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BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection

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Council proceeds with abatement ban for solar

By HOLLY GASKILL
The Wells County Council is moving forward with a resolution to prohibit utility-scale solar companies from receiving local property tax abatements. In light of recent pushback against local solar developments, Council President Seth Whicker said members of the council had

gotten together to see how they would be able to stop solar companies from receiving these benefits in the future. They determined a resolution could both deter future developments and add an extra hurdle to future council members. The council could later repeal a resolution, but this would add another step for any tax abate-

ments for solar companies to be approved. "It would slow down the process," summarized Council member Brandon Harnish. Whicker added, "It would definitely add some more transparency there." The County Council had approved a 10-year total tax abate-

ment for Paddlefish Solar, a potential solar development in southern Wells County, in December 2022. The council voted 5-2 in favor of the abatement — splitting 4-1 among current council members, with Vicki Andrews opposed and Whicker, Steve Huggins, Todd Mahnensmith and Scott Elzey in favor.

During the council's meeting Tuesday, Whicker said the council had believed the abatement agreement was advantageous for the county, as it secured 85% of the abated amount through economic development payments. He also noted that there had been some public opposition at the time, but

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Apartment fire

Bluffton, Liberty Center and Ossian fire departments were dispatched to Pine Grove Apartments in northern Bluffton around 10:45 p.m. Tuesday with reports of smoke and flames coming from a second-floor balcony. Pictured, firefighters removed burned siding from the building as they assessed damage. (Photo by Holly Gaskill)

Four teens, Ossian man arrested after shooting, car crash in Keystone

By SYDNEY KENT
One adult and four juveniles are in custody after a 16-year-old was shot in southern Wells County last Sunday. Dustin Sanders, 19, Ossian, was charged with battery by means of a deadly weapon (attempt to commit), a Level 5 felony, and criminal recklessness with a deadly weapon, a Level 6 felony. Because the three additional suspects in this case are juveniles, identifying information is not available. For clarification purposes, the juveniles will be referred to as: Teen A, Teen B, Teen C and Teen D. All four teens were referred to Wells County Juvenile Probation for charges involving aggravated battery and/or dangerous possession of a firearm by a juvenile. According to a probable cause affidavit, police were dispatched to 1000 South, east of 200 West in Keystone around 1:30 p.m. on May 26. The caller reported that their

16-year-old son, Teen A, was driving home after sustaining a gunshot wound. They then reported that he crashed his car. Upon arrival, police located Teen A with the gunshot wound in his upper chest and shoulder area. There was reportedly not an exit wound. The teen was alert and able to give details about the shooting. He advised that he and a 15-year-old, Teen B, met with three people at the Petroleum United Methodist Church parking lot to sell a gun. However, he said the subjects took the gun without paying and sped off. Teen A said that he and the other juvenile chased after the trio in their vehicle. Teen A stated that during the chase, the subjects began firing a shotgun from the window of a small blue Mazda. One bullet traveled through the windshield, causing a wound to the upper torso. Police located the Mazda and spoke

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Council discusses housing, apartment complex issues

By JONATHAN SNYDER
Housing issues related to the potential development of apartment complexes on both Cottonwood Court and in northwest Bluffton were discussed by the Common Council on Tuesday. The Wilson Park Apartments are meant to provide rental options for people under the area median income rate. A potential agreement for payment in-lieu of taxes and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program would help ease the cost of the apartments for the developer, Gorman and Company. "I do think that that project could make some sense, particularly with the west side (of Bluffton)," Council member Chandler Gerber said. "I think right now our motto as a city is basically, 'housing housing housing' and this project ... checks a lot of boxes across the spectrum of price points and apartments and single family homes to buy." In place of discussing the Wilson Park

Apartments, Council member Rick Elwell pivoted to discuss plans to help Bluffton residents find and make home-owning more attractive for potential homeowners. Council member Josh Hunt proposed investing any PILOT program funds in a program that helps reduce costs for first time home buyers. "Before I ever ran for office, most of our family moved away all over the country ... now the jobs and opportunities are better in our region but the housing is still a big hole," Hunt said. Council member Blake Fiechter concurred with Hunt's statement, citing a program in Decatur that allows certain homeowners, depending on credit thresholds and income rates, to apply for a potential 5% incentive for a down payment on their home. Gerber additionally stated that some communities have programs that give

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Board of Works approves Bluffton pole contact rate

By JONATHAN SNYDER
Pole contact rates for Bluffton will be at a rate of \$14.50 per contact per year, with provisions for the rate to climb higher depending on market value, the Board of Public Works and Safety announced on Tuesday. After a review of the fees by Utility Director Jon Oman proposed the new rate citing its competitiveness with the current market value. Any company wishing to put equipment on a Bluffton-owned utility pole will have to pay \$14.50 for each pole they use for the entire year. Board of Works member Scott Mentzer noted that current agreements have allowances to increase the rate annually compared to the Consumer Price Index, which allows the city to increase the rate if they see fit.

"It's good to get this commonized to what the market rate is." Board member Scott Mentzer said. The board also approved an agreement with Baker Tilly Advisory, Tax and Assurance to supply accounting and reporting support services, should the city need them. This allows the city to get help for their computerized accounting system and aids them in keeping track of payroll, property taxes, bond issues and like issues. The agreement is not to exceed \$35,000 in expenses. Furthermore, the board approved an encroachment agreement involving a mobile shed at 1010 Farmington Dr. Oman stated that the shed is easily movable and extends

(Continued on Page 2)



Forever blowing bubbles

Toddlers gathered at Roush Park early Tuesday morning to have a day with bubbles. Bubble machines and plenty of wands kept the party going. Above, Hannah Bishir points at a big bubble in the sky. At left, Ike Neuen-schwander carefully balances a bubble on his wand. (Photos by Jonathan Snyder)

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Outside



Shows and storms today and tonight, sun Thursday

Today	Thursday	Friday
High 81	High 78	High 72
Low 62	Low 55	Low 54

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A who's who of partisanship and non-partisanship in Congress

Back in mid-May, the Lugar Center and the McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University released the latest of their studies looking at bipartisanship in the US House and Senate. They summed up the bottom line in their first sentence: "The results show a slight improvement in bipartisanship in 2023 but remained near record lows."



Lee Hamilton

In the scheme of news stories coming out of Washington, the "Bipartisanship Index" rarely gets much ink, except for a one-day piece in the home newspapers of the most bipartisan members. But I can't help thinking that it deserves much more play.

Hoosier Opinions

Over the course of my career, two big things stood out to me about bipartisanship: Americans like it; and over the long haul, legislation passed with bipartisan support tends to show more staying power.

We live, of course, in intensely polarized times. But the history of Congress has shown that requiring lawmakers to compromise and work with their political adversaries often produces better legislation. It takes into account a broad range of views, produces wider acceptance both within a legislative body and in the public at large, and perhaps most important, gives the legislation a chance of surviving the next change in power. The history of the last six decades is filled with examples: the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the creation of Medicare, the Clean Air Act of 1970, the Americans With Disabilities Act, the Affordable Care Act, the 2021 Infrastructure Act...

Though Congress these days has a reputation as a bastion of partisanship, it's actually gotten a fair bit done across the aisles, from the budget to aid for Ukraine and Israel to, recently, measures aimed at reducing carbon emissions. Still, it's unlikely that we'll see major legislation of lasting importance out of this Congress. That's in part because, as measured by the Lugar Center and the McCourt School, partisanship remains the order of the day. To put it in numerical terms, in 2023, the researchers found, 44 senators scored above the historical average for bipartisanship, while 54 scored below it. On the House side, 129 members exceeded the historical bipartisan average, but a whopping 309 scored below it.

The index measures how often members introduce bills that attract co-sponsors from the other party and how often they co-sponsor bills introduced from across the aisle. There are other ways to measure partisanship: You might, for instance, look at the most important measures passed or not passed by each chamber and which members took the courageous step to cross the aisle on those. Still, the McCourt/Lugar index is informative. Its scoring finds Pennsylvania Republican Brian Fitzpatrick leading the House, followed by New York GOP Rep. Marc Molinaro and New Hampshire Democrat Chris Pappas. In the Senate, Maine Republican Susan Collins led things off, followed by Democrats Gary Peters of Michigan and Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire.

At the bottom of the bipartisanship rankings in the House were Ohio GOP Rep. Jim Jordan, New York Democrat Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Missouri Democrat Cori Bush, New York Democrat Jamaal Bowman and Missouri Republican Eric Burlison. In the Senate, Alabama Republican Katie Britt ranked as the least bipartisan member of that chamber, followed by Missouri Republican Eric Schmitt, Washington state Democrat Patty Murray, Wisconsin Republican Ron Johnson, and Arkansas Republican Tom Cotton.

Especially in this day and age, it takes backbone to be bipartisan. Some members feel more at home sticking with their tribe, while within a caucus, you're more likely to get called out for working with members across the aisle than for toeing the party line. But as Dick Lugar wrote when the center first unveiled the Bipartisanship Index some years back, "What we are measuring... is not so much the quality of legislation but rather the efforts of legislators to broaden the appeal of their sponsored legislation, to entertain a wider range of ideas, and to prioritize governance over posturing." Those are the values that help our representative democracy work, and the members who make it a priority deserve our gratitude.

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 Wednesday, June 5, the 157th day of 2024. There are 209 days left in the year.

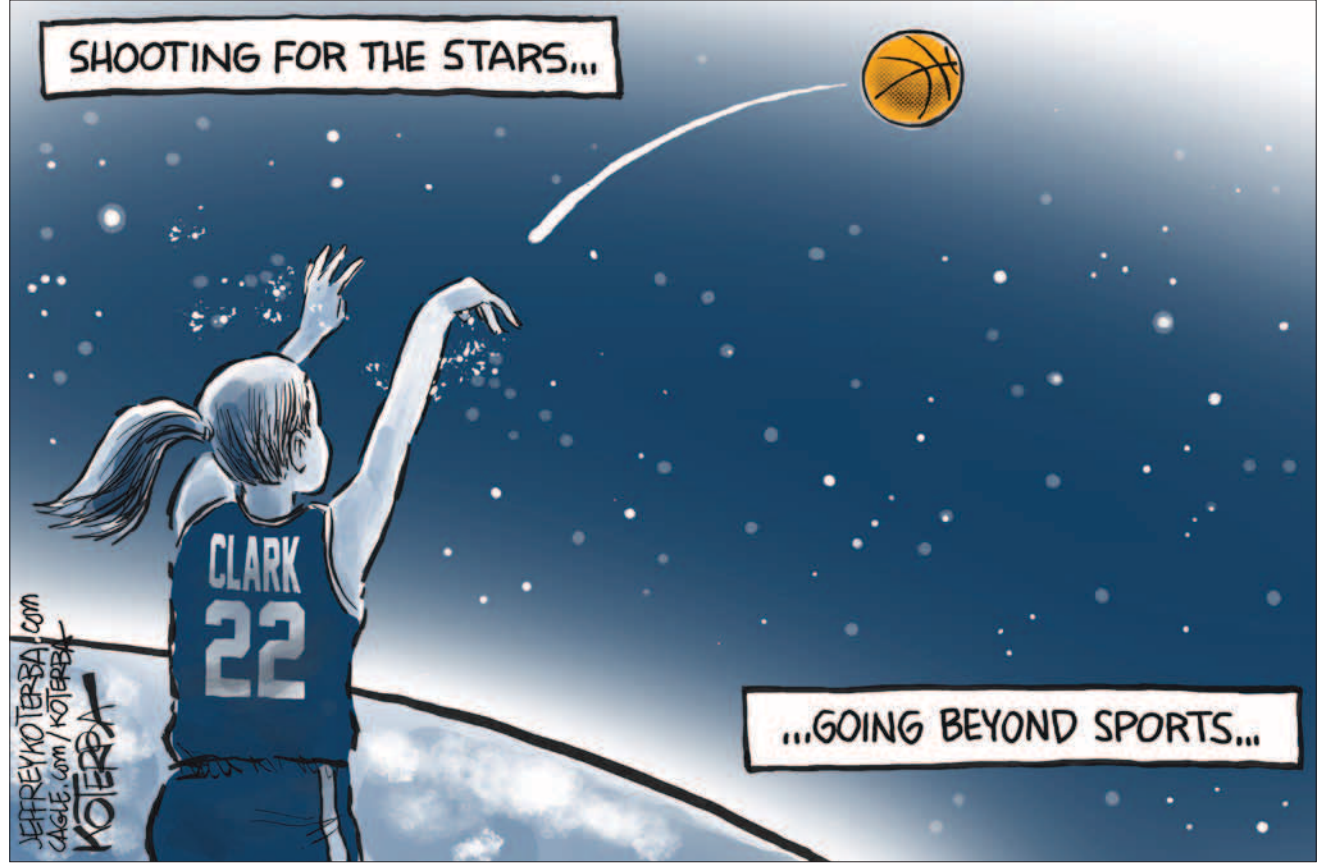
Today's Highlight in History: On June 5, 1968, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy was shot and mortally wounded after claiming victory in California's Democratic presidential primary at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles; assassin Sirhan Bishara Sirhan was arrested at the scene.

On this date: In 1794, Congress passed the Neutrality Act, which

prohibited Americans from taking part in any military action against a country that was at peace with the United States.

In 1981, the Centers for Disease Control reported that five men in Los Angeles had come down with a rare kind of pneumonia; they were the first recognized cases of what later became known as AIDS.

In 2004, Ronald Wilson Reagan, the 40th president of the United States, died in Los Angeles at age 93 after a long struggle with Alzheimer's disease.



Don't hate Caitlin Clark

By all means, let's take a star who is drawing new attention to a women's sports league that could definitely use it, and make her into a hate figure.

If her critics have their way, this will be the fate of Caitlin Clark.

Of course, Clark is the former University of Iowa basketball legend who has now embarked on her rookie season in the WNBA with the Indiana Fever, generating new interest in a league that has survived for almost two decades, but hasn't set the world on fire.

The other WNBA players don't like Clark very much, an animosity exemplified by a flagrant foul against Clark by a player with the Chicago Sky last weekend.

The old Rodney Dangerfield line is, "I went to a fight and a hockey game broke out." Well, the body check of Clark was worthy of an NHL game, and her former LSU rival now on the Sky, Angel Reese, cheered the take-down lustily.

As a hyped newbie, Clark is inevitably in for some rough treatment from longer-tenured opponents, but she shouldn't get abused for the offense of being a bright new star -- or for, according to her more fervid detractors, being too white or attractive.

On the "The View," co-anchor Sunny Hostin accused Clark of benefiting from white privilege, pretty privilege, tall privilege and straight privilege.

That's a lot of alleged privilege, and still leaves out the most important -- shooting- and passing-ability privilege.

If Caitlin Clark were a pedestrian player, no one would know her name. It's her ability to make long-distance "logo threes" and her extraordinary pass-making skills that make her exceptional.

The sports commentator Jemele Hill has complained that Clark's "race and her sexuality played a role in her popularity," and that she's symptomatic of how black players are "erased."

A player for the Las Vegas Aces, A'Ja Wilson, has said much the same thing.

These interpretations are non-falsifiable. Testing the proposition would require a black LGBTQ+ player

becoming the highest-scoring college basketball player of all time -- in both the men's and women's game -- and averaging an insane 31.6 points per game in her final season. Since only Clark has achieved this, there's no way to make a comparison. But it seems likely that if Clark's non-white, non-straight hypothetical equal pulled this off, she'd probably get a Nike contract, too.

For anyone who values the WNBA, it is self-sabotaging to treat Clark as a white interloper. She's an incredible draw and an invariably courteous emissary for the game. She has inspired girls around the country and patiently signed their signs, jerseys and sneakers.

Her Iowa team didn't just routinely sell out at home, but sold out on the road against teams that were otherwise meager draws. The Caitlin Clark effect led to the women's college championship game this year easily drawing more viewers than the men's championship.

It's not as though the WNBA is in a position to turn its back on a potential generational talent. If the league has been making gains, it still badly lags the NBA. The clinching game of the WNBA championship last year averaged 889,000 viewers and the post-season averaged 470,000 viewers. In contrast, the clinching game of the NBA finals averaged 13 million viewers and the post-season 6.4 million. The WNBA generated about \$200 million in revenue in 2023, whereas the NBA generates roughly \$10 billion.

Caitlin Clark isn't going to make up this disparity (she's a point guard, not a miracle-worker). Anything to draw more people to the game should be profoundly welcome, though. Clark so far has struggled, at least by her standards. She is 16th in the league in points per game. But she's only played 11 games so far. Already, she scored 30 points in one game, and she's the fastest WNBA rookie to 150 points, 50 assists and 50 rebounds.

Who knows if she will eventually be the GOAT of the WNBA, but she's certainly not the villain.

Rich Lowry is on Twitter @RichLowry



Rich Lowry

The Pentagon is changing at the speed of war

For several decades, military reformers such as retired Navy Capt. Jerry Hendrix have pleaded with the Pentagon to stop buying wildly expensive but vulnerable aircraft carriers and fighter jets and instead focus on getting vast numbers of cheap drones. But nobody seemed to listen.

"Buy Fords, Not Ferraris" was the title of Hendrix's iconoclastic 2009 polemic for inexpensive survivable systems. Aircraft carriers, he wrote, "have become too expensive to operate, and too vulnerable to be risked in anything other than an unhostile environment." Similar arguments applied to exquisite systems beloved by all the services.

Hendrix became so eager for change that he argued the Navy needed a skunk works to reinvent itself for the 21st century. He proposed using Lake Michigan, away from prying Chinese eyes, to create an "Area 52" experimentation site for autonomous naval systems. He imagined it as a Navy version of the Air Force and CIA's famous Area 51 test site in Nevada.

But an addiction is hard to quit - especially one that benefits so many congressional districts around the country. So the military sailed on, spending ever more money on vulnerable platforms that would probably survive only for minutes in a war with China. Christian Brose, another Pentagon reformer who now works for start-up Anduril Industries, put it bluntly in a recent article for the Hoover Institution: "The US defense enterprise ... is systematically broken."

But for reformers, there's finally a flicker of good news. Change advocates, including Hendrix and Brose, told me that the iron triangle that supports legacy systems - which Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) described as the "defense-industrial-congressional complex" - might finally be giving way to common sense. Every military service, in nearly every combat command, is experimenting with uncrewed, autonomous systems for land, air, sea and undersea combat.

"A new consensus is emerging that we must make major changes," Brose wrote in September. He quoted Gen.



David Ignatius

Charles Q. Brown Jr., the new chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who argued: "If we don't change - if we fail to adapt - we risk losing ... a high-end fight."

What's finally driving change is the brutal lesson of the war in Ukraine. This is a drone and satellite war: Russian and Ukrainian tanks are almost defenseless against attacks from drones overhead; Russia's huge Navy has lost control of the Black Sea because of Ukrainian naval drones; satellites can feed precise targeting information to kill anything that algorithms designate as a weapon.

But there's a catch: The Ukraine battlefield is a blizzard of electronic warfare. So systems must be truly autonomous, able to operate without GPS or other external guidance, as I described in a recent account from Kyiv of technology developed by the software company Palantir. In makeshift weapons factories in Kyiv, and in defense labs around the United States, designers are creating systems with artificial intelligence at "the edge," embedded in the weapons themselves, so they don't have to depend on jammable signals from space.

Leading the campaign for Pentagon reform is Kathleen Hicks, deputy secretary of defense. In August, she announced the "Replicator Initiative," which aimed to transfer the tech lessons of Ukraine for the potential battle areas of the Indo-Pacific. She wanted cheap drones for use in land, sea and air - and quickly. The goal, Hicks said, was to field "autonomous systems at [a] scale of multiple thousands, in multiple domains, within the next 18 to 24 months."

That was unimaginably fast for the Pentagon. But Hicks said in a January speech that in its first five months, Replicator had achieved what normally takes the Pentagon two to three years. "If you're not sure what is more mind-blowing - how fast we did it, or how long it normally takes - I don't have to tell you," Hicks said. "Honestly, the length of our normal process should blow your mind."

Hicks told me last week that the key to Replicator was "transforming internal processes." One big goal was to leap over what a generation of

reformers have called the "valley of death" - the long gap between development of prototype weapons and procurement and deployment at scale. "Bureaucracies need to be shown that new ways of doing things are possible. That's what we're doing," she messaged me. The first Replicator drone systems were delivered to warfighters last month.

Replicator is a striking example of Pentagon reform, but there are others. Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall announced in March 2023 an innovative plan called "Collaborative Combat Aircraft" to team uncrewed jets with ones piloted by humans. The Air Force plans to buy at least 1,000 of these uncrewed jets and have them in the air by the end of the decade. In mock dogfights between human pilots and AI computers, the machines nearly always win, Kendall told me several years ago.

Now, the Navy, too, is finally embracing change. Task forces are deploying uncrewed vessels in the Persian Gulf, Mediterranean and Caribbean. The Navy last month announced a new squadron of what it hopes will be hundreds of unmanned surface vessels, known as Global Autonomous Reconnaissance Craft. The squadron's informal name is "Hell Hounds."

Four big uncrewed Navy vessels completed in January a five-month deployment to Hawaii, Guam, Micronesia, Australia and other destinations. Because the Pacific is such a complex and hostile environment, a robust naval drone program will need its own "robotic systems command," with an authorities like those that created the nuclear navy, retired Vice Adm. Dave Lewis told me. As senior vice president for maritime activities at Leidos, he helped support the uncrewed four-ship flotilla that sailed the Pacific.

The Pentagon has managed for half a century to keep radical change from breaching its five walls. Carriers, bombers, tanks and fighter jets were built to last forever, and in a cozy world without peer competitors, it seemed that they could. But now, Hicks said, we're in an era in which the Pentagon needs "deliberate discomfort" and "collaborative disruption." It's a revolution that's long overdue.

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

Sometimes intent and event simply do not sync

For 70 consecutive years, Bob Skorjanc (81) has been attending the Indy 500 since 1952 when he was 9 years old. That first race was notable because Troy Ruttman won at the age of 22, the youngest winner ever of The Greatest Spectacle in Racing. Skorjanc didn't even miss the event during the Covid-19



Anna Spalding

Pandemic. When the race was closed in 2020 to the public, Skorjanc says he "stuck his feet underneath the fence," therefore, he technically attended it. (CNN News-source, 18 May 2024) Bob clearly wasn't about to ruin his streak.

Jim and I have been attending since May 28, 2008, the year we began dating, but our streak doesn't compare to Skorjanc's. Our race friends informed us as we took our seats in Turn 4 that we had to pick a driver, one we'd root for throughout the 200 laps. I chose Australian Will Power. I didn't know anything about Will Power: I just liked his name. It was his first Indy 500 and mine. He started 23rd and finished 13th.

Our race attendance has continued with some hiccups along the way. On May 27, 2018, we rose early in our Indy hotel room to get ready for the race. Climbing out of the shower, I slipped, fell, and hit my head on the cabinetry below the bathroom sink. Jim helped me dress while I held pressure on my bleeding noggin. He drove us to an emergency facility just a couple buildings away. An ER doc put 7 stitches in the back of my head. He gave me a prescription for pain meds and antibiotics, and advised us to skip the Indy 500 that day. Based on how I was feeling and the fact I never lost consciousness, he didn't think I suffered a concussion; however, sitting in the noise and heat at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway wasn't advisable.

So back to the hotel we went, packed our belongings, let our friends know we wouldn't be joining them in the stands, and drove home. On the way we tuned the radio to the race and listened intently. We were able to watch the last 20+ laps on TV when we reached home and were seated in our living room. Guess who won. Will Power.

This year we were eager to take our place in the stands to see if Newgarden (starting in the pole



Here's the Thing

position) would record a back-to-back win, if Castroneves (starting in the second row) would claim his record fifth Indy 500 win, or if Will Power (my driver) would advance from 12th position to take the checkered flag, drink and shower himself with the traditional milk drink, and sit in Victory Lane with his second win.

Alas, our attendance was not meant to be. We arrived at Heartland RV Resort in Greenfield Thursday afternoon to enjoy some camping before the race on Sunday. That evening we ate a yummy dinner of hotdogs, potato salad, baked beans, and fruit salad. By 7:30 Jim was in severe pain. He sat in his recliner briefly, moved outside to one of the camp chairs momentarily, then gravitated to a post on the other side of the camper bracing himself to "toss his cookies." He didn't, but came inside to google "hospitals nearby."

Half an hour later we were on our way to Hancock Regional Hospital, seven minutes away (though it took longer because I was driving our behemoth of a truck and Jim was puking into a bag in the passenger seat). After a look at his urine, a CT scan, and blood work, the ER doctor determined that Jim's kidney stone was on the move. After being discharged, we drove to CVS for

meds and Arby's for a jamocha shake and slider for Jim (and a slider for Java, our chocolate lab who'd been hanging out in our camper for more than 5 hours). On the way back to Heartland, Jim was feeling no pain but we decided to sell our tickets and enjoy the race from the comfort of our camper.

By Saturday afternoon Jim had sold the tickets and parking pass. Sunday we watched the 4-hour, rain-delayed race and saw Will Power crash on lap 146 and Josef Newgarden claim the win—a back-to-back accomplishment.

Here's the Thing: We Spaldings are known for our camping calamities. However, when the Indy 500 is our destination, it seems it's more like health calamities. We don't let them stop us from enjoying life, enjoying camping. A positive attitude in any situation can make all the difference in the world. Let's talk.

annaspalding1956@gmail.com

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



Lions Club Fishing Derby at Ouabache

Fifty-eight young fishermen (and women), ages 2 to 15, participated in the Bluffton Optimist Club's Fishing Derby on a recent Saturday morning and in addition to catching an occasional fish many received door prizes that included tackle boxes, rods and reels and other fishing gear. The event is an annual project of the Optimists. Above right, eager to show off their prizes were half of the youngsters to participated in the fishing experience. From left, front row are Murphy Dobson, Broden Morgan, Lennon Draper, Imogen Draper and Blayne Dawson while behind them are Liam Evans, Micah McAfee, Kreigh Bagley, Zeth Baumgartner, Bryson Goines, Natalie Simmons and Lily Morgan. Below right, the rest of the "door" prize winners from the Fishing Derby. From left, front row are Bryant Kumfer, Micah Byer, Colten Madden, Braxton Simmons, Blayne Dawson, Royal Davis, Lennon Draper and Clara McAfee while behind them are Kaliyah Ehrman, Olson Draper, Hudson Aschliman, Maximus Carrillo, Easton Okey, Ryder Kumfer and two young men who skipped off before we caught their names. (Photos provided by Roger Sherer)



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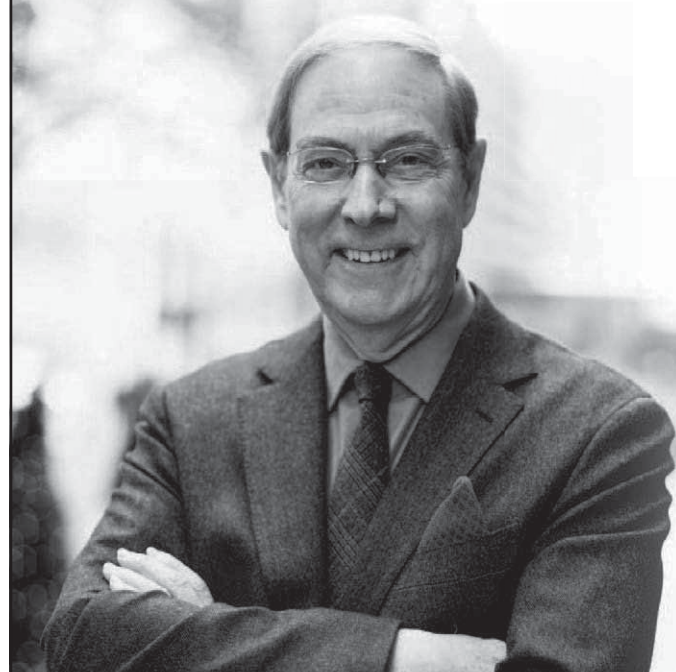
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Rural pharmacies fill health care gap, owners say it's harder to stay open

By DEVI SHASTRI
AP Health Writer

Basin Pharmacy fills more than prescriptions in rural northern Wyoming. It's also the key health care access point for the town of about 1,300 people and the surrounding area.

It sells catheters, colostomy supplies and diabetic testing strips. The storage room contains things that people rely on to survive, such as a dozen boxes of food for patients who must eat through tubes. The pharmacy fills prescriptions in bulk for the county jail, state retirement center and youth group homes. Some patients come from Jackson, five hours away by car, for the specialized services.

Pharmacist Craig Jones makes house calls when no one else can, answers his phone at all hours of the night and stops to chat about bowel movements at church. Yet Jones keeps a pile of his own paychecks on a desk in the back of his pharmacy. Four months' worth, uncashed.

"Every year, it's a little worse," Jones said of the financial pressures on his business.

Rural pharmacies, independent or chain, can be a touchstone for their communities. The staff knows everyone's names and drugs, answers questions about residents' mail-order prescriptions or can spot the signs of serious illness.

But rural pharmacies' business models face unrelenting pressures to the point that sometimes they have to close. Several largely rural states have some of the lowest number of pharmacies per ZIP code, according to

an AP analysis of data from 49 states and the National Council for Prescription Drug Programs.

The closest pharmacy to Basin Pharmacy is eight miles away in Greysbull, and Jones and two other pharmacists opened it after the department store chain that ran its predecessor went bankrupt.

EFFECTS OF A CLOSURE

When a pharmacy does close in a rural area, communities feel the absence.

In Herscher, Illinois, news came out of nowhere that the CVS would shut down in early March.

Mayor Shannon Sweeney met with CVS representatives and asked them to delay the closure for his village of 1,500 that's 80 miles south of Chicago, but he said the company told him the front of the store was not making enough money.

Pharmacy access is an important consideration, CVS spokesman Matt Blanchette told The Associated Press, but the company also weighs local market dynamics, population shifts and the number of stores in the area selling similar products. He confirmed the meeting with Sweeney, but did not directly answer a question about what financial issues led to the store closure.

Tammy McLearn came to the CVS twice a month to pick up medications for her blood pressure and cholesterol on her way to and from work near Kankakee.

She moved her prescriptions to the CVS near work because she doesn't want to get them through the mail; her village isn't a top prior-

ity for snow removal in the winter — and her late husband's heart medications would often get lost in the mail.

"We're losing convenience, a staple," she said of the pharmacy, which was part of a small statewide chain before CVS bought it in 2017. "I hope another pharmacy goes in here."

Sweeney said that's his goal — preferably an independent one. But in the months since the closure, two promising leads have dried up, leaving the them "dead in the water," he said.

FINANCIAL PRESSURES

Four of Wyoming's independent pharmacies closed last year, said Melinda Carroll, legislative director of the state's pharmacy association. Two more, one independent and one chain, closed so far this year.

Jones plans to hold out in Basin. He owns two other businesses there — a café next to the pharmacy and a grocery store, for which he cashed in some of his retirement accounts to keep it from closing.

But some 25% of the prescriptions he fills today are reimbursed for less than what he bought the medications for. Jones said he lost \$30,000 between the beginning of the year and mid-May.

Hence, the uncashed checks.

"I'm working for free a lot," he said. "And I don't mind. I love to serve the community. But I kind of resent having to do that because of large corporations, huge pharmacy benefit managers, that are making millions of dollars a year."

In cities across the U.S., Black and Latino neighborhoods have less access to pharmacies

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Parts of the north side of Montgomery are defined by what it has lost: restaurants, grocery stores and a convenient pharmacy, the latter of which closed five years ago.

People who still live in the historically Black neighborhood of Newtown, like Sharon Harris, are frustrated. She goes to a different location of the same pharmacy chain, which is four miles from her home.

"You have to come back sometimes," she said, "and then they wait so long to fill the prescription."

In cities across the U.S., major retail pharmacies have closed hundreds of stores over the past few years and independents can't always afford to stay open. That can leave residents of color without easy access to a business that provides not only prescriptions but also fundamental public health services like vaccinations, over-the-counter medicines and even food.

Closures create "a situation where there's not just (a lack of) investment in terms of pharmacy development and expansion, but there's no incentive to stay in those neighborhoods," said Dima Qato, a professor of clinical pharmacy at the University of Southern California who has studied pharmacy access.

And an Associated Press analysis of licensing data from 44 states, data from the National Council for Prescription Drug Programs and the American Community Survey shows residents of neighborhoods that are majority Black and Hispanic have fewer pharmacies per capita than people who live in mostly white neighborhoods.

MAC Pharmacy is the only one serving about 20,000 people in a majority Black ZIP code in Cleveland. George Tadross, the part-owner and pharmacy manager, said he is adamant about making things as easy as possible for his mostly older customers — sometimes by organizing their medications by day for

them.

"You have to have a pharmacist to talk to," he said. "My philosophy in the pharmacy business is you know your doctor, he knows everything about you. You need to know your pharmacist as well (because) the pharmacist is the only one that sees the whole medical treatment plan you have."

Pharmacists play a role in managing chronic diseases like diabetes and heart-related issues, which Black and Hispanic people are more likely to be diagnosed with.

And when pharmacists or pharmacy technicians reflect their customer base — by speaking the same language or understanding the community — it can be easier to build a strong rapport and trust, said Jasmine Gonzalvo, who teaches at Purdue University's College of Pharmacy and has researched the needs of Spanish-speaking patients at pharmacies.

She noted that if people don't feel comfortable asking questions about the medication, then it might mean they don't take it or don't take it correctly.

"You don't get a refill," Gonzalvo said, "simply because there were barriers in the way of your communicating and feeling safe in that relationship with your pharmacist."

That's why Bert's Pharmacy in Elizabeth, New Jersey, has "Spanish- and English-speaking staff all the time," said owner and pharmacist Prakash Patel said. His business is located in an ZIP code where nearly 70% of the residents are Hispanic.

"We want to make sure, too, they understood everything," Patel said. "We have Spanish-language labels for them, we print all the instructions in Spanish for them."

In Montgomery, where Harris lives, the city is working on a development plan for the north side. A retail analysis in the plan shows a small pharmacy could generate \$1.5 million in sales a year.

Service dogs helped ease PTSD symptoms in some U.S. military veterans, researchers say

By CARLA K. JOHNSON
AP Medical Writer

Specially trained service dogs helped ease PTSD symptoms in U.S. military veterans in a small study that the researchers hope will help expand options for service members.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs provides talk therapy and medications to veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and runs a pilot program involving service dogs. The VA can prescribe service dogs to certain veterans diagnosed with a visual, hearing or substantial mobility impairment, including eligible veterans with PTSD, and will cover some costs associated with having a service dog.

The agency continues to review the research "to evaluate the effectiveness of service dogs," said VA press secretary Terrence Hayes, "and we are committed to providing high-quality, evidence-based care to all those who served."

Study co-author Maggie O'Haire, of the University of Arizona's veterinary college, said one of the researchers' goals was "to bring evidence behind a practice that appears to be increasingly popular, yet

historically did not have the scientific base behind it."

For the study, service dogs were provided by K9s For Warriors, a nonprofit organization that matches trained dogs with veterans during a three-week group class. The dogs are taught to pick up a veteran's physical signs of distress and can interrupt panic attacks and nightmares with a loving nudge.

Researchers compared 81 veterans who received service dogs with 75 veterans on the waiting list for a trained dog. PTSD symptoms were measured by psychology doctoral students who didn't know which veterans had service dogs.

After three months, PTSD symptoms improved in both groups, but the veterans with dogs saw a bigger improvement on average than the veterans on the waiting list. The study, funded by the National Institutes of Health, was published Tuesday in JAMA Network Open.

It wasn't clear from the study whether spending time with any dog would have had the same effect. (About 40% of the veterans in both groups owned pet dogs.) And all the veterans in the study had access to other PTSD treatments.

Service dogs should be considered complementary and not a standalone therapy, O'Haire said.

"When you add it to existing medical practices, it can enhance your experience and reduce your symptoms more," she said.

PTSD is more common among veterans than civilians, the VA says, affecting as many as 29% of Iraq war veterans over their lifetimes. Symptoms include nightmares, flashbacks, numbness or the feeling of being constantly on edge.

"I would wake up in the middle of the night, almost nightly, in a pool of sweat," said Dave Crenshaw, who served with the Army National Guard in Iraq and was diagnosed with PTSD in 2016 while working undercover in law enforcement. Antidepressants helped with some symptoms, he said, but he still felt numb.

The 41-year-old veteran met his service dog, a pointer-black lab mix named Doc, in 2019. He immediately felt what he described as "joy and wholesomeness. It's just an overwhelming feeling of 'Hey, everything's going to be OK.'"

Doc senses when he's upset, often before he notice

es himself, and come close, Crenshaw said. Today, Crenshaw is no longer taking antidepressants and is enjoying retirement from the military and law enforcement. He gives Doc credit for getting his life back on track.

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Board Appointments for 2024

The Wells County Board of Commissioners and/or the Wells County Council are accepting applications for a Board Appointment to:

Wells County Library Board

The appointment to this board is a 4-year term and is effective August 15, 2024 – August 15, 2028. If you are interested in serving on this board, please contact the Wells County Auditor's Office at 260-824-6470 for an application. Applications can also be downloaded by going to the Commissioner or County Council page of the County Website at www.wellscounty.org. Send completed applications to Wells County Auditor, 102 W Market St., Suite 205, Bluffton, IN 46714 or email to auditor@wellscounty.org. Applications will be accepted through June 28, 2024.

Wells County, Indiana prohibits discrimination and/or the exclusion of individuals from its governmental facilities, programs, activities, and services based on the individual person's race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, low-income status, sexual orientation or limited English proficiency. **Wells County, Indiana** affirms its commitment to providing meaningful opportunities and access to government facilities, programs, activities and services in an effort to comply with all laws including: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended.

Friends, frustrations and finding new connections

Dear Annie: I've experienced couples being completely tone-deaf to the single friends in their lives. Sometimes they have no interest in helping their friends find a relationship. I'm not even talking about setting someone up. I'm talking about having no interest in even going to a place where single people might be.

In my case, it resulted in dropping the friend group entirely since they wouldn't offer to meet me somewhere single people might be. They also wouldn't have conversations outside of marriage and kids. When asked to move the conversation to something I could contribute to, I was berated for not being happy about being single from someone who was in a string of relationships continuously for a decade.

Sometimes, it's better to realize that not everyone has your interests in mind. They were a part of my life for a long time, and now they don't feel like a part of it. Should I try to keep these friendships or move on and find new friends? — Kicked to the Curb

Dear Kicked: I'm not sure you were kicked to the curb so much as redirected by the time of life that your friends are in. Have you tried to tell them that you feel sad for not being in a relationship and that you would like their help as friends? They could be your married wingmen.

It sounds like they are making you feel left out of the relationship world, and no one likes to feel left out. Just tell them you don't want to talk about their relationships. Your letter does come across as a little bitter. Not being in a relationship does not have to be a permanent thing. You sound like you want to go out and mingle with other singles. Try to find friends who are single and with whom you have more in common at this season of your life. Nothing is forever, so you might come back to your "relationship friends."

Dear Annie by Annie Lane



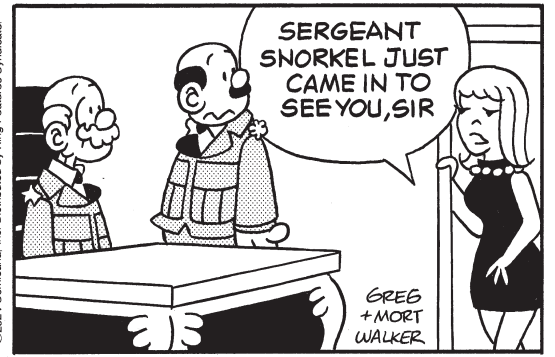
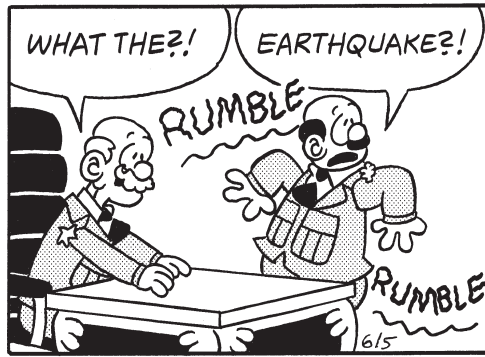
Dear Annie: I am a 34-year-old single mother. Last year, I was offered a job at a hospital for a good service position. I passed my background check but failed the drug screening because I tested positive for THC. I only consumed it one time, and I told that to the hiring manager, but she said that they have a no-tolerance policy.

I was crushed after I withdrew my application. For years I have been trying to better my life, not only for me but for my 13-year-old daughter. I was wondering if you can give me advice on the entire situation. I have been clean since November. It was a one-time thing and a horrible mistake. I was wondering if I should reapply for the same position. I even took a course online and got my food aid certificate, which would help me get this job back. — Lost Out on a Good Opportunity

Dear Lost Out: All is not lost. In fact, it is better than ever because you are clean and sober. If you struggle with substance abuse, you can find support in groups like Narcotics Anonymous. You absolutely should reapply for that job and for a few other jobs if you find them available.

"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. © 2024 CREATORS.COM

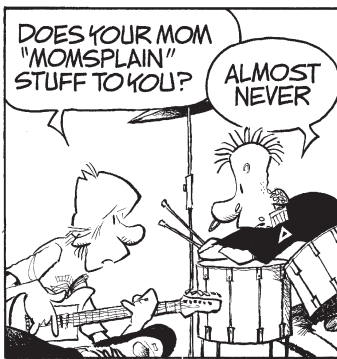
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My Answer



By Dr. Billy Graham

Satan is the commander of deceit

tell me there's no use praying for my boy. Is there a Bible verse that says otherwise? — D.G.

Answer: The world's pastimes chock-full of pop culture is searing the souls of our children. Young people's sense of right and wrong is being choked by wild and rank weeds of a moral wasteland. Satan is the commander of deceit. He is the ringleader in rebellion against the faithful. Satan is the great spoiler of everything good. Only God can change the heart of someone who is in rebellion against Him. No matter how logical our arguments or how fervent our appeals, our words will accomplish nothing unless God's Spirit prepares the way. Never stop praying for God to work in another person's life.

This should be the motto of every follower of Jesus Christ.

The Bible says, "Remember, beloved, ... 'In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.' It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. ... Have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire ... hating even the garment stained by the flesh." (Jude 1:17-23, ESV). No matter how dark and hopeless a situation might seem, never stop praying.

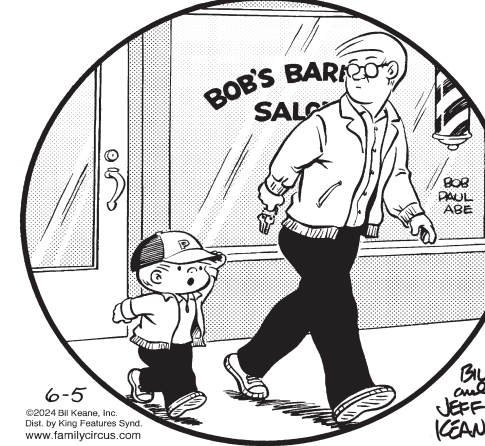
(This column is based on the words and writings of the late Rev. Billy Graham.)

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THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane

The LOCKHORNS



"Now my cap is loose."

"... THEN HE REALIZED HE WAS GOING TO BE LATE, SO WHAT WAS OUR HERO TO DO?..."

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes solution time: 23 mins.

Yesterday's answer 6-5 crossword puzzle grid with filled-in words.

TV schedule table with columns for time slots (5 PM to 12:30) and rows for various channels (WIMM, CBS, etc.) listing programs and their descriptions.

