



A bounce, skip and hop

A fun-filled field day took place at Ossian Elementary School on Friday. Students enjoyed bouncing, kicking, running, jumping, and celebrating the soon-to-be end of the school year.

Above left, Dean Evans (pictured) garnered cheers from his classmates with his impressive bouncing

Below, Special Education teachers Cylie Krug (left) and Anna Whet-stone (right) and their students were not short on smiles. (Photos by Sydney Kent)



Bluffton Woman sentenced in elder abuse case

By SYDNEY KENT

A woman from Bluffton who repeatedly abused, controlled and confined an elderly family member in her care did not receive any prison time.

Natasha Stanton, 42, pled guilty to two counts of domestic battery causing bodily injury. She was sentenced to two years in prison with all time suspended as well as 462 days in jail - time served with a day-for-day credit - for the charges. She is required to report to probation following her release from jail.

As part of a plea agreement with the state, three counts of domestic battery using a deadly weapon, all Level 5 felonies, one count of strangulation, and one count of confinement, all Level 6 felonies, were dismissed.

According to a probable cause affidavit, the charges were filed after an elderly family member escaped Stanton's residence and ran to a neighbor's house to call for help. The victim reported that Stanton had strangled her, making it difficult to breathe, which led the victim to seek help. However, the abuse reportedly began long before Stanton's arrest.

The victim reported that Stanton broke her arm and "prayed" over it while also condemning her for the injury. Stanton had Power of Attorney over the victim. This allowed Stanton to control many facets of the victim's life - including finances and government assistance. She reported that Stanton would deny her food, lock her in her room and not allow her to leave. She also said that the abuse escalated approximately six weeks before the report - when Stanton's boyfriend moved in.

Prosecutor Colin Andrews indicated that Stanton's boyfriend was also a victim - so much so that the no-contact order between the two will remain.

(Continued on Page 2)

Botanists scour U.S.-Mexico border to document ecosystem split by giant wall

By JULIE WATSON, Associated Press JACUMÉ, México (AP) – Near the towering border wall flanked by a U.S. Border Patrol vehicle, botanist Sula Vanderplank heard a quail in the scrub yelp "chica-go," a sound the birds use to signal they are separated from a mate or group.

plants and animals, and records the coordinates of the location.

The hope is the information could lead



Then silence.

A quail on the Mexican side called back, triggering a back-and-forth soundtrack that was both fitting and heartbreaking in an ecosystem split by an artificial barrier.

Vanderplank was among several botanists and citizen scientists participating in the Border Bioblitz near the Mexican community of Jacumé, about 60 miles east of Tijuana.

Roughly 1,000 volunteers armed with the iNaturalist app on their smartphones are documenting as many species as possible along the U.S.-Mexico border in May. Uploading photos to the app helps identify

to more protections for the region's natural richness, which is overshadowed by news of drug trafficking and migrant smuggling.

On a recent day, Bioblitz volunteers scrutinized a bright yellow blooming carpet of common Goldfields, a sharp contrast to the imposing steel bollards of the border wall topped with rolls of razor wire. Some navigated their way around piles of empty water jugs, a gray hoodie and empty cans of tuna fish left under the branches of native flora like the Tecate Cypress.

"There's a fabulous amount of biodiversity here that's traditionally been overlooked," Vanderplank, of the binational program Baja Rare, said.

The efforts started in response to former President Donald Trump adding hundreds (Continued on Page 2)

Airstrike kills 27 in central Gaza and fighting rages

By WAFAA SHURAFA, SAMY MAGDY and JOSEPH KRAUSS **Associated Press**

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) -An Israeli airstrike killed 27 people in central Gaza, mostly women and children, and fighting with Hamas raged across the north on Sunday as Israel's leaders aired divisions over who should govern Gaza after the war, now in its eighth month.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces criticism from the other members of his War Cabinet, with main political rival Benny Gantz threatening to leave the government if a plan is not created by June 8 that includes an international administration for postwar Gaza. His departure would leave Netanyahu more reliant on far-right allies who support full military occupation of Gaza and rebuilding of Jewish settlements there.

U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan met with Netanyahu to discuss an ambitious U.S. plan for Saudi Arabia to recognize Israel and help the Palestinian Authority govern Gaza in exchange for a path to eventual statehood. Netanyahu's office in a statement said they focused on Israel's military operation in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, humanitarian aid and hostages held in Gaza.

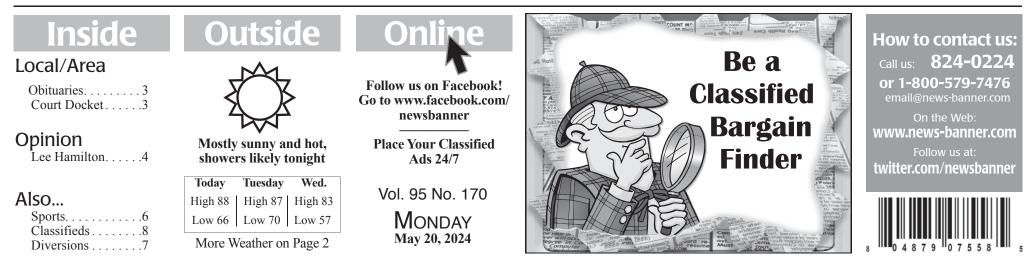
(Continued on Page 2)



Derby Cart Race

First Reformed Church held a derby cart race for kids and adults Saturday morning. Participants sped down South Bennet Street in carts built by parents and kids. Above, Julie Johnson (right) gives Vince Schumm some final instructions before a practice run. At left, Jerry Hook, who helped organize the event, prepares to head down the hill. Below, Schumm (left) and Brinley Griner are neck-and-neck as they head for the line. (Photos by Jonathan Snyder)





LOCAL/NATION

Elder abuse case

(Continued from Page 1)

"He's just been damaged by the whole thing,' Andrews said. "I would ask for probation to engage in significant psychological counseling. Stanton acknowledges that and says she needs help. I'm not asking for additional jail time and the victims are not asking for additional jail time."

Andrews told the court there was a "significant pattern" of mental health issues in Stanton's family.

"If you read the probable cause affidavit," Andrews noted. "At one point (Stanton's) son told police that she speaks directly to God."

Andrews went on to

say that Stanton's family is "quite spiritual — to the point of exorcism being used" and that there is a clear pattern of controlling behavior. According to court documents, Stanton's 9-year-old son lived in the home during the ongoing abuse. The victim in the case reported that she endured Stanton's treatment out of fear of what may happen to him.

"In speaking with the family, (they) have the tools in place to protect them-selves," Andrews told the court. "I think it was an eyeopening experience for (the family). They realized there were options outside of stay-

ing in the home in a toxic environment."

Andrews did not comment on what tools Stanton's son has accessible. Judge Kenton Kiracofe noted that a Child In Need of Services case was in process for Stanton's son. He asked the parties if anyone had spoken to the Department of Child Services about expectations.

Stanton's public defender, Cory Spreen, said he believed that DCS intended to reunify Stanton with her 9-vear-old son. He advised he did not know with certainty

'She needs to be there for him," Spreen said. "Not just as she is now, but as a whole

human and healthy adult. It's my hope that she gets the help she needs."

Kiracofe explained that the reason for the court's sentence was for Stanton to be supervised and receive services locally. Kiracofe also stated that Stanton had spent 18 months in jail and referred to the time awaiting disposition in her case as a "significant amount of time." However, according to court documents and coverage of the case, Stanton was incarcerated for 231 days - approximately 8 months. She has since been released from the Wells County Jail.

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Botanists document ecosystem

(Continued from Page 1)

of miles of border walls that toppled untold numbers of saguaro cactuses in Arizona and passed through the biodiversity hotspot of Baja California.

"When the border wall construction began, we realized how little hard data we had, especially when it came to plants and small organisms," Vanderplank said. "We don't know what all we could lose."

Since then, there has been a groundswell of initiatives to document the borderland's flora and fauna as climate change coupled with habitat loss, pollution and development have hammered the world's biodiversity. One estimate in 2019 warns that a million plant and animal species face extinction within decades, a rate of loss 1,000 times greater than expected.

The United Nations is expected hold a high-level meeting in Colombia of signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity in October aiming to protect 30% of land, freshwater and oceans considered important for biodiversity by 2030, known as 30 by 30. Representatives from nearly 200 countries are expected to present plans on how they will meet conservation targets agreed upon in 2022.

Currently, 17% of terrestrial and 10% of marine areas are protected.

Baja California peninsula, which borders California and is home to Tijuana with one of Mexico's highest homicide rates, has more than 4,000 species of plants. A quarter of them are endemic and at least 400 plants are considered rare with little to no protection.

Flora and fauna that have gone extinct or are in danger of disappearing in the U.S., like the California redlegged frog, are thriving south of the

Airstrike kills 27

border, producing specimens that are being used to bring back populations.

But the region's crime deters many U.S. scientists from crossing the border. Mexico also is restricting permits for botanists and not allowing seeds to be collected, further curtailing the work, scientists say.

Bioblitz organizers work with local communities and say they take people only to areas deemed safe. "You have to be really careful

because of the violence," said Jon Rebman, a curator of botany at the San Diego Natural History Museum, who has named 33 new plants for science from the southern California and Baja California region.

"It's scary from that standpoint, yet those are the areas where we really need more information because there's hardly any protected area on the south side," he said.

Using the museum's collection, Rebman made a list of 15 plant species endemic to Baja California and not seen since being collected nearly a century ago. He created a binational team to find them. So far, they have located 11

Rebman also discovered two new plants to science in 2021 in a canyon off a Tijuana highway: the new species, Astragalus tijuanensis, and a new variety of the Astragalus brauntonii named lativexillum.

"I was worried they would go extinct before we even got them named," Rebman said. "That tells you what type of area we're working in.'

Tijuana-based botanist Mariana Fernandez of Expediciones Botánicas periodically checks on the plants. Working with Rebman, she is pushing Baja California to adopt more protections for its native plants. Currently only a fraction are on Mexico's federal protection list.

She hopes the state will step in, while she also tries to build support by taking Tijuana residents and Baja officials on hikes.

"People are amazed that these things exist in Tijuana, and I hope to show more and more people so they can see the beauty, because we need that," Fernandez said. "It's important to not be impeded by the barriers that humans create."

As border security increases with the number of people being displaced by natural disasters, violence and wars at record levels worldwide, more migrants are traipsing out to areas like the stretch near Jacumé. The tinv community of about 100 families includes members of the Kumeyaay tribe and sits across the border from an equally sparsely populated desert near the California town of Jacumba Hot Springs. Population: about 1,000.

The area has seen thousands of asylum seekers who wait for an opportunity to cross, usually in the cloak of darkness, and then camp again on the U.S. side after turning themselves in to U.S. Border Patrol agents.

Fernandez was among the botanists helping Bioblitz volunteers on the Mexican side near a crumbling crossing station from the 1920s.

'I never would have thought that there would be so much biodiversity on the border," said Jocelyn Reyes, a student of Fernandez at La Universidad Autónoma de Baja California who stopped every few feet to hover over a plant and photograph its details. "It's so interesting and makes you realize there's so much worth saving."

Monday, May 20, 2024 (24-hour observations at 9:58 p.m. Sunday) High: 88; Low: 61; Precipitation: None Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 2.2

Weather

feet at 9:45 p.m. Sunday

Wells County forecast

Today: Mostly sunny, with a high near 88. Southwest wind 5 to 10 mph.

Tonight: A 20% chance of showers and thunderstorms after 2 a.m. Partly cloudy, with a low around 66. South wind 5 to 10 mph.

Tuesday: A 10% chance of showers and thunderstorms before 8 a.m. Mostly sunny, with a high near 87. Southwest wind 5 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Tuesday Night: A 30% chance of showers and thunderstorms after 2 a.m. Partly cloudy, with a low around 70. South wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Wednesday: A 50% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny, with a high near 83. Breezy.

Wednesday Night: A chance of showers and thunderstorms before 2 a.m., then a slight chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 57. Chance of precipitation is 50%

Thursday: A 10% chance of showers before 8 a.m. Sunny, with a high near 75.

Thursday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 53.

Friday: A 20% chance of showers after 2 p.m. Mostly sunny, with a high near 79.

Friday Night: A 20% chance of showers. Partly cloudy, with a low around 57.

Saturday: A 20% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly sunny, with a high near 81.

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

Sunday: A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny, with a high near 78.

Ed Dwight, America's first Black astronaut candidate, finally goes to space 60 years later

VAN HORN, Texas (AP) — Ed Dwight, America's first Black astronaut candidate, finally rocketed into space 60 years later, flying with Jeff Bezos' rocket company on Sunday.

Dwight was an Air Force pilot when President John F. Kennedy championed him as a candidate for NASA's early astronaut corps. But he wasn't picked for the 1963 class.

Dwight, now 90, went through a few minutes of weightlessness with five other passengers aboard the Blue Origin capsule as it skimmed space on a roughly 10-minute flight. He called it "a life changing experience."

"I thought I really didn't need this in my life," Dwight said shortly after exiting the capsule. "But, now, I need it in my life I am ecstatic.'

The brief flight from West Texas made Dwight the new record-holder for oldest person in space - nearly two months older than "Star Trek" actor William Shatner was when he went up in 2021.

It was Blue Origin's first crew launch in nearly two years. The company was grounded following a 2022 accident in which the booster came crashing down but the capsule full of experiments safely parachuted to the ground. Flights resumed last December, but with no one aboard. This was

(Continued from Page 1)

Balah, a strike killed Zahed

Israel launched its offen-

Israel says it tries to

Netanyahu opposes Palestinian statehood, saying Israel will maintain openended security control over Gaza and partner with local Palestinians unaffiliated with Hamas or the Westernbacked Palestinian Authority.

The U.S. said Sullivan said Israel should "connect its military operations to a political strategy" and proposed measures to ensure more aid "surges" into Gaza.

In recent weeks, Hamas militants have regrouped in parts of northern Gaza that were heavily bombed in the war's early days.

The airstrike in Nuseirat, a built-up Palestinian refugee camp in central Gaza dating back to the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, killed 27 people, including 10 women and seven children, according to records at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in nearby Deir al-Balah, which received the bodies.

A separate strike on a Nuseirat street killed five people, according to the Palestinian Red Crescent emergency service. In Deir al-

al-Houli, a senior officer in the Hamas-run police, and another man, according to the hospital.

Palestinians reported more airstrikes and heavy fighting in northern Gaza, which has been largely isolated by Israeli troops for months and where the World Food Program says a famine is underway.

The Civil Defense said strikes hit several homes near Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahiya, killing at least 10 people. And in the urban Jabaliya refugee camp nearby, residents reported a heavy wave of artillery and airstrikes.

Abdel-Kareem Radwan, 48, said the whole eastern side has become a battle zone where the Israeli fighter jets "strike anything that moves."

Mahmoud Bassal, a spokesman for the Civil Defense, said rescuers had recovered at least 150 bodies, more than half of them women and children, since Israel launched the operation in Jabaliya last week.

sive after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack in which militants stormed into southern Israel, killing around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting about 250. Mourners gathered Sunday for the funeral of one of four hostages killed in the attack whose bodies were recently found by Israeli troops in Gaza.

The war has killed at least 35,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't distinguish between combatants and civilians. Around 80% of the population of 2.3 million Palestinians have been displaced within the territory, often multiple times.

We need a decent life to live," said Reem Al-Bayed, who left Gaza City and shelters with thousands in the gritty coastal Muwasi camp in the south without basic facilities like wells. "All countries live a decent life except us."

She took a quick mouthful of bread before tearing the rest into pieces for half a dozen children, then poured them a can of beans.

avoid harming civilians and blames the high death toll on Hamas, which it says operates in dense residential areas.

Netanyahu's critics, including thousands of Israeli protesters, accuse him of prolonging the war and rejecting a cease-fire deal so he can avoid a reckoning over security failures. They also seek early elections in which polls show that Gantz, a political centrist, would likely succeed Netanyahu. That would expose Netanyahu to prosecution on longstanding corruption allegations.

Netanyahu denies any political motives and says the offensive must continue until Hamas is dismantled and the estimated 100 hostages still held with the remains of more than 30 others are returned.

Blue Origin's seventh time flying space tourists.

Dwight, a sculptor from Denver, was joined by four business entrepreneurs from the U.S. and France and a retired accountant. Their ticket prices were not disclosed; Dwight's seat was sponsored in part by the nonprofit Space for Humanity.

Dwight was among the potential astronauts the Air Force recommended to NASA. But he wasn't chosen for the 1963 class, which included eventual Gemini and Apollo astronauts, including Apollo 11's Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins. NASA didn't select Black astronauts until 1978, and Guion Bluford became the first African American in space in 1983. Three years earlier, the Soviets launched the first Black astronaut, Arnaldo Tamayo Mendez, a Cuban of African descent.

After leaving the military in 1966, Dwight joined IBM and started a construction company before earning a master's degree in sculpture in the late 1970s. He's since dedicated himself to art. His sculptures focus on Black history and include memorials and monuments across the country. Several of his sculptures have flown into space.





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OBITUARIES

Jane Hamilton, 95

Jane Hamilton, 95, of Bluffton, passed away Saturday afternoon, May 18, 2024, at River Terrace Estates in Bluffton.

Jane was born May 31, 1928, in Liberty Center, to Roy Elliot and Maude Mae (Kingen) Stinson. She graduated from Chester Center High School with the class of 1946 and worked at Caylor-Nickel Clinic for a couple of years, Franklin Electric in Bluffton from 1972, until she retired in 1984,



where she worked at the Handy Spot in Bluffton for 10 years.

Jane was a member of the First United Methodist Church in Bluffton and an active member of the United Methodist Women's Group. Jane enjoyed being a member of the Terrace Jewels, the Red Hatters Group at River Terrace. She enjoyed fellowship with others, she would often say, "Life is great, so much to do", but most importantly, Jane loved her Savior Jesus Christ!

On July 27, 1947, in Keystone, Jane and Wayne E. Hamilton were married and they shared a very happy marriage for 57 1/2 years, until Wayne preceded her in death on March 6, 2005.

Survivors include her children, Cathyrn Creek of Geneva, Robert (Etta) Hamilton of Churubusco and Mark (Carolyn) Hamilton of Markle.

She was a loving grandma to Jason "Jake" Hamilton, J.D. (Shawna) Hamilton, Laura (John) Martin, Lesli (Ted) Haughan and Ashley Hamilton, Erica (George) Gephart, Paula (Scott) Hunsburger, Charles (Anette) Lane and Teresa Shelley; along with 24 great-grandchildren and 22 great-great-grandchildren. She is also survived by a sister, Nellie Sleppy of Poneto. She is preceded in death by her parents; husband

Wayne; a son Roger D. Hamilton; grandsons Ryan Hamilton and Chad Hamilton; and daughters-in-laws, Georgia Hamilton, Rhonda Hamilton and Sandy Hamilton; grandson-in-law David Lane; a brother Kenneth Stinson; and two sisters, Martha Haines and Sarah Lou Garrett.

Visitation will be held from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday, May 23, 2024, at the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton, and for one hour prior to the service.

Funeral Service will take place at 10:30 a.m. Friday, May 24, 2024, at Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton with Pastor Sherri Drake officiating. Burial will follow at Elm Grove Cemetery in Bluffton.

Memorials may be made to the First United Methodist Church or Grace & Mercy Transitional Housing.

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the care of the Lemler family of Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton. Friends can send online condolences to the Hamilton family at www.thomarich.com.

Court News

Wells Circuit Court **Criminal Cases**

Amanda Sanford, 45, Fort Wayne, appeared in the Wells Circuit Court for a change of plea hearing. Sanford was charged with operating a vehicle after forfeiture of license for life, a Level 5 felony, operating a vehicle with an ACE of .08 or more, and operating while intoxicated, both Level 6 felonies, and criminal mischief, a Class A misdemeanor.

ed to a domestic dispute for dealing in a schedule

31, Bluffton, appeared in the Wells Circuit Court for a change of plea hearing for multiple cases. In December, Ramseyer was charged with possession of methamphetamine, a Level 6 felony, and conversion, a Class A misdemeanor. She posted bond soon after. The matter is set for status hearing to occur contemporaneously with the sentencing hearing in the following case.

In January, Ramseyer The charges are relat- acquired additional charges III controlled substance, a



Plants for sale

Members of the Wells County Master Gardeners held their annual spring plant sale Saturday at the 4-H Park's Quonset Hut. Available were annuals and perennials, as well as garden accessories. Master Gardener Sue Poulson (right) was assisting a customer with a selection. Next event for the Master Gardeners will be a Garden Walk on Saturday, June 22 (Photo by Barbara Barbieri)

Former judge admonished for \$1,000 loan to defendant behind on payments

By LESLIE **BONILLA MUÑIZ Indiana Capital Chronicle**

Indiana's Commission on Judicial Qualifications on Friday admonished a former judge for making a loan to a defendant behind on a money judgment.

The commission found that former Benton County Circuit Court Judge Rex Kepner's actions four years ago "went beyond a judge's ethical authority to encourage a settlement and tarnished the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judiciary."

The entity, created in 1970, investigates complaints about judges and enforces judicial conduct standards.

'Hard times'

Kepner, a Republican, made the loan in a small claims case.

Gick Rentals sued Clark Coltin — later released from the case – and Mckenzie Griffith in October 2019. Steve Gick initially wanted \$4,000 from the defendants for unspecified rental dama narcotic drug, a Level 4 age, but upped the amount felony, possession of methto \$8,260 to cover damage amphetamine and unlawful and repair, according to a possession of syringe, both November 2019 order from Level 6 felonies, possession Kepner. of marijuana, and possession The then-judge ordered of paraphernalia, both mis-Griffith to pay \$2,535. It would've taken her more A sentencing hearing is than two years to pay off scheduled for 1 p.m. on June at the court-ordered rate of \$100 per month plus 8% interest.

the bench and entered his chambers. Through his court reporter, Kepner gave the defendant the money.

The court reporter told the defendant that the money was a loan from the judge that would need to be repaid. The plaintiff, however, wasn't told Kepner was the source of the money.

Griffith, who'd appeared without a lawyer, paid Gick \$1,000 in cash that day, according to the Oct. 6, 2020 order.

"The case is now concluded in its entirety and the case is now dismissed with prejudice," the order reads.

Kepner, according to the admonition, had wanted "to help a member of his community who had fallen upon hard times."

"Although the Commission appreciates that Rex Kepner did not have an improper motive for the loan and merely sought to assist a struggling community member, he acted outside of his role as a neutral arbiter of the dispute by making the loan," the commission wrote. The body cautioned judges that, while they can "feel sympathy towards a litigant, judges must be mindful of the duty to remain impartial and to not allow such compassion to cause them to take actions ... which cause the public to question their impartiality." Kepner acknowledged violating Rule 1.2 of Indiana's Code of Judicial Conduct. It requires judges to "act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judiciary" and to avoid even "the appearance of impropriety.'

He was first elected to the court in 1996, his LinkedIn signals, and earned reelection three times, state candidate lists indicate. He ran unopposed in the general elections for 2002 and 2014, according to the lists, but there's no data for 2008.

Kepner retired in 2020 - the year of the loan according to legal research platform Trellis. Republican John Wright, formerly Benton County's chief deputy prosecuting attorney, was elected to fill the vacancy.

The admonition comes two years into his new gig.

The commission found that formal disciplinary charges were "warranted" but instead admonished Kepner because he cooperated with the investigation, acknowledged his violation and apologized for his actions.

The commission is composed of the Indiana Supreme Court Chief Justice – currently Loretta Rush - along with three lawyer-elected attorneys and three governorappointed laypeople.



where the caller reported that initially, Sanford was Level 3 felony, dealing in belligerent and would not leave their property. Sanford allegedly then left in a vehicle that was not hers while intoxicated, ultimately landing in a ditch. Sanford is scheduled for a sentencing hearing in the matter at 9 a.m. on June 20.

Jamie M. Ramsever, 26.

Obituary Policy

demeanors.

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.

But she fell behind.

A year later, Kepner presided over a hearing about a default judgment entered in Gick's favor. According to the admonition, he asked how much money Griffith had already paid, how much was unpaid, and how much Gick would accept that day to resolve the matter.

After Gick named an amount, the admonition says Kepner stepped off

Four years later Kepner no longer serves

as judge.





An enduring question for American democracy

I've either been involved in or keeping an eye on American politics for over 60 years now. We've faced plenty of tough questions during that time, and though many of them have been resolved and we've moved on, some are tenacious-income inequality, racial equity, the ever-ballooning national deficit, climate change. But in all those years, the question I've found myself returning to again and

again—and that I suppose we'll never really resolveis the one Lincoln posed at Gettysburg: Can a nation like ours, "conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created



Lee Hamilton

Hoosier

Opinions

equal," endure? He asked that question in 1863. Here we are, 161 years later, and it's still pertinent-perhaps more so this election year than any other in recent memory. Yet when I think about what Lincoln said, what always strikes me is what he didn't say. He did not call for replacing what was then still a relatively young representative democracy with something else. He didn't say, "Our system's being tested and we're going to have to jettison it to meet the challenge." He called, instead, for redoubling our dedication to the experiment our founders embarked

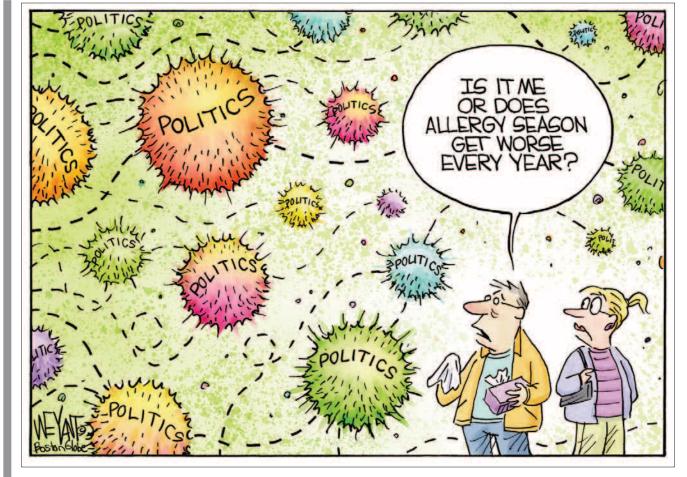
upon. It was a reminder at a very dark time in our history that representative democracy is a never-ending work in progress. The issue of whether it can endure is always in doubt. The question that we face as Americans isn't whether something would be better for us. It's how we can make it work.

Today, truly systemic problems are challenging ours and other democracies: all kinds of discrimination, unevenly distributed economic rewards and uncertainty, political polarization, misinformation, the degradation of civic discourse. But we've faced tough challenges in every generation: wars, recessions, civil unrest, economic disasters. We've always squared our shoulders and returned to what unites us: our democratic ideals and our beliefs in our basic rights, fundamental freedoms, and shared responsibility for making it all work.

The greatest risk in all this is that if we don't pay attention or we become complacent-if we as Americans disengage-then we place in jeopardy the democratic enterprise Americans have spent two and a half centuries shaping. Our freedoms and our rights can, without question, be eroded.

So what do we do? This may seem fuzzy, but I think it's anything but: We have to renew our appreciation for being part of the American republic. Let me put it this way: We live in a political system marked by strong, independent branches of government, each designed to exercise limited and defined powers within constitutional boundaries. We have checks and balances, separation of powers, individual rights and opportunities, rule of law, and fair and free elections overseen by an army of election workers who are our neighbors. This is a monumental achievement that can always be improved, but that always gives us room to seek a more perfect union. And we've thrived as a result.

People often ask me whether I'm pessimistic or optimistic about the future, and it's a question I resist answering, because it doesn't matter. What does matter is that whatever the challenges we face, we accept them and use the system and its endless possibilities to address them. Our strength comes when we recognize that we're all in this republic together and work cooperatively for a country in which all persons have an opportunity to enjoy the promise of America and to live a life of honor and excellence. In the end, we have no choice but to step up to our responsibilities as citizens. And to ensure, time and time again, that, as Lincoln put it at the end of that short speech, "this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom-and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."



The waxing and waning GOP power

Politicking

With the GOP nomination of U.S. Sen. Mike Braun for governor, we now settle in to watch the lame-duck Holcomb administration depart while the candidate begins to put the pieces in place to extend the record Republican dynasty to six terms in November.

On Braun's plate is the management of his nomination of freshman state Rep. Julie McGuire as lieutenant governor into a June Republican convention where delegates have a distinct history of defying even sitting governors. With temporary Republican Chairman Anne Hathaway immersed in managing the logistics for the National Convention in Milwaukee, Sen. Braun must pick a new chair. And with John Hammond III's letter to the Republican Central Committee announc-

ing he won't seek another term as national committeeman, Braun will make a new selection there.

Then there's the reality of

gubernatorial politics, which is vastly different from running for the U.S. Senate or managing a legislative office. A case in point was McGuire's proposed nomination. Most political reporters and pundits were planning to write about Braun's emphatic 20% plurality victory over five primary rivals a week ago, when, lo and behold, the campaign abruptly announced the proposed McGuire nomination.

In essence, the Braun campaign stepped on its own primary victory milestone with the McGuire selection, which in past cycles would have been weeks in the offing. There's speculation that the Braun campaign needed to stop any momentum of announced candidate Micah Beckwith, the Noblesville pastor who told State Affairs he was beginning a statewide tour to court the 1,800 convention delegates.

Our goal was to get halfway to that majority plus one in delegates," Beckwith told State Affairs on May 10. "From our calculations with our list going in who were supporting us and then our list coming out, we are at that 50% mark. Obviously, we've got work to do, but it was a strong night for us on the delegate front.'

In the wake of McGuire's proposed nomination, Beckwith said Braun "has every right to tell the delegates who he believes would be best for the job. I respect his right to do what he did. I don't see it as a slam on me. I don't think he sees what I'm doing as a slam on him. Regardless of if I win or lose, no matter what happens, I told him I'm on Team Braun - we're going to link arms." McGuire could be a tricky sell to convention delegates. She defeated radical anti-abortion activist state Rep. John Jacob in the 2022 primary, with the House Republican Campaign Committee pumping more than \$1 million to defeat him and state Rep. Curt Nisly. Beckwith will certainly be reminding the more socially conservative delegates of those campaigns.

Publisher Ed Feigenbaum told Indiana Public Media. "And there are some in that camp that might not have already migrated to Micah Beckwith who will be going with team Micah." Feigenbaum added that the lieutenant governor field could grow to include gubernatorial candidate Eric Doden and former Indiana GOP Chairman Jeff Cardwell.

The McGuire selection is expected to take on much more scrutiny in the coming month. She is a back-bench representative with few legislative bills passed, much like Mike Pence's 2012 selection of freshman Rep. Sue

Ellspermann as his lieutenant governor. After winning election with only 49% of the vote (the only modern ticket elected with less than 50%), Ellspermann resigned in February 2016.

Multiple sources cited a falling-out between Pence and Ellspermann that led to her resignation and subsequent appointment as president of Ivy Tech. That also paved the way for Gov. Eric Holcomb, who was nominated by Pence to succeed Ellspermann.

Braun and McGuire must demonstrate in the coming weeks that the Indianapolis freshman has the gravitas to hold the office of lieutenant governor and its sprawling agency portfolio. Will she be capable of succeeding Braun, who at age 70 will be one of the oldest Indiana governors in history if elected? McGuire was not made available by the Braun campaign this week, nor did she return a phone call from State Affairs.

Potentially complicating the McGuire selection were Holcomb's comments at a Tuesday press scrum where he said delegates should weigh in. "You have to trust and respect the folks that vote at every stage. And at this stage, it's at the convention," said Holcomb, who in 2022 watched delegates rebuke his handpicked Secretary of State Holli Sullivan for nomination and opted instead for Diego Morales, who had accused Holcomb of overstepping his authority during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have a history in Indiana of some tickets being blessed and some not," Holcomb said. "And so that's very instructive going into this convention, and [it's] incumbent upon the gubernatorial candidate to make their pitch to the convention delegates of their preference. And so I've been there, done that. And it worked out OK for me." While Braun has promised to be the "most accessible" governor, Holcomb told reporters that the nominee needs to provide more policy detail. "And to do that, you have to have a plan," Holcomb said. "And then you've got to implement and execute on that plan. You have to share that plan as well."



Brian Howey

Lee Hamilton is a distinguished scholar with the IU School of Global and International Studies. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

Today in History

By The Associated Press Today is Monday, May 20, the 141st day of 2024. There are 225 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On May 20, 1927, Charles Lindbergh took off from Roosevelt Field on Long Island, New York, aboard the Spirit of St. Louis on his historic solo flight to France.

On this date:

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act, which was intended to encourage settlements west of the Mississippi River by making federal land available for farming

In 1916, the Saturday Evening Post published its first Norman Rockwell cover; the illustration shows a scowling boy dressed in his Sunday best, dutifully pushing a baby carriage past a couple of boys wearing baseball uniforms.

In 1932, Amelia Earhart took off from Newfoundland to become the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic. (Because of weather and equipment problems, Earhart set down in Northern Ireland instead of her intended destination. France.)

In 1948, Chiang Kaishek was inaugurated as the first president of the Republic of China (Taiwan).

In 1956, the United States exploded the first airborne hydrogen bomb over Bikini Atoll in the Pacific.

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"The social conservatives are decidedly not happy about Braun picking her," Indiana Legislative Insight

Brian Howey is senior writer and columnist for Howey Politics Indiana/State Affairs. Tom Davies and Rory Appleton of State Affairs contributed to this column. Find Howey on Facebook

Warren Buffet is wrong on taxes

Many people have made money by following the advice of Berkshire Hathaway CEO Warren Buffett. His recommendations about which stocks to buy, which to sell and where to invest (or not) have earned him the "Oracle of Omaha" title. I prefer a modern cultural version: "the Taylor Swift of Capitalism."

Speaking at his company's annual hedge fund shareholders gathering, Buffett predicted the government will have to raise taxes if the massive\$34 trillion (and counting) national debt is to be reduced. He said nothing about cutting spending which remains the real problem. The debt is approaching the value of the entire U.S. economy. It does not take an economist or someone with only a minimal knowledge of economic principles to conclude that Buffett

has it backward. According to

the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget: "In the first seven months of Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, spending on net



education, and transportation combined."

Is there anyone who believes that allowing the Trump tax cuts to expire at the end of next year will cause politicians to suddenly become responsible about spending should they gain additional revenue? Everyone knows the main drivers of the debt are Social Security and Medicare. Few politicians want to touch this "third rail"

because they fear being demonized, losing their precious seats in Congress, or suffering defeat in a presidential race. This is, after all, the age of "entitlement."

As noted by the Peter G. Peterson Foundation, "Rising debt reduces business investment and slows economic growth. It also increases expectations of higher rates of infla-

tion and erosion of confidence in the U.S. dollar. The federal government should not allow budget imbalances to harm the economy even the smallest amounts and families across the country.'

This should be so obvious as to be beyond debate, but we can't get a real debate on the economy because so many people rely on government to do for them what they mostly once did for themselves — save and invest wisely, live within your means, be responsible for yourself and if you must look to government for help, make it last on your list. not first.

Buffett noted projections from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) which has forecast a rise in federal deficits to 8.5 percent of GDP in fiscal 2054 from today's 5.5 percent. But that's only deficits, not debt. Deficits are added to the debt. When politicians claim to have reduced the deficit, they usually say nothing about the debt or cutting even the smallest amounts of spending.

I have previously argued for the necessity of a complete audit of the federal government. Members of an audit committee could be appointed by Democrat and Republican Members of Congress, they would have to be nonpartisan and serious about the task assigned to them. This is what the Base Realignment and Closure Commission did after it was chartered by the Defense Department in 1988. Some politicians howled as outmoded and aging bases in their districts were closed, but it worked and saved money.

A similar approach to the national debt could also work. The last thing we need is for the productive to be taxed at greater rates so that politicians can continue to misspend the money.

The definition of a prophet is that he must be right 100 percent of the time. Warren Buffett is right most of the time, but he is no prophet because he is wrong about raising taxes while ignoring spending cuts.

tcaeditors@tribpub.com



Thomas

When politicians claim to

have reduced the deficit,

they usually say nothing

about the debt or cutting

of spending.

LIFESTYLES

What's happening at the Wells County Public Library

The Wells County Public Library takes its mission to "provide the community with access, knowledge and growth" very seriously and offers a variety of events each week for kids, teens, and adults. Registration is preferred at most events. To signup, go to www.wellscolibrary.org, click on the Library Event Calendar, navigate to the date of the event, and view more to get to the registration screen. Alternatively, call 260-824-1612 (Bluffton) or 260-622-4691 (Ossian) to register.

Nature Windows: Try It Night

At the Main Library (Bluffton): Monday, May 20 from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Adults and teens. Use an embroidery hoop and pressed flowers to make a nature window that you can hang near a window or anywhere in your house. Try Registration required. Space is limited.

Calming Coloring at Ossian

At the Ossian Branch Library: Every Tuesday from 1 to 3 p.m.

Adults. Stress busting afternoon featuring coloring in a restful setting with soft music and snacks. Drop-in program.

Craft Club

At the Main Library (Bluffton): Tuesday, May 21 from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

Adults. Bring your own craft projects with you to work on them while you socialize with others in attendance. Get new ideas for crafts to complete, including knitting, crochet, embroidery, paper crafts, painting, and lots more. The library has a book about almost every craft! Drop-in program.

Closed for Memorial Day Weekend

The Main Library and the Ossian Branch will be closed on Saturday, May 25 and Monday, May 27 for Memorial Day.

Summer Reading

"Adventure Begins at the Library" is the theme for this year's Summer Reading, which starts on Tuesday, May 28 for children, teens, and adults. All ages can earn prizes for reading books and participating in events featuring the adventure theme. Prizes include Chamber Bucks, Amazon Gift Cards, children's toys, books, and more depending on your age level. Also, sign up for a variety of summer events and weekly story sessions. Get more info at wellscolibary.org/summer.

Golden Gamers

At the Main Library (Bluffton): Tuesday, May 28 from 3 to 5 p.m.

Adults. Are you bored? Do you need some social interaction? Come and enjoy two hours of socializing, games, and snacks. Registration appreciated.

Teen Advisory Board

At the Main Library (Bluffton): Wednesday, May 29 from 6:00 to 6:45 p.m.

Grades 6-12. Do you wish you had a say

in Teen Programming at the Library? Do you need volunteer credit? Join the Teen Advisory Board! You don't need to sign up--just show up for the TAB meetings on the last Wednesday of each month.

Bingo with Jason

At the Main Library (Bluffton): Monday, June 3 from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m.

Adults. Enjoy a lively game of Bingo for a chance to win a candy bar with everyone's favorite librarian named Jason! Registration required.

Teen Gaming Club

At the Main Library (Bluffton): Monday, June 3 from 6 to 7 p.m.

Grades 6-12. Enjoy a variety of different games each month, including video games, trading card games, and board games. No registration needed.

"Ab-READ-Cadabra" Magic Show with **Jim Barron**

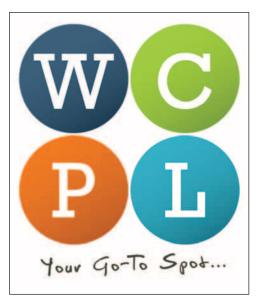
At the Main Library (Bluffton): Tuesday, June 4 at 4 p.m. and 6 p.m.

All ages. Help us kick off the start of Summer Reading 2024 and enjoy Jim Barron's fast-paced and family-friendly magic show. Everyone will be laughing out loud one minute and gasping at astounding illusions the next. No registration needed.

Genealogy/Local History Club

At the Main Library (Bluffton): Thursday, June 6 from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.

by Melba Edwards



Ages 12+. Members help each other learn new things and obtain a greater appreciation for local history and genealogy research. Bring your own laptop or share one of ours. Registration appreciated.

Library Hours

At the main library in Bluffton - Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

At the Ossian branch library – Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturday, 9 a.m. to noon.

Access the library online at www.wellscolibrary.org for digital books, magazines, online databases, event info, and more.

Zanesville News

Today it is a beautiful day. It looks like summer is really here!

Lots of things are happening in Zanesville.

Coming up is the Lions 5K Fun Run on Saturday, May 25, at 8 a.m. at the Tower Life Center parking lot.

Read It Starts at the Zanesville Community Church of God on June 4. Also their Centershot program starts soon

There are ballgames many nights at the Lions Club Ballpark on Van Horn Street and you will probably find the concession stand open.

The Zanesville Youth Program began at the Zanesville Lions Club with about 10 kids. In just a few years they outgrew in number for meeting at the clubhouse so the ZYP moved to the Tower Life Center and that is where they hold their four week summer program today. You will not want your children to miss this!

Here is the information:

Zanesville Youth Program students completing kindergarten through fifth grade, sixth through 12th grade students needed as junior leaders, June 4 through June 27, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 a.m. to noon.

ZYP Activity Schedule: June 4, 11, 18, 25 we will have games, snacks, stories and crafts at the church. Please wear old clothes and non-marking gym shoes (no flip flops). Individually wrapped snack and drink donations are appreciated. Junior leaders will stay until 1 p.m. for training on these days.

Field Trips and Special Events: Meet at the TLC at 9 a.m. sharp. Pick up at noon. We are requesting a \$5 donation for each field trip to help with the cost of bus drivers, activities and snacks.

Thursday, June 6, Pizza at the Park. Enjoy pizza and time with friends at Markle Park. Wear your ZYP shirt and tennis shoes. You may want to bring a basketball, kite, tennis racquet and ball, frisbee, etc. Bring \$5 if you can.

Thursday, June 13, Flatcreek Farm. Join us for a fun, unique farm experience. Wear sunscreen, ZYP shirt and tennis shoes. Bring \$5 if you can.

Thursday, June 20, Huntington Splash Park. Wear your bathing suit, sunscreen and ZYP shirt. Bring a towel. Flip flops are great for this trip. Bring \$5 if you can.

Thursday, June 27, Stillwater Retreat. Wear your bathing suit, sunscreen and ZYP shirt. We will enjoy swimming, boating, swings and games. Bring \$5 if you can. Parent help is needed.

Registration night is May 16 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Tower Life Center in Zanesville. Registration fee is \$25. Junior leaders will stay until 1 p.m. on Tuesdays for leadership training and also attend a training on May 30 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Call Wendy, 260-410-6954 with questions.

Headwaters Park events in Fort Wayne Events scheduled at Fest Headwaters Park, Clinton & Superior St. in Fort Wayne include the

July 12-20: Three **Rivers** Festival

July 26-27: Pride Festival

Aug. 10: Fiesta Fort Wayne

More information at June 20-23: Greek fortwayneparks.org.





Summer concerts at Fort Wayne's Foellinger Theatre

Foellinger Theatre is located at 3411 Sherman Blvd., near the FW Children's Zoo.

In addition to the free concerts these will be offered:

Free Concerts

June 11, 7:30 p.m.: FW field

July 9, 7:30 p.m.: FW (Great White, Slaughter & Area Community Band July 17, 7:30 p.m.: New Millennium Jazz Orchestra July 26, 7 p.m.: Fort Big Head Todd & the Mon-Wayne Children's Choir

sters Aug. 21: High Kings & **Other Concerts** May 23: Rick Spring-Gaelic Storm

Vixen)

Aug. 22: Night Light

Aug. 13: Blue Monster

Tour (Blues Traveler with

sion)

Sept. 13, 8 p.m. & Sept. 14, 12 a.m.: The Rocky Horror Show Sept. 21: Indiana Jones

& the Raiders of the Lost Ark/FW Phil Sept. 23: TESLA

Tickets through Ticket-

June 1-2: Arab Fest June 5-9: Arab Fest June 13-16: Rib Fest

following:

A Talk with Tego





Willow is a nine-week-old, torbie colored female.

Whiskers is a nine-weekold, tortieshell female.

Tego's Tips: The Wells County Animal Shelter can always use treats, toys, leashes, dog collars, blankets, towels, pet shampoo, pet combs/brushes, scratching posts, grooming clipper blades (sizes 5, 10, 30, 40 for Oster A-5), Advantage flea treatment (large dogs), canned food (kittens/puppies), cat litter (non-clumping), paper towels, Pine-sol, Windex, bleach, laundry soap, dish detergent. The Shelter is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Friday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., by appointment only.

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

Black and white film series at Embassy

Films to be presented in the Fort Wayne Embassy Theatre's Black & White Silent Film Series include:

July 14: Grandparents Day with Buster Keaton in "Sherlock Jr.," Dennis Scott organist.

July 28: "The Thief of Bagdad" with Dennis James as organist.

Aug. 11: "Greed" with Dennis Scott as organist.

Aug. 25: "Girl Shy" with Clark Wilson as organist.

All the Sunday showings will begin at 3 p.m. and free popcorn will be given each ticket holder. Tickets are \$10, but free to those 12 and younger, seniors over 65 and Embassy members.

Tickets available at the Embassy box office.



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Tigers place 5th, Raiders 7th at ACAC, three earn all-conference honors

Bluffton and Southern Wells placed fifth and seventh at the ACAC golf meet at Celina Lynx Golf Course Saturday.

The Tigers scored a 371 for the day and had two of its golfers place in the top four, earning first-team all-conference honors. Only one strike separated the two, as Declan Grieser led the way with a score of 83, good for fourth in the field. Connoer Klopfenstein was right behind him in fifth at 84. The rest of the Tigers finished: Kade Abbett (95), Anthony Hartman (109) and Max White (122).

Southern Wells shot a 400, but its No. 1, Gabe McElhaney, posted an 86, which received first-team all-conference honors. Following McElhaney for the Raiders were Cash Banter (98), Tristen Worster (106) and Dirk Frauhiger and Chandler Oswalt (110).

Bluffton will visit Huntington North at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday May 21.

Southern Wells will visit Northfield at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 21.

All-conference

First team: Jake Dalman, Heritage (80 score), Caleb DeRome, Jay County (81), Declan Grieser, Bluffton (83), Connor Klopfenstein, Bluffton (84), Graham Subler, South Adams (85), Adre Johnson, Adams Central (85), Gabe McElhaney, Southern Wells (86).

Second team: Avery Bieberstein, Adams Central (87), Dylan Carvey, Woodlan (87), Ricky Nava, South Adams (87), Connor Roth, Woodlan (88), Conner Fear, South Adams (88), Gage Sims Jay County, (89), Jayden Sharp, Adams Central (90).

Team scores:

1. Adams Central (355 score), 2. South Adams 357), 3. Jay County (365), 4. Woodlan (366), 5. Bluffton (371), 6. Heritage (394), 7. Southern Wells (400).

Sports Roundup

Knights finish 6th at NE8 golf meet

Norwell placed sixth in the Northeast 8's conference meet Saturday at Cobblestone Golf Course.

The Knights shot a 345, while Leo was the overall champion at 300. The team also had two all-conference award winners -Derek Smith and Bodie Zimmer, who shot 82s and received honorable mention.

Following Smith and Zimmer were Cooper Sloan (88), Chase Hulvey (93) and Cavin Smithley

All-conference winners

First team: Justin Hicks, Leo (71 score), Kam Hoag, Columbia City (72), Caden Mathias, Leo (74), Caden Anderson, East Noble (76), Hudson Hines, Leo (77).

Second team: Hosh Eberly, Columbia City (78), Javin Gray, Huntington North (78), (78), Griffin Husband, Huntington North (78), Henry Nussbaum (78), Leo (78), Dalton Hoch, Huntington North (80). Honorable mention: Grant Stuckey,

DeKalb (81), Derek Smith, Norwell (82), Bodie Zimmer, Norwell (82), Grant PAttee, East Noble (85), A.J. Shambaugh, DeKalb (85), Nic Ley, DeKalb (85), Ceaten Brubaker (85), Huntington North (85), Brooks Opliger, Leo (85)

Team scores

1. Leo (300), 2. Huntington North (321 score), 3. Columbia City (326), 4. East Noble (336), 5. DeKalb (340), 6. Norwell (345), 7. Bellmont (360), 8. New Haven (471).

Norwell will host South Adams at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 21.

Knights put up 17 in final softball season game

selections, tied with Huntington North with five.

On the first team, Addyson Heyerly made it on singles, while Annabelle Johnson and Macy Felger were first-team doubles.

Celaney Hoover and Macie Saalfrank were honorable mentions for singles.

Norwell is still in the state tournament and will face Manchester in the regional semifinal at 5 p.m. Tuesday, May 21 at Bluffton High School.

Bluffton sweeps Southwood in weekend baseball

Bluffton swept the weekend baseball doubleheader on the road to Southwood Saturday.

The wins improve their record to 16-8 on the season

In Game 1, Bluffton won 4-1 and had 11 hits. Of them, Eli Garrett, Lukas Gehrett, Griffin Morgan, A.J. Streveler and Brody Lewis all had two-hit games. Gehrett had a home run and two RBI. Morgan had an RBI. Easton Blair went 1-3 with an RBI. Garrett and Streveler stole two bases.

Morgan got the win on the mound, throwing seven innings and allowing one run, two hits and struck out eight.

In Game 2, the Tigers poured on a 19-3 victory over the Knights.

Of the 18 hits, Axton Beste led the way with four hits, including two doubles, an RBI and four runs scored. Dane Schlagehauf went 3-5 with a home run and three RBI. Blair went 3-3 and three RBI. Gehrett had a double and two RBI. Garrett had a double and three RBI. Lewis had a double and an RBI.

Streveler got the win, throwing three innings and allowing three runs (two earned) with two hits and two strikeouts.



Bluffton and Southern Wells were a part of the ACAC golf meet at Celina Linx Golf Course over the weekend. At left, Bluffton's Connor Klopfenstein looks ahead at his ball during the meet. At right, Southern Wells' Gabe McElhaney takes a drive during the meet. (Photos by Ryan Walker)

High School Calendar

MONDAY, MAY 20 SOFTBALL: (Sectional)

Liberty Christian at Southern

Adams at Norwell, 4:30 p.m.;

Bluffton at Huntington North,

4:30 p.m.; Southern Wells at Northfield, 4:30 p.m.

GIRLS TENNIS: (Region-

BOYS GOLF: South

TUESDAY, MAY 21

Wells, 4:30 p.m.

al semifinal) Norwell vs. Manchester at Bluffton, 5 p.m

TRACK & FIELD (Girls): Bluffton, Norwell at Carroll, 6 p.m

SOFTBALL: (Sectional) Norwell vs. Peru at Oak Hill, 7 p.m

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22 BASEBALL: (Sectional)

Pacers top Knicks in Game 7 to make Eastern Conference finals

By BRIAN MAHONEY AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — When the Indiana Pacers compiled one of the best offensive seasons in NBA history, they were just getting warmed up.

For Game 7 of the Eastern Conference semifinals, they delivered something really spectacular.

Tyrese Haliburton scored 26 points and the Pacers set an NBA playoff record by shooting 67.1% from the field, beating the New York Knicks 130-109 on Sunday to advance to the Eastern Conference finals for the first time in 10 years.

"We have a historic offense obviously, but this guy got things rolling and everybody kind of just followed suit," center Myles Turner said, pointing toward Halibur-

"To do that on the road here in the Garden in Game 7 obviously is phenomenal, but I think this is what we've been doing all season long and we were able to show it on the biggest stage."

The Pacers averaged 123.3 points during the regular season, sixth highest in league history, and set an NBA record by scoring 140 11 times.

for the first time since 2000 but couldn't overcome the losses of Julius Randle, Mitchell Robinson and Bojan Bogdanovic, before losing Anunoby and finally Brunson.

Peru at Norwell, 7:30 p.m

Southern Wells, 5 p.m.

p.m.

p.m.

THURSDAY, MAY 23

Norwell, 4 p.m.; Heritage at

Bluffton, Norwell at Carroll, 6

TBD at South Adams, 5:30

BOYS GOLF: Bluffton at

TRACK & FIELD (Girls):

SOFTBALL: Bluffton vs.

"Knowing that this team gave its best effort all year long, I can live with the result," Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau said. "It's disappointing, but in the end there's only going to be one happy team. Twentynine teams will fall short. This team fought like crazy and there's no regret.'

Brunson finished with 17 points and nine assists, shooting 6 for 17 after scoring 40 or more points five times in this postseason. Alec Burks came off the bench for 26 points.

The third Game 7 between the franchises — the Knicks won in the 1994 Eastern Conference finals and the Pacers pulled out a 97-95 victory the next year in the East semifinals - was a chance for the Pacers to prove that their fast-paced style can win at a time when defenses are supposed to rule.

They scored 39 points in the first quarter, the most in a Game 7 in the play-by-play era, a score that would have been more fitting for halftime in the Pacers-Knicks rival-

SPORTS

Norwell smacked 17 runs against Whitko on the road in softball on Saturday.

It was the Knights' final regular season game of the season, posting a 14-7 record overall and 4-3 in the Northeast 8 Confer-

Of the 15 hits, Kaydance Clark and Nevada Lenwell led the team with three each. Clark had a double and a home run with two RBI. Lenwell had two doubles with three RBI. Sami Lemler hit a double and a home run for two RBI. Reese Frauhiger also homered, a solo shot. Jordan Markley went 2-4 with two RBI. Makayla Young and Abby Wagner had a hit with one RBI.

Kayla Watkins got the win, throwing two innings with no runs or walks, two hits and two strikeouts. Kara Brown threw three innings and allowed two runs.

Norwell heads to Oak Hill in the first round of the sectional tournament to face Peru at 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 21.

Knights post five on NE8 girls' tennis all-conference list

The Northeast 8 Conference came out with its girls' tennis honors Sunday.

The Norwell Knights were the champions of the conference at 7-0. Huntington North was second at 6-1.

Unsurprisingly, Norwell had the most

Garrett threw three scoreless innings without allowing a hit, walked one and struck out five.

Bluffton will face the Starfires in the sectional at South Adams at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, May 23.

Tigers beat Patriots, fall to Jets in middle school tennis

Bluffton's middle school tennis teams split over the weekend.

The Tigers defeated Jay County 7-0 and fell to Adams Central 5-3.

Winners for the Tigers

vs. JC

• Reid Abbett won 8-4 at No. singles.

- Dane Fiechter won 8-4 at No. 2 singles. • Vince Lambert won 8-7 at No. 3 singles.
- Ithan Rinkenberger won 8-5 at No. 4 singles.
- Parker Christal and Ethan Ribich won 8-0 at No. 1 doubles.
- Ava Trexler and Eli Seago won 8-0 at No. 2 doubles.

• Carter Williams and Jordan Simpson Barkley won 8-0 at No. 3 doubles.

vs. Adams Central

• Dane Fiechter won 8-3 at No. 1 singles. Reid Abbett and Vince Lambert won 8-2 at No. 1 doubles.

 Carter Willaims and Jordan Simpson Barkley won 8-6 at No. 3 doubles.

They haven't slowed down much in the playoffs.

The Pacers made 29 of their 38 shots in the first half, a shooting percentage of 76.3% that was the highest in the postseason since 1997, when the NBA began keeping detailed play-by-play for all four quarters. They led 70-55 at that point and pulled away every time the Knicks tried to make a run in the second half.

"I just told our team when you win a Game 7 in Madison Square Garden, you've made history," Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said.

The No. 6-seeded Pacers advanced to face top-seeded Boston in a series that begins Tuesday. Indiana last reached the conference finals in 2014, losing to Miami.

Jalen Brunson left in the second half with a broken left hand, one final injury for a Knicks team that was decimated by them.

They got OG Anunoby back Sunday after he missed the previous four games with a strained left hamstring, but he clearly wasn't moving well and was taken out of the game after just five minutes.

Pascal Siakam and Andrew Nembhard each scored 20 points and Aaron Nesmith was 8 for 8 en route to his 19 for the Pacers.

Donte DiVincenzo made nine 3-pointers and scored 39 points for the Knicks, who were trying to reach the conference finals ry of the previous century.

"I think it's just the old-school way of thinking that you can't play this fast in the playoffs, but I think opportunistically you can do it. I think if we're able to get stops, of course we can," said Haliburton, who was wearing a sweatshirt with a picture of Reggie Miller making a choking sign from a playoff game at MSG.

The Pacers made 10 of their first 11 shots - it would have been 11 of 12, but Turner's dunk attempt bounced back out of the basket — and didn't slow down much the rest of the half. Knicks fans who were screaming and chanting before the game were groaning during it as the Pacers made shot after shot, no matter how well the Knicks had defended them.

The Pacers led 39-27 after shooting 16 for 21 from the field (76.2%) and 7 for 9 from 3-point range (77.8%) in the first quarter. Indiana then went 13 for 17 (76.5%) in the second quarter, with the lead growing to 22 points.

The Knicks cut it to 70-55 at halftime, then scored the first seven out of the break as part of a 12-3 start to the second half that trimmed it to 73-67. But with the Pacers leading by seven, the Knicks committed three straight turnovers that helped Indiana push the lead to 84-70.

Josh Hart played through an abdominal strain for the Knicks, fouling out with 10 points and eight rebounds.

News-Banner Scoreboard

BASKETBALL

NBA Friday, May 17 Indiana 116, New York 103 Saturday, May 18 Dallas 117, Oklahoma City 116, Dal-las wins series 4 - 2 Sunday, May 19 Indiana 130, New York 109, Indiana wins series 4 - 3 Minnesota 98, Denver 90 CONFERENCE FINALS (Best-of-7; x-if necessary) Tuesday, May 21 Indiana at Boston, 8 p.m. Wednesday, May 22 Dallas at Team TBD, 8:30 p.m. Thursday, May 23 Jediana et Desten 9 p.m. Indiana at Boston, 8 p.m. Friday, May 24 Dallas at Team TBD, 8:30 p.m.

WNBA

Saturday's Games New York 91, Indiana 80 Chicago 83, Dallas 74 Phoenix 88, Atlanta 85 Las Vegas 89, Los Angeles 82 Sunday's Games Seattle 84, Washington 75 Monday's Games Connecticut at Indiana, 7 p.m. Seattle at New York, 7 p.m.

Tuesday's Games Dallas at Atlanta, 7:30 p.m. Phoenix at Las Vegas, 10 p.m. Washington at Los Angeles, 10 p.m. Wednesday's Games Indiana at Seattle, 10 p.m.

HOCKEY

NHL

Friday, May 17 Florida 2, Boston 1, Florida wins series 4 - 2 Dallas 2, Colorado 1, 20T, Dallas wins series 4 - 2 Saturday, May 18 Edmonton 5, Vancouver 1, series tied 3 - 3 Monday, May 20 Edmonton at Vancouver, 9 p.m. CONFERENCE FINALS

(Best-of-7) (x-if necessary) Wednesday, May 22 Florida at N.Y. Rangers, 8 p.m. Friday, May 24 Florida at N.Y. Rangers, 8 p.m.

BASEBALL

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Pittsburgh 3, Chicago Cubs 2 San Francisco 4, Colorado 1 Arizona 6. Detroit 4 L.A. Dodgers 3, Cincinnati 2, 10 inninas

San Diego 9, Atlanta 1 Monday's Games

San Diego (Cease 5-3) at Atlanta (López 2-1), 12:20 p.m., 1st game N.Y. Mets (Megill 0-1) at Cleveland N.Y. Mets (Megill 0-1) at Cleveland (Lively 2-2), 6:10 p.m. San Diego (Vásquez 0-2) at Atlanta (Sale 6-1), 6:20 p.m., 2nd game Milwaukee (Ross 2-4) at Miami (Weathers 2-4), 6:40 p.m. Minnesota (López 4-3) at Washing-ton (Parker 2-2), 6:45 p.m. Baltimore (Kramer 3-3) at St. Louis ton (Parker 2-2), 6:45 p.m. Baltimore (Kremer 3-3) at St. Louis (Gray 5-2), 7:45 p.m. Arizona (Mantiply 2-1) at L.A. Dodg-ers (Yamamoto 4-1), 10:10 p.m. **Tuesday's Games** Atlanta at Chicago Cubs, 7:40 p.m.

Midwest League

Saturday's Games Wisconsin 8. Beloit 7 Fort Wayne 9, South Bend 2 Dayton 6, Great Lakes 3 Dayton 6, Great Lakes 3 Lansing 15, Lake County 11 Cedar Rapids 7, Quad Cities 6 West Michigan 3, Peoria 2 Sunday's Games Great Lakes 3, Dayton 1 Lake County 13, Lansing 9 Fort Wayne 9, South Bend 6 Cedar Rapids 5, Quad Cities 3 Wisconsin 5, Beloit 3

West Michigan 4, Peoria 2 Monday's Games No games scheduled

DIVERSIONS

Getting curious instead of getting defensive

Dear Annie: After reading the letter from "Family Friend," who is concerned about the development of the 2-year-old child of a friend, I wanted to share my own experiences. Perhaps this child may not be speaking well because he is not hearing properly.

My daughter-in-law (special ed teacher and school counselor) felt that her eldest child, my grandson, was not speaking as well as he should have been when he was very young, probably 18 months or so. She monitored the situation and mentioned it to her pediatrician, who referred her to an ENT specialist. His diagnosis was fluid on the ears. He compared it to how sound is muffled when our ears are under water. My grandson had tubes put in his ears, and some speech therapy, and was soon speaking often and properly.

I am the mother of a deaf child. My son had spinal meningitis when he was 9 months old -- high fever and swelling in the brain damaged his hearing. When my son was about 18 months old, our elderly neighbor asked me if I'd ever noticed that my son often didn't respond when spoken to, or to a sudden noise, etc. I will be FOR-EVER GRATEFUL for his comment. I wasn't upset with my neighbor at all, and I began to pay much more attention to my little boy. Our pediatrician even downplayed it when I contacted him. He never told me that hearing loss is not uncommon after a serious illness such as meningitis. As my son was very verbal and made a lot of noise, I'd overlooked the fact that he wasn't actually speaking even the simplest words.

All this to say, I do hope that this caring individual will mention her concerns to her family friend. One month after my neighbor's comment, my son had been tested (severely hard-of-hearing) and was enrolled in a preschool for the deaf. No doubt, my hus-

band and I would have eventually realized that our son wasn't verbalizing as he should, but our neighbor's caring comment alerted us, and we began seeking answers immediately. In cases like this, early detection is important, as treatment can began. My son was in deaf education throughout his education, graduated from a college for the deaf and has a very good job.

Dear Annie

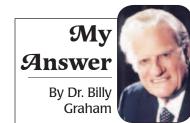
by Annie Lane

I enjoy reading your column thank you. — Hearing

Dear Hearing: Thank you for your letter. I hope it encourages others to tell friends if they identify something of concern that needs professional help. Your actions are that of a wonderful mother. You didn't get defensive when your neighbor expressed his concern; you got curious about it. And that curiosity is what led to early detection in your son's hearing loss. Bravo.

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

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Question: More people deny the traditional belief that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Even some churches are saying that the Old Testament should be put aside – ignored. I believe in being progressive, but this seems dangerous and *irresponsible – especially* depriving our children from learning about the foundations that have stood the test of time. Without the revelations of mankind's beginning, people have no basis for anything. Isn't the Old Testament still relevant today? - F.B.Answer: God gave the whole Bible to us – including the Old Testament – that has some-

The New Testament documents the era of God the Son

thing to teach us. Much of it has been fulfilled as seen in the New Testament.

The time of the Old Testament was an age of God the Father. The New Testament documents the era of God the Son - Jesus Christ on Earth followed by the coming of God the Holy Spirit, present and active today in His followers.

God's voice was heard

sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross and the Holy Spirit's power and presence today in the hearts of those who believe. God is the Bible's author, Christ its message, and

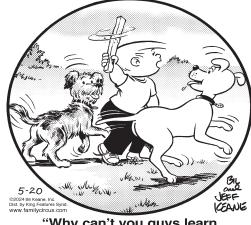
the Holy Spirit its teach-

er. The Father is the source of blessing. The Son is the channel of blessing. And it's through the Holy Spirit at work in us that all truth becomes living and operative in our lives. May we "hear Him." (This column is based on the words and writings of the late Rev. Billy Graham.) ©2024 Billy Graham Literary Trust. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.



By Bil Keane

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"Why can't you guys learn to take turns?



The LOCKHORNS



DIDN'T GET THE RAISE, LOCKHORN?

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer ACROSS 1 Couch

when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist: "Suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" (Matthew 17:5, NKJV).

The whole Bible tells the story of God's redemptive plan for mankind through the willing



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SEE your ad published every day in Wells County homes ... I ads are searchable at classifieds.news-banner.com...

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively

King Classic Sudoku

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Difficulty: \star

FOR SALE Miscellaneous

EVEREST VX3 ICE & WATER VENDING MACHINE This Everest VX3 water/ice vending machine is the perfect addition to any business looking to boost their profits. With the ability to dispense both water and ice, this unit is sure to be a hit with customers. The machine is in great working condition and has been slightly used, making it a cost-effective option for those looking to invest in a vending machine. This unit is made in the United States and comes with a unit quantity of 1. Included is an all season insulation package, ice shield ozone disinfection, and cold fusion energy recovery. It is perfect for placement in other beverage and snack vending locations, as well as in restaurant and food service settings. Don't miss out on the opportunity to make extra money with this Everest VX3 vending machine. \$45,000.00 260-273-7020

glacierpure@outlook.com

Miscellaneous

5/20

CEMETERY LOTS FOR SALE The McFarren Cemetery association has lots for sale in the McFarren Cemetery. Lots include a concrete foundation for headstone. 260-750-5609 mcfarrencemetery@gmail.com

Wanted to Buy

WANTED : ANTIQUES & OLD TOYS Cash Paid for old toys! Gi Joe, Transformers, Tin toys, Robots, Pressed Steel Cars/ trucks, Action Figures, Antiques of all kinds, etc. Searching for attics, basements, barns, etc to go through. Call or Text! 260-223-8083

SERVICES

Services

4G LTE HOME Internet Now Available! Get GotW3 with lightning fast speeds plus take your service with you when you travel! As low as \$109.99/mo! 1-877-327-0930 (I)

WAIT UNTIL YOU taste it! Send 100% guaranteed, delivered-to-the-door Omaha Steaks! This package comes with 8 FREE PureGround Filet Mignon Burgers! Order The Protein-Packed Assortment Package! ONLY \$129.99. Call 1-833-498-2009 and men-tion code 75432VDL or visit www.omahasteaks.com/Grill-Faves2546 (I)

Services

CONSTRUCTION MARV'S Room additions, fix old saggy floors, all types remodeling. Redo bathrooms, old foundation repairs. Marv Schwartz: 260-525-8877.

HOME MAINTENANCE AND repairs. Free quotes. Locally owned and operated. hirebrennan.com, 260-353-9339.

TROPHY CONSTRUCTION. ALL types of construction: Pole barns, roofing, remodeling, concrete, seamless gut-ters, etc. Free estimates. (260) 223-4835.

WINDOW CLEANING SERVICES

Residential/ranch/lake homes/ villas/condos. Entire home inside & out. Lowest rates in the state. 765-603-9981. Psalms 51:7

CONNECT TO THE best wireless home internet with Earth-Link. Enjoy speeds from 5G and 4G LTE networks, no contracts, easy installation, and data plans up to 300 GB. Call 855-430-1496 (I)

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RENTALS

Office Space Rental

LOCATION GREAT MAKE YOUR AD stand out for extra attention! Add a graphic or photo for an additional \$5 or a border for an additional \$1. Contact the Bluffton News-Banner office, 260-824-0224, 125 N. Johnson St., or submit online at www.news-banner.com and click on classifieds.

EMPLOYMENT Help Wanted

THE CITY OF Bluffton is accepting applications for Paid-On-Call Firefighters and Part Time Firefighters. Both positions require a high school diploma or equivalent and a Driver's License. The City utilizes E-Verify and



Lottery Numbers

Saturday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY Cash 5 - 09-17-20-28-

44 Cash4Life - 01-11-27-39-54, Cash Ball: 03 Lotto Plus - 03-12-20-

22-26-28

Quick Draw Midday -01-03-08-10-17-28-30-32-45-47-55-57-59-63-66-71-75-76-78-79, BE: 08

Daily Three-Midday — 04-03-05, SB: 09

Daily Three-Evening — 09-08-06, SB: 02

Daily Four-Midday — 01-09-01-05, SB: 09

Daily Four-Evening — 01-06-09-04, SB: 02

Quick Draw Evening 02-06-07-08-10-22-26-28-32-41-42-43-45-52-56-57-60-62-64-65, BE: 10

Hoosier Lotto — 08-10-15-16-18-45

POWERBALL 19-36-37-42-59; Powerball: 19; Power Play: 2X

Sunday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY Cash 5 — 06-07-08-19-

42

Cash4Life — 05-09-13-52-57, Cash Ball: X Quick Draw Midday -03-10-15-16-28-29-30-40-44-52-55-56-61-62-65-66-70-71-77-78, BE: 16 Daily Three-Midday — 01-05-02, SB: 08 Daily Three-Evening — 00-09-04, SB: 04 Daily Four-Midday —

02-01-00-04, SB: 08

Daily Four-Evening 07-00-02-07, SB: 04 **Quick Draw Evening**

- 01-03-05-10-13-17-22-23-29-30-36-38-47-49-53-59-68-69-75-78, BE: 03

Hoosier Lotto — Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$12.6 million

MEGA MILLIONS Estimated jackpot (for Tuesday): \$421 million POWERBALL Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$88 million

EEOC guidelines. Applications may be obtained from the Clerk-Treasurer's Office, 128 E. Market St, Bluffton, Mon-Fri from 8a-4:30p or online at www.blufftonindiana.net. Applications due June 14th.

eers, www.NessBros.com

824-3006

com

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VITH THE NEWSPAPER ⁽
Do you know what happened in your community last week?
St., Bluffton



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

MAY 26-JUNE 2 - (Online Only Auction) - The Estate of John F. Holbrook, seller. 200+ pcs. Roseville, Rookwood, Hull, McCoy, VanBriggle, antique & modern furniture, 1950 Ford Sedan, Coca Cola vintage signs & collect-ibles, antique tools, 2-pc. Oak kitchen cabinet, JFK political buttons and advertising, vintage toys. Auction preview: May 23 from 3-6 p.m. and May 30 from 3-6 p.m., 10421 W. Yoder Rd., Roanoke, IN. Patrick Carter, sale manager, The Steffen Group Inc., 260-824-3006, www.steffengrp.com. JUNE 1 - 8:30 a.m. - E & M Blacksmith Shop. 2404 W 350 S, Berne, IN. 13th annual consignment auction. Horses, ponies, horse-drawn machinery, produce equipment. buagies, harness, carts, new tack, saddles, shop tools, lawn & garden tools, sausage grinders & stuffers, new & used furniture, washing machines, hay, straw & firewood. Accepting consignments every evening that week from 4-8 p.m., all day May 30, and May 31 from 7 a.m.-8 p.m. Troyer Auctions, LLC, 260-768-7246, ext. 3. JUNE 1 - 11:30 a.m. - Ardith Smith estate, Cheryl Heral estate & Sonja Bartlett, sellers. 320 Sparks St., Markle, IN. Live on-site. One story, two bedroom home on 1.6 acres, 1,144 sq. ft., 10x18 detached