

The News - Banner

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 2024 BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection \$1.00



Painting at Roush's pavilion

Paints and stamps were the tools of choice as kids painted various designs at Roush Park Tuesday. From left to right, Kenzie Barnes, Bella Quinn and Elsie Quinn all look off each other's designs for inspiration. (Photo by Jonathan Snyder)

BOW open bids for electric substation, OK's extension on Hershey's agreement

By JONATHAN SNYDER

Bids for transformers and breakers meant for the new electric substation on Cherry Street were opened by the Board of Public Works and Safety on Tuesday.

Three bids for transformers and three bids for breakers were opened and read to the public by Bluffton Engineering Consultant Jake Yatzo of Power System Engineering. Transformer bids came from WEG Transformers, who had the low bid at \$4,650,800 for the transformer itself, but with a 140-week delivery timeline. Virginia Transformer's bid came in at \$4.9 million with a 60- to 66-month warranty, but with a 65- to 70-week delivery timeline. Power Line Supply's bid came in at \$5,246,386 with an optional warranty included and a 38-week delivery timeline.

Bids for the breakers ran around \$250,000, with Meiden America Switchgear having the low bid for two 69KV circuit breakers, valued at \$210,822.22 with an 18-month warranty period and a 34- to 38-week delivery timeline. Siemen's bid came in at \$216,955.56 with no warranty period and a 75- to 87-week delivery timeline. Irby Utilities bid \$249,000 with a 60- to 66-month warranty period at an additional \$9,965 cost and a 96- to 100-week delivery timeline.

No bids were approved by the board at Tuesday's meeting. Yatzo stated that his company will look over each bid in more detail and give a recommendation to the board. Yatzo hopes that next Tuesday's board meeting will see an approval for both the transformers and breakers.

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Ossian receives \$2.5M loan for housing infrastructure

By HOLLY GASKILL

Ossian was awarded \$2.5 million in the first round of low-interest loans from the the Indiana Finance Authority through the Residential Infrastructure Fund.

The funds will be used toward public infrastructure for a new addition in northern Ossian, Fawn Meadows, which is anticipated to have 168 lots.

The housing development was the only one in Wells County and one of 11 statewide to be awarded in the first round. In a press release Monday, it was announced that \$51 million would be loaned to the 11 developments to "provide infrastructure to support housing".

The RFI guidelines state that applicable

uses for the loan are: a water distribution system; water treatment plant; wastewater treatment plant; sanitary sewer system; storm sewer system; lift station; street, road, or bridge; curb, gutter, or sidewalk; traffic signal; street light; and electric or gas distribution line.

Other recipients were located in Fort Wayne, Goshen, Gas City, Auburn, Jamestown, Vincennes, Churubusco, Indianapolis, Clarksville and Michigan City.

In 2023, the Indiana General Assembly established the RIF program in hopes of reducing infrastructure costs for residential housing in communities that show a need for additional housing.

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Pictured in the photo from left are Samantha Creager, media manager; Hattie Wondercheck, program manager; Erin Prible, executive director; and Rachel Reinhard, accounting manager. (Photo submitted)

Chamber nets two awards for Excellence in Innovation

The Wells County Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce that it has recently received two prestigious awards from the Indiana Chamber Executives Association for Excellence in Innovation. These annual Excellence Awards recognize innovative new projects introduced by chambers in the past year, highlighting programs that bring fresh ideas and solutions to their communities.

The first award was granted for the formation of the Wells County Drug Taskforce Committee. This initiative emerged in response to an urgent need to tackle drug concerns within the community. The Wells County Chamber of Commerce took on the leadership role in creating this taskforce in August 2023. The committee is a diverse coalition of nearly 40 individuals representing various sectors of the community. They convene monthly, with sub-committees dedicated to raising awareness, disseminating information, and developing programs tailored for employers, youth, parents and the broader community.

The second award recognized the introduction of the Real Colors Team Building

workshop in the workplace. Erin Prible, who received certification as a Real Colors instructor, offers these workshops to local businesses and organizations. Real Colors is a personality assessment tool that enhances communication and collaboration by helping participants understand personality dynamics. The workshops provide a user-friendly and practical approach to uncovering individual temperaments — Gold, Green, Blue, or Orange — and leveraging this knowledge to improve interpersonal relationships and teamwork.

"Through the Real Colors personality assessment, our engaging workshops serve as a platform for participants to uncover their individual temperament and that of others. Armed with this invaluable insight, individuals can cultivate enhanced communication abilities and foster stronger relationships, both within and beyond the professional realm," explained Prible.

Erin Prible and her team are excited to share this award with the community and Chamber Members. "Our goal is to continue to offer programs and resources that are rel-

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Iowa floodwaters breach levees as more rain hits

By HANNAH FINGERHUT, DAVE COLLINS and MARGERY A. BECK Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Tornado warnings, flash flooding and large hail added insult to injury for people in the Midwest already contending with heat, humidity and intense flooding after days of rain.

The National Weather Service on Tuesday afternoon and evening issued multiple tornado warnings in parts of Iowa and Nebraska as local TV news meteorologists showed photos of large hail and spoke of very heavy rain.

Earlier on Tuesday, floodwaters breached levees in Iowa, creating dangerous conditions that prompted evacuations.

A vast swath of lands from eastern

Nebraska and South Dakota to Iowa and Minnesota has been under siege from flooding from torrential rains since last week, while also being hit with a scorching heat wave. Up to 18 inches (46 centimeters) of rain have fallen in some areas, and some rivers rose to record levels. Hundreds of people were rescued, homes were damaged and at least two people died after driving in flooded areas.

The sheriff's office in Monona County, near the Nebraska border, said the Little Sioux River breached levees in several areas. In neighboring Woodbury County, the sheriff's office posted drone video on Facebook showing the river overflowing the levee and flooding land in rural Smithland. No injuries were immediately reported.

Patrick Prorok, emergency manage-

(Continued on Page 2)

Surgeon general declares gun violence a public health emergency

By AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. surgeon general on Tuesday declared gun violence a public health crisis, driven by the fast-growing number of injuries and deaths involving firearms in the country.

The advisory issued by Dr.

Vivek Murthy, the nation's top doctor, came as the U.S. grappled with another summer weekend marked by mass shootings that left dozens of people dead or wounded.

"People want to be able to walk through their neighborhoods and be safe," Murthy told The Associated Press in a phone interview.

"America should be a place where all of us can go to school, go to work, go to the supermarket, go to our house of worship, without having to worry that that's going to put our life at risk."

To drive down gun deaths, Murthy calls on the U.S. to ban automatic rifles, introduce universal background checks for pur-

chasing guns, regulate the industry, pass laws that would restrict their use in public spaces and penalize people who fail to safely store their weapons.

None of those suggestions can be implemented nationwide without legislation passed by Congress, which typically recoils at gun control measures. Some state

legislatures, however, have enacted or may consider some of the surgeon general's proposals.

Surgeon General Murthy said there is "broad agreement" that gun violence is a problem, citing a poll last year that found most Americans worry at least sometimes that a loved one might be

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Outside

A little less warm today, but storms continue

Today	Thursday	Friday
High 79	High 80	High 84
Low 60	Low 59	Low 70

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Skeptics and cynics and much ado about something

“People talk about the divide in this country as though we were standing on opposite sides of a chasm. When the reality is that we are standing over the chasm, as if on a bridge. You’re never going to get everyone to cross to one side or the other. Some people can’t accept that. If they can’t get everyone to their side, they’d rather blow up the bridge.”



Mark Franke

The above is quoted from the futuristic “2054: A Novel” by Elliot Ackerman and Admiral James Stavridis. It appears at the end of the book as the protagonist muses over civil violence in an America that represents a logical extension of our current situation.

Hoosier Opinions

It has the ring of a Shakespearean soliloquy although the speaker is addressing a young friend. The speech would fit nicely in “Julius Caesar,” perhaps as Brutus reflects on his actions and that of the other conspirators on the eve of the battle of Philippi. Octavian, the future emperor Augustus, won that battle and the sun set permanently on the Roman republic and Brutus’ time on this earth.

I admit to being a skeptic but not a pessimist and certainly not a cynic, but it is hard to find a reason to be optimistic these days. Is there any good news to be found in the daily headlines and the cable news chyrons? Public reaction to the recent convictions of President Donald Trump and Hunter Biden was informed not by respect for American jurisprudence but by predetermined bias for or against the defendants.

In a perverted sense one cannot help but conclude that the legal process did not matter at all. Why go through expensive trials when the outcome would not be accepted by half of the population? Why not just put the verdict to a popular referendum?

Ancient Athens and Republican Rome had court systems that involved large open juries of citizens, at least those who bothered to show up for the trial. In Rome’s republican death throes, guilt or innocence was decided by which side rallied the larger number of favorable jurors to attend. It was political theater at its most cynical. Cicero’s courtroom eloquence notwithstanding.

In the novel “2054” street mobs are a daily occurrence. The nation has broken down in a crisis of governmental legitimacy and the unwillingness of the general populace to view it as legitimate. These demonstrations devolve to violence on a regular basis. Meanwhile White House advisors and senior Congressmen scheme for power exercised behind the scenes as they manipulate an inept president.

One might want to excuse the situation on our college campuses as they are just kids going through a phase. Let’s hope that is all it is but I am not sanguine. I was in college during the Vietnam demonstrations. Although my campus, IPFW, had only peaceful and non-disruptive protests, the same could not be said of other colleges and major cities. Wikipedia, my crutch for AI, has a list of these protests longer than I cared to count. The escalation of violence is evident as one scans the list which is in chronological order. Violence begets violence as history instructs us.

As I write this just after the summer solstice, there are news reports of a few radical environmentalists spray-painting the monuments at Stonehenge. Vandalism of important pieces of art is not a contemporary phenomenon; just recall the senseless iconoclasm in the Byzantine Empire during the eighth and ninth centuries. And who can forget the Taliban’s 2002 destruction of the large Buddha statues in Afghanistan? Cultural barbarism must have a half-life running to millennia.

This is not simply destruction of private property, which is abhorrent enough. The current horde of cultural barbarians are targeting historical treasures. But then their manifestos make it clear that they are at war with civilization.

I am Christian, not a Buddhist, but I regret the obliteration of their statues. Nor am I a pagan but I regret the defacing of Stonehenge.

While I am disclosing what I am not, I should add that I am not a psychologist either. In fact it was my least favorite class in college. But it doesn’t require a Ph.D. in psychology to recognize these acts, and their actors, for what they are — selfish and self-centered, declaring themselves intellectually and morally superior to we hoi polloi.

I wonder what goes through their minds when they realize that they just ran afoul of the criminal justice system. Or perhaps they won’t face that anguish since they cleverly have taken the measure of large city prosecutors and campus administrators.

I must return to Shakespeare before I become irretrievably depressed by all this. What play would he write about America’s political and cultural environment in 2024? Would he write a tragedy or a comedy? I doubt that even the Bard could find satire in our current state of affairs. And he surely wouldn’t title it “Much Ado about Nothing.”

Mark Franke, an adjunct scholar of the Indiana Policy Review, is formerly an associate vice chancellor at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne.

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All letters must be signed and must include a phone number or address in case verification is desired. Letters are edited for brevity and clarity. Letters must be no more than 500 words. Please mark your correspondence as a “Letter to the Editor,” or if you wish to express an opinion to us but do not want it published, please mark as “Not for Publication.”



How a long, debt-loving bipartisan consensus has warped U.S. business

Economic policy during a second Joe Biden term would be even worse than policy during a second Donald Trump term. Both, however, would continue a bipartisan consensus that for decades has grown broader, deeper, and more economically and culturally debilitating. Americans are sleepwalking toward convulsive pain, a consequence of decades of easy money policies to prevent minor pains.

Social outcomes that are deemed flaws of capitalism — increased inequality and corporate power — are actually largely consequences of government. It has grown excessively interventionist and confident as it and the nation have become addicted to prolonged low interest rates, the “socialization of risk” and the resulting misallocation of capital. Because of government’s “paternalistic fear,” a “bailout culture” has grown: “A safety net once meant to catch the poor at the precipice of hunger was extended under the financial markets.” This was the result of a vow by the Ayn Rand-reading Alan Greenspan, appointed Federal Reserve chairman by Ronald Reagan.

So argues Ruchir Sharma, investor and chairman of Rockefeller International, in his invigorating “What Went Wrong With Capitalism.” This nation has become “the biggest deficit spender in the capitalist world” by increasing increments of risk-aversion and pleasure-delivery by government.

President John F. Kennedy’s proposed tax cuts, enacted after his assassination, were, Sharma says, an American first: a tax stimulus to fuel an ongoing expansion. President Lyndon B. Johnson’s innovation was a spending stimulus to accelerate an ongoing expansion. In 2017, Trump “instituted tax cuts later in a recovery than any previous president, pushing the practice of constant stimulus to a new extreme.” And pushing the deficit to a peacetime record.

Because of the fiscal follies during the pandemic — “forgivable loans” (hitherto called grants), cash downpours (recipients, including most Americans, many of them gainfully employed, fattened bank deposits by \$3.5 trillion) — the government issued more debt in 12 months than it had in the first two centuries after 1776.

Hitherto, the “cleansing effect” of large recessions culled weak companies, causing a 20 percent increase in bankruptcies. But because of the bailout culture, during the pandemic corporate bankruptcies declined. Did you even notice Biden’s \$36 billion bailout of the Teamsters’ retirement plan in 2022? Sharma on the indiscriminate “impulse to rescue”:

“By the summer of 2020, the Fed owned debt issued by major companies in virtually every industry ... even a utility held by Berkshire Hathaway. In

effect, the government was offering unsolicited financial aid to Warren Buffett.”

In 1987, after the Black Monday stock market crash, a ripple in an expansion, Greenspan declared the Fed’s “readiness to serve as a source of liquidity to support the economic and financial system.” That is, to support everything. His wielding the central bank for stimulus during an economic expansion was, Sharma says, a step toward government operating “in permanent crisis mode.” And toward almost four decades of what the political class relishes: cheap money.

Since Greenspan’s 1987 promise, Sharma writes, “the stock market has grown from half the size of the U.S. economy to two times larger,” disproportionately benefiting the wealthy. But economic stability can disguise loss of dynamism. The economy was in recession half the time in the late 19th century, one-fifth of the time between 1945 and 1980, and just one-tenth of the time since then.

But, Sharma argues, the business cycle is dampened by piling up debt. In the bailout culture, slowing growth stimulates financial markets, which anticipate fresh gushers of government money. Especially benefiting the wealthy.

Between the 1790s and 1970, Sharma writes, the nation “ran consistent surpluses, with significant deficits only during five crises: the War of 1812, the Civil War, the Great Depression, and the two world wars.” Since 1970, there have been significant deficits every year but four.

Conservatives’ faith that tax cuts will pay for themselves is mirrored by progressives’ faith that their “investments” pay for themselves. The result is the same: debt.

Greenspan’s successor, Ben S. Bernanke, said the Fed’s bond-buying was designed to drive down interest rates, thereby driving up asset prices for a “wealth effect”: Feeling richer, Americans would spend more. This was not demand management, it was the manufacturing of demand; government planning, not capitalism, wherein market forces allocate wealth.

Socializing risk benefits the rich most, but others, too. Total U.S. social spending — including health and pension benefits delivered by private employers but mandated or subsidized by government — is about 30 percent of gross domestic product, and the welfare state is world’s second-most (behind France) generous. But everyone eventually loses from what Sharma calls “a business culture pickled in debt.”

georgewill@washpost.com.



George Will

My questions for the candidates

The debate between President Biden and former president Donald Trump Thursday night on CNN ought to be more than rehearsed answers and soundbites we’ve heard before. Polls show Americans are alarmed over what many feel is the unraveling of our country when it comes to the economy, uncontrolled immigration, the weakening of once shared moral values, and an unraveling of what used to be known as cultural norms.

Trying to pry loose some honest answers from politicians has always been a difficult exercise. Here are some of the questions I would ask if given the chance.

Polls show voters are most concerned about immigration and our borders, the economy and crime. It is obvious to anyone with eyes wide open that the border is not secure. According to The Hill, “The United States had some 10.2 million illegal immigrants in 2020, and another 10 million have entered during Biden’s presidency.” Many, it can safely be said, are gang members, criminals, some with terrorist ties, and let’s not forget the drugs. In a handful of cases, innocent Americans have even been murdered by undocumented immigrants.

President Biden, you swore for more than three years you could do nothing about the border without congressional action. Now you have issued several executive orders limiting asylum access for migrants crossing the border unlawfully. These actions have, reportedly, lowered bor-



Cal Thomas

der apprehensions, in Arizona, by nearly 40 percent. U.S. Customs and Border Protection data also shows there has been a “25% decrease in daily encounters between ports of entry.” No news yet on the flow of drugs, so not quite a complete victory. What would you do differently in a second term to address the border?

Follow-up. You and former President Obama have pledged to “fundamentally transform America.” Does that mean flooding the nation with people who broke our laws to get here, allowing them to become citizens and, as critics say, perpetual Democrat voters? For Trump: You have said you would deport millions of undocumented migrants, but last week you seemed to modify your position. Explain the actions you would take.

For Biden: The Congressional Budget Office projects the national debt will have reached \$56 trillion by 2034. The main drivers of debt are Social Security, Medicare and other federally funded programs. These must be reformed because no nation in history has been able to sustain itself with so large a debt. What would you do to protect people now receiving these benefits, but overhaul them to allow these programs to continue for future generations?

For Trump: You added \$8 trillion to the national debt during your four years in office. How would you reduce spending and the debt? For Biden: Polls show the people are concerned about a new wave of crime and soft prosecutors who allow repeat offenders to walk free and in some

cases commit new crimes. Would you urge a tougher-on-crime approach and the replacement of these prosecutors?

For Trump: Why do you call so many Democrats and some Republicans names while speaking nicely about Vladimir Putin, Kim Jong Un and President Xi Jinping? What do you hope to accomplish by demeaning your fellow citizens?

For Trump: You have claimed Putin would never have invaded Ukraine and war would not have broken out between Israel and Hamas if you were president. On what basis can you say that?

For both: Iran is on the verge of producing a nuclear weapon. You both and Israel have said that cannot be allowed. What would you do to stop them and can you afford to wait?

For Biden: Democrats seem to be consumed by the abortion issue. Nearly 64 million abortions have been performed in the U.S. since Roe v. Wade was enacted in 1973. As a Catholic, doesn’t that cause you concern and why won’t you at least endorse adoption as an option?

For Trump: The president has called you a “threat to democracy” and a “convicted felon.” What can you do to ease voter’s fears about the first and would you pardon yourself of any additional federal charges if you are re-elected? For both: You have and apparently will continue attacking each other. Say something nice and substantive you like about your opponent.

Hey, Jake Tapper and Dana Bash, you have your own credibility problems having attacked Trump so often. Let’s try to be fair Thursday night.

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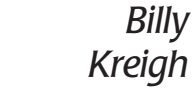
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There is a word for every little thing...a million meanings for every little word

It has been adequately established that words have meaning and power. Tough to communicate even the simplest of ideas without using language somewhere in the process. Ok, let us forego the inclusion here of phalange gestures and flying flags upside down... although we can agree that they are often quite effective on occasion.



Billy Kreigh

We will be referring here to words, using words, meanings, problems associated with, slang, generational words...well, just words. In today's world, the world that is simultaneously growing smaller by the moment and yet expanding into areas that many of us never anticipated encountering - ever. - it must be said, that there are very few words that I am not willing to say either in a whisper or a yell. This is because I have yet to discover a more powerful way to communicate than with those compilations of letters that when placed in specific order, magically mean more than the sum of each letter individually.

It also must be said that language changes with such rapidity that it is often difficult to keep up with current meaning. How does this happen, one might ask. A word is a word; how can the meaning change? Well, with ease it would seem. Think about it. What was the popular slang when you were a kid? A teenager? Some of the more familiar slang from when I was a kid, well the slang that I could speak out loud

within earshot of my mom included such phrases as: hip, groovy, mod, boob tube, five finger discount (ok, that one did not get mentioned within earshot of the mom), tennies, zit, dig it, hippie, kiss off, mop-top, square, ticked off, unglued, burn rubber, passion pit (ditto, that one also was not spoken around the mom).

Now, think for a moment about the language changes due primarily to online communication. I spent an inordinate amount of time trying to decipher IYKYK that was sent to me in an email. Heck, I tried every combination I could conceive and could come up with nary a clue. So, I swallowed the scintilla of pride that I still have intact and texted back, "Huh??" Yep, I do have a way with words. Well, the response was one of incredulity, I guess at my lameness. Turns out it means "If you know, you know." Ok then, I still was not 100% sure what that meant. The person who sent the text, then said, "Gee, Bill, you are becoming an NPC." Once again, I wittily responded, "Huh??"

Get this, an NPC means a "non-playable character." This is a term used by "gamers" for characters in video games that are not like "real people" but merely characters that interact in the game's narrative, but do not really have meaning. So what? Now I have no meaning and must exist for the remaining moments of my life as an NPC? WIM (woe is me)...batter's up, I can play this game.

Language changes continu-



ously; it is on the move. Here's one that causes my head to throb and my bile to churn: woke. I have heard and read this one since about 2022. The definition used

to be that if one was "woke" then one was "awake" as opposed to asleep or unconscious. Today, as I have been told, it means to be socially conscious and culturally aware. Ok, I can live with that. But here's the rub...for many people who share the planet with me, the term "woke" is considered a negative. What the heck? I guess if I have my druthers, I will choose awake, conscious, and aware over the alternatives. And yes, that is my final answer.

Other words that have morphed in politicized verbiage include: tolerance, grooming, cancel culture, systemic racism. See, I at one time was confident in my knowledge of meanings; today the clarity may have dimmed a bit. Just what do these terms mean for you? How about language that is termed as "dog whistle"? I used to think that dog whistles were the devices used to...wait for it...call a dog. Well, imagine my chagrin. It means no such thing, at all. Well, it does still imply that the words will only be audible to a select group of humans, not dogs.

Dog whistle, as it turns out, are words, phrases, and terms that are political shorthand, if you will, that are used to summon a preferred response when used in political situations like rallies and large gatherings. Here's the kicker though: the "dog whistle" is only

effective if most persons don't know what they mean. That might seem anathema to successful communication, but who knew? They are actually often thinly veiled, coded political messages which are directed to a particular group about a particular other group. Guess these "incognito phrases" are perfect examples of IYKYK...see how quickly I adapt? Just like that I used the term as if it had been in my verbal repertoire for years.

Another option for studying language and meaning would be reading The 2025 Presidential Transition Project (Project 2025) which is a collection of policy ideas from The Heritage Foundation to "reshape" the US federal government. "Reshape" - what can that possibly entail? Well, look it up...all 920 pages. it runs the gamut of "reshaping" public education, taxes, the rule of law and separation of powers, individual freedoms and rights, contraception, terminating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs and even foreign trade policy. In 920 pages, I guess, there is something for everyone. Do not ever take my word about such things; take no one else's word... look it up and read it for yourself. You can find it online; I did. Then, let's talk.

Recently a person stopped by my house and over a Pepsi, our conversation rambled into the realm of politics. My guest, with a sanctimonious, snarky, smirk said, "By the way, Bill, you might want to do further research because the United States is NOT a democracy, it is a republic." She sat back quite impressed with her profundity. This is not the first time this particular sentiment has surfaced in conversations of late. Well,

drop the dang mic and back that proverbial bus up, Trigger. Fact: The United States is a representative democracy. I did not make this up; the Constitution establishes a federal democratic republic. Republic means that the government is representative and abides by a constitution and democracy means a government is ruled by the will of the majority. (Call Mr. Kracium or Mr. Gilbert if more specificity is required.)

Here's the thing: Language is a slippery little dickens. We use it every time we think, dream, write, read, converse, watch a movie, look at a map, read a direction, write a poem, hear a song lyric. So very much depends upon the words that we use, see, or hear. Words have heft and most words have multiple levels of meaning, and the fact that we can speak and be understood at all is an amazement.

As a person who has forever had a fascination with language, it is a topic that will never lose its appeal to me. I do not know how things will turn out for the remainder of this year, but I do know this for certain. If we can agree to continue to try to communicate, to understand, and to see and hear others in the same way we want them to see and hear us, then we have a real shot making it possible for all of us to survive and thrive. That will get my vote every dang time.

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Editor's Note: This is one of a series of articles and opinions written by a group of retired and current teachers - 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.



Meet them in the 'jungle'

When the Creative Arts Theater presents "Disney's Jungle Book," at the Auditorium, 428 S. Oak St., Bluffton on June 28-29, these young actors will be taking the leading roles. Left to right are Kai Davis (Baloo), Ryder Kumpf (Mowgli) and Eva Gerber (Bagheera). Friday's performance will begin at 7 p.m. and Saturday's at 3 p.m. Admission is \$11. (Photo provided)

Samuel Jones Pioneer Award Breakfast is July 5

The 36th annual Samuel Jones Pioneer Award Breakfast will be at 7:30 a.m. Friday, July 5, at the Knight-Bergman Center, and will officially open the 57th Annual Salamonie Summer Festival. The Warren Area Chamber of Commerce invites the public to participate in this historic event as these annual awards for community service are presented. Guests will learn a little about the history of Warren, and those who contribute to the Small Hidden Treasure of Warren, Indiana, this fantastic family-friendly community!

This year the event will be a continental breakfast. Tickets are only \$5 pre-sale, or \$6 at the door. Pre-sale tickets will be available at: Bippus State Bank, Town of Warren office and the Warren Pharmacy.

Dollar drive-in movie at the Y

On the Fridays of June 28, July 19 and Aug. 9, A \$1 per vehicle will allow entry to the Caylor-Nickel Foundation Family YMCA's Movie Night. An LED screen, which can be seen in any light, will be set up in the parking lot. All movies will begin at 6 p.m. and concessions and ice cream will be available for purchase from Major League Creamery. "Toy Story" will be shown on Friday, July 28th with "Monsters, Inc. on July 19th and "Beauty and the Beast" on Aug. 9th. All proceeds will support the Y's scholarship fund.



Start The Party Community VBS hosted by First Church of Christ

First Church of Christ will host a Vacation Bible School July 8-12 from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. Dinner starts at 5 p.m. and service starts at 5:30 p.m. every evening. Each day will consist of two large group times, small group, craft, and games. Participants will be placed in a small group of 7-10 similar age children with an adult leader. All volunteers undergo a background check. Pick up begins at 7:30 p.m. Register at <https://vbspro.events/p/starttheparty>. Registration is open to the first 70 kids. The church is located at 909 W Spring St. in Bluffton.

Area Things to See and Do

- ARENA DINNER THEATER, FW**
"The Drowsy Chaperone," June 14-29. www.arenadinnertheatre.org
- EMBASSY THEATER, FORT WAYNE**
Nurse Blake: Nov. 15; <http://fwembassytheatre.org/events>
- BOTANICAL CONSERVATORY, FW**
botanicalconservatory.org
- FORT WAYNE CIVIC THEATER**
"Something Rotten," July 21-30. Arts United Center box office 260-424-5220; [info at www.fwcivic.org](http://info.atwww.fwcivic.org).
- FORT WAYNE MUSEUM OF ART**
"Lucky Monster" work by Jiha Moon. Open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (until 8 p.m. on Thursdays, noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. www.fwmoa.org
- FURTH CENTER, ANGOLA**
ParrotDance: July 12; trine.edu/furth
- HONEYWELL CENTER, WABASH**
Gary Allen: June 28; Killer Queen: July 12; Sawyer Brown: Aug. 1; Tusk: Aug. 3; Happy Together Tour: Aug. 18; Gabby Barnett: Aug. 23; Daniel O'Donnell: Sept. 15; Selah: Sept. 6; Rush Tribute Project: Oct. 19; Wheels of Fortune Live: Nov. 2; Midtown Men: Dec. 12; HoneywellArts.org.
- EAGLES THEATRE, WABASH**
Duke Tomato: July 11; Twitty & Lynn: July 18; Lynch Mob with George Lynch: Aug. 22; War Hip-pies: Aug. 23; Ultimate

- Doors: Nov. 1; <https://www.boxofficeticketsales.com/honeywell-center>
- SCIENCE CENTRAL, FORT WAYNE**
1950 N. Clinton St. in Fort Wayne. Hours 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. Info at 260-424-2400 or at www.sciencecentral.org
- SWEETWATER SOUND, FORT WAYNE Performance Pavilion**
Blackberry Smoke: July 26; Zach Williams: Aug. 1; Rival Sons, Clutch: Sept. 22; Tickets: 800-514-3849 or eTix
- FOELLINGER THEATRE, FW**
Rockin the 80s: Aug. 2; Lee Bice: Aug. 8; Blue Monster Tour: Aug. 13; Gladys Knight: Aug. 17; The Mighty Tour: Aug. 21; Tesla: Sept. 25; The Rocky Horror Show: Sept. 13-14; Ticketmaster or 260-427-6000
- LERNER THEATRE, ELKHART**
Voices of Rock Radio: Oct. 5; TheLerner.com
- WAGON WHEEL, WARSAW**
Kiss Me Kate: through June 29; The Wedding Singer: July 4-13; Murder on the Orient Express: July 18-27; Beautiful (Carol King musical): Aug. 1-10; Miracle on 34th Street: Dec. 6-22; wagonwheelcenter.org
- ABCINEMA, DECATUR**
130 W. Monroe St., Decatur. Information: www.abcinemainc.com or 260-724-SHOW
- NISWONGER CENTER, VAN WERT**
Lee Warren Band: June 28; Johnny GForseom: July 5; Side Car Band: July 12; vanwertlive.com
- KEHOE PARK, BLUFFTON**
Def Legend Tribute: June 28, 8-10 p.m.
Community Worship: June 30, 7-8:30 p.m. (Sunday)
Hotel California—Eagles Tribute: July 12, 8-10 p.m.
The Insiders—Tom Petty Tribute: July 26, 8-10 p.m.
Woolblies Rock Orchestra: Aug. 2, 8-10 p.m.
- MUSIC ON THE PLAZA, BLUFFTON**
Parlor City Plaza, 118 W. Market St., Bluffton
Rylie Lynn Band: July 19, 7-10 p.m.
Whoa, Man!, Aug. 8, 7-10 p.m.
The Electric Cars, Sept. 5, 7-10 p.m.
- WELLS CO. 4-H FAIR**
Hubie Ashcraft Band: July 16
Trevor Hunt: July 17

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Thursday, June 27th 6pm
Friday, June 28th 6:30pm
Saturday, June 29th 3:15pm & 7pm
Sunday, June 30th 2:30pm

Inside Out 2
Thursday, June 27th 6:20pm
Friday, June 28th 6pm & 8:20pm
Saturday, June 29th 3pm & 5:30pm & 8pm
Sunday, June 30th 2pm & 4:20pm

Despicable Me 4
Wednesday, July 3rd 6:20pm

Free Family Film Festival
Paw Patrol, The Mighty Movie
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WELLS COUNTY 4TH OF JULY CELEBRATION

Bluffton Fireworks Display

Celebrate the 4th of July with an all-aerial fireworks show that will last approximately 20 minutes beginning at 10pm. The show will be shot from WEG parking lot just north of Boys & Girls Club. Wayne Street will be closed from Spring to St. Road 116.

Fireworks by Pyrotecnico.

In case of high winds or heavy rain, the fireworks will be held on July 5.

Restrictions on use of Consumer Fireworks: It shall be unlawful to use, ignite or discharge consumer fireworks within the corporate limits of the City of Bluffton except as follows: Between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and two (2) hours after sunset on June 29, June 30, July 1, July 2, July 3, July 4, July 5, July 6, July 7, July 8 and July 9. Between hours of 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 midnight on July 4; and Between the hours of 10:00 a.m. on December 31, and 1:00 a.m. on January 1.



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Interesting facts related to Independence Day

Americans celebrate Independence Day every July 4. The holiday has become synonymous with summer fun, as grand fireworks displays and backyard barbecues are integral components of many people's July 4 celebrations.

As Americans and residents of the United States prepare for some festive Fourth of July celebrations, they can keep these interesting facts related to Independence Day in mind.

- There have been many iterations of the American flag. The American flag has become an iconic symbol of freedom recognized across the globe since the United States declared their independence from Great Britain in 1776. But few July 4 celebrants may know that the current version is the 27th iteration of the American flag. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the current version of the flag officially became the flag on July 4, 1960.

- More than half of all Americans own an American flag. A 2023 poll from WalletHub found that 57 percent of Americans own an American flag. And that's not the only way Americans show their national pride, as the same poll found that roughly one in three Americans intended to purchase patriotic merchandise for July 4.

- The United States is not the only place to celebrate American independence. Such celebrations occur in various countries, including Australia, Denmark, Ireland, and Norway. The festivities in Rebild National Park in Denmark is believed to be the largest celebration of American independence outside the United States.

- The National Hot Dog and Sausage Council estimates that 150 million hot dogs are consumed on July 4. Though there's no corresponding estimate related to how many hamburgers Americans eat on July 4, various reports suggest Americans eat roughly 50 billion burgers annually, so it's fair to conclude many a burger will be consumed this Independence Day.

- July is a popular month for nations to celebrate their independence. In addition to the United States, various countries, including Algeria (July 5), Argentina (July 9), The Bahamas (July 10), Belarus (July 3), Burundi (July 1), Canada (July 1), Cape Verde (July 1), Colombia (July 20), Kiribati (July 12), and Liberia (July 26), celebrate their Independence Day in July.

- John Adams, a Founding Father of the United States and the second president in the country's history, felt Americans should celebrate their independence from Great Britain on July 2. That's because the Continental Congress voted for independence on July 2, 1776. However, the Declaration of Independence was not approved for two more days, thus making July 4 the day to celebrate America's independence from Great Britain.



Tips to save when shopping for your July Fourth barbecue

Barbecues are part and parcel of July Fourth celebrations. Such get-togethers might be even more notable in 2024, when Independence Day falls on a Thursday. That means many people will likely be taking off on Friday, July 5, which adds another day to celebrate with friends and family around the grill this year.

Opportunities to entertain will abound this July, and that can take a toll on hosts' pocketbooks. As the holiday approaches, individuals planning to host a July 4 barbecue can heed these tips to save on food and supplies at the grocery store.

- Ask guests to bring a side and/or beverages. Hot dogs and hamburgers may garner the bulk of the culinary attention at a July 4 barbecue, but side dishes are necessary as well. When inviting guests, ask each to bring a side dish or dessert. Potato salad, mixed greens, pasta salad, chickpea salad, and other cold fare go well with traditional barbecue favorites, and asking guests to bring these along can save hosts substantial amounts of money. If guests can't bring food, ask them to bring beverages like soft drinks, iced tea, beer, or wine.

- Shop ahead. Hot dogs, hamburgers, chicken breasts, and other summer grilling favorites can be frozen and thawed out come the day of the barbecue. Shopping ahead for such items, as well as beverages, can help hosts spread out the cost of hosting, which can make it easier to manage the cost of throwing a party, particularly if the guest list figures to be sizable.

- Consider less expensive cuts of meat. If steak is on the menu at your Independence Day barbecue, consider purchasing less expensive cuts of meat. The Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association notes that chuck cuts like flat-iron steaks and petite filets are flavorful cuts that won't cost nearly as much as rib-eyes and New York strip steaks. Hosts also can save on burgers by purchasing ground beef and creating their own patties as opposed to purchasing pre-made hamburgers from their grocer's meat department. The HPBA notes that chicken thighs, legs or quarters also tend to be less expensive than chicken breasts.

- Grill up healthy fare. Vegetables are less expensive than meat and poultry, and there's many ways to prepare veggies over an open flame. Grilled vegetable skewers are flavorful and popular, and guests might appreciate some nutritious fare to counter all the less healthy items they're accustomed to eating at July 4 barbecues.

There's no shortage of ways to save money when celebrating July 4 in the backyard. This year hosts can celebrate to the fullest without breaking the bank.

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Pictured in the photo from left are Erin Daugherty of State Farm Insurance, Chris Gerber of Edge Manufacturing, Jessica Beste of Stockton Mortgage, Jayde Ketring of First Bank of Berne, Pam Agler of LSM, Kody Kumfer of Forgotten Children Worldwide, Cyndee Fiechter of North Eastern Group Realty, Rebecca Webb and Angie Hunter of LSM, Nick Huffman of Stefan Group, Ed Schwartz, Adam Carroll, Doug Isch and Drew Neuenschwander of LSM, Kevin Pritchard of Ruoff Mortgage, Mark Ahrens, Troy Leyse and Jean Wesley-Alcin of LSM, Alyssa Brown of Archbold and Lewis, Erica Lehman of Lehman Appraisals, Ben Renkenberger of the United Way of Wells County and Wells County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Erin Prible. (Photo submitted)

Wells County Chamber of Commerce honors Loving Shepherd Ministries as June Member of the Month

The Wells County Chamber of Commerce staff and Ambassadors recently surprised the dedicated team at Loving Shepherd Ministries by naming them the June Member of the Month. Located at 1935 N. Main Street in Bluffton, LSM has been making a significant impact on vulnerable children around the world since its inception in 2002.

LSM was established by Ed Schwartz and Doug Isch with the mission to support the world's most vulnerable children in reaching their God-given potential. They achieve this by creating and sustaining families, engaging the Church both domestically and internationally, and developing educational and business opportunities.

Ed Schwartz's background as a pastor and foster parent inspired the creation of LSM. Realizing the need for an organization to assist families in adopting, Schwartz partnered with Isch, who was seeking a career in non-profit work. Together, they spent several months planning before opening their doors in July 2002.

Since then, LSM has expanded significantly. The Homes of Hope program in Haiti finds local Haitian couples to act as parents for groups of 12 boys or girls, partnering with local churches to identify suitable parents. Today, LSM operates 24 Homes of Hope and employs over 200 Haitians. They also run two schools and a post-high school campus in Haiti, as well as a for-profit busi-

ness producing high-quality concrete blocks and aggregate.

In Ethiopia, LSM shifted to a family preservation approach, supporting over 100 single mothers and 250 children by helping mothers start businesses. Locally, LSM supports foster and adoptive families with counseling services. Isch explained, "Globally, we help vulnerable children through three programs: building Homes of Hope in Haiti for over 250 children, supporting single mothers in Ethiopia with business skills, and focusing on foster care and adoption in the U.S. with counseling and guidance."

The LSM building in Bluffton serves many purposes such as an education wing, where church groups, school groups, and other visitors can tour and learn about LSM's programs. There is an event center for guest speakers and a warehouse for supplies destined for Haiti. They also pack gospel kits for distribution to Haiti.

"Being a ministry here in Bluffton is a blessing. This community is generous, encouraging, and supportive. We're grateful for the support we've received over the past 22 years and for the opportunity to help vulnerable children globally," Isch expressed.

For more information about Loving Shepherd Ministries and their work, visit their website at www.loving-shepherd.org, contact their office at 824-9000, or visit 1935 N. Main Street, Bluffton, IN.

Israelis' lawsuit: UN agency helps Hamas by paying Gaza staff in dollars

NEW YORK (AP) — Israelis who were taken hostage or lost loved ones during Hamas' Oct. 7 attack are suing the United Nations agency that aids Palestinians, claiming it has helped finance the militants by paying agency staffers in U.S. dollars and thereby funneling them to money-changers in Gaza who allegedly give a cut to Hamas.

But the agency, known as UNRWA, told The Associated Press on Tuesday that the staffers were paid in dollars by their own choice. Gaza and the Israeli-occupied West Bank don't have their own national currency, and primarily use Israeli shekels.

The lawsuit, filed Monday in a U.S. federal court in New York, marks the latest challenge to the beleaguered U.N. agency, which has been the main supplier of food, water and shelter to civilians during the Israel-Hamas war. The Israeli government has long assailed the over 70-year-old agency, and scrutiny has intensified during the eight-month-long war, prompting UNRWA to defend itself while grappling with a spiraling humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

"UNRWA's staff, facilities and ability to truck cash U.S. dollars into Gaza formed a potent pillar of Hamas' plan to undertake the Oct. 7 attack," the lawsuit says, asserting that the U.N. agency "systematically and deliberately aided and abetted Hamas and its goals."

UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini said Tuesday that he learned of the case only through the media.

"I don't know what the status of this lawsuit is all about, but for the time being, I see this as an additional way to put pressure on the agency," he said at a press briefing in Geneva.

UNRWA has denied that it knowingly aids Hamas or any other militant group.

Israel invaded Gaza after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, in which militants killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted about 250. The war has killed more than 37,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which doesn't say how many were civilians or fighters.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of scores of Israelis including Oct. 7 attack survivors, victims' relatives, and rescued captives. It echoes some complaints their government has raised, ranging from claims that UNRWA employs Hamas operatives to complaints about the content of textbooks in UNRWA-run schools.

But the suit also focuses on the agency's practice of paying its 13,000 Gaza staffers in U.S. dollars. The money is wired from a bank in New York and trucked into Gaza, according to the legal complaint, which says the payroll totaled at least \$20 million a month from 2018 until last September.



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Staying away from social media

Dear Annie: I used to complain about not receiving thank-you notes, but how many times have you been to a shower where, at the end, the gift receiver graciously gives a heartfelt "thank you"?

In this day and age, it really doesn't mean that a person isn't grateful. It has been drilled into their heads to text and to send an answer right away.

I still write thank-you notes, but that's me. It's part of my growing up when it was the thing you do. — Another Perspective

Dear Another Perspective: I like your letter because you are giving people the benefit of the doubt. You are assuming that their in-person "thank you" was heartfelt and that was enough for you to feel appreciated.

Dear Annie: I do not engage in social media platforms for a few reasons. First and foremost, I cherish face-to-face communication along with the sound of another's voice and real human interaction.

Ever since then, people I thought I was close to — those I considered my inner circle and even my own siblings — have slowly stopped communicating with me.

I will run into people I have known most of my life who seem excited to see me; they ask where I have been,

and they ask if I am on Facebook. When I tell them I do not use social media, I often tell them I have had the same phone number and email address for 25 years and inform them that I have reached out to them — by text, phone or email — and have gotten no response.

Am I doomed to a life of solitude if I don't give in to the worldwide obsession with social media? The loss of social skills in this world concerns me. — No Communication

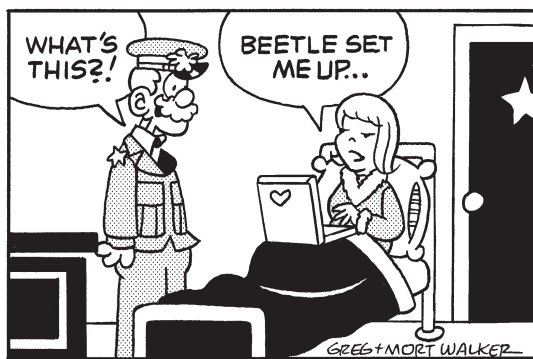
Dear No Communication: There is nothing wrong with not wanting to be on social media. My guess is that you will have more "quality friends" over many "quantity friends."

"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.

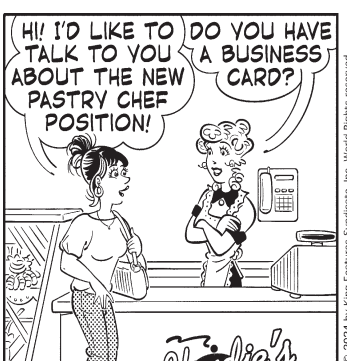
Dear Annie by Annie Lane



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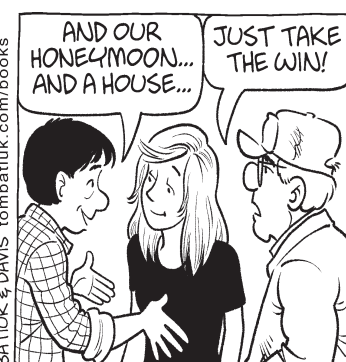
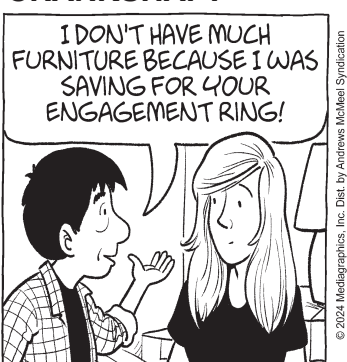
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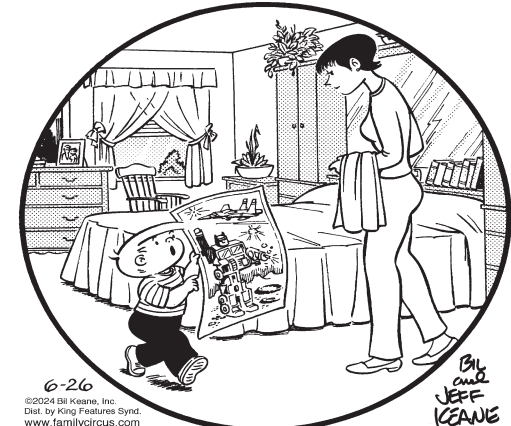


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THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



"Can I put this up in here? I'm out of wall space."

The LOCKHORNS



"LEROY RESOLVED NEVER TO GO TO BED ANGRY ... SO HE DOES HIS SLEEPING THERE."

My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



It is Christ who offers salvation to all

but more true Christians. Some so-called Christian leaders advocate the working out of a system of morals, ethics, and religion that would bring together all the religions of the world.

Some people have said, "It doesn't really matter what people believe, just so they are sincere. Somehow all paths lead eventually to God, I guess. And if God is a loving God, then everyone will be saved eventually whether they are trusting Christ or have rejected Him."

But the Bible says otherwise: "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other

name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12, NKJV).

The Lord did not design the church to cater to people's needs — the Lord breathed into the church to proclaim His truths. But while many ponder why God allows suffering and poverty, one answer is certain: He wants His followers to demonstrate the love of God's love, mercy, and comfort to others, and the church should not seek pleasures but seek to serve God and obey Him.

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

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Question: There's a lot said about Christian faith being narrow — and it must be! But so many Christian churches today say quite differently that true Christianity accepts everyone regardless of their path, and that the goal of religion is to eradicate all poverty and suffering. To identify with them is to affirm a religion without Jesus Christ. How can these churches get away with calling themselves Christian? — F.C.

Answer: Today's culture has become well versed in Christian terminology but is remiss in the actual practice of Christ's principles and teachings. Our greatest need today is not for more Christianity

Table with columns for date, time, and program names. Includes channels like WIMM, CBS, and various news and entertainment programs.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a solution time of 23 mins and a 'Yesterday's answer' section.

Table with columns for date, time, and program names, similar to the main schedule table.

