

# The News - Banner

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TUESDAY, JULY 2, 2024      BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection      \$1.00

## Commissioners look at road conversion line-up

**By HOLLY GASKILL**  
Four road sections have been outlined as the first priority for summer paving by the Wells County Highway Department. Highway Supervisor Shawn Bonar could not attend Monday's County Commissioner meeting on Monday but sent an organized list of county road conversion projects for review. The four first priority projects listed on the form were CR 450S from 200E to State Road 1, 100N from 500W to 600W, 450E from 250S to 300S, and 625S from S.R. 3 to Willow Road. The commissioners plan to discuss and approve the list of projects with Bonar at their next meeting, July 15. Over 20 other projects have 100% property owners petitioning for the conversion. The roads were prioritized due to their traffic and project specifications. Steve Kabel, who lives over the county line on Adams County Road 700 West in Decatur, advocated for paving Wells CR 800E, telling the commissioners the road receives high traffic which kicks up a significant amount of dust and dirt. The dust is carried by the

(Continued on Page 2)



**A snake in the grass**

After a hibernation over the winter, "Wells" the rock snake has returned to the Wells County Public Library entrance. The snake was started last summer by the Wells County Rocks group, which place decorated rocks throughout the area as a way to brighten others' days. Community members are encouraged to paint a rock with a design or picture and add it to the chain. (Photo by Holly Gaskill)

## Supreme Court rules ex-presidents have broad immunity from prosecution

**By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press**  
WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Monday ruled for the first time that former presidents have broad immunity from prosecution, extending the delay in the Washington criminal case against Donald Trump on charges he plotted to overturn his 2020 presidential election loss and all but ending prospects the former president could be tried before the November election. In a historic 6-3 ruling, the court's conservative majority, including the three justices appointed by Trump, narrowed the case against him and returned it to the trial court to determine what is left of special counsel Jack Smith's indictment. Trump celebrated a "BIG WIN" on X. President Joe Biden said the justices set "a dangerous precedent (that) undermines the rule of this nation." The ruling reflected a muscular view of presidential power, and left dissenting judges to criticize it as undermining a core democratic principle that no person is above the law. The court's decision highlighted how the justices have been thrust into an impactful role in the November presidential election. Earlier, they had rejected efforts to bar him from the ballot because of his actions following the 2020 election. The court last week also limited an obstruction charge faced by Trump and used against hundreds of his supporters who stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. The split among the justices also in many ways mirrored the political divide in the country. "Under our constitutional structure of separated powers, the nature of presidential power entitles a former president to absolute immunity from criminal prosecution for actions within his conclusive and preclusive constitutional authority," Chief Justice John Roberts wrote for the court. "And he is entitled to at least presumptive immunity from prosecution for all his official acts. There is no immunity for unofficial acts." The chief justice insisted that the president "is not above the law." But in a fiery dissent for the court's three liberals, Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote, "In every use of official power, the President is now a king above the law." Reading from her opinion in the courtroom, Sotomayor said, "Because our Constitution does not shield a former president from answering for criminal and treasonous acts, I dissent." Sotomayor said the decision "makes a mockery of the principle, foundational to our Constitution and system of government, that no man is above the law." The protection afforded presidents by the court, she said, "is just as bad as it sounds, and it is baseless." Trump posted in all capital letters on his social media network shortly after the decision was released: "BIG WIN FOR OUR CONSTITUTION AND DEMOCRACY. PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN!" Biden, in evening remarks from the White House, cited accepted restraints on presidential power all the way back to George Washington and bemoaned that "for all practical purposes, today's decision almost certainly means that there are virtually no limits on what a president can do." Smith's office declined to comment on the ruling. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer denounced the ruling as "a disgraceful decision," made with the help of the three justices.

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## Education Scholarship Accounts see boosted participation ahead of the 2024-25 term

**By CASEY SMITH Indiana Capital Chronicle**  
The number of Hoosier families using an Indiana Education Scholarship Account — meant to help students who require special education services — is up 200% for the upcoming school year, the Indiana Treasurer of State announced Monday. The agency said more than 50% of the \$10 million appropriated for ESAs in the 2024-25 academic year has already been committed to eligible students. The program application deadline is till two months away, on Sept. 1. The office said that between the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years, the number of K-12 students with disabilities who applied for and received ESA dollars increased by more than 200%. Provider participation also increased by more than 130% for that same time period — with more joining "each week," according to the treasurer's office. Additionally, nonpublic schools educating ESA students increased by more than 350% between the 2022-23 and 2023-24 terms. "These numbers are proof positive that this program is hitting the mark with parents and nonpublic schools, and our provider pool is growing across the state," said Tina Kaetzel, executive director of the ESA program within the state treasurer's office. "That provider data point is crucial, because providers are significantly instrumental to both parents and nonpublic schools in providing support and services to customize education for our special-needs kids." Kaetzel said the ESA program is continuing to grow, noting that 20% more providers are registered with the program for the 2024-25 school year compared to the year prior. The number of non-public schools participating in the program has additionally grown by 50%, compared to the 2023-24 school year. "We're seeing strong activity, with more applications coming each day — so parents will have their best chance of funding availability if they apply now," Kaetzel said. To be eligible for an ESA, school-aged Hoosiers must have an active service plan, Individualized Education Plan or Choice Special Education Plan. They must also have an income below 400% of the Federal Free or Reduced School Meals limit, according to the Indiana Department of Education. Accounts set up by the state treasurer's office provide each qualifying student with thousands of dollars for private school tuition and various other educational services from providers outside of their school district. Other expenses can include transportation, examinations and assessments, occupational therapy, paraprofessional or education aides, training programs and more. The ESA program was created by the General Assembly in 2021 despite push-back from public education advocates who argued that the program lacks oversight and takes money away from traditional public schools.

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## Lawsuit alleges Iran, Syria and North Korea provided support for Hamas attack

**By JENNIFER PELTZ and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press**  
NEW YORK (AP) — Victims of Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel sued Iran, Syria and North Korea on Monday, saying their governments supplied the militants with money, weapons and know-how needed to carry out the assault that precipitated Israel's ongoing war in Gaza. The lawsuit, filed in federal court in New York, seeks at least \$4 billion in damages for "a coordination of extrajudicial killings, hostage takings, and related horrors for which the defendants provided material support and resources." Iran's mission to the United Nations declined to comment on the allegations, while Syria and North Korea did not respond. The United States has deemed Iran, Syria and North Korea to be state sponsors of terrorism, and Washington has designated Hamas as what's known as a specially designated global terrorist. Because such countries rarely abide by court rulings against them in the United States, if the lawsuit's plaintiffs are successful, they could seek compensation from a fund created by Congress that allows American victims of terrorism to receive payouts. The money comes from seized assets, fines or other penalties leveled against those that, for example, do business with a state sponsor of terrorism. The lawsuit draws on previous court findings, reports from U.S. and other government agencies, and statements over some years by Hamas, Iranian and Syrian officials about their ties. The complaint also points to indications that Hamas fighters used North Korean weapons in the Oct. 7 attack. But the suit doesn't provide specific evidence that Tehran, Damascus or Pyongyang knew in advance about the assault. It accuses the three countries of providing weapons, technology and financial support necessary for the attack to occur. Iran has denied knowing about the Oct. 7 attack ahead of time, though officials up to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei have praised the assault. Iran has armed Hamas as a counter to Israel, which the Islamic Republic has long viewed as its regional archenemy.

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Inside</b></p> <p>Local/Area</p> <p>Obituaries . . . . . 3</p> <p>Police Notebook . . . 3</p> <p>Opinion</p> <p>Niki Kelly . . . . . 4</p> <p>Also...</p> <p>Sports . . . . . 1a-2a</p> <p>Classifieds . . . . . 4a</p> <p>Diversions . . . . . 3a</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Outside</b></p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Sunny and warm today, chance of rain tomorrow</b></p> <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td>Today</td> <td>Wed.</td> <td>Thursday</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High 85</td> <td>High 88</td> <td>High 81</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Low 70</td> <td>Low 70</td> <td>Low 68</td> </tr> </table> <p>More Weather on Page 2</p> </div>	Today	Wed.	Thursday	High 85	High 88	High 81	Low 70	Low 70	Low 68	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Online</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Follow us on Facebook! Go to <a href="http://www.facebook.com/newsbanner">www.facebook.com/newsbanner</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Place Your Classified Ads 24/7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Vol. 95 No. 206</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>TUESDAY</b> July 2, 2024</p>
Today	Wed.	Thursday									
High 85	High 88	High 81									
Low 70	Low 70	Low 68									

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## Road conversion line-up

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breeze into Kabel's yard, so much so that it looks "almost like snow," he said. The mile, 800E from U.S. 224 to CR 750N, was included in a second priority group of road sections.

The commissioners — with Commissioner Jeff Stringer attending via Zoom — recognized the request but said they were limited by available funding.

"We have the list, now

we have to have all the things lined up for funding," said Commissioner Blake Gerber.

Meanwhile, the commissioners approved a Community Crossings Matching Grant application for Bridge 65 on Jeff Road over the Salamonie River.

Also during the meeting, the commissioners approved \$16,500 for the Wells County Historical Society for the upcoming year. This

increased from \$12,500 in 2023, but President Jim Sturgeon said the museum has experienced increased insurance and utility costs. In approving the request, Gerber complimented the group's frugality over the years.

Sturgeon said the group was also planning to complete a series of repairs for the museum, estimated at \$30,000, and they plan to fundraise for the cost.

"We work real hard at preservation and education and hope to continue to do that," said Lynn Elliot of the Historical Society. "And we appreciate the fact that you're working with us to make that happen."

The Wells County Historical Museum will also host their annual ice cream social from 2-5 p.m. on Sunday, July 21.

holly@news-banner.com

## Supreme Court rules

(Continued from Page 1)

tices that Trump appointed.

"It undermines SCOTUS's credibility and suggests political influence trumps all in our courts today," the New York Democrat said on X.

The justices knocked out one aspect of the indictment. The opinion found Trump is "absolutely immune" from prosecution for alleged conduct involving discussions with the Justice Department.

Trump is also "at least presumptively immune" from allegations that he tried to pressure Vice President Mike Pence to reject certification of Democrat Joe Biden's electoral vote win on Jan. 6, 2021. Prosecutors can try to make the case that Trump's pressure on Pence still can be part of the case against him, Roberts wrote.

The court directed a fact-finding analysis on one of the more striking allegations in the indictment — that Trump participated in a scheme to enlist fake electors in battleground states won by Biden who would falsely assert that Trump had won. Both sides had dramatically different interpretations as to whether that effort could be construed as official, and the conservative justices said determining which side is correct would require additional analysis at the trial court level.

Roberts' opinion further restricted prosecutors by prohibiting them from using any official acts as evidence in trying to prove a president's unofficial actions violated the law. One example not relevant to this case but which came up in arguments was the hypothetical payment of a bribe in return for an ambassadorial appointment.

Under Monday's decision, a former president could be prosecuted for accepting a bribe, but prosecutors could not mention the official act, the appointment, in their case.

Justice Amy Barrett, who joined the rest of Roberts' opinion, parted company on this point. "The Constitution does not require blinding juries to the circumstances surrounding conduct for which Presidents can be held liable," Barrett wrote.

She also described as unnecessary the analysis of the fake electors claim. "I see no plausible argument for bar-

ring prosecution of that alleged conduct," Barrett wrote.

The work of figuring out how to proceed will fall to U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan, who would preside over Trump's trial.

Trump still could face a trial, said Notre Dame law professor Derek Muller. "But the fact remains that it is almost impossible to happen before the election."

David Becker, an election law expert and the executive director of the nonprofit Center for Election Innovation and Research, called the breadth of immunity granted to Trump "incredibly broad" and "deeply disturbing."

"Almost anything that a president does with the executive branch is characterized as an official act," he said on a call with reporters following the ruling. He said that "for any unscrupulous individual holding the seat of the Oval Office who might lose an election, the way I read this opinion is it could be a roadmap for them seeking to stay in power."

The ruling was the last of the term, and it came more than two months after the court heard arguments, far slower than in other epic high court cases involving the presidency, including the Watergate tapes case.

The Republican former president has denied doing anything wrong and has said this prosecution and three others are politically motivated to try to keep him from returning to the White House.

In May, Trump became the first former president to be convicted of a felony, in a New York court. He was found guilty of falsifying business records to cover up a hush money payment made during the 2016 presidential election to a porn actor who says she had sex with him, which he denies. He still faces three other indictments.

Smith is leading the two federal inquiries of the former president, both of which have led to criminal charges. The Washington case focuses on Trump's alleged efforts to overturn the 2020 election after he lost to Biden. The case in Florida revolves around the mishandling of classified documents. A separate case, in Georgia, also turns on Trump's actions after his defeat in

2020.

If Trump's Washington trial does not take place before the 2024 election and he is not given another four years in the White House, he presumably would stand trial soon thereafter.

But if he wins, he could appoint an attorney general who would seek the dismissal of this case and the other federal prosecution he faces. He could also attempt to pardon himself if he reclaims the White House. He could not pardon himself for the conviction in state court in New York.

The Supreme Court that heard the case included three justices appointed by Trump — Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Barrett — and two justices who opted not to step aside after questions were raised about their impartiality.

Thomas' wife, Ginni, attended the rally near the White House where Trump spoke on Jan. 6, 2021, though she did not go the Capitol when a mob of Trump supporters attacked it soon after. Following the 2020 election, she called the outcome a "heist" and exchanged messages with White House chief of staff Mark Meadows, urging him to stand firm with Trump as he falsely claimed that there was widespread election fraud.

Justice Samuel Alito said there was no reason for him to step aside from the cases following reports by The New York Times that said flags similar to those carried by the Jan. 6 rioters flew above his homes in Virginia and on the New Jersey shore. His wife, Martha-Ann Alito, was responsible for flying both the inverted American flag in January 2021 and the "Appeal to Heaven" banner in the summer of 2023, he said in letters to Democratic lawmakers responding to their recusal demands.

Before the Supreme Court got involved, a trial judge and a three-judge appellate panel had ruled unanimously that Trump could be prosecuted for actions undertaken while in the White House and in the run-up to Jan. 6.

Chutkan ruled against Trump's immunity claim in December. In her ruling, Chutkan said the office of the president "does not confer a lifelong 'get-out-of-jail-free' pass."

## Hamas attack lawsuit

(Continued from Page 1)

In the years since the collapse of Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, Iran and Israel have been locked in a shadow war of attacks on land and at sea. Those attacks exploded into the open after an apparent Israeli attack targeting Iran's embassy complex in Damascus, Syria, during the Israel-Hamas war, which sparked Tehran's unprecedented drone-and-missile attack on Israel in April.

Neighboring Syria has relied on Iranian support to keep embattled Syrian President Bashar Assad in power amid a grinding civil war that began with the 2011 Arab Spring protests. Like Iran, Syria also offered public support for Hamas after the Oct. 7 attack.

North Korea denies that it arms Hamas. However, a militant video and weapons seized by Israel show Hamas fighters likely fired North Korean weapons dur-

ing the Oct. 7 attack

South Korean officials, two experts on North Korean arms and an Associated Press analysis of weapons captured on the battlefield by Israel point toward Hamas using Pyongyang's F-7 rocket-propelled grenade, a shoulder-fired weapon that fighters typically use against armored vehicles.

The lawsuit specifically cites the use of the F-7 grenade in the attack as a sign of Pyongyang's involvement.

"Through this case, we will be able to prove what occurred, who the victims were, who the perpetrators were — and it will not just create a record in real time, but for all of history," said one of the attorneys, James Pasch of the ADL, also called the Anti-Defamation League. The Jewish advocacy group frequently speaks out against antisemitism and extremism.

Hamas fighters killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted

about 250 during the Oct. 7 attack. Israel invaded Gaza in response. The war has killed more than 37,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. It doesn't say how many were civilians or fighters.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of over 125 plaintiffs, including the estates and relatives of people who were killed, plus people who were physically and/or emotionally injured. All are related to, or are themselves, U.S. citizens.

Under U.S. law, foreign governments can be held liable, in some circumstances, for deaths or injuries caused by acts of terrorism or by providing material support or resources for them.

The 1976 statute cited in the lawsuit, the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act, is a frequent tool for American plaintiffs seeking to hold foreign governments accountable. In one example, a federal judge in Washington ordered North Korea

in 2018 to pay \$500 million in a wrongful death suit filed by the parents of Otto Warmbier, an American college student who died shortly after being released from that country.

People held as prisoners by Iran in the past have successfully sued Iran in U.S. federal court, seeking money earlier frozen by the U.S.

The new lawsuit joins a growing list of Israel-Hamas war-related cases in U.S. courts.

Last week, for example, Israelis who were taken hostage or lost loved ones during Hamas' Oct. 7 attack sued 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.

The agency, known as UNRWA, has denied that it knowingly aids Hamas or any other militant group.

## Weather

Tuesday, July 2, 2024

(24-hour observations at 11:40 p.m. Monday at the Fort Wayne International Airport)

High: 75; Low: 50; Precipitation: None  
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.62 feet at 8:45 p.m. Monday

## Wells County forecast

**Today:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 85. Southeast wind 5 to 10 mph.

**Tonight:** Partly cloudy, with a low around 70. South wind 5 to 10 mph.

**Wednesday:** A slight chance of showers, then showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm after 2 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 88. Southwest wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

**Wednesday Night:** Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm before 8 p.m., then a chance of showers and thunderstorms after 8 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 70. West wind around 5 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

**Independence Day:** A chance of showers and thunderstorms, then showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm after 2 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 81. Chance of precipitation is 60%. New rainfall amounts between a tenth and quarter of an inch, except higher amounts possible in thunderstorms.

**Thursday Night:** Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm before 2 a.m., then a chance of showers and thunderstorms after 2 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 68. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

**Friday:** A 50% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny, with a high near 84.

**Friday Night:** A 20% chance of showers and thunderstorms before 2 a.m. Partly cloudy, with a low around 65.

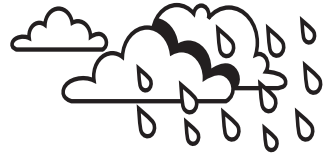
**Saturday:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 80.

**Saturday Night:** Mostly clear, with a low around 61.

**Sunday:** A 20% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly sunny, with a high near 84.

**Sunday Night:** A slight chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy, with a low around 66.

**Monday:** A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly sunny, with a high near 85.



## Scholarship

(Continued from Page 1)

schools. During the 2024 legislative session, a top state Republican lawmaker floated a bill to eliminate the ESA program — in favor of a new grant program that would allow all

Hoosier families, regardless of income, to choose where their students get educated.

The proposal did not advance, but discussion around the measure previewed possible legislative momentum in 2025.

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## Indiana's Rep. Spartz charged with bringing gun through airport security, officials say

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Indiana Republican U.S. Rep. Victoria Spartz has been charged with bringing a firearm through airport security, authorities said Monday.

Spartz, 45, was charged with a Class 1 misdemeanor under Virginia law, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority said Monday.

A TSA spokesperson said officers detected an unloaded .380-caliber firearm in Spartz's carry-on during passenger security screening on Friday at Washington Dulles International Airport.

Her office said in a statement that Spartz mistakenly carried an unloaded handgun in the pocket of her suitcase while going through security on her way to a meeting of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly in Europe.

"Rep. Spartz was issued a citation and proceeded on her international flight," the statement said.

TSA allows passengers to travel with a firearm but it must be declared with the airline and packed in a hard-sided case in the passenger's checked baggage. Firearms are prohibited at

security checkpoints.

The charge carries up to a year in jail and a \$2,500 fine if convicted.

The two-term congresswoman from central Indiana won a contentious and competitive primary in May after she had said in 2023 that she wasn't going to run again.

Spartz — a Trump-aligned, Second Amendment touting Republican — is the first Ukrainian-born member of Congress. However, she recently voted against sending war aid to the country, a reversal from her position when Russia invaded Ukraine.

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OBITUARIES

Molly A. Beavans, 51

Molly A. Beavans, 51, of rural Poneto, Chester Township in Wells County, passed away at 8:48 a.m. on Saturday, June 29, 2024, at Stillwater Hospice in Fort Wayne. She was born Wednesday, Nov. 1, 1972, in Muncie. She married Eric L. Beavans on Saturday, July 24, 2004, in Muncie.



Molly was a graduate of Muncie Southside High School. She earned her associate degree at Ball State University and Ivy Tech. Molly worked as a physical therapy assistant at Markle Health and Rehabilitation and as a home healthcare therapist in Blackford and Wells counties. Formerly, she had operated a dog grooming business in Bluffton. Molly enjoyed camping, riding horses, exercising and attending sporting events. She especially enjoyed spending time with her family.

Molly is survived by her husband, Eric L. Beavans Poneto; son, Wyatt M. Beavans; daughters, Erika Lynn Beavans, Sydney Rene (Kevin) Ramseyer, Warren, and Chloe Ann (Cullen) Tafflinger, Muncie; grandchildren, Weston Ramseyer, Brooks Tafflinger and Jolee Tafflinger; father, Robert Samuel Marshall, Muncie; mother, Karen L. Marshall, Muncie; sister, Candy (Tim) Abbott, Muncie; brother, Doug (Misty) Marshall, Muncie; and mother-in-law, Irma Beavans of rural Poneto.

She was preceded in death by her grandson, Wade Allen Ramseyer and her father-in-law, Dave Beavans.

There will be a celebration of life at the family residence at 6823 S. 200 W. Poneto, IN, on Saturday, July 6, 2024, beginning at 5:00 p.m.

Preferred memorials may be sent to the family for the Blackford County Animal Shelter and/or the Southern Wells Athletic Department to be used for the basketball and/or golf programs.

Arrangements are being handled by Walker & Glancy Funeral Home in Montpelier.

Online condolences may be made at [www.glancyfuneralhomes.com](http://www.glancyfuneralhomes.com)

Thelma Irene (Myers) Hill, 102

Thelma Irene (Myers) Hill, 102, of rural Markle, went to be with the Lord on Sunday morning, June 30, 2024, at Bluffton Regional Medical Center. Born April 28, 1922, in Williams County, Ohio, at her late parents', Ethel and Alva Myers, home on the farm.



She married A. Herbert Hill on Dec. 7, 1941, and shared 50 years together until his death, Jan. 8, 1992. They moved to Wells County to buy their first farm in 1946. Thelma has resided in Wells County for 78 years.

She cherished being with her family, enjoyed reading, playing cards, games, knitting, crocheting and helped her husband with farming. She taught Sunday school and visited her church family when they were in nursing homes. When her six children were married, she made and decorated their wedding cakes. She made the flower girls, bridesmaids and maid or honors dresses for several of the weddings. She loved the hunting and fishing trips with her husband. After retirement, they spent their winters in Arizona for 12 years.

Thelma is survived by her children, Gerry Hill (Sherry), Janet Fox (Tom), Gwen Shady (Bud), Donna Bergman (Chris), Duane Hill (Debby, deceased), Marilyn Thrasher (Steve); 14 grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren; 11 step-great-grandchildren; 22 great-great-grandchildren with one due August; five step-great-great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

She is preceded in death by her husband, A. Herbert Hill of 50 years; her parents; her brothers, Howard, Myrl, Raymond and Donald; her daughter-in-law, Debby (Gaunt) Hill; and granddaughter, Abby (Hill) Helmke.

Visitation will take place from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Friday, July 5, 2024, at the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton and for one hour prior to the service.

Funeral Services will take place at 2 p.m. on Saturday, July 6, 2024, at the funeral home with Pastor Mark Wilson officiating. Burial will follow at Horeb Cemetery in Uniondale.

Memorials may be made in Thelma's memory to Friends Who Care Cancer Relief Foundation and can be directed to the funeral home.

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

Interpretive programs at Ouabache

Ouabache State Park

4830 E SR 201, Bluffton, IN 46714, 260-724-0926

Interpretive Naturalist: Lydia Ade

Thursday, July 4

10 a.m.: Bison feeding at the Bison Enclosure and meet the new baby.

1 p.m.: Patriotic Pinwheel construction at the Campview Shelter in celebration of Independence Day.

2 p.m.: Nature's Nightlights, meeting at the Campview Shelter to learn all about Indiana fireflies and other critters that glow in the dark.

Friday, July 5

4:30 p.m.: Phenology Friday meeting at the Trails End Shelter to study the seasons and how things change—looking for birds, mammals, plants and more. Bring binoculars with hiking boots desired.

8 p.m.: Bat Chat meeting at the Campview Shelter to learn about nighttime neighbors and their unique adaptations.

Saturday, July 6

10 a.m.: Bison Feeding meeting at the Bison Enclosure. 12:30 a.m.: Bike Decorating, meeting at the Trails End Shelter to decorate bikes for parade.

1 p.m.: Bike Parade leaving the Trails End Shelter to show off decorated bikes and ride with Smokey the Bear to the Campview Shelter to Smokey's Birthday Party.

1:30 p.m.: Smokey Bear's Birthday Party, meeting at the Campview Shelter for photos and to enjoy a cupcake treat.

Sunday, July 7

Scavenger Hunt: Pick up the "clues" at the park office and return at the end of the day for a prize. The park office is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Obituary Policy

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

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

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

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

County:

Friday, 5:38 p.m., 1200N 500W, Bluffton. Report of a loose pig in the area.

Friday, 6:25 p.m., South 100W and 400S, Bluffton. Report of a can in same location for several hours.

Saturday, 10:45 a.m., 3800E S.R. 124, Bluffton. Subject reported fraud via credit card.

Saturday, 8:26 p.m., South 600W and 700S, Warren. Report of trailer that came loose from truck, striking a pole.

Saturday, 10:15 p.m., 800W S.R. 218, Poneto. Car versus deer.

Saturday, 10:55 p.m., 7200N 300W, Markle. Report of subjects letting off fireworks.

Sunday, 12:21 a.m., 3900E 900S, Keystone. Caller complained of fireworks in the area. Subjects advised to postpone the festivities until the fourth.

Sunday, 11:59 a.m., 60

block of Sunrise Way, Bluffton. Report of threatening from boyfriend.

Sunday, 12:23 p.m., 5900 North Miller Street, Uniondale. Report of dog crying, welfare check requested. Dog was fine, just kenneled while owner was in church as he likes to eat furniture while people practice faith.

Sunday, 5:44 p.m., 6500E 100N, Bluffton. Report of several goats and pigs in the roadway.

Sunday, 6:28 p.m., 6900 North Lincoln Avenue, Uniondale. 18-year-old requested help contacting adoptive mom who kicked her out and will not give her documents to get her ID or a job. Advised to contact an attorney.

Monday, 12:48 a.m., 4200 South Meridian Road, Bluffton. Subject spoke to law enforcement about threats from her brother. The messages were reportedly not threatening, and the call-

er appeared to be the instigator.

Ossian: Saturday, 12:07 a.m., Woodcreek Drive and S.R. 1, Ossian. Driver cited for speeding.

Sunday, 1:50 a.m., S.R. 1 and East 1200N, Ossian. Tarp removed from roadway.

Sunday, 2:32 a.m., 1100W 1200N, Ossian. Caller reported party with drug use from pregnant woman and several others.

Sunday, 11:36 p.m., 400 block of North Jefferson Street, Ossian. Caller reported subject burning items that produced a thick black smoke. Subjects advised of what they could and could not burn.

ARRESTS

Andres Alejandro Parra Urdaneta, 20, Bluffton; operating without ever obtaining license, a Class C

misdemeanor. Booked and released.

Jayana Lamia Herman, 24, Fort Wayne; probation violation, a Level 5 felony. No bond set.

Ricki Abram Parson, 24, Roann; theft, a Level 6 felony. Bond set at \$5,000.

Matthew Tyler Elston, 41, Warren; driving while suspended — prior, a Class A misdemeanor. Booked and released.

Amilcar Jimenez, 42, Bluffton; operating without ever obtaining license, a Class C misdemeanor. Booked and released.

Yusendy Beatriz Parra Vera, 34, Bluffton; operating a vehicle with a ACE of .15 of more and operating while intoxicated, both Class A misdemeanors. Bond set at \$1,500.

Emily D Mitchell, 48, Madisonville, Kentucky; possession of methamphetamine, a Level 6 felony, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor.

Most candidates not returning thousands in political donations by disgraced sheriff Jamey Noel

By CASEY SMITH  
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Multiple Republican campaigns and committees that received political donations from disgraced former Clark County Sheriff Jamey Noel said they have no plans to return or donate those dollars elsewhere — while numerous others are keeping mum, distancing themselves from Noel altogether.

Noel, a prominent Hoosier Republican himself, currently faces more than two dozen felony charges for allegedly misusing money from the fire and EMS departments which he oversaw.

Of the more than \$100,000 he's contributed to GOP candidates and campaigns since 2008, per state and federal campaign finance records, investigators now allege at least \$33,000 made in Noel's name actually came from public funds he misappropriated between 2020 and 2023.

The donations — made through WinRed, a Republican fundraising platform — were earmarked to campaigns for former President Donald Trump, the Indiana State Republican Committee, Congresswoman Erin Houchin, and others.

The former sheriff is accused of using credit cards from New Chapel EMS and the Utica Township Volunteer Firefighters Association to fund his and his family's lifestyle — spending millions of taxpayer dollars on cars, planes, vacations, cigars, clothing and other luxury purchases.

Separate from the criminal filings, Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita is also seeking to force Noel, as well as his wife Misty and their daughter, Kasey, to pay back more than \$4 million.

Noel is currently awaiting trial, scheduled for November, in the Scott County Jail. Though he completed a 60-day sentence in June for contempt of court, his bond amount was increased to \$1.5 million a day after new charges — some related to the WinRed donations — were levied against him.

Investigation reveals thousands to WinRed  
Details about Noel's WinRed contributions came

to light last month, when six new charges were filed against him — five for theft and one for money laundering — amid an ongoing investigation.

Dollars donated via WinRed can be earmarked for particular candidates and campaigns, at both the federal and state levels, across all 50 states. It's a similar platform to the Democratic Party's ActBlue.

Federal Election Commission records, in conjunction with the new court filings, show Noel made approximately \$20,518.72 in donations between 2020 and 2023.

Investigators allege the donations were charged to the Utica Township Volunteer Fire Fighters Association's American Express Card linked to a Fifth Third Bank Account.

Additionally, Noel is accused of using public funds to contribute another \$8,902.56 through Apple Pay, PayPal and Venmo donations. When contributing, Noel used his name as the contributor — not the firefighter's association, according to court documents.

The contributions made via WinRed allegedly totaled \$33,121.28 — about a third of all political contributions on record by Noel.

WinRed did not respond to the Capital Chronicle's multiple requests for comment.

It's not yet clear what might happen to the donations made with misappropriated taxpayer dollars.

The Trump campaign — which received at least \$7,000 from Noel through WinRed — also did not respond to numerous requests for comment.

Kelly Loeffler, a former U.S. senator from Georgia whose campaign was in receipt of \$1,250 from Noel in 2020, additionally did not reply to questions about the donations.

Holcomb unwilling to redirect donations, for now

Among Hoosier politicians, Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb has received the lion share of campaign donations made by Noel over the last two decades. State and

federal records tally at least \$33,622 to Holcomb across his campaigns for both U.S. Senate and governor. None of those dollars came from WinRed, however.

Holcomb has repeatedly maintained he never knowingly accepted political donations or non-nominal travel gifts or otherwise from Noel — which could have been paid for with stolen taxpayer dollars. He said allegations against his close friend and associate are "so surprising."

The governor told the Capital Chronicle that his

"understanding" was that Noel's donations, specifically, were "all above board."

"This is not the first time that this scenario has unfolded," Holcomb said, largely referring to campaign contributions he formerly received from online charter school scandal donors.

The scheme came to light in 2020, revealing that nearly \$70 million in taxpayer funds from the Pike Township Educational Foundation went to campaigns and committees for various Hoosier Republicans.

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# A big month for FSSA has real life consequences

The Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) is arguably the most important agency in state government. And it is crucial that they get upcoming July changes right.

Many of their services — from medical coverage to childcare and food assistance — are the difference between life and death for struggling Hoosiers.

The behemoth agency is the second-largest in terms of employees, with 4,305 (behind only the Department of Correction with 5,219) and serves literally millions of men, women and children on Medicaid and other programs.

And it's going to be a busy July 1 for FSSA. They have not one, but three significant changes rolling out. All of the changes have an important factor in common — money.

Spending on health and human services in Indiana is \$26 billion in the 2024-25 fiscal year. That includes both state and federal dollars and equals 51% of all appropriations. By comparison, education is 29% of spending at \$14.8 billion in state and federal tax dollars.

Of the Health and Human Services category, about 78% is the Medicaid program.

So, when a forecasting error found a nearly \$1 billion shortfall in the Medicaid program last year, it sent shockwaves through state government. I want to be clear — no money was lost or misplaced. Experts predicted Medicaid costs would be \$1 billion less than they actually were. Kind of like when you think your electric bill is going to be lower, and you are shocked when it arrives in the mail.

The shortfall was covered immediately through use of a Medicaid reserve account and tapping Indiana's substantial surplus.

### Preparing for the future

But lawmakers and state officials are now wrestling with the long-term problem of how to keep those costs from eating up more of the state budget than it already does. That has led to a number of changes:

- The first is a proposed \$300 million in cuts to Medicaid. While there are several changes occurring, the cut that has gotten the most attention is a shift in how they pay parents of medically complex disabled children to provide attendant care. The change to structured family caregiving is set to go into effect July 1 despite families reporting that numerous issues remain unresolved. Other changes include halting expected reimbursement rate increases for providers.

- Another major change is transitioning its current long-term supports and services offerings to managed care, meaning the state will pay Managed Care Entities (MCEs) a flat rate to cover member health benefits rather than individually paying for claims. This means that an estimated 130,000 Hoosiers over the age of 60 using Medicaid will now have an MCE coordinate their health coverage under the state's Pathways for Aging program. The change, which also goes into effect July 1, impacts services such as home health aides and nursing home care. The move is expected to save the state money and make future costs more predictable, though it is unclear how much savings the state will see.

- The last major change is that the state will start charging premiums again to some Medicaid beneficiaries. The state waived the cost-sharing requirement, otherwise known as POWER Accounts, in early 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. But on July 1, Medicaid beneficiaries in the Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP), Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and MedWorks will get a bill — many of them for the first time, if they enrolled during or after the pandemic. A late Thursday court ruling was still being digested on this matter.

Some of these changes are painful but necessary, and I hope the transitions go well. But I equally hope FSSA will be open to delays if Hoosiers are getting lost in the shuffle of the cost-saving measures.

It's not a weakness to hold off on major change to ensure you get it right. It's the right thing to do, especially when you have fragile children and senior citizens paying the price.

*Niki Kelly is the editor of the Indiana Capital Chronicle, a non-profit newsroom. nkelly@indianacapitalchronicle.com*



Niki Kelly

## Hoosier Opinions

### How foreign cartoonists saw the American debate



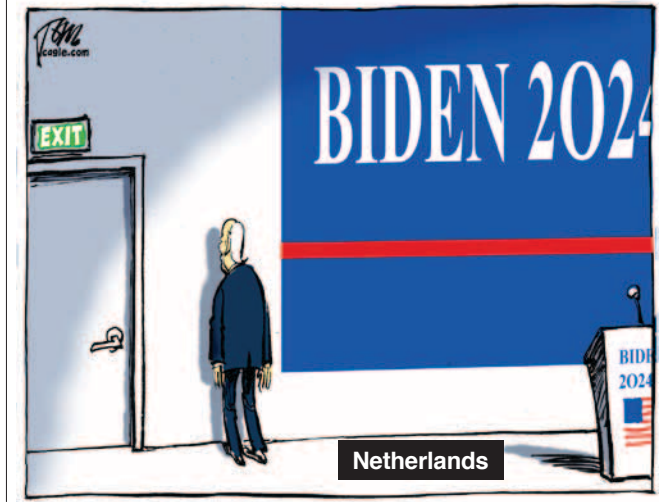
Brazil



India



Jordan



Netherlands

## What Biden owes his country if he stays in

President Biden's lieutenants want to write off his dismal debate performance on Thursday as one bad night and are calling on Democrats to buck up and fight. But many in the party (and more in the world of commentary) think Biden should drop out and open the way for a new nominee, lest the president's weakness open the door wide to the disastrous return of Donald Trump.

Neither view fully grasps the depth of the mess Democrats, and the country, are in. Biden defenders underestimate the potential long-term damage of the president's debate performance, which was designed to show that the 81-year-old was up to the job and did just the opposite. But those who'd like to hurtle full speed ahead to an open convention vastly underestimate how hard it will be to pull off.

The voices most certain that Biden should leave the race include many who said long ago that Biden should not to run again. They feel vindication. Alas for Biden, they have reason to. The people most shocked by Thursday (and I'm one of them) were those who felt he was up for one more campaign and had proven his mettle in his State of the Union address and other outings.

It turned out that a debate is not like a prepared speech or the occasional interview. Biden had trouble landing even easy punches or executing well-prepared attack lines coherently. Heck, sometimes he struggled to finish sentences. This was not like the debate losses of former presidents Barack Obama or George W. Bush.

The cascade of demands on Biden to hang it up was thus inevitable, and his team would be foolish to resort to catcalls against hand wringers and nervous nannies. People cannot unsee what they have already seen. Biden needs to own just how damaging that performance was.

But romanticizing a magical solution to the problem the party faces is a mistake, too. If Biden withdrew, the party would face two core decisions: first, whether to nominate Vice President Harris, and if not, whom it should pick from a list of hopefuls who could easily run to a dozen alternatives.

Unless Harris decided to stay on as the vice-presidential candidate, the up-or-down decision on her future would be deeply divisive. And a free-for-all compressed into a short period would limit the amount of vetting a nominee would go through and could reopen ideological conflicts that Biden was largely able to pacify. (These are Democrats, after all.) Sure, it could be exciting. It could also be chaotic.

It also doesn't help Democrats to say that it's Republicans who should look at Trump's debate

performance — his cascade of blatant lies, his refusal to answer questions, his plain lack of patriotism — and demand that he withdraw. Of course they should. But they won't. The point is to defeat Trump.

So what should be done? I'm with those saying Biden needs a painful reckoning with himself over whether his best contribution to history now is to soldier on, or to help a leader from the next generation see his fight for the soul of America through. Biden has a formidable legacy rooted in a presidency characterized by responsibility, decency and real accomplishment. If his staying in the race allows Trump back into power, Biden will destroy that legacy.

But with Biden apparently determined to tough it out — the campaign put out a list of politicians reaffirming their support Saturday afternoon — the president's future will be settled by the polls. If they show the debate caused Biden real damage, pressure on him to drop out will move from private alarm to public demands. If the numbers don't change much, he'll likely get through this.

If he does, he owes those who support him a clear strategy for undoing Thursday's damage. He needs to do televised interviews, including many in less than friendly settings. He'll have to step up his campaign appearances, offering more speeches along the lines of his energetic performance in North Carolina on Friday.

He should make a major commitment to doing all he can to strengthen the campaigns of Democratic House and Senate candidates, the most vulnerable of whom have more reason than anyone to worry about the electoral impact of a weakened Biden. He needs to use last week's demonstration of the Supreme Court's radical right-wing activism to underscore the long-term impact of the choices voters will be making this November. If Democrats lose both the Senate and the White House, the damage to the judiciary over a generation will be catastrophic.

Above all, Biden and those around him need to understand that this is not about them, their touchiness over who has underestimated the president in the past or who is loyal and disloyal. Every decision he makes from now on, including whether he remains in the contest, must prove he means what he says about the grave danger Trump poses to our democracy. His legacy depends upon it, and the country needs to be able to depend upon him.

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



E.J. Dionne

## Beware Gretchen Whitmer

In 1960, the New York Yankees fired their legendary manager Casey Stengel for being too old. "I'll never make the mistake of being 70 again," Stengel quipped.

If Democrats dump Joe Biden, the president might want to say the same thing about being 81.

The biggest loser of the debate, besides the president himself, was First Lady Jill Biden.

One assumes that she was the one with the most influence on her husband's foolhardy decision to run for a second term, and could have persuaded him to stand down last year and give Democrats time to have a normal nomination process.

Instead, she went along with the hubristic delusion that an already unsteady 80-something could serve in the most demanding job on the planet until ... January 2029.

Now, the bodyguard of lies of Democrats and much of the left-center media that had protected Joe Biden from questions about his fitness for office has finally fallen away.

Still, there's no mechanism to force him out of the race unless he and Jill make the decision themselves.

If Biden does exit, suddenly Donald Trump isn't running against an octogenarian considered too old for a second term by a super-majority of Americans prior to his debate debacle.



Rich Lowry

The natural heir is the vice president. Kamala Harris has many weaknesses, but, at a youthful 59 years old, frailty is not one of them. As a historic nominee and a progressive Democrat, she would be the beneficiary of deliriously favorable coverage in glossy magazines and much of the elite media, at least initially.

On the other side of the ledger, she's as unpopular as Biden and would be saddled with the administration's record. She's a terrible boss and is utterly charmless. Biden has held up pretty well in the Rust Belt states, when Harris would probably give up ground there. An upside of Biden's age is that he seems too old to be a radical. Harris, though, is a progressive from central casting, combining the politics of Elizabeth Warren with the charisma of Al Gore.

Even with the age issue neutralized, Trump would be favored over her, so it's not clear how much Democrats would gain by making a painful switchero. If Biden goes, it will be an admission that he was a failure and that Democrats have been lying about his condition for years — not an auspicious basis for launching a new candidate, who, by the way, won't have won any votes in a primary or caucus.

Getting to a stronger potential candidate requires bypassing Harris, which involves its own complications. Is an identity-politics-obsessed

party really going to pass over the first African-American female vice president of the United States?

Even if it can, an alternative presumably wouldn't be the unanimous choice of a Democratic convention, creating chaos at an event typically choreographed to drive the message of a presumptive nominee.

If Democrats can somehow work through all of this, someone like Gretchen Whitmer would be a much tougher opponent for Trump on paper. She's a young, relatively popular governor in the key swing state of Michigan. She wouldn't have to answer directly for any of Biden's failures and has a history of presenting herself in campaigns as a non-ideological Democrat. "Fix the damn roads" was her slogan when she first ran for governor.

Any somewhat conventional Democrat would have better odds against Trump than Biden. It'd be easier for such a candidate to make the race all about Trump, something Biden wanted to do, but is going to be impossible after his catastrophic debate.

The likelihood, though, is that Democrats won't find a way to push aside Biden. At the end of the day, by going along with the deceptions about his mental and physical state and hoping that the public somehow wouldn't notice, Democrats chose to hire Joe Biden at age 81. They presumably won't make that mistake again, but it may well be too late for 2024.

*Rich Lowry is on Twitter @RichLowry*

## Today in History

### By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, July 2, the 184th day of 2024. There are 182 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On July 2, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law a sweeping civil rights bill passed by Congress prohibiting discrimination and segregation based on race, color, sex, religion or national origin.

Also on this date:

In 1776, the Continental Congress passed a resolution saying that "these Unit-

ed Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States."

In 1881, President James A. Garfield was shot by Charles J. Guiteau at the Washington railroad station; Garfield died the following September. (Guiteau was hanged in June 1882.)

In 1962, the first Walmart store opened in Rogers, Arkansas.

In 1976, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Gregg v. Georgia*, ruled 7-2 that the death penalty was not inherently cruel or unusual.

## The News-Banner

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Mark Miller, Opinion Page Editor

# Getting to know a little about the Yoder children

I am amazed by how much life changes and how little I find out about those shifts on a day-to-day basis.

This past weekend we had the opportunity of hosting a friend of mine from my girlhood years. I hadn't seen her for years. Much has happened since then, she is now married and has four little children including a set of two-year-old twin girls. My friend and I enjoyed catching up in each other's lives, and one afternoon we even got to babysit their children while they as parents were in a meeting.

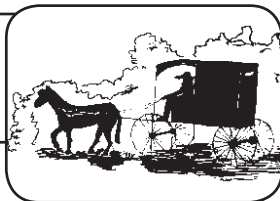
Caring for other little ones is a rich joy to me now that we no longer have any in the infant and toddler stages. We no longer have pacifiers and baby toys scattered around, nor are we pacing the floor with a crying newborn. Infant car seats and high chairs are a thing of the past. Those days are now shifting into playing ball, water fights, and working together.

And when we get to babysit for another busy mom, I have helpers on all sides ready to devote their own type of love to visiting little ones. The children enjoy dreaming of having an orphanage some day. For now I feel like I have some more batteries to recharge.

Our children, ranging from ages 3 to 12, also show more and more of their personalities, their likes and dislikes. It takes channeling - many times it feels like it takes more than I can dish out. I keep telling myself that everything taught and trained now will make a difference in their future - down to picking up their

## The Amish Cook

by Gloria Yoder



own clothes! A while ago I told the boys I really don't like the thought of their future wife (if God would give them one) to have to pick up after them. "If I don't train you, I'll only cause extra work for your partners!"

I heave a little sigh, I know I won't hit every area squarely, so we'll just keep doing our best and move on to the next moment, and the next, and the next. Life is lived by taking the situation at hand, trust God to take us through, then move on to the next.

Recently, when Julia attended a hymn conference in Pennsylvania for a couple of days, I realized how much I depend on her. The other children had to step up to the plate and help fill in. I'm now trying to figure out how to keep developing the other children with things they can do for the family and not miss the opportunity of teaching the younger ones responsibility. Seems the youngest children tend to fall through the cracks in learning how to shoulder their share of the load. Any ideas?

And then, children are all so different! What clicks with one is a trial to the next. I dearly love every one of them. When I think of areas where others accepted and loved me, it motivates me to do the same for our little ones. And when I think of the years of struggling with despising myself, I know it's

worth the effort it takes.

Everyone has a story; everyone has an idea. And yes, every one counts on the Lord.

Julia, 12, is naturally precise in all she does and finds satisfaction in learning new things and meeting new people. Austin 9, is full of life and energy, along with a very tender side who enjoys the challenge of taking care of children and often ends up being a favorite to little children coming to our house. Hosanna, who just turned 8 is full of ideas and is not afraid to try new things. Jesse, 6, has many brainstorms, big stories, and a voice to match it. Elijah, 6, who is four months younger than Jesse, is more reserved and enjoys many things his daddy liked to do when he was a boy, such as playing ball or anything that takes aim. Joshua who will turn four this week, drizzles his own sweetness over our family, we especially enjoy listening to him voice his own thoughts and ideas. His curly blonde hair are a delight to him since Daddy also had hair like that when he was a boy.

The children all seem to enjoy working in the kitchen. Last week several of them were helping me make a zucchini casserole. They were impressed with cranking the zucchinis through the king cutter



and offered to shred some extra for me. More than once, when we needed a quick meal, I grabbed the container of zucchini and fried it in a bit of bacon drippings and added whatever I happened to have on hand, which is usually something like onions, peppers, mushrooms, and meat of some sort, and whatever seasoning strike my fancy at the moment. Topping it with shredded cheese is an added luxury to us.

The casserole we made is one of those dishes we don't get tired of right away, plus it's easier for me than the zucchini patties since those require more work just before the meal

**Zucchini Hamburger Casserole.**

- 3 eggs
  - 3 tablespoons butter, melted or bacon drippings (opt)
  - 1/2 cup flour
  - 1 1/2 teas baking powder
  - 1/2 teas salt
  - 1/4 cup chopped onion (opt)
  - 1/2 cup chopped peppers (opt)
  - 2 cups shredded zucchini
  - 2 cups fried meat of your choice (opt)
  - 1 cup shredded cheese of your choice
- Beat together eggs and butter, add flour, salt, and baking powder. Mix well, then add remaining ingredients. Place in a greased 9 inch baking dish. If desired sprinkle with black pepper and parsley. Bake at 350 until set.



### Philharmonic on tour

On Saturday night the Fort Wayne Philharmonic presented their Patriotic Pops concert at the Clock Tower in Berne with lots of Wells county residents spotted in the audience. The concert was conducted by Assistant Conductor Caleb Young. Above, while the Philharmonic musicians played songs representing each of the armed services Conductor Young ran through the large audience shaking the hands of veterans and their family members. (Photos by Barbara Barbieri)

## July Festivals in Indiana

- Angola Balloons Aloft:** July 12-13, Angola High School for hot air balloon competition. 30 balloons at night illuminations, car show, food and entertainment, free. Info at [angola-balloonaloft.com](http://angola-balloonaloft.com).
- Three Rivers Festival:** July 12-20, Headwaters Park in Fort Wayne, free. Info at [threeriversfestival.org](http://threeriversfestival.org)
- Circus City Festival:** July 13-20, Peru, admission charged for some events. Info at [perucircus.com](http://perucircus.com).
- St. Joe Pickle Fest:** July 18-20, Riverdale School in St. Joe celebrating Sechler's Pickles. Food, music and more. Info at [st.joeindiana.org/pickle-festival](http://st.joeindiana.org/pickle-festival).
- Quilters Hall of Fame Celebration:** July 18-20, 926 S. Washington St., Marion. Exhibits, vendors, workshops, lectures and induction of newest honorees, admission charged. Info

- at [quiltershalloffame.net](http://quiltershalloffame.net).
- Berne Swiss Days:** July 25-27, food, vendors, entertainment, parade, free. Info at [swissdaysberne.com](http://swissdaysberne.com)
- Fort Wayne Pride:** July 26-27, Headwaters Park, two stages of entertainment, vendors and food, admission charged. Info at [fwpride.org](http://fwpride.org).
- Rolling into Roanoke:** July 27, downtown. Over 500 cars, special attractions. info at [rollingintoroanoke.com](http://rollingintoroanoke.com).

### Farm Wagon on Tuesdays

The Community Harvest Farm Wagon visits Life Community Church every Tuesday at 9 a.m. to give FREE fresh food to needy families. The church address is 428 S. Oak St. in Bluffton. Enter the parking lot at the south entrance off of Oak Street and park facing North.

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## Zanesville News

by Melba Edwards

We are now getting ready for our Lions Club Summer Festival that will be held on Saturday, July 27.

The car show begins at 8:30 a.m. with registrations to noon. Awards are at 2 p.m. This happens at the Tower Life Center's upper parking lot. Trophies will be given to winners of the judging. There will be a 50/50 drawing. Dash plaques will be given to the first 50 entries. The McCoy's will have a hula-hoop contest and line dancing as they DJ the show.

The parade begins at 10 a.m. You can call Tara at 760-6070 for information and entry.

Craft and flea markets may be set up either at the Tower Life Center or at the Lions Club Park by calling Melba at 638-4327.

There will be a townwide garage sale so contact 705-0534 to be listed on this for both Friday and Saturday. Breakfast and lunch will be served at the Church of God at their sale on Friday.

At the ballpark will be: Church of God pancakes and sausage and later brats and onion rings. The Lions will have ice cream sundaes/floats in the clubhouse. There will possibly be a baseball game.

You can catch the free Camelot Carriage Horse and Wagon ride sponsored by the Churches of Zanesville. Sis & Bub's, County Line Pizza & Pub, and the Green Door Studio will be open downtown.

For more information go to these Facebook sites: Zanesville Lions Club Summer Festival, Town of Zanesville, Tower Life Center.

Phone contact numbers are Melba Edwards at 260-638-4327 or 417-8982.

Our condolences to the Walmsley Family. Jean Garland (Saufley) Walmsley, 92, passed away June 14.

Lafayette Central High School loses two former graduates. Doris Donaghy Jones, 97, passed away June 12, and Marjorie Grover, 99, passed away June 10.

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# Israel orders Palestinians to flee Khan Younis, signaling likely new assault

By MOHAMMAD JAHJOUH, SAMY MAGDY and JULIA FRANKEL  
Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — The Israeli army ordered a mass evacuation of Palestinians from much of Khan Younis on Monday, a sign that troops are likely to launch a new ground assault into the Gaza Strip's second-largest city.

The order suggests Khan Younis will be the latest target of Israel's raids into parts of Gaza it had previously invaded in the war, as it pursues regrouping Hamas militants. Much of Khan Younis was destroyed in a long assault earlier this year, but large numbers of Palestinians had moved back to escape another Israeli offensive in Gaza's southernmost city, Rafah.

The evacuation came as Israel released the director of what was once Gaza's largest hospital after holding him for seven months without charge or trial. Israel alleged the hospital had been used as a Hamas command center, which he and other Palestinian health officials have denied. The doctor said he and other detainees were held under harsh conditions and tortured.

The decision to release Mohammed Abu Selmia raised questions over Israel's claims surrounding Shifa Hospital, which Israeli forc-

es have raided twice since the start of the war with Hamas. The hospital was left severely damaged after the raids.

Abu Selmia's release triggered an uproar across Israel's political spectrum. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office called it "a grave mistake." Government ministers and opposition leaders expressed outrage and insisted Abu Selmia played a role in Hamas' alleged use of the hospital — although Israeli security services rarely unilaterally free prisoners if they have a suspicion of militant links.

**Khan Younis evacuation**  
Monday's evacuation order covered the eastern half of Khan Younis and a large swath of the Gaza Strip's southeast corner. Earlier in the day, the army said a barrage of rockets out of Gaza was fired from Khan Younis.

As night fell, streams of civilians trudged on foot beside a steady flow of vehicles as people began making their way out of the evacuation zone. A woman dragged a rolling suitcase with a little girl riding on top. Others carried a few crucial belongings — mattresses, clothing, plastic buckets for washing, an electric fan. Trucks were piled high with possessions and furniture.

"We received a message on our mobile phones" to evacuate, said one displaced woman Zeinab Abu

Jazar, holding back tears. "Look at these children, how they walk. We did not find a car to ride in."

Israel told people to move to Muwasi, a coastal area designated by the Israeli army as a safe zone and which has become filled with crowded and unsanitary tent camps.

The order suggested a new assault into Khan Younis was imminent. Israeli forces fought for weeks in Khan Younis earlier this year and withdrew, claiming to have destroyed Hamas battalions. But in other places where the military has made similar claims, renewed raids have underscored Hamas' capabilities.

Last week, the military ordered an evacuation from the north Gaza district of Shijaiyah, and intensive fighting has followed.

Netanyahu said Monday that the military was "making progress toward ending the phase of the destruction of Hamas' terror army." But he said forces will continue to "target their remains going forward."

More fighting in the Khan Younis area could further hamper Palestinians' access to much-needed potable water. Included in the evacuation zone is a water line that Israel installed following criticism over its cutoff of water to the strip early in the war.

Also in the zone is the area surrounding the Kerem Shalom

crossing, the major aid crossing to southern Gaza, and an aid route inside the territory that Israel has said it would safeguard.

Most of Gaza's population of 2.3 million have fled their homes, with many displaced multiple times. Israeli restrictions, fighting and the breakdown of public order have hindered the delivery of humanitarian aid, fueling widespread hunger and sparking fears of famine.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the new evacuation order "just shows yet again that no place is safe in Gaza" for Palestinian civilians. "It's another stop in this deadly circular movement that the population in Gaza has to undergo on a regular basis," he said in a statement calling for a cease-fire.

**Shifa Hospital director's release**  
The decision to release Abu Selmia and 54 other Palestinian detainees back into Gaza appeared to be meant to free up space in overcrowded detention centers. Since the start of the war, Israeli forces have detained thousands of Palestinians from Gaza and the occupied West Bank. Many are being held without charge or trial in what is known as administrative detention.

"Our detainees have been subjected to all kinds of torture behind bars," Abu Selmia told a news

conference. "There was almost daily torture."

He said guards used batons to beat detainees and terrorized them with dogs. He said some detainees had limbs amputated because of poor medical care. He said a beating caused his head to bleed and guards broke his finger.

The allegations could not be independently confirmed but matched other accounts of Palestinians who have been held in Israeli custody. There was no immediate response from the prison service, which has denied similar accusations.

Israeli forces raided Shifa Hospital in November, alleging that Hamas had created an elaborate command and control center inside. Abu Selmia and other staff denied the allegations and accused Israel of recklessly endangering thousands of patients and displaced people sheltering there. Abu Selmia was detained on Nov. 22.

After its first raid on Shifa Hospital, the military uncovered a tunnel beneath it leading to two empty rooms, as well as evidence that militants had brought wounded hostages to the facility. But the evidence fell short of showing an extensive base as claimed. Israel has since raided other Gaza hospitals on similar allegations, forcing them to shut down or dramatically reduce services.

# Supreme Court casts doubt on Florida, Texas laws to regulate social media platforms

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Monday kept on hold efforts by Texas and Florida to limit how Facebook, TikTok, X, YouTube and other social media platforms regulate content posted by their users in a ruling that strongly defended the platforms' free speech rights.

Writing for the court, Justice Elena Kagan said the platforms, like newspapers, deserve protection from governments' intrusion in determining what to include or exclude from their space. "The principle does not change because the curated compilation has gone from the physical to the virtual world," Kagan wrote in an opinion signed by five justices. All nine justices agreed

on the overall outcome.

The justices returned the cases to lower courts for further review in broad challenges from trade associations for the companies.

While the details vary, both laws aimed to address long-standing conservative complaints that the social media companies were liberal-leaning and censored users based on their viewpoints, especially on the political right. The cases are among several this term in which the justices are wrestling with standards for free speech in the digital age.

The Florida and Texas laws were signed by Republican governors in the months following decisions by Facebook and Twitter, now X, to cut then-President

Donald Trump off over his posts related to the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol by his supporters.

Trade associations representing the companies sued in federal court, claiming that the laws violated the platforms' speech rights. One federal appeals court struck down Florida's statute, while another upheld the Texas law. But both were on hold pending the outcome at the Supreme Court.

While the cases are complicated, said First Amendment expert and Notre Dame Law School professor Richard W. Garnett, the justices were clear on two things:

"First, the First Amendment protects what we choose to say, but also what we choose not to say, sup-

port, or endorse. That is, the freedom of speech includes editorial judgment. This is true whether the speaker is a lone individual or a large media company," he said. "Second, the government is not permitted to regulate speakers simply to produce what the government thinks would be a better, or more diverse, marketplace of ideas. What's on offer in that marketplace is, in the end, up to us."

In a statement when he signed the Florida measure into law, Gov. Ron DeSantis said it would be "protection against the Silicon Valley elites."

When Gov. Greg Abbott signed the Texas law, he said it was needed to protect free speech in what

he termed the new public square. Social media platforms "are a place for healthy public debate where information should be able to flow freely — but there is a dangerous movement by social media companies to silence conservative viewpoints and ideas," Abbott said. "That is wrong, and we

will not allow it in Texas."

But much has changed since then. Elon Musk purchased Twitter and, besides changing its name, eliminated teams focused on content moderation, welcomed back many users previously banned for hate speech and used the site to spread conspiracy theories.

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## Pennville Soccer League holds tournament weekend, wraps up its ninth season

Pennville's Soccer League finished its ninth season with the end-of-the-year tournament at Pennville Park over the weekend. Thirty-eight goals were scored during the festivities by 19 different players.

Due to lightning, the games were moved from Saturday and Sunday. Below are the results and the final goal leaders.

### Stinger Division

Game 1: A Place to Grow Wasps 8, AgBest Express Bees 0. Kenna Penrod six goals, Harper Love two goals.

**Championship Game:** A Place to Grow Wasps 3, Patriot Sportswear 2. Kenna Penrod three goals, Raelyn McClain two goals.

Scoring leaders: Kenna Penrod 18 goals, Mabel Leonhard (11), Raelyn McClain (8), Grant Cosner and Oan Kaehr (6).

### Space Division

Game 1: Vinson Rental 2, Properties Galaxy Ohio Valley Gas Stars 1 (OT). Carter Love, Raul Martinez and Vinny New one goal each.

Game 2: Dave's Heating and Cooling Asteroids 3, New Beginnings Holiness Church Rockets 1. Owen Ehrhart two goals, Eden Lee and Paizley Murphy one goal.

Game 3: Bro Shadow Meteors 3, Vinson Rental Properties Galaxy 2. Liam Phipps

two goals. Neymar Carreno, Love and Martinez one goal each.

**Championship Game:** Bro Shadow Meteors 4, Dave's Heating and Cooling Asteroids 1. Neymar Carreno four goals, Owen Ehrhart one goal.

Scoring leaders: Neymar Carreno 18 goals, Liam Phipps (10), Own Ehrhart (9), Raul Martinez (5).

### Wild Cat Division

Game 1: Portland Insurance Cougars 3, Pennville General Store Tigers 1.

Lyle Beiswanger, Mason Edmonds, Alivia McClain and Kendrick Teegardner one goal each.

Game 2: Penrod Monuments Jaguars 1, POET Biorefining Cheetahs 0. Gabrielle Gibson one goal.

Game 3: WPGW Lions 1, Portland Insurance Cougars 0. Jackson Westgerdes one goal.

**Championship Game:** Penrod Monuments Jaguars 1, WPGW Lions 1. Jaguars win in a shootout by Casten Penrod. Sam Gibson and Karsen Kuhn one goal each.

Scoring leaders: Lyle Beiswanger 12 goals, Charlee Peterson (7), Blake Jellison, Karen Kuhn and Jax McClain (6).



### Champions

Two of Bluffton's city teams won their baseball league and tournament championships over the weekend. At top, the KOA Campground team won the Junior League tournament championship and American Division. Members of the team are from left to right, front row: Boone Sprunger, Bear Sprunger, Wes Kunkel, Karter Gerber, Nolan Fields and Ryan Mcpherson; second row: Riker Beste, Keegan Brubaker, Kole Kiefer, Parker Christal and Jeff Bell; third row: Ben Sprunger, Mike Christal, Eric Kiefer and Bill Mettler. At bottom, the National Oil team won the Farm League tournament and division championship. Members of the team are from left to right, front row: Boone Sprunger, Harry Kunkel, Bo Sprunger, Aiden Pangburn and Pheniox Edwards; second row: Kaleb Hartman, Carter Creager, Karson Brooksher and Jake Hoffack; back row: Ben Sprunger, Jeremy Hartman, Stacy Herrold, Kurtis Brooksher and Skip Edwards. Not pictured: Jace Swann. (Photos provided)

## NHL free agency headlines Stamkos to the Predators, Blackhawks make moves

By STEPHEN WHYNO and JOHN WAWROW, AP Hockey Writers

The Nashville Predators made a huge splash when free agency opened Monday by signing Stanley Cup champion forwards Steven Stamkos and Jonathan Marchessault in a series of moves topping \$100 million that made Smashville the center of attention on a record-setting, billion-dollar day across the NHL.

Stamkos left Tampa Bay after 16 seasons, two Cup titles and two additional trips to the final to sign a four year, \$32 million contract with Nashville.

"By no means did I ever envision that a day like today would happen, but it did," Stamkos said. "It was definitely a bitter pill to swallow when it really started to materialize that it wasn't going to work in Tampa."

Stamkos turned to the Predators, made his decision and got a call from Marchessault asking if he was signing with them too, worried it was one or the other. "He said, 'No Stammer, I'm coming, too,'" Stamkos recalled.

Marchessault got \$27.5 million for the next five seasons less than 13 months since earning playoff MVP honors in leading Vegas to its first championship. The two will have company: Defenseman Brady Skjei signed with Nashville for seven years and \$49 million, and Scott Wedgewood came in at \$3 million for two years to back up franchise goaltender Juuse Saros.

### OTHER DEALS

On the first day of free agency, teams committed a record \$1.12 billion in contracts as more than 100 players changed teams. The total — the most ever spent in any single day of free agency, according to CapFriendly — is a direct result of the salary cap jumping to \$88 million per team, the first big increase since before the pandemic.

"A lot of cash," Toronto GM Brad Treliving said. "There were some really good

players available. You saw teams be aggressive, and lots of players changed teams."

Tyler Bertuzzi and Teuvo Teravainen agreed to contracts with Chicago on Monday, providing a major offensive lift for the rebuilding Blackhawks on the first day of NHL free agency. Bertuzzi received a \$22 million, four-year deal, and Teravainen's agreement is worth \$16.2 million over three seasons. The Blackhawks also reached deals with goaltender Laurent Brossoit, forwards Pat Maroon and Craig Smith, and defensemen Alec Martinez and T.J. Brodie. The team re-signed forward Joey Anderson to a \$1.6 million, two-year contract.

Jake Guentzel signed a \$63 million, seven-year contract with Tampa Bay after they acquired his rights from Carolina over the weekend, opting to pay him big money at age 30 rather than Stamkos at 34.

Fresh off helping Florida win the Stanley Cup, defenseman Brandon Montour signed a \$50 million, seven-year contract with Seattle, and the Kraken added former Golden Knights center and '23 champion Chandler Stephenson for \$43.75 million over the same length of time. The Panthers' exodus included Oliver Ekman-Larsson and Anthony Stolarz to Toronto, Ryan Lomberg to Calgary and Kevin Stenlund to Utah.

Vancouver signed former Bruins winger Jake DeBrusk for \$38.5 million over seven years.

Boston signed center Elias Lindholm to a seven-year contract worth \$54.25 million and gave defenseman Nikita Zadorov \$30 million for the next six seasons.

New Jersey continued to build a playoff-worthy roster, signing a pair of defensemen, Brett Pesce for six-years and \$33 million and Brenden Dillon for three years and \$12 million, and forward Stefan Noesen for three years and \$8.25 million.

San Jose signed forwards Tyler Toffoli for \$24 million over four years and Alexander Wennberg for two years and \$10 million.

## Home Run Derby issues change

The Home Run Derby is altering its format. This year's event limits the number of pitches each hitter can face in each round and changes the setup of its opening round. Each hitter will get either three minutes or 40 pitches in the opening round and semifinals. Hitters will get two minutes or 27

pitches in the championship round. The top four hitters from the opening round will advance to the semifinals. The previous format had hitters competing in one-on-one quarterfinal, semifinal and championship matchups. The Home Run Derby is July 15 at Arlington, Texas.

## NBA's free agency Day 2 makes big splashes: George to Philly, Thompson to Mavs, Tatum max

By The Associated Press

Paul George is going back to the Eastern Conference, and surely has made Joel Embiid very happy in the process.

George will sign a four-year, \$212 million contract with the Philadelphia 76ers, a person with knowledge of the move told The Associated Press early Monday. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the deal cannot be finalized until July 6 by NBA rule.

The move was finalized a few hours into the start of NBA free agency, but Embiid — Philadelphia's center and the 2022-23 NBA MVP — began planting the seeds for this at least a couple weeks ago. He and George made a television appearance together during the NBA Finals, one where the Philadelphia center suggested he'd like to see the veteran wing join him with the 76ers.

And it happened. The Los Angeles Clippers, now George's former team, said earlier Sunday night that he would not be back with them going forward — and from there, it was just a matter of the nine-time All-Star working out terms with the 76ers.

Klay Thompson is moving on from the Golden State Warriors, with the four-time league champion agreeing to join the Western Conference champion Dallas Mavericks and change franchises for the first time in his 13-year NBA career, according to two people with knowledge of the decision. ESPN and The Athletic first reported the multiteam deal, which as currently constructed will be executed as the sign-and-trade of a three-year, \$50 million contract involving the Warriors,

Mavericks and Charlotte Hornets, according to people who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the agreement has not been publicly announced. Thompson is sixth on the NBA's all-time 3-pointers made list with 2,481.

Jayson Tatum has agreed to a five-year, \$314 million contract extension to remain with the Boston Celtics, a person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press. The new pact will begin with the 2025-26 season and keep the five-time All-Star in Boston through 2029-30 season, according to the person who spoke on the condition of anonymity because it has not been announced. When completed Tatum's new, "supermax" contract will become the largest in NBA history, supplanting the one signed last off-season by teammate Jaylen Brown, when he inked a five-year deal that will pay him up to \$304 million.

Meanwhile, James Harden is staying with the Clippers on a two-year contract that includes a player option, a person with knowledge of that decision told AP earlier Sunday.

Harden's deal — which could be worth up to \$70 million if he opts into 2025-26 — was agreed upon in principle before free agency technically started, said the person who spoke to AP on condition of anonymity because neither Harden nor the Clippers had announced the agreement.

Harden, a 10-time NBA All-Star, averaged 16.6 points and 8.5 assists last season for the Clippers, who will move into their new Intuit Dome home when this coming season starts.

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The true struggle of single parenthood

Dear Annie: Ten years ago, I became a single parent when my ex-husband, who had worked in the World Trade Center on 9/11, became addicted to drugs and alcohol. The love of my life became abusive toward me, threatened our young children and pets, and refused treatment. After a lengthy and expensive court battle, I gained sole custody of our three children. I have financially supported them almost entirely alone since he is unable to hold a job.

I cringe when I hear married people call themselves "single parents" because their spouse works a lot, travels often or spends too much time on leisure. It is offensive and minimizes my experience.

Can you please remind your readers that single parents run a home themselves, wipe their children's tears alone, hold down jobs and pay the bills? They attend school events and go to sleep by themselves every night. They never have a sick day off, even after surgery or serious illness. This marathon often lasts for years or even for decades.

Parents may be single due to death, illness, disability, divorce or other reasons that may be completely beyond their control. It's not a badge of honor to be a single parent. It is an overwhelming climb for both us and our children.

Dear Annie by Annie Lane



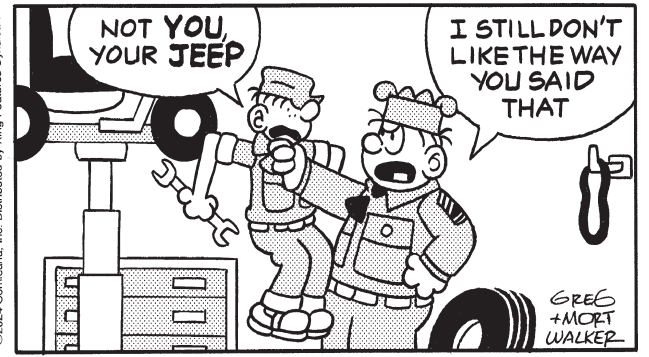
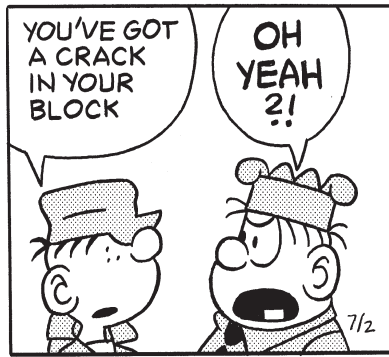
I ask others to please not minimize our struggle. Instead, make an effort to check in on a single parent family, invite them to a meal or offer to act as a mentor to the child(ren). We will appreciate it more than you know. — Single and Salty in New York

Dear Single and Salty in NY: Thank you for your letter. Word choice is very important, and you have brought awareness to the real definition of what a single parent is. Perhaps the letter writer of the husband who works late should have used "neglected wife" instead.

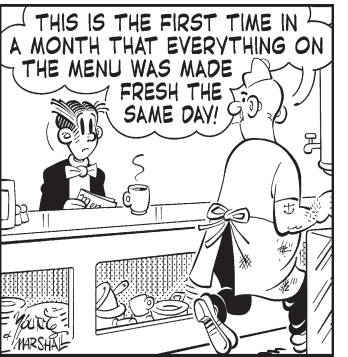
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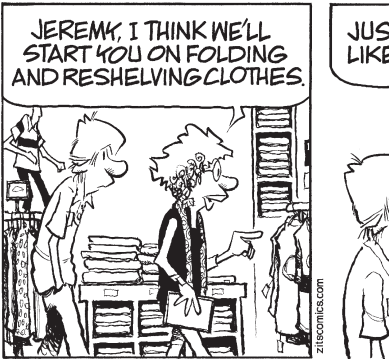
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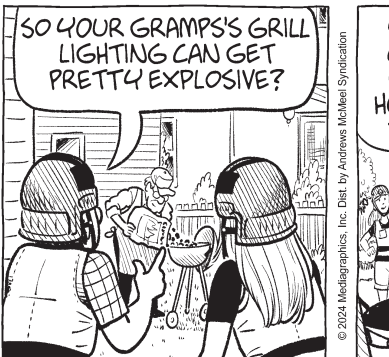
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My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



Responding to God's call

I'm a child of the King. Should I look for another church that trusts me when I say, "He knows my name?" — C.D.

Answer: Many people know exactly when they responded to God's call and gave their lives to Christ. With some, it is a very vivid memory whether it was in church, at camp, or perhaps even in front of a television. Conversion involves the mind, the affection, and the will. There have been thousands of people who have been intellectually converted to Christ. They believe the entire Bible. But they've never really surrendered to Christ. Others know in their

hearts that they belong to Jesus; He is their Lord and Master.

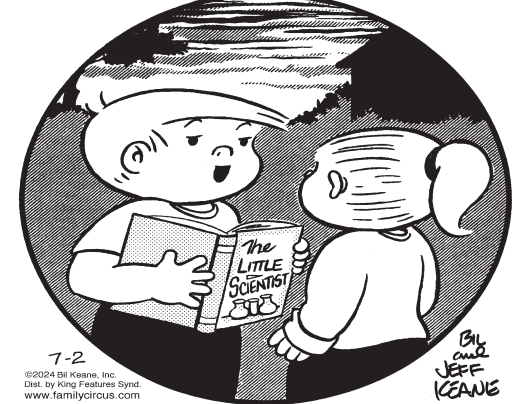
Some may have no recollection of the time or date, but they know with certainty that there was a time of repentance and commitment to Christ. This is the most important point. "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:12, NKJV). Trusting Christ and walking with Him daily is a manifestation of following Him.

(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



"Heat makes things expand. That's why days are longer in the summer."

The LOCKHORNS



"NO, MR. LOCKHORN, YOU CAN'T DEDUCT CORKAGE FEES."

Question: I became a Christian as a young girl when I went with a neighbor friend to vacation Bible school. I had never heard the Bible stories and had never really experienced the love of Christian parents or the security of a Christian home. While my mother and stepfather did not permit me to go to church at other times, I'm still grateful they let me go during the two special weeks in June. Now that I'm grown, I am thinking of joining a church but was told I have to know the date of my conversion to Christ. There's no way I can know the exact date, but I know

Table with columns for date, channel, and program listings for various networks like WJLA, CBS, ABC, NBC, etc.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Table with columns for date, channel, and program listings for various networks like HBO, MAX, PARSHO, TMC.

