

receive many applications.

The board also considered forming a subcommittee to vet applications in between board meetings.

Nothing was approved or decided, but the board asked Blevins to proceed with preparing an application format and process proposal; their next meeting is at 6:30 a.m. on June 20.

In following up on the board's April discussion of changing their regular meeting time, Board President Chris Esterling said he's been unable to find a better meeting time for all parties.

While Blevins and all board members were present Thursday, Health Officer

Dr. Brandon Huggins listened to the meeting via phone, and Environmental Specialist Ryan Bennett and Administrator Sahara Wall were absent.

"I think it's going to be incredibly hard to change the meeting time," he concluded. "I would like as much of the staff to be here, (but) it is a board meeting, so that's probably a higher priority," he concluded.

Esterling said Wall was taking some time off, but said Thursdays would not work for Huggins' schedule. Huggins has not been present in person at a board meeting or other county meetings with agenda items pertaining to the Health Department since his appointment on March 19.

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Weather

Friday, May 10, 2024

(24-hour observations at 10:34 p.m. Thursday) High: 69; Low: 53; Precipitation: 0.60 inches of rain Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 3.51 feet at 8:45 p.m. Thursday

Wells County forecast

Today: Partly sunny, with a high near 63. North wind around 10 mph.

Tonight: A 50% chance of showers after 2 a.m. Partly cloudy, with a low around 48. Northwest wind around 5 mph becoming southwest after midnight.

Saturday: A 30% chance of showers, mainly before 8 a.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 63. Northwest wind 15 to 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

Saturday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 43. West wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Sunday: Sunny, with a high near 73. Sunday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 56.

Monday: A slight chance of showers, then a chance of showers and thunderstorms after 2 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 75. Chance of precipitation is 50%.

Monday Night: A 50% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 57.

Tuesday: A chance of showers and thunderstorms before 8 a.m., then a chance of showers between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m., then showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm after 2 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 70. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

Tuesday Night: Showers and thunderstorms likely. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 54. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

Wednesday: A 40% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny, with a high near 74.

Wednesday Night: A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy, with a low around 55.

Thursday: A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny, with a high near 76.

U.S. says Rafah offensive would jeopardize cease-fire talks, Biden threatens to halt more Israel aid

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States warned on Thursday that Israel will be dealing a strategic victory to Hamas if it carries out plans for an all-out assault on Rafah, the militants' last major stronghold in Gaza.

The warning was backed by a new threat from President Joe Biden: He says he will pause more offensive military assistance to Israel if it goes through with the operation in a city where more than 1 million civilians are sheltering.

Biden last week put on hold a shipment of large bombs to Israel over concerns the weapons are of the type that has caused significant civilian casualties in Gaza and would almost certainly do more such damage if Israel conducted a major offensive in Rafah.

On Wednesday, he held out the possibility of holding up future shipments of bomb guidance kits and artillery to Israel, in hopes the threat would turn Israel back from an operation in the city.

The pronouncements are part of last-ditch push for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his far-right government to rethink their public commitments to invade the city in an effort to eradicate Hamas. The U.S. believes such a move would result in significant civilian casualties and exacerbate an already dire humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

The U.S. is making its sharpest moves yet to influence the decision-making of its ally in the ongoing war against the militant group that was triggered by Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel. Some 1,200 people in Israel were killed and about 250 were taken captive.

"Our view is any kind of major Rafah ground operation would actually strengthen Hamas' hands at the negotiating table, not Israel's," White House national security spokesman John Kirby said Thursday. He said more civilian deaths in Rafah from an Israeli offensive would give more ammunition to Hamas' "twisted narrative" about Israel.

Talks in Cairo aimed at securing a six-week cease-fire to allow for the release of some hostages and a surge of food and aid to civilians in Gaza are continuing, Kirby added. But CIA Director Bill Burns and other delegations to the talks left Egypt on Thursday without a deal.

Kirby said it was too soon to know whether the aid holdup had altered the Israeli calculus, but that the U.S. was continuing to advise Israel on how it could defeat Hamas through more surgical operations.

"We believe that they have put an enormous amount of pressure on Hamas and that there are better ways to go after what is left of Hamas in Rafah than a major ground operation," he added.

Biden, in an interview with CNN on Wednesday, insisted that despite the arms hold up, the U.S. was still committed to Israel's defense and would supply Iron Dome rocket interceptors and other defensive arms.

He acknowledged that "civilians have been killed in Gaza" by the type of heavy bombs that the U.S. has been supplying. It was his first validation of what administration critics have been loudly protesting, even if he still stopped short of taking responsibility. His threat to hold up artillery shells expanded on earlier revelations that the U.S. was going to pause a shipment of heavy bombs.

Biden said Israel's actions around Rafah had "not yet" crossed his red lines, but he has repeated that Israel needs to do far more to protect the lives of civilians in Gaza. The Hamas-run health ministry puts the toll at more 34,000 dead, though it doesn't distinguish between militants and civilians.

Israel's military spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said that despite the American pause, "we have what we need" to press ahead with the mission. His comments came after Netanyahu brushed Biden's threat, saying in a statement, "If we have to stand alone, we will stand alone."

The U.S. has historically provided enormous amounts of military aid to Israel. The shipment that was paused was supposed to consist of 1,800 2,000-pound (900-kilogram) bombs and 1,700 500-pound (225-kilogram) bombs, according to a senior U.S. administration official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive matter. The focus of U.S. concern was the larger explosives and how they could be used in a dense urban area.

"I made it clear that if they go into Rafah — they haven't gone in Rafah yet — if they go into Rafah, I'm not supplying the weapons that have been used historically to deal with Rafah, to deal with the cities, that deal with that problem," Biden said.

"We're not walking away from Israel's security," the Democratic president continued. "We're walking away from Israel's ability to wage war in those areas."

U.S. officials had declined for days to comment on the halted transfer. Word about it came as Biden on Tuesday described U.S. support for Israel as "ironclad, even when we disagree."

those days. The department also announced the following donations:

- Race Donations: \$850. Kehoe Donations: \$1,400. Eagle Scout Donations for Pool Shed: \$500. Elks Donation: \$100 bought 8 new life vests. Outdoor Concepts: 2 yellow wood trees donated and planted at Lancaster Park.

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May GOODS & SERVICES DIRECTORY

SWearingen ELDER LAW. As a resident of the Wells County community for decades, Attorney, Gerret J. Swearingen, has devoted his legal practice to assisting clients in preserving the family assets from the high cost of Nursing Home and In-Home Healthcare.

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OBITUARIES

Elizabeth "Libby" Andrews, 91

Elizabeth "Libby" J. Andrews, 91, of Bluffton, went to be with her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, surrounded by her children on Monday, May 6, 2024, at Christian Care in Bluffton.



She was born on Dec. 22, 1932, in Delphos, Ohio, to the late Thomas Price Jones and Gladys (Huffer) Jones.

Libby was united in marriage to Paul Andrews on June 30, 1955, in Cleveland, Ohio. He preceded her in death on Jan. 13, 2016.

She was a member of First Missionary Church in Fort Wayne.

Libby was raised on a farm in Fort Jennings, Ohio, near Delphos, Ohio, where she graduated in 1950 from Delphos Jefferson High School. Libby attended St. Paul Bible College for two years, where she met her husband Paul. Paul served in the U.S. Air Force, and Libby was a proud military wife. They were stationed in Utah, Missouri, Evreux AFB France, Illinois and Alaska, before settling in Ossian. Libby was a proud housewife and mother, and devoted herself to also serving as the church secretary at First Missionary in Fort Wayne for 20 years.

She loved to spend all of her time with her family. Libby and Paul loved to travel, especially to Michigan and Tennessee. She enjoyed playing board games with her family, and was rather competitive. She loved to attend her grandkids' sporting and school events, and was their biggest fan. She taught Sunday School for many years. Libby enjoyed working in her flower beds and gardening. She was an excellent cook, and enjoyed sharing her skills with family and friends.

Survivors include her son, Gregory (Rhonda) Andrews of Smalley Lake, Kimmel, Indiana; daughter, Pamela (Jeff Neumeyer) Ruble-Neumeyer of Fort Wayne; daughter, Suzette (Dean) Grote of Bluffton; daughter, Rebecca (Jeff) Ruble of Monroeville; son, Thomas (Tammy) Andrews of Fort Wayne; sister, Joyce Brant of Van Wert, Ohio; 14 grandchildren, Kim (Angie) Broxon, Denise Krider, Gregory P. (Nikki) Andrews, Tonya Andrews, Aaron (Olivia) Andrews, Jessica (Elliot) Nichols, Jenna (Josh) Kosnick, Joshua Grote, Natalie (Jason) Anderson, Paul (Denise) Grote, Stephen (Lilliah) Grote, Zachary Ruble, Nicolas (Nikki) Ruble, Jack Henry Andrews; and 26 great-grandchildren.

In addition to her parents and husband, Paul, she was preceded in death by two brothers, Bill and Bob Jones; sister, Helen Brennehan; and son-in-law, Thomas F. Ruble.

A funeral service will be held at 10:30 a.m., Wednesday, May 15, 2024, at Zwick & Jahn Funeral Home in Decatur, with Pastor David DeSelm officiating. Burial will follow at the Horeb Cemetery in Uniondale.

Family and friends will be received from 4 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, May 14, 2024, at Zwick & Jahn Funeral Home in Decatur and one hour prior to the service at the funeral home on Wednesday.

Preferred memorials can be given to Heart to Heart Hospice or Parkinson Foundation.

Arrangements by Zwick and Jahn Funeral Homes of Decatur, Indiana



BHS Prom Court

Bluffton High School's prom is this Saturday at Lighted Gardens. At right is the prom court: front, Zoe Morrison, Gretchen Crist and Alydia Bertsch; back, Andrew Hunt, Connor Collins and Benjamin Ramseyer. (Photo provided)

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

**City:**  
Wednesday, 3:32 p.m., 500 block of West Wiley Avenue. Caller reported issue with property owner not fixing apartment conditions. Advised it is a civil issue.

Wednesday, 9:09 a.m., 1500 Wheatfield Court. Report of paraphernalia found in a child's bedroom.

Thursday, 1:47 a.m., South Bond and West Jefferson streets. Report of three individuals walking in alley with flashlight. Looking for a cat.

Thursday, 2:53 a.m., Capri Apartments. Caller reported someone attempted to open her door.

**County:**  
Wednesday, 3:54 a.m., South 300 West and West 1200 South, Keystone. Car versus deer.

Wednesday, 11:22 a.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Alejandro Eli Mayor Ruiz.

Wednesday, 5:58 p.m., Wells County Jail. Man requested woman be removed from property, advised it is a civil issue.

Wednesday, 6:48 p.m.,

Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Randal Thompson.

**Ossian:**  
Thursday, 6:07 a.m., 7600 North S.R. 1, Ossian. Car versus deer.

Wednesday, 2:13 p.m., Silo Farms. Report of harassment.

ARRESTS

Randal Lee Thompson, 44, Bluffton; criminal mischief and disorderly conduct and public intoxication, all Class B misdemeanors. Bond set at \$4,000.

Matthew Stephen Stand-

ford, 37, Lima, Ohio; possession of methamphetamine, a Level 6 felony, possession of marijuana, a Class A misdemeanor, operating with a controlled substance in body and possession of paraphernalia, both Class C misdemeanors. Bond set at \$11,000.

Alejandro Eli Mayor Ruiz, 23, Fort Wayne; operating without obtaining license, a Class A misdemeanor, and operating with expired plates and no financial responsibility, both Class C misdemeanors. Bond set at \$2,000.

Indiana teachers call on state board to reconsider literacy licensure requirement

By CASEY SMITH  
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Teachers from around Indiana spent hours before the State Board of Education on Wednesday, criticizing a new literacy licensure requirement that was adopted by the General Assembly earlier this year.

The training requirement requires all Pre-K to Grade 6 and special education teachers to complete 80 hours of professional development on science of reading concepts and pass a written exam. Teachers won't be able to renew their license without doing so.

Although the literacy endorsement wasn't on the state board's agenda, educators descended on the meeting, which lasted more than four hours. Most of that was spent on public comments from teachers, as well as union representatives, who said the new training mandate is unfair and overwhelming. Complicating matters further, many of the free training courses are already full, leaving only a few other options for which teachers must pay for out of pocket.

"No other profession is going to be okay with being told — not only do you have to do this to keep your license — but you have to do it outside your contracted hours," said Cory Freihaut, a special education teacher from the Vigo County School Corporation who spoke at Wednesday's meeting.

Freihaut said he's a single father who works two other jobs, in addition to teaching. He echoed numerous other educators who emphasized that fitting in training over the summer is inconvenient and a hardship for many.

"I understand we're getting a stipend, but ... that's like \$15 an hour. I make more than that at the pizza shop I do on the weekends," Freihaut said. "I ask that you guys look at shortening that (professional development), because honestly, unless you can provide it in our contracted hours, we shouldn't be doing it."

At the meeting, Secretary of Education Katie Jenner noted Indiana's reading

scores, which have been on the decline for more than a decade. According to data from the Indiana Department of Education, in 2023, one in five Hoosier third graders lacked foundational reading skills.

She acknowledged concerns, however, and maintained that the state board and education officials want to find solutions and create more "flexibility" for teachers to complete the training requirements.

Jenner noted, too, that 12,000 teachers signed up for the Keys to Literacy training in three weeks. The IDOE announced Wednesday that the state is adding cohorts.

Additional sessions were added for spring and summer, increasing the total number of cohorts from 12 to 64 — each with approximately 200 educators. More cohorts are also open for both Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 "in response to the early demand," according to IDOE.

State lawmakers approved the literacy training requirement during the 2024 legislative session as part of an effort to reverse lagging literacy scores among Hoosier students.

Under the law, teachers renewing their licenses must earn an "Early Literacy Endorsement" by 2027. They can do so through Keys to Literacy, a free third-party professional development program, through 2025. Teachers are eligible for a \$1,200 stipend for the 80-hour Keys to Literacy training, and the state is covering the cost of the

PRAXIS exam.

But representatives from the Indiana State Teachers Association said education officials should provide more options for teachers to meet the literacy requirement, and also account for teacher expertise — such as years spent leading a classroom and attainment of other coursework, like master's degrees, for example.

ISTA Treasurer Diana Reed said, specifically, the PRAXIS exam imposes an "unnecessary burden" on teachers. She additionally raised questions about the efficacy and necessity of the exam and asked that it be removed as a requirement.

"The literacy endorsement requirements ... are a great, great source of concern and a high-level issue among my fellow educators. The requirements ...

have increased stress and compounded existing challenges of teacher burnout and retention," Reed told the board. "Colleagues have expressed they would rather let their licenses lapse at the next renewal date than be subjected to more hoops and mandates to prove their worth. We are already experiencing a shortage of qualified educators, and these new requirements do not signal to our teachers that their education, degrees obtained, and endorsements earned are valued."

Even so, representatives from the nonprofit advocacy groups Stand for Children and the Institute for Quality Education encouraged the board to uphold the literacy requirements. They doubled down that the science of reading training is necessary to improve student literacy.

County Briefs

Drainage board approves summer projects

Surveyor Jarrod Hahn presented quotes for three tile projects this summer, with the apparent low bid on all three being Advanced Drainage Systems. All were unanimously approved by the drainage board.

The company's quoted \$18,950 for the Walter Johnson Prong 2 Tile in Harrison Township, \$17,167.15 for the Peter Gaskill Tile in Liberty Township, and \$12,200 for the William Day Prong 3 Tile in Liberty Township.

During the following commissioner meeting, the board approved a quarter one invoice for the Wells County Council on Aging.

County approves series of additional appropriations

The Wells County Council approved a series of transfers and additional during their meeting Wednesday.

Additional appropriations were:

- \$23,000 to the jury pay fund for the Circuit Court. Judge Kenton Kiracofe wrote in his request that the court has nearly expended its \$10,000 budget for this year. The appropriation amount was determined through average costs and the current scheduled trials through July.

- \$6,208 to software support for the Area Plan Commission. Executive Director Mike Lautzenheiser advised that the request will support updating the GIS software.

Transfers were:

- \$57.32 from IVD law books to IVD program printing within the prosecutor's budget to cover the cost of a legal noticed printed in The News-Banner.

- \$235 from vehicle supplies to wearing apparel and \$2,000 from truck maintenance to indigent for Community Corrections.

- \$71,614.87 from American Rescue Plan Acts funds to police vehicles for the Sheriff's Department, approved by the County Commissioners.

— Compiled by Holly Gaskill

Corrections and clarifications

An obituary for Thomas Woodard ran in error in Tuesday's and Thursday's News-Banner. There are no upcoming services for Woodard.

Obituary Policy

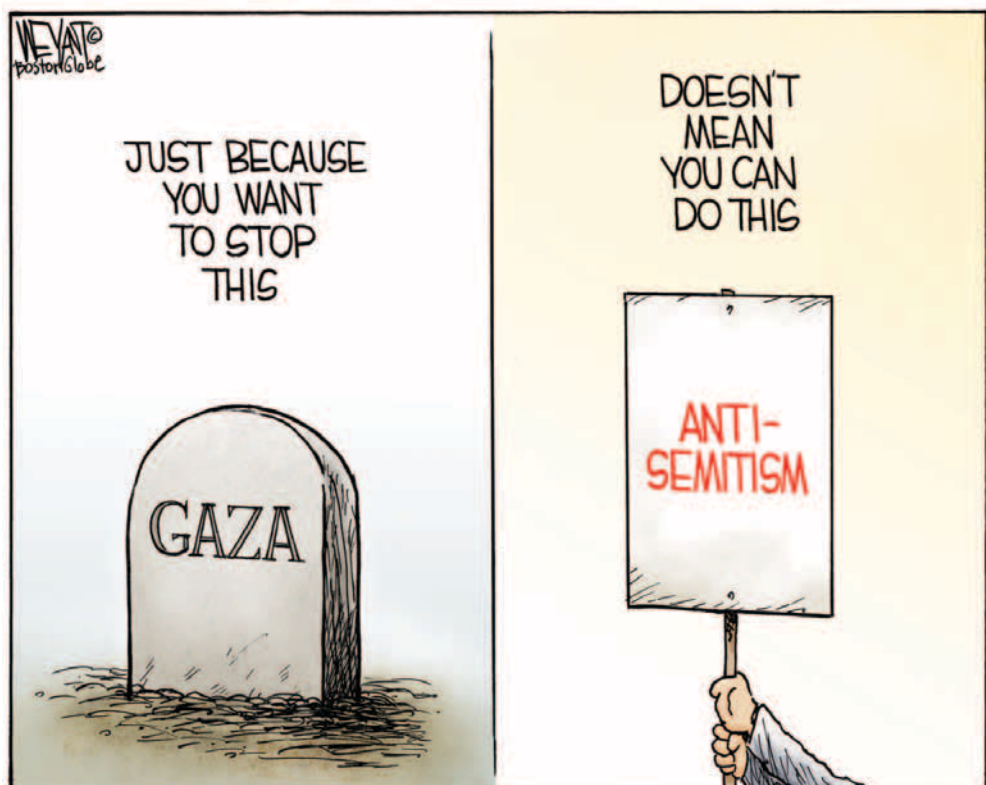
The News-Banner and Ossian Journal publishes "basic" obituaries free of charge for "local" deaths. "Basic" obituaries will include the deceased's name, age, community of record, date and place of death, basic genealogical information, the date, time and location of calling hours and services and the name of the funeral home handling arrangements.

If additional information and/or a photo is desired to be included, or if the deceased does not meet the definitions of a "local" person, there is a charge.

Area funeral homes will provide details on the policy and will coordinate obituary publication.

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**Campus Demonstrations - a look through cartoonists' eyes...**



**Other Opinions**

**The silencing of journalists by dictators as U.S. power recedes**

Friday (May 3) was World Press Freedom Day and a grim reminder of how many voices have recently been silenced by the world's authoritarian regimes. Our colleague Evan Gershkovich remains wrongfully imprisoned by Russia, where he is being held without a trial or even formal charges. He is one of far too many imprisoned journalists, and those numbers are growing.

Hong Kong newspaper owner Jimmy Lai remains in prison on accusations of endangering China's national security. The charges against him, including sedition and colluding with foreign forces, are a farce, but Beijing is happy to hold out his high-profile detention as a warning to others who dare to speak for freedom. Hong Kong's recent passage of a new national-security law known as Article 23 ensures that press freedom in the territory will continue to contract until it vanishes as in mainland China.

In China, journalist and women's rights activist Huang Xueqin has spent more than two years in prison and could face 15 more after sentencing, according to the Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation (CFHK). China has the most jailed writers in the world, exceeding 100 for the first time, according to the Pen America Freedom to Write Index, released on May 1. Around the world there were 547 journalists in jail at the end of 2023, according to Reporters Without Borders.

In Iran, 2023 Nobel Peace Prize winner Narges Mohammadi has been jailed for her fight against the state's oppression of women. In Burundi, reporter Sandra Muhoza is in custody and could face life in prison for comments on a WhatsApp group. Some of these names were projected on London's Tower Bridge Thursday night and close to the Capitol building in Washington, D.C., by the CFHK.

Authoritarian regimes lock up journalists to control what their citizens can read and see, and in some cases as leverage to trade with the West to get back spies or murderers. As American power has receded in the world, so has the West's ability to protect journalists. That's something American journalists might reflect on when they criticize their country for its imperfections. They'd be arrested elsewhere.

Rising numbers of arrests mean growing risks for reporters who continue the important work of finding and telling the truth. Evan Gershkovich was arrested for doing precisely that.

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**Today in History**

**By The Associated Press**  
Today is Friday, May 10, the 131st day of 2024. There are 235 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On May 10, 1940, during World War II, German forces began invading the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium and France. The same day, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain resigned, and Winston Churchill formed a new government.

On this date:

In 1775, Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys, along with Col. Benedict Arnold, captured the British-held fortress at Ticonderoga, New York.

In 1865, Confederate President Jefferson Davis was captured by Union forces in Irwinville, Georgia.

In 1869, a golden spike was driven in Promontory, Utah, marking the completion of the first transcontinental railroad in the United States.

**US debt will change local economic development policies**

The U.S. national debt is near its politically unsustainable level. That means substantive changes to both taxes and spending in the foreseeable future, which also means less federal funding for state and local governments.

County government, municipal government, schools, libraries and other local governments need to start planning now for a future with far less federal money.

At the start of the Great Recession, our national debt hovered at roughly 60% of gross domestic product. Today, it is a tad bit over 120 percent. Right now, the federal government is spending about 23.4% of GDP, while collecting taxes of about 17.4% of GDP.

The last time we balanced our national budget, both taxes and spending ran between 19% and 20% of GDP. That seems like a reasonable political compromise: raising taxes substantially and cutting spending substantially. By substantially, I mean reversing all the tax cuts and spending growth of the past 25 years.

There's no easy way to do this. For example, our entire military budget is at a post-World War II low of 2.7% of GDP. We could eliminate all the armed forces, and sell all our equipment, and it would not cut the annual deficit by half.

We could eliminate the Veteran's Administration, the departments of education, energy, state and agriculture, and still not balance the budget. We could cut all our foreign aid, all our research and development spending, and yet the savings wouldn't round up to one-thousandth of the debt.

To balance the budget, we will need to cut Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Those cuts won't come just in the future. They will need to come to current recipients.

To balance the budget, we also will need to raise taxes on everyone. Those tax increases cannot be limited just the rich or super rich; everyone will see an increase in taxes.

I know this is an unpleasant realization that is probably causing many readers to come slightly unglued. Sorry, the arithmetic is unavoidable. There are no easy answers. There's no tax cut that will generate rapid economic growth, nor is there some magical spending mix that will cause a big spike in productivity. I wish there were, but there is not. This debt will be lowered the old-fashioned way.

Among the unavoidable casualties of budget cuts will be significantly fewer intergovernmental transfers, from a wide range of programs. Many local governments have come to anticipate federal spending. Poor places, in particular, receive a disproportionate share of federal spending on roads, housing, economic development, education, healthcare and social services.

I don't think local governments should be viewing this with dread. Instead, I think it is, in the words of FDR, "...preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly." Prospering communities are mostly a consequence of local action, not state or federal largesse. Even in places where state or federal development efforts are effective, as in Indiana's Regional Cities Initiative, the effects are modest when compared to the benefits of local action.

Sometime over the next decade or so, we are almost certain to enter a period in which state and local

governments can expect much lower federal spending. It would be wise to begin preparing residents. If you want additional or improved infrastructure, better schools and other quality of life

improvements, now is the time to begin planning those investments.

I recommend a three-part approach.

First, there must be a frank review of local

economic conditions. There are over 200 Midwestern counties in the midst of long-term economic and population decline. It takes courage to confront unpleasant facts head on. Without doing so, no place will be lucky enough to reverse economic course.

A second step is to take stock of the policies that you've been using for the past several decades. I am amazed at the number of places who complain of inadequate school or municipal funding, while spending millions of dollars a year on traditional economic development. Add up all the assessed value locked into tax increment financing (TIF) or in property tax abatements and assess that value at the current tax rate. Add up the cost of your economic development office, and any direct spending program, like a revolving loan fund.

The results will shock and dismay. There is no community in the Midwest where traditional business attraction policies have yielded prosperity. I'd be very surprised if a single county saw the benefits of that spending outweigh the costs over any 10-year period since the 1970s.

For the 200 or so Midwestern counties in decline, the level of lost spending on attracting new businesses will be terribly vexing. These are exactly the same places in need of vast infrastructure improvement, ranging from bridge replacement and new schools to water and sewer facilities. This process should make clear that there's plenty of resources to support local improvements. They are simply being misspent.

Finally, local governments should think hard about what residents want out of their communities. Don't ask them what types of economic development they want. Ask them what they want their community to be for their families. They should be asked in surveys and focus groups, preferably after they've seen presentations about economic conditions and their economic development policy history in their city or county.

In most cases, you'll hear about a lot of little things: parks, eateries and recreational activities. Some will want their school to be better—particularly if they've seen clear data on student outcomes. I suspect most people will want a city or county that could keep their children around after they graduate.

These steps will allow local elected leaders and their constituents better understand the challenges of tighter federal budgets and fewer federal resources to poor places. They may also set a community on a healthier past, focused more on the building blocks of prosperity, and less on economic development policies crafted for the middle of the last century.

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



Michael Hicks

**Hoosier Opinions**

Brother's new girlfriend gets off on the wrong foot

Dear Annie: My recently divorced brother has a new girlfriend. He has been divorced for three months. She has introduced him to all of her friends and family. She was married 20 years and went through a bitter divorce and had several bad dating experiences from dating sites. She seems to be elated to find a nice guy like my brother. She seems to think he's too good to be true and even did a background check on him.

Now, she wants to meet my mom and me. Unfortunately, I am apprehensive and reluctant to meet her. My brother called me while I was driving, so my mom mostly talked to her. I talked for maybe five minutes to her. He told me later that he asked what she thought of us. Her reply was, "Your mom is a hoot, and your sister has a lot of opinions."

I feel a little hurt at this revelation. It seems to suggest that I'm opinionated or that she didn't like my opinions. It didn't sound positive. I asked my mom and brother if I said anything rude. Mom said no. My brother didn't see anything negative about his girlfriend's comment. I inquired again a couple weeks later, and he no longer remembers the incident. I haven't said anything negative about his girlfriend, so I don't understand her remark.

Considering I've talked to her directly once and have never met her, I'm concerned she is possibly judgmental and negative. Should I meet her? If so, would it be disrespectful if I suggest to meet her for only a day? I don't want to spend several days with a rude person biting my tongue, but I don't want to be disrespectful to my brother since we have always been close. — Slighted Sister

Dear Slighted Sister: It's understandable to feel apprehensive about meeting someone new, especially when their initial comments about you weren't entirely positive. But meeting her could be an opportunity to form your own opinion rather than relying on a brief, possibly offhand comment. It's also important to maintain your close relationship with your brother, and showing willingness to

meet his new partner can be a way of supporting him.

Considering your reservations, suggesting a shorter meeting, like a lunch or coffee, is a reasonable approach. It gives you a chance to meet her without the commitment of an extended visit, and it's perfectly respectful.

Dear Annie: I have a dilemma. My retired father constantly texts me — I mean all day long. I have texted him back "Have a good rest of your day," trying to hint to him that I'm done texting him for the day. He doesn't get it. Then I asked him directly to please not text me so often. He said he was sorry and would try to text me less. That lasted a day. He even texted me all day long when I was on vacation! Now I have blocked him, but he doesn't know that. How should I handle this situation? — Tired of Text Messages

Dear Tired: It sounds like you've tried to set boundaries with your father, but the results haven't lasted. Blocking him without his knowledge can lead to more confusion and hurt feelings down the line, so it's good you're open to reevaluating how to handle this.

Have an in-person conversation with your dad to explain how much you value your relationship with him, but also express your need for space during your busy days or personal time. It's important he understands that your replies might be delayed, not because you don't care but because you have other commitments. I suspect your dad might be feeling lonely and is desperately seeking human connection and company. Help him find ways to engage his time that lessen his focus on texting you and give him more sources of interaction and fulfillment.

Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com. © 2024 CREATORS.COM

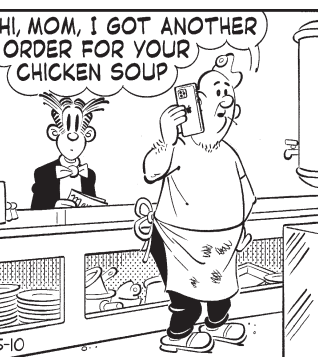
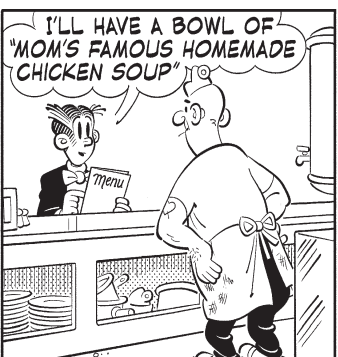
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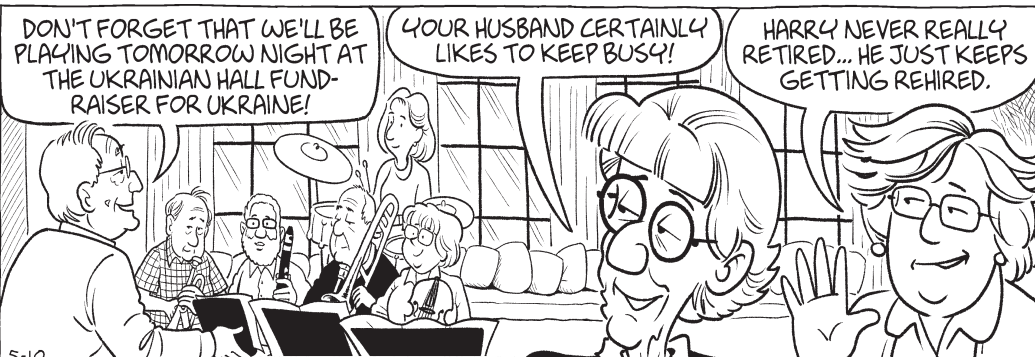
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ZITS



CRANKSHAFT



THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane

The LOCKHORNS



My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



Christ calls us to follow Him

Question: My youth pastor walked to the edge of the platform, took out his iPhone, held it up, and asked our group, "Have you noticed a call from God?" We all looked at each other wondering if he was coherent. He asked that we open our Bibles to Jeremiah 33:3, and he read, "Call to Me, and I will answer you (NKJV)". Being a tech nerd, it really got my attention. Does God still call people the same way He did in Bible times? — T.N.

Answer: Telecommunications have changed our world. Now there are few instances when anyone is disconnected. But some-

times phone reception is difficult. A call can just simply drop or be interrupted because of interference. Callers may scream into the phone, "Can you hear me?" A reply may come back, "I can hear you!" It's a comical exchange.

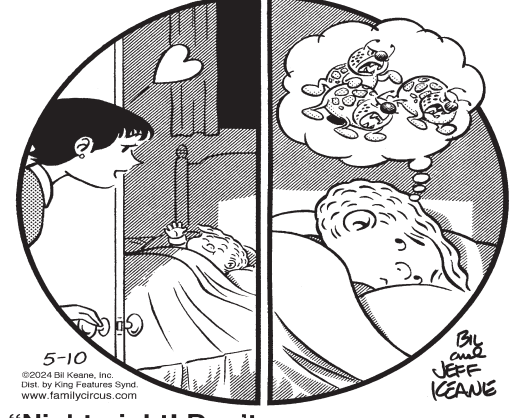
Sometimes the same happens when we try to communicate with the Lord. There's nothing humorous about that! When there's interference, be assured the problem is with us. Often we don't want to hear what God has to say because we already know what the Word of God has told us. We must not let anything keep us from communicating daily with God.

Not only does He want

to communicate with us — He wants us to obey Him. The human race is called on throughout the Bible to repent of sin and return to God. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13, KJV). And when Christ calls us to follow Him, He calls us out of this world's sin and confusion, and then He sends us back into the world; not to share any longer in its sin and spiritual darkness, but to bear witness to the light of Christ.

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

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"Night-night! Don't let the bedbugs bite!"

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and solution time: 25 mins.

Yesterday's answer 5-10 crossword puzzle grid

TV schedule table with columns for time slots (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) and rows for various channels (WJMN, CBS, Antenna, ABC, NBC, FOX, PBS, etc.)

# Knights earn first in boys, girls track meets, preps for sectionals next week

By RYAN WALKER

Norwell wrapped up its final track meet of the season on a rainy, cold and windy night at Adams Central.

The boys won the meet with the Belmont Braves also in attendance, and the girls tied for first with 53 points with the Braves.

Admittedly, the three teams in the girls' events were mostly junior varsity or runners with an opportunity to showcase what they've got that don't normally get to. The reason for this is the sectional meet coming up next Tuesday, and coaches want their team to have as much rest as possible and avoid injury.

"The goal tonight was, just this last regular season meet, just giving some of our younger girls that have worked real hard at practice all season a chance to give it their last shot," Norwell head coach Deidre Stoppenhagen said. "Then it gave the varsity girls some rest time. We've got some sore shins and calves."

The Knights know a thing or two about the sectional meet, winning it five times over the past six seasons, including last year. Stoppenhagen shared that this season, Oak Hill and Eastbrook are going to make a run for the trophy.

Because of the stiff competition, she had to think about what she was going to do with her lineup. Track coaches have two options: One, to try and score as many points and spread their athletes around events they might not be the best in, but would score more points. Or two, risk team points for individuals to move on to the regional meet, in which only the top three advance.

Stoppenhagen came to an answer — they're going to go for it all.

"I was really wrestling back and forth when I was organizing my lineup," Stoppenhagen said. "We have a high standard to win it, but again, Oak Hill and Eastbrook are tough this year. When I scored us out, I said 'OK, do I do individuals? Do I want to win it? I just kind of talked to the girls and went with my gut, and we're going to go for it.'"

The boys had a much different approach than the girls.

Thursday night was the one-week mark for the sectional coming up. The team is working hard and getting its last few rounds of training and meets in before resting for the big day.

"We try not to overtax them, but we try to work them so they get enough work in that they'd be ready to go next week with plenty of rest," coach Josh Gerber said.

Head coach Adam Prater was absent at the meet.

Gerber is unsure of what the team will officially do with the lineup yet in terms of winning as a team or individuals.

It would be hard not to try and win as a team, as the Knights might still have a bad taste in their mouth after a runner-up finish last year, 20 points behind Oak Hill.

This team has lost some depth, which could make an easier decision.

"Back when I was the head coach about 10 years ago, we'd always load up the sectional and try and get as many kids through as we could," Gerber said. "And you want to see

good team success and stuff like that ... You want to do well as a team, but you also don't want to compromise a kid's chance to make it out in an individual. It's a fine balance to walk."

The girls' sectional is hosted by Marion and will begin at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 14. The boys will follow on Thursday.

ryan@news-banner.com

## Individual results:

- Boys**
- Trevon Stoppenhagen first in the 100m with a time of 11.4 and Brady Smith third at 11.9.
  - Stoppenhagen first in the 200m with a time of 24.0 and Nolan Weedman second at 24.7.
  - Mathew Hernandez first in the 400m with a time of 55.4 and Ryan Smith third at 57.8.
  - Caiden Petrie second in the 800m with a time of 2:10.2 and Luke Johnson third at 2:14.2.
  - Gavin Threewits third in the 1600m with a time of 5:09.0.
  - Zane Borne and Hayden Bennett tied for first in the 110m hurdles with a time of 16.3.
  - Norwell's 4x100m relay team of Jase Harmon, Stoppenhagen, Quentauris Jones and Devin Dale first with a time of 47.8.
  - Norwell's 4x400m relay team of Stoppenhagen, Kyler Morris, Smith and Dale first with a time of 3:48.1.
  - Norwell's 4x800m relay team of Morris, Threewits, Petrie and Johnson first with a time of 8:58.0.
  - Trace Moser first in the high jump at 5-4.
  - Harmon first in the long jump at 17-4.
  - Alex Fojtik first in the shot put at 41-6.
  - Will Gerber third in the discus at 114-9.
- Girls**
- Shae Brooks second in the 100m with a time of 14.2.
  - Lillian Mann third in the 200m with a time of 30.9.
  - Alivia Green third in the 400m with a time of 1:18.0.
  - Brooklyn Meyer third in the 800m with a time of 3:02.2.
  - Lyanna Kelley second in the 1600m with a time of 6:39.0 and Ali Riley third at 6:46.0.
  - Hallie Smith second in the 100m hurdles with a time of 19.7 and Mann third at 19.8.
  - Mann third in the 300m hurdles with a time of 58.8.
  - Norwell's 4x100m relay team of Jersey Donaldson, Zoe Ott, Reaghan Plunkett and Samira Perez third with a time of 1:01.6.
  - Norwell's 4x400m relay team of Green, Karrigan Melcher, Kelley and Smith second.
  - Norwell's 4x800m relay team of Kelley, Kylee Hannie, Mariah Kline and Addison Meyer third with a time of 12:27.0.
  - Haley Williamson first in the high jump at 4-10 and Brooks third at 4-2.
  - Carlee Strunk first in the long jump at 13-4 and Ryland Graft third at 11-8.75.
  - Mackenzie Fuess second in the shot put at 30-3.
  - Astrid Clausson first in the discus at 87-6.



Norwell's Lukas Mashuda (front) leads the pack of Knights during the mile run Thursday night at Adams Central High School. Runners in the event for Norwell were Mashuda, Gavin Threewits, Gage Reinhard, Luke Johnson, Elijah Jacob and Parker McCartney. (Photos by Ryan Walker)



Knights senior mile runner Haleigh Reinhard (left) and Ali Riley jog together in their final regular season meet of their careers.

# Mitchell's 29 points help Cavs blow out Celtics, tie series 1

By JIMMY GOLEN  
AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Donovan Mitchell banked in a 3-pointer from a few steps beyond the top of the arc and could only shrug as he back-pedaled back on defense. He followed with two baskets in the lane to give the Cleveland Cavaliers a 16-point lead.

"Sometimes you get lucky," Mitchell said after scoring 29 points to help Cleveland beat Boston 118-94 on Thursday night. "Shooters shoot."

Two nights after losing the opener by 25 points, the Cavaliers answered with a blow-out of their own, beating the top-seeded Celtics in Boston to tie their Eastern Conference semifinal series at one game apiece. The teams now head to Cleveland for Games 3 and 4 on Saturday and Monday.

"We expected them to play better and they did," Celtics center Al Horford said. "They responded and we didn't."

Mitchell scored 33 points in the opener but got little help. On Thursday, the Cavs All-Star took just six shots and scored six points in the first half, while handing out five assists. Mitchell had 16 points in the third quarter and hit three straight baskets to start the fourth, including the 28-footer off the glass.

"I hadn't shot much, trying to find ways to get guys involved early, and picking my spots. I was just continuing to find ways to apply pressure on them," said Mitchell, who finished with eight assists and seven rebounds.

"In the second half it was scoring," he said. "Sometimes it's assists. Sometimes it's rebounds. Whatever it takes. And when it was time to go, it's time to go. I knew at some point I was going to have to start, obviously, shooting."

Jayson Tatum scored 25 for Boston, and Jaylen Brown added 19 points. But Derrick White, whose 25 points in Game 1 helped the Celtics coast to a 120-95 win, managed just 10 points, missing seven of his eight 3-point tries.

With the win, the Cavaliers assured themselves of at least a fifth game back in Boston on Wednesday. And after finally getting their first road win in this postseason, they showed that they can win there.

"When we defend the way we defended and our shots fall, what we do travels," Cleveland coach J.B. Bickerstaff said. "And we can win anywhere."

Evan Mobley had 21 points and 10 rebounds for his third straight double-double, and his fifth of this postseason. Caris LeVert scored 21 off the bench for Cleveland, hitting a pull-up jumper midway through the fourth quarter that gave the Cavaliers a 20-point lead and started a parade of fans to the exits. Many of those who stayed began booing.

A minute later, after the Celtics missed another 3-pointer — they were 8 for 35 from long distance in all — LeVert made a layup and drew a flagrant foul from Tatum. It was a 25-point game, and Boston coach Joe

Mazzulla emptied his bench.

Bickerstaff followed soon after, getting some rest for Mitchell, who played a game-high 37 minutes on Tuesday night but was on the bench for the 10-2 Celtics run to start the fourth that blew open the game.

Mitchell hit four of his five 3-point attempts in the third quarter to help Cleveland extend its lead to as many as 14 points. And he remained in the game at the start of the fourth and until the game was put away, with Cleveland up 27 and four minutes left.

"At halftime I was just like, 'I don't plan on coming out.' That was the mindset," Mitchell said. "He asked me if I needed (a break) and I was like, 'I'm good.'"

According to ESPN, the 24-point win was the biggest in the playoffs by a double-digit underdog since 1991.

Celtics center Kristaps Porzingis missed his third straight game with a strained calf muscle. Mobley started at center in place of Jarrett Allen, who has missed five straight games with bruised ribs, and reached a career playoff high in points.

Mobley scored 11 in the first quarter, when the Cavaliers quickly fell behind by nine — giving the Celtics a second straight blowout. But Cleveland ran off 11 points in a row — eight from LeVert. Boston went ahead by eight in the second before the Cavs sent it into halftime tied.

Tatum had 16 points, six rebounds and four assists at the half, and Mobley had 15, seven, and five.

## Sports Roundup

### Tigers fall to Warriors in boys' golf at Whispering Creek

Bluffton went on the road and fell to Woodlan in boys' golf at Whispering Creek Thursday.

The Tigers scored a 165 compared to the Warriors' 152.

Declan Grieser was the medalist with a score of 36, followed by Connor Klopfenstein (41), Kade Abbett (42), Anthony Hartman (46) and Max White (49).

Bluffton will visit South Adams at 4:30 p.m. Monday, May 13.

### Tigers drop ACAC softball contest to Heritage Patriots

Bluffton's softball team fell 10-0 at home against Heritage Wednesday night.

The Tigers fall to 9-10 on the season and 1-6 overall in their final conference game.

The Tigers had one hit, and that went to Madison Smith. Tyrah Shaw picked up the loss, throwing two innings. Madyson Sonnigen threw one inning, no runs and two strikeouts.

Bluffton will be at Wes-Del at 5:30 p.m. Monday, May 13.

### Knights win final middle school track meets

Norwell won both of its track meets in middle school against New Haven and McCulloch at home Wednesday night.

The Knight boys had a score of 93, McCulloch 32 and New Haven 19. The

girls had a team score of 87, McCulloch 39 and New Haven 19.

This was the last meet of the regular season, and Norwell will compete in the Northeast 8 Middle School Conference meet at 5:30 p.m. Friday, May 10.

#### Event winners:

- Boys**
- Stellen Davis in the shot put at 35-9.5.
  - Chris Misch and Cooper Figert in the long jump at 16-1.
  - Tyler Zent in the pole vault at 8-0.
  - Roman Meyer in the 110m hurdles with a time of 19.38.
  - Jace Smith in the 100m with a time of 12.61.
  - Hudson Petrie in the 800m with a time of 2:20.6.
  - Zeke Ford in the 400m with a time of 58.52.
  - Maddux Thornton in the 1600m with a time of 5:27.
  - Norwell's 1600m relay team with a time of 3:59.
- Girls**
- Cyndall Pyle in the shot put at 31-6.
  - Lillie Felton in the long jump at 13-7.
  - Macy Oatess in the high jump at 4-5.
  - Mia Kurtz in the pole vault at 8-0 and in the 800m with a time of 2:30.
  - Miyah Foss in the 100m hurdles with a time of 17-62 and in the 200m with a time of 33.41.
  - Tenlee Morris in the 100m with a time of 13.58.
  - Norwell's 400m relay team with a time of 53.42.
  - Norwell's 1600m relay team with a time of 4:34.

## High School Calendar

**FRIDAY, MAY 10**  
BASEBALL: Huntington North at Norwell, 5:30 p.m.  
SOFTBALL: Northrop at Norwell, 5:30 p.m.  
Southern Wells at Southwood, 5 p.m.

**SATURDAY, MAY 11**  
BASEBALL: St. Mary's Memorial at Bluffton, 12:30 p.m.; Southern Wells at Canterbury, 11 a.m.

BOYS GOLF: Norwell at Angola Invitational, 12:30 p.m.  
SOFTBALL: Norwell at Belmont, 10 a.m.; Southern Wells at Liberty Christian, 11 a.m.

TRACK AND FIELD (CO-ED): Norwell at Huntington North's 9/10 Boys Invitational, 11 a.m.; Bluffton hosting throwers showcase, 10 a.m.

**MONDAY, MAY 13**  
BASEBALL: Blackhawk at Bluffton, 5 p.m.  
BOYS GOLF: Bluffton at South Adams, 4:30 p.m.

GIRLS TENNIS: Norwell at Carroll, 4:30 p.m.  
SOFTBALL: Columbia City at Norwell, 5:30 p.m.; Southern Wells at Lakewood Park Christian, 5 p.m.

**TUESDAY, MAY 14**  
BASEBALL: Norwell at Columbia City, 5:30 p.m.; Southern Wells at Bluffton, 5 p.m. (non-conference)

BOYS GOLF: Belmont/East Noble at Norwell, 4 p.m.; Adams Central at Southern Wells, 4:30 p.m.

GIRLS TENNIS: (Sectional) Bluffton, Norwell at Bluffton vs. TBD, 4:30 p.m.



# TikTok to start labeling AI content as tech becomes more universal

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN  
AP Business Writer

TikTok will begin labeling content created using artificial intelligence when it's been uploaded from outside its own platform in an attempt to combat misinformation.

"AI enables incredible creative opportunities, but can confuse or mislead viewers if they don't know content was AI-generated," the company said in a prepared statement Thursday. "Labeling helps make that context clear—which is why we label AIGC made with TikTok AI effects, and have required creators to label realistic AIGC for over a year."

TikTok's shift in policy is part of a broader attempt in the technology industry to provide more safeguards for AI usage. In February Meta announced that it was working with industry partners on technical standards that will make it easier to identify images and eventually video

and audio generated by artificial intelligence tools. Users on Facebook and Instagram users would see labels on AI-generated images.

Google said last year that AI labels are coming to YouTube and its other platforms.

A push for digital watermarking and labeling of AI-generated content was also part of an executive order that U.S. President Joe Biden signed in October.

TikTok is teaming up with the Coalition for Content Provenance and Authenticity and will use their Content Credentials technology.

The company said that the technology can attach metadata to content, which it can use to instantly recognize and label AI-generated content. TikTok said it began to deploy the technology Thursday on images and videos and will be coming to audio-only content soon.

In coming months, Content Credentials will be attached to

submissions made on TikTok, which will remain on the content when downloaded. This will help identify AI-generated material that's made on TikTok and help people learn when, where and how the content was made or edited. Other platforms that adopt Content Credentials will be able to automatically label it.

"Using Content Credentials as a way to identify and convey synthetic media to audiences directly is a meaningful step towards AI transparency, even more so than typical watermarking techniques," Claire Leibowicz, head of the AI and Media Integrity Program at the Partnership on AI, said in a prepared statement. "At the same time we need to better understand how users react to these labels and hope that TikTok reports on the response so that we may better understand how the public navigates an increasingly AI-augmented world."

TikTok said it's the first video-sharing platform to put the creden-

tials into practice and will join the Adobe-led Content Authenticity Initiative to help push the adoption of the credentials within the industry.

"TikTok is the first social media platform to support Content Credentials, and with over 170 million users in the United States alone, their platform and their vast community of creators and users are an essential piece of that chain of trust needed to increase transparency online," Dana Rao, Adobe's executive vice president, general counsel and chief trust officer, said in a blog post.

TikTok's policy in the past has been to encourage users to label content that has been generated or significantly edited by AI. It also requires users to label all AI-generated content where it contains realistic images, audio, and video.

"Our users and our creators are so excited about AI and what it can do for their creativity and their ability to connect with audi-

ences." Adam Presser, TikTok's Head of Operations & Trust and Safety told ABC News. "And at the same time, we want to make sure that people have that ability to understand what fact is and what is fiction."

The announcement initially came on ABC's "Good Morning America" on Thursday.

TikTok's AI actions come just two days after TikTok said that it and its Chinese parent company, ByteDance, had filed a lawsuit challenging a new American law that would ban the video-sharing app in the U.S. unless it's sold to an approved buyer, saying it unfairly singles out the platform and is an unprecedented attack on free speech.

The lawsuit is the latest turn in what's shaping up to be a protracted legal fight over TikTok's future in the United States — and one that could end up before the Supreme Court. If TikTok loses, it says it would be forced to shut down next year.

# Guns are being stolen from cars at triple the rate they were 10 years ago

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The rate of guns stolen from cars in the U.S. has tripled over the last decade, making them the largest source of stolen guns in the country, an analysis of FBI data by the gun safety group Everytown found.

The rate of stolen guns from cars climbed nearly every year and spiked during the coronavirus pandemic along with a major surge in weapons purchases in the U.S., according to the report, which analyzes FBI data from 337 cities in 44 states and was provided to The Associated Press.

The stolen weapons have, in some cases, turned up at crime scenes. In July 2021, a gun taken from an unlocked car in Riverside, Florida, was used to kill a 27-year-old Coast Guard member as she tried to stop a car burglary in her neigh-

borhood.

The alarming trend underscores the need for Americans to safely secure their firearms to prevent them from getting into the hands of dangerous people, said Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Director Steve Dettelbach, whose agency has separately found links between stolen guns and violent crimes.

"People don't go to a mall and steal a firearm from a locked car to go hunting. Those guns are going straight to the street," said Dettelbach, whose agency was not involved in the report. "They're going to violent people who can't pass a background check. They're going to gangs. They're going to drug dealers, and they're going to hurt and kill the people who live in the next town, the next county or the next state."

Nearly 112,000 guns were reported stolen in 2022, and just over half of

those were from cars — most often when they were parked in driveways or outside people's homes, the Everytown report found. That's up from about one-quarter of all thefts in 2013, when homes were the leading spot for firearm thefts, the report says.

Stolen guns have also been linked to tragic accidents, such as when a 14-year-old boy in St. Petersburg, Florida, killed his 11-year-old brother after finding in an alley a gun that had been stolen from an unlocked car a few days before.

At least one firearm was stolen from a car every nine minutes on average in 2022, the most recent year for which data was available. That's almost certainly an undercount, though, since there's no federal law requiring people to report stolen guns and only one-third of states require a report.

"Every gun stolen from a car increases the

chances it'll be used in a violent crime," said Sarah Burd-Sharp, senior director of research at Everytown, which advocates for gun control policies. It's unclear what's driving the trend. The report found higher theft rates in states with looser gun laws, which also tend to have higher rates of gun ownership.

The report analyzed crime data from the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System, which includes details about what was stolen and where it came from. Guns stolen from cars bucked car theft trends overall — the rate of other things stolen from cars has dropped 11% over the last 10 years, even as the rate of gun thefts from cars grew 200%, Everytown found in its analysis of FBI data.

In Savannah, Georgia, city leaders last month passed an ordinance requiring people to secure firearms left inside cars after

seeing more than 200 guns stolen from unlocked cars in a year. The measure is facing pushback from the state's attorney general.

The ATF has separately said that theft is a significant source of guns that end up in the hands of criminals. More than 1 million guns were reported stolen between 2017 and 2021, the agency found in

a sweeping report on crime guns released last year. And the vast majority of gun thefts are from individuals.

The agency is prohibited by law from publicly releasing detailed information about where stolen guns end up. The information can, however, be shared with police investigating a crime.

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