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WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 2024 BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection \$1.00

Norwell boasts SAT and ILEARN scores

By HOLLY GASKILL

This past school year, Norwell Community Schools ranked in the top 25% of Indiana schools for the rate of students passing ILEARN and the top 20% for rates passing the SAT.

During the district board meeting Tuesday, Superintendent Mike Springer highlighted these statistics in his report — notably, that the district's passing rate for either test was the highest in the county.

In third grade, 39.7% of students passed the English/Language Arts test, and 60.9% passed the math test. Springer also noted that the 2023 third grade cohort increased by 12% in its passing rate in fourth grade.

For the SAT, 57% of students passed the reading and writing portion, and 35% passed the math portion, according to Springer.

Springer told the board he believed the district's SAT passing rate could be higher, but there aren't consistent efforts from some students who don't plan to attend college. To this, board member Angie Topp asked if there was any way to incentivize students to try to pass the test, which they're required to take as

juniors.

"I think it's (about) developing a culture with our kids that every time you sit down ... to perform a task or something to show what we know, we're just going to do our best," Springer stated. "Regardless of if it's SAT, which is an absolute challenge for kids to take seriously if that's not something that they necessarily care about. But again, it's about developing that culture."

Board member Gene Donaghy added that students should know there's value in mastering the material, regardless of their career pathway.

Also during his report, Springer presented conglomerated results from exit interviews with over 30 staff members this last year. Overall, Springer found the feedback positive. He said these staff members were often leaving for different opportunities or personal reasons, as opposed to issues with the school or district. That said, the most common areas for improvement were employee benefits, communication and feedback, and time for training and preparation.

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NMS and NHS will start earlier this year

By HOLLY GASKILL

Norwell middle and high schools will shift their daily schedule this upcoming school year, beginning at 7:30 a.m. and ending at 2:30 p.m.

The Norwell board of trustees approved the change at their Tuesday meeting, as recommended by Superintendent Mike Springer. In working through transitions within the district's transportation department, Springer said the drivers requested more time between the routes for the middle and high schools and elementary schools.

While the groups considered moving the elementary schools' schedule back, Springer said that solution ultimately created more problems, particularly with extracurricular activities. He

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Sewer repairs on Main Street

South Main Street just past Bluffton Regional Medical Center was closed to one lane traffic only Monday and Tuesday due to sewer line repairs. New pipes and an inner liner for them will be installed under the road. (Photos by Jonathan Snyder)

Second unusual water bills sparks Board of Works discussion

By JONATHAN SNYDER

A second mysterious water leak came to the Board of Public Works and Safety's attention Tuesday.

Steve Baker, who owns property at 1195 Fawncrest Ct., stated that his April and May bills skyrocketed, and the cause is unknown. Baker stated that his bill normally falls in the \$200 range, but the aforementioned months bills came in at about \$570 and \$775, respectively.

Baker also reported that his June and July bills have fallen back to the normal range, which complicated matters for the board. Baker said that he brought in a plumber, water softener experts and Water Distribution supervisor Dave Hendricks to see if there was a leak. All parties could not find any leaks on the property.

Baker stated that his habits have not changed in the two high-billing months. Board member

Josh Hunt cited an instance where 76 gallons of water was used in a one hour span of time around 7:40 a.m. as a reason why he believes Baker's habits have not changed.

"To me that was kind of a red flag," Hunt said. "Seems like an awkward time to have that kind of use."

Utility Director Jon Oman stated that the meters were tested on Baker's property and they are working properly. Oman additionally cited the bills going back down to normal rates as a reason why he believes the meters are working properly.

This is the second time in the past two months where a high water bill came before the board, with no indication of a leak on the property, a concern for board member Scott Mentzer. Mentzer cited a similar scenario where the water

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Zoning board denies request for fence construction in Ossian

By JONATHAN SNYDER

A variance request for a front yard setback from 30 feet to 1 foot in the front yard of 423 Autumn Ct. was denied by the Board of Zoning Appeals Tuesday.

Jade Heyerly, who owns the property, requested the variance so that the fence could block the view from some large bushes on the property to his east, approximately over 6 feet tall. The fence would be one foot off of the city easement.

Heyerly cited a fence already built on Abbey Lane, similar to the design he wanted. The board, however, noted that the fence would be considered a violation if reported, as they had not granted a variance on the property.

Julie Myers, who lives at 1004 Abbey Ln., directly east of Heyerly's property, had three questions about the property — if the fence would infringe on her property, if the fence would touch the bushes, and if the fence would be extended out to the road.

Heyerly stated that the fence would not go over onto her property, clarifying that a mower's width of space would be given. Heyerly also clarified that the fence will not go to the road and will stay behind the city easement in his front yard. Heyerly further said that the fence at the moment will not touch the bushes, but that the natural growth will eventually make it a problem.

The bushes were the main point of contention between Myers and Heyerly. A discussion of whether or not the bushes themselves were in violation of municipal code was discussed, with board member Tim Rohr stating that the bushes would be considered a violation since they are in the city utility easement area.

Overall, the board were sympathetic to Heyerly's situation, but were not comfortable going against one of their ordinances of going past the building line for the fence. Rohr stated that, if this were approved, it would set a precedent out to the road.

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Indiana's reserve funds projected to hit post-pandemic low

By WHITNEY DOWNARD
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Indiana's reserves will hit a post-pandemic low after years of above-average returns due largely to a Medicaid forecast miss of nearly \$1 billion, according to fiscal statements released Tuesday.

Budget writers typically aim for reserves to be between 10-12.5% of current year expenditures, and the 2024 fiscal year closed out this month with \$2.6 billion in reserves — or 11.9% of expenditures. That amount will drop even further next year.

Indiana Comptroller Elise Nieshalla credited the reserves to the state's "long-standing conservative stewardship," adding that "a slight increase in income and a solid return on investments further

support(ed) our strong financial position."

"Indiana's healthy reserves and standing as the 7th lowest debt per capita state showcases our high level of fiscal responsibility, especially during a time when our country is facing a national debt crisis," Nieshalla said in a release. "As a lead financial officer for our state, I see the national debt at nearly \$35 trillion as the greatest looming threat to Indiana's robust economy."

However, the 2025 fiscal year is projected to have reserves that are 10.4% of expenditures, or \$2.3 billion — the second-lowest reserves percentage in the last six years. Indiana's reserves dipped to an unprecedented 8.6% of reserves, or \$1.4 billion, in 2020 when Indiana delayed tax collections during

the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 relief from the federal government — both to state coffers and to individual Hoosiers — boosted reserves to a high of \$6.1 billion in the 2022 fiscal year, or 34.9% of the state's expenditures. High reserves in both 2021 and 2022 triggered automatic taxpayer refunds and lawmakers made large, one-time payments toward pension liabilities and capital projects.

Prior to 2020, the 2019 fiscal year closeout was 13.9%, or \$2.2 billion, and state analysts at the time projected the state would stay near that number for 2020 and 2021.

"Those of you who have been covering this for some time probably find the revenue report and the closeout statement rather boring

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Outside

Chance of showers and storms again

Today	Thursday	Friday
High 83	High 80	High 80
Low 62	Low 59	Low 57

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Vol. 95 No. 224
WEDNESDAY
July 24, 2024

The LiGHT membership awarded \$11,758 in grants for 2023

LiGHT, the women's giving program sponsored by the Wells County Foundation, has proven that modest gifts, when added together, make a significant impact!

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~Mary Anne Radmacher

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SAT, ILEARN scores

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Topp asked if Springer felt the feedback had been honest given the circumstances, and Springer, Assistant Superintendent Anna Murphy and Financial Services Director Deb Adams all said they felt the interviews had been candid. All exit interviews take place in person.

Later, new technology director Byron Gerber discussed a series of organizational changes within the technology department, hoping to better serve the staff's strengths and workload. However, he stated this year would be a "gap year" as they figure out the best solutions.

Moreover, the board

approved a contract with Matrix Integration of Jasper, Indiana, for additional technology support at \$1,125 per month.

Also during the meeting, the board:

- Learned board member Chad Kline was selected to represent District 3 on the legislative committee for the Indiana School Board Association.

- Approved matching grants for teachers graded as "effective" to the level of those graded as "highly effective" out of the education fund. Indiana's Teacher Appreciation Grant requires "highly effective" teachers to receive 25% more, but Springer advised that the

line is "very thin" between the two. "Effective is effective," he concluded.

- Recognized the resignation of Kelly Putt, NHS teaching assistant, and accepted the resignations of former bus driver Joy Groat, OES art teacher Chris Leeth and OES fourth grade teacher Deanna Wyrick.

- Approved employment recommendations for Abbie Boyer as an NHS language arts teacher; Macy Montgomery as OES fifth grade teacher; Elizabeth Mann as an OES fourth grade teacher; Payton Switzer as an LES third grade teacher; Kathleen Messmann as an NMS mild intervention teacher; Mckenzy Denney for color

guard; Meghan Howard as district special education and preschool secretary; Anne Troutman as an OES Latchkey assistant; Dianna Huxhold and Skylar Keller as NMS teaching assistants; Matthew Schwartz, Brandisue Macdonald and Kathleen Kozlowski for food service; Jason Figert as a bus driver; and Greg Mann and Gracie Rinkenberber as NHS girls' soccer assistant coaches.

- Heard a quarter financial update from Adams.

An open house of the OES renovations will precede the board's next meeting at 4:45 p.m. on Aug. 13. The regular meeting will follow at 5:30 p.m.

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Early start

(Continued from Page 1)

added that he would also work with the drivers to ensure more efficiency and better ECA scheduling this year.

"I don't know if this is a forever timeframe, but I feel like we need to do this for this next year," Springer concluded.

Alongside this, the board again discussed upcoming changes to traffic routes at Ossian Elementary School and Norwell middle and high schools.

The intersection at County Road 100 East and U.S. 224 is set to receive a four-way stop in the coming days, although it was unclear when that is to begin. Springer stated signage in the area indicates the four-way stop is being

implemented on July 24, however, the county had previously announced the effective date would be July 29.

Regardless, many parents will experience the change for the first time during school registration at the high school on July 29.

The district administration and board have expressed some concern with the sudden change before the school year. The board announced the change at their last meeting, on July 9; at the following Wells County Commissioner meeting, multiple officials advised it was the first they had heard about the change from the Indiana Department of Transportation.

"I think all of us know that that

intersection is a problem," Springer said. "What's the right answer? There's really only a few solutions ... Probably none of them are great."

"And we didn't get to make the choice," Topp added.

Alongside this, the board reiterated changing traffic patterns at OES to accommodate the one-lane traffic at the bridge on the south side of Ossian. Parents will drop off and pick up their students along the north side of the building, coming in on Metts Street and exiting onto Melching Drive. Buses will pick up and drop off on the west side of the building. The first student day is Aug. 7.

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Board of Works

(Continued from Page 1)

cost was unexplained in mid-May. Mentzer cited that they did not grant any adjustment on the water bill, because of the lack of evidence supporting a leak.

"It's concerning that we have two now," Mentzer said. "My kneejerk reaction to this is to be consistent, but certainly if we have more instances similar to this, we may need to reconsider our stance on this."

The board decided not to adjust Baker's water bills, which he understood. Baker also stated that Hendricks and Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Bri Lautzenheiser were

very professional with his case, and he understands the board's perspective.

"I totally respect what you're saying and totally understand and agree with what you're saying," Baker said. "If I was sitting there, I would probably say the same thing."

Additionally, the board gave a demolition order for a shed located at 1325 West Cherry St. On the property, a "decrepit" shed, according to Building Supervisor Richard Triplett, is located between a house and a garage. Triplett sent a letter to the homeowner on May 13, calling on the owner to

fix the unsafe shed. Triplett reported that the homeowner has made no contact with the Building Department, nor has he made improvements to the shed.

"It's very obvious that the entire structure is just caving in on itself," Triplett said. "The roof is collapsing and it's not safe."

"The building is beyond gone," Hunt said.

Bids for the work will need to be heard by the board before the shed is demolished. Mentzer lamented that the situation had to come to this point.

"That (The demolition order) is the next step,"

Mentzer said with a sigh.

The board also heard a request to block parking spaces in front of the courthouse on Sept. 13, 14 and 15, for Shakespeare on the Plaza, an event where William Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing will be performed at the plaza downtown. Mayor John Whicker noted that the Sept. 15 showing will need to be moved as they are preparing downtown for the Bluffton Free Street Fair that day.

Dispatchers Nicholas Fields and Tiffany Leas were both given \$1 hourly raises during the meeting.

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Indiana's reserve funds

(Continued from Page 1)

because we're sort of landing back into our traditional patterns — unlike what happened during the pandemic," said Cris Johnston, the director of the Indiana Office of Management and Budget.

Acting State Budget Director Joseph Habig said that "good fiscal stewardship and prudent budgeting" were "culturally ingrained" in Indiana, with "decades ... of historic results" demonstrating the state's dedication to spending less than it collected in revenues.

"That common sense discipline ensured that Indiana was able to maintain a \$421.2 million annual surplus and total combined balances in our general fund reserves at \$2.5 billion," Habig said. "Our vision is to ensure that Indiana's priorities are funded not just today, but also tomorrow."

More from the fiscal closeout

Indiana's revenues for the 2024 fiscal year totaled \$21.48 billion, slightly below the forecasted \$21.5 billion. In terms of major revenue sources, Indiana missed the mark on collecting corporate income taxes — which makes up roughly 5% of revenues — by \$182 million but made up the difference in unexpected interest revenues of \$179 million plus other smaller income streams, such as surplus lottery revenue.

"Corporate income tax is the most difficult tax type to predict," Johnston said, noting that every company handles its taxes differently. "Also, it can be influenced by very large taxpayers ... but also financial institution taxes. So it is difficult to pinpoint and we've seen those variances over the years."

But future costs remain murky, especially with the ever-increasing Medicaid budget and ongoing tax reform discussions. Legislators are entering the second year of intensive deliberations to determine whether Indiana can afford to further

cut — or even eliminate — the state's income tax, which sits at 3.15%. During the 2022 legislative session, Indiana lawmakers passed a plan to gradually cut the state's income tax from 3.23% to 2.9% by 2029, which would make it one of the lowest rates in the nation.

Income taxes bring in just over \$8 billion each year, equal to roughly one-third of the state's revenue — behind only sales taxes, which make up about half of the state's revenue and bring in over \$10 billion.

More on Medicaid

The December 2023 Medicaid forecast — which isn't prepared by state analysts — revealed that actuaries had missed the mark in predicted Medicaid expenses by roughly \$984 million because of unanticipated claims for long-term services and supports over the two-year budget period.

To rebalance the budget for 2024, the state's budget drafters transferred \$255 million from the Medicaid reserve fund, as documented in Tuesday's closeout statement. But the bulk of the near-\$1 billion miss was forecasted for the 2025 fiscal year so another \$457.9 million is flagged to come out of the general reserves fund to cover remaining expenses.

However, that \$457.9 million estimate is based off of the December 2023 forecast, which won't be updated again until December 2024. That doesn't account for the policy changes the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) has made to the Medicaid program since that time, including its reformation of the attendant care program.

The decision to curtail parent payments under attendant care combined with pausing Medicaid rate increases and implementing a waitlist would save the state an estimated \$300 million over two years, according to FSSA.

"(When the) revised

Medicaid forecast came out in December, FSSA immediately went to work looking at how we can improve forecasting..." Johnston said. "I think FSSA is taking a broad look at all of their (programs)."

Planning for the 2025 budget session

Tuesday's fiscal closeout will be one of many documents budget writers use to craft the state's next biennial budget in the 2025 session. Johnston flagged the December 2024 forecast and Medicaid forecast as another important milestone that will shape many spending decisions.

The 2023 budget was the last to be crafted under Gov. Eric Holcomb, who is term limited. The winner of the November gubernatorial election will play a large role in the 2024 budget negotiations.

Still, Sen. Ryan Mishler — the chief budget writer for the Senate Republicans who oversees the powerful Appropriations Committee — continued to voice his ongoing concern about rising Medicaid expenses.

"I remain cautious about state expenditure increases

as the state returns to lower and more historic levels of revenue growth, particularly in regard to the Medicaid program, as the current rate of growth in Indiana's Medicaid spending is not sustainable and could adversely affect other aspects of our state's budget," said Mishler, R-Mishawaka, in a statement. "As we look forward to the 2025 legislative session, we should consider using the upcoming budget session to regroup and ensure our state is on a sustainable financial path as we go forward."

But Democrat Rep. Greg Porter, of Indianapolis, flagged Republican-sponsored increases for vouchers and charter schools, saying they "outstripp(ed) Indiana's revenue growth."

"We'll only have an estimated \$844 million for new programs and expansions, which is not enough," he said. "Our spending in the 2023 budget for new programs and expansions was over \$1 billion. I encourage my colleagues across the aisle to consider the growing mismatch between our revenue and spending priorities."

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Upcoming Events

July 27 - JB's Cuisine Machine
August 17 - JB's Cuisine Machine w/ live music from Bob Thompson
August 31 - Live music from the Trevor Hunt Band

Weather

Wednesday, July 24, 2024

(24-hour observations at 10:09 p.m. Tuesday)

High: 84; Low: 63; Precipitation: None

Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.32 feet at 8:45 p.m. Tuesday

Wells County forecast

Today: A 30% chance of showers and thunderstorms, mainly after 2 p.m. Mostly sunny, with a high near 83. West wind 5 to 10 mph.

Tonight: A chance of showers and thunderstorms before 8 p.m., then a slight chance of showers between 8 p.m. and 2 a.m., then a slight chance of showers and thunderstorms after 2 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 62. West wind around 5 mph becoming calm in the evening. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Thursday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 80. Calm wind becoming north around 5 mph in the afternoon.

Thursday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 59. Northeast wind around 5 mph becoming calm in the evening.

Friday: Sunny, with a high near 80.

Friday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 57.

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 83.

Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 64.

Sunday: A slight chance of showers, then a chance of showers and thunderstorms after 2 p.m. Mostly sunny, with a high near 86. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Sunday Night: A 30% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy, with a low around 69.

Monday: A 40% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly sunny, with a high near 85.

Monday Night: A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy, with a low around 71.

Zoning board

for other fences that would lead to a lot of sticky situations in the future with sight lines to the main roads.

Additionally, a size allowance variance for Michael Todd was approved by the board. Todd plans to add onto the north side of his detached garage, bringing the size allowance from 1500 square feet to 2288 feet. Todd clarified that no additional lighting or drainage tile is going in, and the board had no other complaints about Todd's request.

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Ossian Rotary to Hear from Kristiana Joloff of Cleaning One, Inc.

At its regular weekly meeting on Thursday, July 25, Ossian Rotary will host Kristiana Joloff, business manager of Cleaning One, Inc., a local commercial cleaning service established 35 years ago.

Joloff grew up in Akron, Indiana, and then moved to Ossian when she was 16. She graduated from Norwell High School in 2003.

In-laws Bob and Bev Joloff started the business over 30 years ago. Kristiana married their youngest son, Rob, 19 years ago. The Jolloffs and their three children currently live in Bluffton and attend Hope Missionary Church there. Joloff has been in the high school ministry student leadership team for six years.

Joloff has been working in the cleaning business since she married her husband Rob. She started out doing accounting and cleaning in the evening while her kids were young. She was promoted to a supervisor with more responsibilities in quality control, and later became the one to run the company. Their children also work for the business, and as the company grows, the children can carry out the heritage that was set previously.

Anyone is welcome to attend Ossian Rotary this Thursday morning, at 7:30 at First Baptist Church of Ossian, 1001 Dehner Drive for this program.

For more information, please contact Matthew Gullion, Ossian Rotary President, at mwggullion@gmail.com.

Next Thursday, Aug. 1, Ossian Rotary will host Kylie Tomlin, executive director of Helping Hands.

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OBITUARIES

Michael McBride, 53

Michael McBride, 53, of Bluffton, passed peacefully at 5:42 a.m. on Sunday, July 21, 2024, at Stillwater Hospice in Fort Wayne with his wife, children, parents, and siblings by his side after a courageous and valiant fight – he won the battle and received his miracle.

Mike was born in Fort Wayne on August 18, 1970, to Connie (Stackhouse) and Bill McBride and spent his childhood years growing up on the family farm in Craigville and later moved to Bluffton with his family. He was musically inclined and was quite partial to the trumpet, which he affectionately called “God’s instrument.” Mike was the drum major for the Norwell Marching Knights in 1987 and 88. In this role, he met his high school sweetheart who he would eventually marry.

Mike was a 1989 Norwell graduate, and then graduated from IPFW in 1995 with a Purdue University Bachelor of Communications degree with a concentration in radio and television. He spent time as a videographer for weddings and producing color guard instruction videos for marching bands. His early career was at the former Music House of Decatur, where he performed a variety of roles that included sales, traveling to various high schools to maintain instruments and relationships with band directors, and helping students choose instruments that they were well suited for. Later, Mike served as an aide at Norwell High School, working with some amazing students with severe physical challenges, and then transitioned to the role of patient care tech at Lutheran Hospital and loved patient care. From there, he became a 911 dispatcher for the city of Bluffton and received Dispatcher of the Year Award for extraordinary services. Finally, Mike joined Indiana Technical Installations where he’s been managing the office and logistics. He absolutely loved his second career as a realtor and broker with McBride and Associates Real Estate, coming alongside many families and individuals in their home buy and selling processes over the past 20 years.

Mike has been actively involved at Hope Missionary Church his entire adult life. He had an incredible passion for worship and children’s ministry. He spent many years serving as a worship leader for both adults on Sunday mornings and children on Wednesday nights, a guitar and bass player for worship teams, a sound technician in many venues, and loved spending weeks up at Camp Blast helping kids learn about and love Jesus. He was a “Punching Penguins” master! Mike also served several years on the church board and worked as evening church security.

In his spare time, Mike loved every moment with his family, mowing his yard with straight lines, fixing instruments for band kids, assisting marching band directors with critique and instruction, and



coaching and encouraging drum majors. He was an incredible band dad and found investing in hundreds of students highly gratifying. He was also a fan of comedies and could have entire conversations just in movie lines. He was known for his kindness, compassion, and incredible sense of humor. Ultimately, his all-time favorite past time was vacationing with friends and family at the beach and formerly to the heart of the Ozarks to spend sweet time with Brett’s extended family. Each morning, Mike could be found enjoying a cappuccino on his screened in porch watching the morning begin and late in the evening, occasionally savoring a sip of bourbon.

Mike married the love of his life, Brett Michelle (Garrett) on May 27, 1995, after seven years of dating with a long engagement. She survives. Together, they built a wonderful family and an amazing circle of friends.

Other survivors include his parents, Connie (Roger) Stackhouse and Bill (Diana) McBride; son, Reed (Natalie) McBride; daughters, Tess (Dakota) Savage, Maryn McBride and Paula Kjdrian; granddaughters, Amelia and Georgia McBride; and his beloved pups, Birdee Jo and Buster. Also surviving are his father-in-law, David Garrett; siblings, Kris (Dave) Uptgraft, Patrick McBride, Branda (Devon) Cromer, Mitchell Westerman and Blair Wright. Nephews and nieces, Justin (Leah) Uptgraft, Nathan (Shelby) Uptgraft, Quincee (Zach) Mounsey, Quade and Elias Musselman, William and Eleanor Wright, Calvin and August Westerman; and one great-niece and five great-nephews, many very close friends, his entire ITI family and his Hope Church staff family.

Mike was preceded in death by all of his grandparents and his mother-in-law, Jill Phillips.

Visitation will take place from 2-8 p.m. on Friday, July 26, 2024, at Hope Missionary Church, 429 E. Dustman Rd. in Bluffton.

Memorial Service will take place at 11 a.m. on Saturday, July 27, 2024, at the Hope Missionary Church. There will be two hours of Visitation prior to the services at the church.

In keeping with the spirit of celebration, the family would love to see you in your favorite party shirts – Hawaiian, fun t-shirts, camp Blast shirts, etc.

The family would like to thank and acknowledge the incredible care teams at Fort Wayne Medical Oncology and Hematology, Lutheran Hospital, and Stillwater Hospice. Myers Funeral Home, Markle Chapel, is honored to be taking care of arrangements.

Preferred memorials are to the family to help carry out Mike’s final wishes, made out to Brett McBride and can be sent in care of Myers Funeral Home, P.O. Box 403, Markle, IN 46770.

Elizabeth Meyer, 98

Elizabeth A. (Dunwiddie) Meyer went to be with the Lord on July 22, 2024. She was a resident of Swiss Village in Berne. Her husband, Harold R. Meyer, preceded her in death in 2009.

Known by many as Beth, she was born on March 8, 1926, to Henry and Grace (Dyson) Dunwiddie. She graduated from Bluffton High School in 1944. She stayed around home for several years to help the family after her mother died in an accident. Then, she graduated from the Saint Joseph School of Nursing in 1952. That was also the year she married Harold. She worked for 31 years as a surgery nurse at Caylor Nickel Hospital until she retired in 1989.

After her retirement, Harold and Beth spent 18 years volunteering at Christian Care Retirement Community in Bluffton, delivering mail to residents and transporting residents to special events. Both were members of the Berne Evangelical Church. Beth served as a children’s Sunday school teacher for 25 years. She was involved in Ladies Aid and the quilting groups. Beth and Harold also served as youth sponsors while their sons were growing up.

Preceding her in death, besides her husband, were three brothers, Lloyd Dunwiddie (Allegan, Michigan), and George Dunwiddie and Gerald Dunwiddie, both from Bluffton. She also had two sisters



preceding her in death, Lela Dunwiddie from Bluffton and Vera Morehouse from Milford, Indiana.

Elizabeth is survived by four sons, Rodney (Carol) Meyer of Albany, Indiana, Bruce (Melody) Meyer of Berne, Gregory (Sara) Meyer of Berne, and Randy (Francine) Meyer of Round Lake Beach, Illinois. In addition, she had six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. There are

also four adopted granddaughters and a grandson, two great-granddaughters, and a great-grandson in the Dominican Republic.

Visitation will take place from 9-10:30 a.m. Saturday, August 3, 2024, in the auditorium of Swiss Village Retirement Community, 1350 W. Main St., in Berne. The Celebration of Life service will be held in the auditorium at 10:30 a.m., following visitation. Burial will follow at Six Mile Cemetery near Bluffton.

Preferred memorials are to Helping Hands Unlimited, PO Box 111, Albany, IN 47320, to Miracle Camp, 25281 80th Ave., Lawton, MI 49065, or to Stillwater Hospice, 5919 Homestead Rd., Fort Wayne, IN 46814.

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.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City:
Friday, 2:36 p.m., Walmart. Report of theft cases.

Friday, 3:20 p.m., 400 block of West Miller Street. Caller reported someone in gray sweat pants and baggy white shirt taking pictures of their house.

Friday, 3:34 p.m., 1000 Lancaster Street. Report of ruts in the yard. Officer helped patch them up.

Friday, 4:52 p.m., 400 block of North Oak Street Ext. Report of fraud on bank account.

Friday, 5:38 p.m., 800 block of Riverview Drive. Caller requested officer clear residence.

Friday, 6:13 p.m., 500 block of South Marion Street. Report of barking dogs.

Friday, 7:43 p.m., 1100 block of West Wiley Avenue. Caller requested subject be removed from property.

Friday, 10:05 p.m., 800 block of Melody Lane. Property damage.

Friday, 10:15 p.m., 500 block of West Miller Street. Report of people arguing. People were in fact arguing, but with dogs.

Saturday, 12:19 a.m., 20 block of Woodlawn Street. Noise complaint.

Saturday, 3:13 a.m., 700 block of McArthur Drive. Report of fireworks.

Saturday, 8:35 a.m., 1000 block of West Central Avenue. Report of a loose dog outside for several days.

Saturday, 11:55 a.m., 1000 block of Hollyhock Lane. Report of harassment.

Saturday, 2:02 p.m., First Bank of Berne. Report of someone camping behind bank.

Saturday, 3:31 p.m., 500 block of South Marion Street. Complaint regarding construction. Caller denied calling.

Saturday, 10:26 p.m., 500 block of West Market Street. Report of loud music and yelling.

Sunday, 12:10 a.m., 500 block of West Market Street. Noise complaint. All subjects agreed to consider their neighbors and quiet down.

Sunday, 1:06 a.m., Market and Johnson streets. Driver cited for no insurance.

Sunday, 2:13 a.m., North Main Street and Capri Court. Driver cited for no insurance.

Sunday, 10:12 a.m., Main and Horton streets. Driver cited for no insurance.

Sunday, 2:54 p.m., Wells Community Swimming Pool. Report of a registered sex offender at the pool.

Sunday, 6:58 p.m., 100 block of Lamar Street. Report of teenager smoking marijuana.

Sunday, 2:48 a.m., 400 block of West Townley Street. Woman reported her water broke.

Monday, 8:47 a.m., 300 block of Capri Court. Report of loud explosion and smoke.

Monday, 3:59 p.m., 1100 block of West Wiley Avenue. Report of child abuse, officer requested to stand by while child was removed from home and subject arrested.

Monday, 6:54 p.m., West Horton and South Johnson

streets. Report of six juveniles and a baby on bikes in the street. Unsure if caller was concerned or impressed.

Monday, 7:48 p.m., Bluffton U-Store. Report of theft.

Monday, 11:07 p.m., Lamar Street and Hunter Road. Report of two people in dark clothes in a field. Shockingly difficult to locate.

Monday, 11:16 p.m., 400 block of East Washington Street. Report of odor from marijuana, odor was actually a skunk.

Monday, 11:57 p.m., 500 block of West Wiley Avenue. Report of attempted breaking and entering from ex-boyfriend.

Tuesday, 5:21 a.m., 300 block of East Market Street. Caller requested subject be removed and trespassed.

Tuesday, 8:36 a.m., South Adams and West Cherry streets. Driver cited for learner permit violation.

Tuesday, 10:38 a.m., Bargain Hut. Officer requested to pickup some bullets that were donated.

County:
Monday, 3:32 p.m., Wells County Courthouse. Clint Dankson transported from courthouse to jail for probation violation.

Monday, 3:53 p.m., 700 block of West Hancock Street, Uniondale. Report of a family disagreement.

Monday, 4:18 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served on April Mahon.

Monday, 5:46 p.m., U.S.

224 and 400W, Markle. Driver cited for speeding 69 in a 55 mph zone.

Ossian:
Monday, 10:02 p.m., S.R. 1 and U.S. 224, Ossian. Report of pallet on side of road.

Monday, 11:00 p.m., 5700N 450E, Ossian. Report of subject trespassing on ATV.

ARRESTS
Katie Lynn McAfee, 31, Bluffton; domestic battery against a family member less than 14, a Level 6 felony. Bond set at \$25,000.

Clint Joseph Dankson, 41, Bluffton; probation violation, a Class A misdemeanor, and probation violation, a Class B misdemeanor. Bond set at \$7,000.

Raymundo Sanchez, 32, Bluffton; operating a vehicle while intoxicated with a passenger under 18, a Level 6 felony, and operating with an ACE of .15 or more, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$5,000.

Hugo Alvarez Jimenez, 18, Fort Wayne; operating without ever obtaining a license, a Class C misdemeanor. Booked and released.

Baltazar Vidal, 28, Bluffton; operating without ever obtaining a license, a Class C misdemeanor. Booked and released.

April Mae Mahon, 51, Bluffton; possession of methamphetamine, a Level 5 felony, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor. No bond set.

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American Legion breakfast on Saturday

The American Legion Post 111 will host its monthly all-you-can-eat breakfast from 8-10 a.m. Saturday, July 27. The cost is \$11 for adults, \$5 for children 12 and under, and free for children under 5 years-old.

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.

Lower Salamonie Field Day: Piecing Together Soil Health

Minimize Disturbance Maximize Biodiversity
Maximize Presence of Living Roots Maximize Soil Cover

Thursday, August 1st 2024
4 PM to 7:30 PM
Chester Township Fire Department
9378 S 300 W Poneto, IN 46781

No fee to attend, a light meal will be provided. Please RSVP for meal count:
Lynne Huffman, Wells Co. SWCD
260-824-1930 ext. 3
Lynne.Huffman@in.nacdn.net

SPEAKERS
Brian Towner
Tonner Precision Services - Equipment Modification
Jonathan Patterson
Crop Performance - Nutrient Placing & Efficiency
Chris Steele
New Heights Ag - Drone
Sara Day
NRCS - Soil Health

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
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Lower Salamonie River Watershed 319
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The real threat to democracy

"In a democratic republic, the organs of state are separate and may even at times work at cross-purposes, with one acting as a balance for the other. In an autocracy, these organs must be deprived of their autonomy ..."

These words are taken from the preface of "The Sons of Caesar: Imperial Rome's First Dynasty" by Philip Matyszak, one of the A-list historians in my uncontrollable reading pile. The book in a nutshell is a history of how and why the Roman Republic, one of the prototypes for our American republic, succumbed to autocracy under a military dictatorship of the Julian-Claudian clan of emperors in the first century A. D.

As an avocational student of history, I see frightening parallels between ancient republican Rome and America's current events: Incitement of urban mobs to violence, attempting to disrupt constitutional processes, prosecution of officeholders upon leaving office and, the point of this essay, the attempt to overthrow the very constitutional checks and balances designed to safeguard democracy.

The goal of this intemperate and dangerous anti-Court rhetoric is to destroy the independence of our court system, put in place to protect our liberties against government overreach and usurpation of illegal power. Its independence is also threatened by proposed legislation to alter its composition through court-packing schemes, term limits for justices and even impeachment proceedings.

This is not an entirely new phenomenon. The Warren court was not popular among us conservatives during my formative years. More than a handful of decisions by the courts of Warren, Burger, Rehnquist and even Roberts were deemed constitutionally wrong and politically outrageous at the time. Yet the public outrage never reached the level of vitriol we are seeing now. The private homes of justices were not picketed, the personal ethics of justices or their spouses were not publicly challenged and there was no orchestrated campaign by those of the other two branches to delegitimize the Court.

Things have changed and not for the better.

Governmental agencies and officials naturally lust for more power. Lord Acton knew whereof he spoke when he warned against corruption when unchecked power is grabbed. The courts, at least those in a representative democracy, are charged with enforcing the limits placed on governmental entities, limits between them under the separation of powers doctrine and between the power lusters and the citizenry.

A federal district judge in Texas saw this clearly when he ruled recently that the federal law prohibiting home whiskey distilling was unconstitutional. "Indeed, the Constitution is written to prevent societal amnesia of the defined limits it places on this government of and by the people. That is where the judiciary must declare when its coequal branches overstep their Constitutional authority."

There is a reason that federal judges are not subjected to election and reelection campaigns. Article III of the Constitution states that federal judges "shall hold their Office during good Behavior." During good behavior does not mean being politically popular per opinion polls, let alone pandering to the mob. And it absolutely does not mean their being frog-marched to politically acceptable decisions by dictates from Congress or the White House.

Alexander Hamilton, in Federalist #78 and following, made the case for an independent judiciary. His focus was on preserving the rights of "the people" even when the legislative branch usurped them in violation of the Constitution. Congress may be popularly elected but it does not have an absolute grant of power. Hamilton wasn't alone in advancing this argument. His partner in the Federalist Papers, James Madison, wrote several explaining the separation of powers doctrine and the equality of the branches.

So how "bad" is the Roberts court in the progressive eye? Horrific, if one were to believe the rhetoric blasted from the Beltway. But what are the facts?

Several weeks ago the Wall Street Journal analyzed the Roberts Court's record of decisions. About one-quarter of the decisions were unanimous but the 6-3 decisions were not always from the same six justices. The most conservative federal circuit court was overturned more often than the most liberal. Textualism and originalism were the common theme, and not just from the Trump appointees.

Whoops. As Patrick Moynihan was fond of saying, "You are entitled to your opinion. But you are not entitled to your own facts."

After the unsuccessful assassination attempt on Donald Trump, both presumptive presidential candidates promised to ratchet down the inflammatory rhetoric. Let's hope they do, but I am not sanguine.

The simple fact is that the Supreme Court must perforce be unpopular with the president and the majority party in Congress or it is not doing its job. It is the Dutch boy's hand in the dike. If its finger is yanked out, who knows how much damage the flood will cause to our liberties. Actually, history instructs us. Just look to first century Rome.

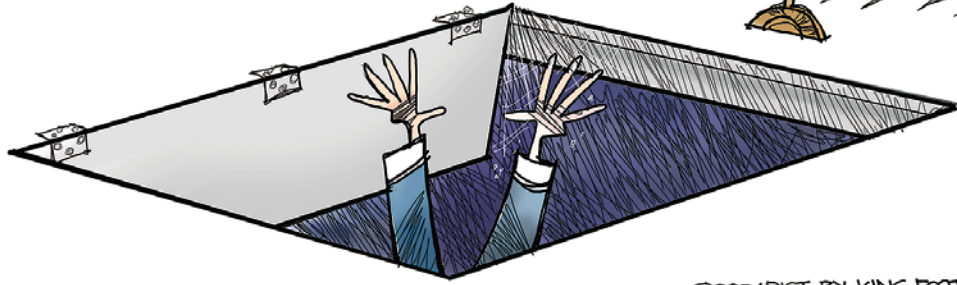
Mark Franke, an adjunct scholar of the Indiana Policy Review, is formerly an associate vice chancellor at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne.



Mark Franke

Hoosier Opinions

BIDEN DROPS OUT...



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Democrats, fear not an open convention

In 1924, Democrats convened in New York for what became history's longest presidential nominating convention. With 103 ballots over 16 days, they selected former congressman and ambassador John W. Davis. He was shellacked by President Calvin Coolidge (382 to 136 in the electoral college).

A century later, Democrats face what seems to, but should not, rattle them: the prospect of an old-fashioned deliberative convention, rather than a modern one that merely ratifies decisions taken in states' primaries and caucuses. President Biden, in what we may hope is the last irresponsible act of his irresponsibly prolonged public career, has said, in effect, to convention delegates and voters: If you enjoyed my presidency (polls indicate that an American majority has not enjoyed it), I urge the convention to nominate Vice President Harris. So, let's recapitulate the Democrats' path into today's political cul-de-sac.

Biden's 1988 presidential quest foundered five months before the Iowa caucuses. In 2008, he lasted until Jan. 3, finishing fifth in Iowa with less than 1 percent of the vote. In 2020, following dismal results in Iowa (fourth) and New Hampshire (fifth), he limped into South Carolina, where 56 percent of Democratic primary participants would be Black and he could leverage his party's established religion - identity politics. He promised a Black female Supreme Court justice. And for a running mate, he wound up with Kamala Harris, whose futility in national politics had already been Bidenesque.

Her candidacy for the 2020 nomination sputtered to extinction 62 days before Iowans cast the first selection votes. Her only memorable moment was when she accused Biden of insufficient enthusiasm for an unpopular and unproductive social policy: forced busing in pursuit of racially balanced public schools. Perhaps even when Biden chose her, he could not remember this insult.

An English person once said of another, "He has risen without a trace." If only that could be said of Harris, the helium candidate, lighter than air. The eerie strangeness of her public manderings will live as long as YouTube enables the savoring of her streams of semiconsciousness about space, school buses, broadband in Louisiana, Poland and NATO's northern flank, nations working together by working together, the border ("We have a secure border") and equity ("Equitable treatment means we all end up in the same place").

Perhaps delusions of adequacy disincline her to prepare, or even think, before speaking. Democratic

delegates who convene in Chicago should think before possibly handing to her the nuclear launch codes. And they should read their party's Rule 13.J: "Delegates elected to the national convention pledged to a presidential candidate shall in all good conscience reflect the sentiments of those who elected them" (emphasis added). Shall, not may. It is a duty.

And spare us doubly silly sermons about how Biden's delegates consented to him, and are his property to dispose of. The noun "consent" comes with an implicit adjective preceding it: "informed." Voters who supported Biden in primaries were misinformed by him and his party about something germane: his evaporating faculties.

Ira Gershwin nailed it: "The age of miracles hadn't passed." Miraculously, the Democratic Party, although increasingly defined by its off-putting progressive minority, contains a slew of plausible presidents: governors Andy Beshear of Kentucky, Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania, Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, Jared Polis of Colorado and, especially, former Rhode Island governor and current Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo. They are executives who have run things (states) larger than a Senate office. (Remember this column's inexplicably forgotten proposal for a constitutional amendment: "No senator or former senator shall be eligible to be president.")

Today, however, two bruited names are governors unsuited to lead this embarrassed nation, which has suffered enough: Illinois' J.B. Pritzker, who is as rich as Donald Trump pretends to be, and could finance his campaign. And California's Gavin Newsom, who should constantly murmur "Thank God for Illinois," the only state more disastrously misgoverned than his.

After Biden's most epic pratfall (plagiarizing, in 1987, a British politician's autobiography), he said, clairvoyantly, "I've done some dumb things, and I'll do dumb things again." Perhaps his latest was clever dumbness - vengeance of Shakespearean subtlety. To the many Democrats - former colleagues - who forced his withdrawal, he proffers Harris's candidacy, giving it whatever momentum his endorsement imparts. He could be saying: "You ingrates deserve this."

The Democratic Party now has an opportunity to make partial amends for Biden's 2024 candidacy. It has, however, done some dumb things, and will do others.

georgewill@washpost.com



George Will

Biden's withdrawal doesn't mean Harris automatically succeeds him

What is amusing and simultaneously contributes to the cynicism some feel about politics is how many Democrats claimed until recently that President Biden was a different man in private than the mumbling, stumbling man everyone could hear and see in public. These include Vice President Kamala Harris, whom Biden apparently forgot to endorse in his withdrawal statement and then quickly tweeted his support of her as his successor. Harris should be asked about that contradiction and whether she lied about Biden's fitness.

Biden and other Democrats have been saying former president Donald Trump would be "a threat to democracy" should he win another term, but how democratic is it to potentially deny the choice of Democrat voters who selected him as their party's nominee should they decide to do so at their convention next month?

Biden and Trump traded accusations Sunday, each calling each other the worst president in history.

Speaker Mike Johnson previewed what could be the main campaign theme for the GOP against Harris should she be the nominee: "The party's prospects are no better now with Vice President Kamala Harris, who co-owns the disastrous policy failures of the Biden administration. As second in command and a completely inept border czar, Harris has been a gleeful accomplice - not



Cal Thomas

only in the destruction of American sovereignty, security, and prosperity, but also in the largest political cover-up in U.S. history. She has known for as long as anyone of his incapacity to serve." Johnson called on Biden to resign, but that is unlikely to happen, especially since it would give time for Harris to gain experience as president.

Harris may be the only person on the national political level capable of making Biden look articulate. Republicans are likely to create ads detailing her numerous nonsensical remarks. Just a few include: "It is time for us to be doing what we have been doing and that time is every day."

Or this one: "The governor and I, we were all doing a tour of the library here and talking about the significance of the passage of time, right, the significance of the passage of time. So, when you think about it, there is great significance to the passage of time in terms of what we need to do to lay these wires. What we need to do to create these jobs. And there is such great significance to the passage of time when we think about a day in the life of our children."

Beyond the likely mocking by Republicans are facts. Harris cannot separate herself from the record of the Biden-Harris administration. While Biden's age has disappeared as an issue, their record has not. Harris'

level of incompetence can only follow his, if she wins the nomination. That is not a given.

The parallels between Biden's withdrawal statement and that of Lyndon Johnson's in 1968 are remarkably similar. Then, LBJ, whose approval ratings were also in decline, largely due to the Vietnam War and anti-war protests, claimed his withdrawal was for a higher purpose - peace. On Sunday, Biden listed what he considers his successes as president, as did LBJ. Among them was his repeated assertion that the economy was in ruins when he became president. Tell that to people who were paying less for just about everything four years ago when inflation was 1.4 percent, not the 9 percent Biden claims.

The raucous Democratic Convention (also in Chicago in 1968, as is this year's gathering) would follow Johnson's withdrawal with images of police beating protesters and discord on the convention floor. History might repeat. The party's eventual nominee, Hubert Humphrey, lost to Richard Nixon in the fall election. Humphrey tried to separate himself somewhat from Johnson's Vietnam policies, but failed because as part of the administration he was tied to those policies. Harris now faces a similar problem, or she can repeat previous falsehoods and hope Biden's media enablers won't expose them.

Could this unpredictable political season become even more volatile? Probably.

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We have this in common: if you are breathing, you are aging...now that's a comfort

Sitting here on a Saturday, I am surprised and somewhat bewildered to realize that July 2024 is almost completely done and near the very end, I will turn 76. I knew that if I lived long enough, I would eventually be 76, but I have to be blunt here: I never really believed it. Call me naive, call me proficiently unaware, call me whatever (I have probably heard it before), but age is a curious thing to my mind. I do realize that it is totally natural, but why did I never figure out that everything in my life would change? And how the heck did 76 years manage to pass so quickly?

Am I still the same person I was at 20? Well, probably except for the facial skin that is sagging, the rather disturbing flesh thing that swings from my upper arm if I lift my arm or attempt to wave, or my hands where the veins are so prominent, I wonder if at some point they will just up and explode. Yep, my body has definitely changed in the course of this aging process. I can live

with most of the alterations with only a modicum of concern, but what causes me the most dismay is that I do believe that my body has somehow betrayed me.

Doctor appointments have become a regular part of my schedule. I take a couple of meds that I distinctly remember as being for "the elderly." Also, I have been informed, in only the kindest of ways, that my hearing may need some attention. It takes about 20-25 steps when I get out of a chair or a car for my hips and knees to function with any efficiency. I no longer like to fly, drive at night, be in large groups, go to a movie theater, wait in lines, get stuck in traffic, hear some of the bull excrement that floods the TV almost constantly, and I find that I suffer from having a noticeably less amount of patience with other humans. Dogs are fine, it's humans that cause the problem for me.

I do not want to concentrate on only my ailments and mental decline, so I recently rediscovered some wonderful words of observation and life written by a 90 year old woman from Cleveland, Ohio. I am going to share some



1. Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
2. When in doubt, just take the next small step.
3. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
4. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your spouse, parents, and friends will. Stay in touch.
5. Pay off your credit cards every month.
6. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.
7. Cry with someone. It's more healing than crying alone.
8. It's ok to get angry with God. He can take it.
9. Save for retirement starting with your first paycheck.
10. When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.
11. Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present. (This one smacked me squarely in the face.)
12. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
13. Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.
14. Get rid of anything that

15. Whatever doesn't kill you, really does make you stronger.
16. It's never too late to have a happy childhood. But the second one is up to you and no one else.
17. When it comes to going after what you love in life, don't take no for an answer.
18. Burn the candles, use the nice sheets, wear the fancy lingerie. Don't save it for a special occasion. Today is special.
19. Over prepare, then go with the flow.
20. The most important sex organ is the brain.
21. No one is in charge of your happiness but you.
22. Frame every so-called disaster with these words: in five years, will this matter?"
23. Always choose life.
24. Forgiveness: give it to others; accept it when it is given to you. And forgive yourself.
25. What other people think of you is none of your business.
26. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
27. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
28. Believe in miracles.
29. Don't audit life. Show up and make the most of it right now.
30. All that truly matters in the end is that you loved and were loved.
31. Get outside every day. Life is waiting everywhere.

32. Life isn't tied up with a bow, but it's still a gift.
 33. Happiness is a choice not a result. It does not come to you. It can only come from you.
 It all sounds so incredibly sensible and logical when enumerated and written by someone else. But nowhere does anyone who has lived more than 8 years, say it is easy. Am I wrong?
Here's the thing: This moment is the only one we are assured of having. When you think about doing something, ask yourself if it is worth a day of your life, because that is what it costs. We will never get the opportunity to relive that day or any other one. Each day is the most valuable thing we have. Life is a virtual cornucopia of irony. Perhaps one of the most meaningful for me is this... when I know who or what I am willing to die for, then I know exactly what I live for. Deal with that particular life-irony in whatever way works for you, and I wish you well always and in all ways.

bkreigh@adamswells.com

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.

Programs at the 4-H cabin



All about raptors

Visitors to the Wells County 4-H Fair could check out "raptors" at the Cabin as volunteers from the Soarin' Hawk Raptors Rehabilitation Center brought four of them to the fair (Eastern Screech Owl, Kestrel, Barred Owl and a Red Tail Hawk). Above Cheryl Mudrack was explaining features of the Barred Owl named Peabody. (Photos by Barbara Barbieri)



Meet "Peabody," a Barred Owl up closer.



Meet "Ryan," a Red Tail Hawk being held by Steve Bonham.



With the help of a volunteer from the audience the differences between raptors and humans were demonstrated including: raptors have bigger eyes, more sensitive ears, talons instead of feet, wings for flying and a beak instead of lips.



Lydia Ade, Interpretive Naturalist at Ouabache State Park

Owl information

People interested in Owls attended the Thursday evening program at the 4-H Cabin during the recent 4-H Fair to learn all about them from Lydia Ade, Interpretive Naturalist at Ouabache State Park. She brought two stuffed owls with her as she told about their unique features which include: large eyes for better seeing, different ear heights for extra good hearing, beaks for tearing their food and fringed feathers for silent flying.

Christmas in July at Ouabache State Park



Meet & greet

Wearing his summer attire Santa held court with his fans both outside and inside the Rustic Oak Shelter Saturday at Ouabache State Park, as the Friends of the Park sponsored the Christmas in July event. All ages of "youngsters" posed for photos with Santa and little Kingston Howard, at right in Santa's lap, took a little snooze. (Photos by Barbara Barbieri)



Fun without snow

Above, before visiting with Santa Jeremiah Cordova tried his hand at the Snow Ball Toss with the help of his Dad and volunteer Jenni Klaus. Below, park-themed Christmas ornaments and ceramic items were offered for sale as a fund raiser for the Friends of the Park group.



Snowball toss

A variety of games, using fake snowballs as ammunition, allowed young visitors to practice their throwing skills. Taking careful aim with their snowballs were Percy and Aurora Kite, at left, under the watchful eye of volunteer Jenni Klaus.



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 Friday, July 26th 6pm & 8:50pm
 Saturday, July 27th
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 Sunday, July 28th 2pm & 4:50pm

Twisters

Thursday, July 25th 6:20pm
 Friday, July 26th 6:15pm & 9pm
 Saturday, July 27th
 2:45pm, 5:45pm & 8:45pm
 Sunday, July 28th 2:15pm & 5pm

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Bulls, Blackhawks set \$7 billion renovation around United Center

By ANDREW SELIGMAN
AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — The owners of the NBA's Chicago Bulls and NHL's Blackhawks unveiled a \$7 billion plan Tuesday to replace the parking lots surrounding the United Center with green space, mixed-income housing, a music hall and more.

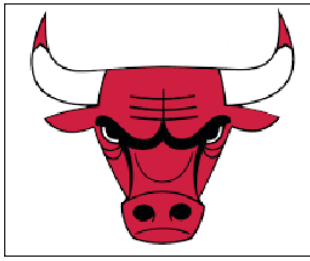
The 1901 Project, touted as the largest private investment in Chicago's West Side, is being spearheaded by the Reinsdorf and Wirtz families, who own the arena. It would be built in phases on more than 55 acres of privately owned land over about a decade-long period starting as soon as next spring if approved by the city.

"The 1901 Project represents a continuation of our families' commitment to the future of Chicago's West Side," Bulls CEO Michael Reinsdorf said in a statement. "This investment will create a thriving, intercon-

nected neighborhood, delivering significant benefits and resources to the community we have long called home."

The first phase calls for a 6,000-seat theater, a multi-level parking facility with more than 10 acres of public green space on its rooftop, more pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and bike lanes, and hotel and retail space. Plans for future phases include housing "that spans various unit sizes and includes affordable, market rate and luxury housing" as well as transportation enhancements.

"While this is just the beginning, we have already started to engage with our neighbors



and community partners to identify areas of opportunity for community wealth generation from this private investment,"

Blackhawks CEO Danny Wirtz said in a statement. "We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to expand on a legacy that makes all of Chicago proud."

Alderman Walter Burnett said the project requires city and community feedback. He also expressed support for the plans.

"I am excited for the investment on the West Side, which is often overlooked for this level of private investment. It's our time," he said in a statement.

After 3 straight losses to Michigan, Ohio State coach Ryan Day finds himself on the coaching hot seat

By MICHAEL MAROT
AP Sports Writer

• Similar story on Page A2
INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Ohio State coach Ryan Day sounds confident and comfortable discussing this year's football team.

Never mind the three Michigan banners hanging over his head and slightly behind the podium where he's speaking at the first of three Big Ten media days in Indianapolis — or that it's a not-so-subtle reminder about the looming stakes when he heads home.

Yes, despite winning 39 league games since taking over one of college football's most storied programs in 2018, the 45-year-old coach finds himself still answering questions about the three losses burning at the heart of the program — all to archrival Michigan.

"Our guys know what the expectation is. You've heard some of them say what their goals are," Day said Tuesday at Lucas Oil Stadium. "We want to win the rivalry game, be right in this stadium right here and win this Big Ten championship and win a national championship."

Day comes here each year and reminds everyone what's on the list and in the proper order. In Columbus, Ohio, beating Michigan ranks above anything else.

So losing three straight, each of which sent Michigan to a Big Ten title game, still ruffles the fan base. And even though the Wolverines cashed in on last year's opportunity by winning a third straight conference crown and their first national championship since sharing the crown with Nebraska in 1997, many Buckeyes fans contended it was tainted by the Wolverines' signal-stealing scheme.

Still, it's made no easier for fans to accept, or for Day's job security.

Despite going 11-2 each of the past three seasons, despite making three playoff appearances and playing for a national title, despite reaching New Year's Six bowl bids all five of Day's full seasons as coach, he finds himself squarely on the hot seat, this fall.

Day understands why it's this way as do his players.

"A bunch of junk came out after we lost to those guys a couple of times, about him not caring, which couldn't be more wrong," all-conference defensive end Jack Sawyer said. "He does get unfairly criticized at times, but he knows what he signed up to do and we all signed up to do the same thing and we've fallen short as well. If anything, it doesn't come back on him, it comes back



Ryan Day

on us as players."

It's a key reason one dozen players, including Sawyer, opted to return to campus rather than leave early for the NFL — to correct a perceived wrong.

And this just might be the Buckeyes year.

Ohio State heads into the fall dubbed by many as the pre-season conference favorite. A media panel selected four of the 12 Buckeyes returnees to be the best at their respective positions this season. Plus, Day has handed former college and NFL head coach Chip Kelly play-calling duties and has added quarterback Will Howard, who threw 24 touchdown passes and 10 interceptions last season at Kansas State.

Day believes Howard's mobility and Kelly's innovative offensive style could change everything in Columbus, Ohio.

"It starts with the quarterback and then it goes to the offensive line, the running backs, the receivers, and how that all gets put together," Day said. "I think he (Kelly) would tell you he's very excited about what he has in terms of the talent level on the perimeter, up front, the running backs, the quarterback options, the tight ends."

Defensively, the Buckeyes look even stronger after allowing the second-fewest points per game nationally last season, 11.23, behind only Michigan.

Nine starters return from that group starting with Sawyer and cornerback Denzel Burke. Sawyer played high school football in suburban Columbus and dreamed of the day he'd help Ohio State defeat Michigan. Burke still does.

"You can't really leave without some gold pants," Burke said, referring to the prized trophy Ohio State hands out for beating the Wolverines.

Michigan isn't scheduled to appear in Indy until Thursday and will largely be in reload mode.

The defending champs return few starters and a new coach, Sherrone Moore, after Jim Harbaugh returned to the NFL.

For Day, that just means the stakes are even higher.

Beat Michigan and all will be well. Lose again, and it's conceivable Day won't be around to see another banner added to the Lucas Oil Stadium collection.

"I'd be lying if I told you it didn't burn a fire inside of us," Sawyer said. "It's definitely something we think about. We know what's at stake when we play those guys. All of our goals and aspirations for the season ride on that one game in November. They hate us, we hate them. That's the way it's got to be."

Ramírez homers, Guardians end 3-game slide with win over Tigers

By TOM WITHERS
AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — José Ramírez homered for the first time in July and drove in two runs as the Cleveland Guardians ended their three-game losing streak with a 5-4 win over the Detroit Tigers on Tuesday night.

Ramírez connected in the fifth inning off Joey Wentz (0-2) to help the AL Central-leading Guardians get just their third win in 10 games. Ramírez added an RBI single in the sixth.

Steven Kwan and rookie Jhonkensy Noel also hit homers for Cleveland, which has been in an offensive rut for weeks. The Guardians came in having scored two or fewer runs in six of their past eight games.

Wenceel Pérez hit a two-run homer for the Tigers.

Trailing 5-2, Detroit scored two in the seventh on a sacrifice fly and Zach McKinstry's heads-up baserunning.

McKinstry, who doubled with one out, was on third and alertly broke for the plate when Guardians reliever Hunter Gaddis tried to pick Matt Vierling off first and his throw got stuck under the Detroit center fielder's body.

Rookie Cade Smith (5-1) pitched a hitless 1 2/3 innings, Scott Barlow stranded the tying run in the eighth and Emmanuel Clase worked a perfect ninth for his league-leading 30th save. He now has 140 saves with Cleveland, passing Bob Wickman for the second most in club history.

Ramírez's first homer since June 29 put the Guardians ahead 3-2 in the fifth.

The All-Star third baseman fell behind 1-2 against Wentz before yanking a fastball over the wall in left for his 24th homer, ending his long-ball drought after 74 at-bats.

Cleveland tacked on two more runs in the sixth on rookie Angel Martínez's sacrifice fly and a two-out RBI single by Ramírez.

Noel tied it 2-2 in the fourth with a towering homer onto the pedestrian plaza in left. Noel jumped on the first pitch from Alex Faedo, the second of five pitchers used by Tigers manager A.J. Hinch in a bullpen game.

Pérez put the Tigers ahead 2-1 in the fourth with a shot to right-center that followed Mark Canha's one-out double.

Kwan, who has led the majors in hitting for several weeks, connected for Cleveland's first homer in five games in the third.

Green Valley Golf League results

George Thomas, Doug Scher, Rick Murphy and Rick Oatess were a part of the winning team at Green Valley's Tuesday Golf League. The group shot a -13 on the day.

Steve Folk shot the low gross of 37, Joe Baur had the low net of 28, Ron Bleins the closest to pin and Arlen Pitts the longest putt.

NCAA's WBIT is returning to Indy for semifinals and title game

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — The semifinals and championship game of the Women's Basketball Invitation Tournament will return to Indianapolis in 2025, the NCAA announced Tuesday.

The games will be played in Hinkle Fieldhouse on the Butler campus. The semifinals are March 31 and the title game April 2. First- and second-round games and quarterfinals will continue to be played at campus sites.

The NCAA created the 32-team WBIT as part of its response to an independent 2021 gender-equity report that found there were longstanding disparities between men's and

women's postseason opportunities.

Illinois won the inaugural tournament, beating Villanova 71-57 last March.

"Indianapolis did an outstanding job hosting our inaugural Women's Basketball Invitation Tournament," said Lynn Holzman, vice president of women's basketball. "We are thrilled to be returning to Hinkle Fieldhouse in 2025. The enthusiasm and support from the local community for women's basketball in Indianapolis continues to grow. We are excited to build on the momentum for all of women's basketball and from this past year's WBIT as we look forward to crowning a 2025 WBIT champion."

Browns receiver Amari Cooper restructures final year of contract

By TOM WITHERS
AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — Cleveland Browns wide receiver Amari Cooper has restructured the final year of his contract, adding \$5 million of incentives to his \$20 million base, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Cooper held out of mandatory minicamp to protest for more money. But he reported on time for training camp after agreeing to the new deal, said the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the contract was still being finalized.

He's scheduled to be a free agent after this season.

Cooper has been the Browns' top receiver since he was acquired in a 2022 trade from the Dallas Cowboys, who were willing to part with him after four seasons and

signing him to a five-year, \$100 million contract.

The 30-year-old has caught 150 passes for 2,410 yards and 14 touchdowns in his two seasons in Cleveland.

His contract situation had the potential to be a major distraction for the Browns, who made the playoffs last season and have higher expectations in 2024. But he's in camp and will be on the field Thursday when the Browns practice for the second year in a row at the Greenbrier Resort in West Virginia.

Cooper was fined more than \$100,000 for missing minicamp and was facing daily fines of \$50,000 if he held out of training camp.

The former Alabama standout — and No. 4 overall pick in 2015 — caught 72 passes for a career-high 1,250 yards last season while making his fifth Pro Bowl.

NFL's expansion to an 18-game regular season seems inevitable

By ROB MAADDI
AP Pro Football Writer

An 18-game NFL season seems inevitable.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell has already stated he favors expanding the regular season by another game. Now, NFLPA executive director Lloyd Howell says the players' union is open to an agreement before the current labor deal expires after the 2030 season.

"We have talked at a very, very, very high level superficially, with a recognition... about, 'Yeah, this is something that we should be talking about. And we should really kick the tires and understand what else goes into that decision-making process,'" Howell told Washington Post reporters and editors during a meeting Monday at the NFLPA's headquarters in Washington, D.C. "Where does the 18th game come from? I think the foregone conclusion is well, you just grab it, like, in what would otherwise be (preseason games) in August. You play it forward. But these are details that really need to be fleshed out. But, again, there are other economic, health and safety matters that also need to be clear to our members before there's ever an agreement about an 18th game."

Of course, it's going to take a lot of convincing to get most of the league's players on board with another game. But the NFL usually gets what the NFL wants. The league persuaded the union to allow a 17th game in the last round of CBA discussions and the schedule was expanded in 2021.

Many players felt the NFLPA should have extracted more concessions during the last labor negotiations so the 2020 CBA only passed by a slim margin of votes, 1,019 to 959.

More games equals more money for everyone. Ultimately, more money gets most deals done in sports and business.

Under the current CBA, the players' share of league revenue increased from 47% to 48% starting in 2021. A "media kicker" that went into effect with the 17-game regular-season schedule grew that share to 48.5% based on an increase in revenue from the league's new television contracts. The maximum amount the players' could've reached was 48.8%. They're going to want at least 50% to add another game.

"The simple fact of the matter is when you have a growing enterprise and there are opportunities within that intervening period of time where progress could be made and you could tweak the existing CBA legal document, why wouldn't you want to do that?" Howell told the Post's staff. "So whether it's field surface, whether it's the (offseason) schedule, if you want to call that formal — I call it bargaining. I call it amendments. I call it updates to what is now a living document called a CBA. Yeah, I want to be able to have our membership in a position to jump on it when we can, not wait until their playing days are done and it's like you go through the cycle all over again."

The preseason schedule decreased from four games to three when the 17th game was added. It would likely drop to two for an 18th game. Many coaches would have a problem with that because it limits opportunities for younger players to gain game experience and earn roster spots in some cases.

"If you reduce a preseason game, you have all these young guys you're trying to develop, and you have to have them every year," Detroit Lions coach Dan Campbell

(Continued on Page A2)

News-Banner Scoreboard

BASKETBALL

WNBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	21	4	.840	—
Connecticut	18	6	.750	2½
Indiana	11	15	.423	10½
Chicago	10	14	.417	10½
Atlanta	7	17	.292	13½
Washington	6	19	.240	15

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	17	8	.680	—
Seattle	17	8	.680	—
Las Vegas	16	8	.667	½
Phoenix	13	12	.520	4
Los Angeles	6	18	.250	10½
Dallas	6	19	.240	11

Sunday's Games

No games scheduled.

Monday's Games

No games scheduled.

Tuesday's Games

No games scheduled.

Wednesday's Games

No games scheduled.

Thursday's Games

No games scheduled.

BASEBALL

MLB

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Baltimore	60	40	.600	—
New York	60	43	.583	1½
Boston	53	46	.535	6½
Tampa Bay	51	50	.505	9½
Toronto	45	55	.450	15

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	60	40	.600	—
Minnesota	55	45	.550	5
Kansas City	56	46	.549	5
Detroit	50	52	.490	11
Chicago	27	76	.262	34½

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	53	49	.520	—
Houston	52	48	.520	—
Texas	49	52	.485	3½
Los Angeles	43	57	.430	9
Oakland	40	62	.392	13

Monday's Games

N.Y. Yankees 9, Tampa Bay 1
 Detroit 8, Cleveland 2
 Minnesota 7, Philadelphia 2
 Texas 4, Chicago White Sox 3, 10
 innings
 Kansas City 10, Arizona 4
 Oakland 4, Houston 0
 Colorado 9, Boston 8, 12
 L.A. Angels 3, Seattle 1

Tuesday's Games

Cleveland 5, Detroit 4
 Miami 6, Baltimore 3
 Tampa Bay 4, Toronto 2
 Texas 3, Chicago White Sox 2
 N.Y. Mets 3, N.Y. Yankees 2
 Philadelphia 3, Minnesota 0
 Arizona 6, Kansas City 2
 Boston at Colorado, late
 Houston at Oakland, late
 L.A. Angels at Seattle, late

Wednesday's Games

Philadelphia (Nola 11-4) at Minne-
 sota (TBD), 1:10 p.m.
 Boston (Pivetta 4-6) at Colorado
 (Quattril 6-7), 3:10 p.m.
 Houston (Brown 8-6) at Oakland
 (Sears 7-7), 3:37 p.m.
 L.A. Angels (Canning 3-10) at
 Seattle (Castillo 8-10), 3:40 p.m.
 Baltimore (McDermott 0-0) at
 Miami (Cabrera 1-3), 6:40 p.m.
 Detroit (Flaherty 7-5) at Cleveland
 (Bbee 8-4), 6:40 p.m.

Midwest League

High-A Midwest League Glance

N.Y. Mets (Manaea 6-4) at N.Y.
 Yankees (Cole 3-1), 7:05 p.m.
 Tampa Bay (Eflin 5-7) at Toronto
 (Rodriguez 1-3), 7:07 p.m.
 Chicago White Sox (Flexen 2-9) at
 Texas (Eovaldi 6-4), 8:05 p.m.
 Arizona (Nelson 7-6) at Kansas
 City (Wacha 7-6), 8:10 p.m.

Thursday's Games

Baltimore at Miami, 12:10 p.m.
 Detroit at Cleveland, 1:10 p.m.
 Chicago White Sox at Texas, 2:35
 p.m.
 Tampa Bay at Toronto, 3:07 p.m.
 Oakland at L.A. Angels, 9:38 p.m.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	64	37	.634	—
Atlanta	54	45	.545	9
New York	52	48	.520	11½
Washington	47	54	.465	17
Miami	36	65	.356	28

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	57	43	.570	—
St. Louis	53	48	.525	4½
Pittsburgh	51	50	.505	6½
Chicago	49	53	.480	9
Cincinnati	48	53	.475	9½

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	60	41	.594	—
San Diego	53	50	.510	8
San Francisco	48	53	.475	12
Colorado	37	64	.366	23

Monday's Games

Pittsburgh 2, St. Louis 1
 N.Y. Mets 6, Miami 4
 Cincinnati 4, Atlanta 1
 Minnesota 7, Philadelphia 2
 Chicago Cubs 3, Milwaukee 1
 Kansas City 10, Arizona 4
 Colorado 9, Boston 8, 12
 L.A. Dodgers 3, San Francisco 2

Tuesday's Games

San Diego 4, Washington 0
 St. Louis 2, Pittsburgh 1
 Miami 6, Baltimore 3
 N.Y. Mets 3, N.Y. Yankees 2
 Philadelphia 3, Minnesota 0
 Arizona 6, Kansas City 2
 Milwaukee at Chicago Cubs, late
 Boston at Colorado, late
 San Francisco at L.A. Dodgers, late
 Cincinnati at Atlanta, p.p.d.

Wednesday's Games

Cincinnati (Montas 4-8) at Atlanta
 (Winans 0-1), 12:20 p.m., 1st game
 St. Louis (Liberatore 2-2) at Pitts-
 burgh (Pérez 1-5), 12:35 p.m.
 Philadelphia (Nola 11-4) at Minne-
 sota (TBD), 1:10 p.m.
 Milwaukee (TBD) at Chicago Cubs
 (Steele 2-4), 2:20 p.m.
 Boston (Pivetta 4-6) at Colorado
 (Quattril 6-7), 3:10 p.m.
 Cincinnati (Martinez 3-5) at Atlanta
 (Sale 13-3), 6:05 p.m., 2nd game
 Baltimore (McDermott 0-0) at Miami
 (Cabrera 1-3), 6:40 p.m.
 San Diego (Waldron 5-9) at Wash-
 ington (Parker 5-5), 6:45 p.m.
 N.Y. Mets (Manaea 6-4) at N.Y. Yan-
 kees (Cole 3-1), 7:05 p.m.
 Arizona (Nelson 7-6) at Kansas City
 (Wacha 7-6), 8:10 p.m.
 San Francisco (Ray 0-0) at L.A.
 Dodgers (Glasnow 8-5), 10:10 p.m.

Thursday's Games

San Diego at Washington, 12:05
 p.m.
 Baltimore at Miami, 12:10 p.m.
 San Francisco at L.A. Dodgers,
 4:10 p.m.
 Atlanta at N.Y. Mets, 7:10 p.m.

Midwest League

High-A Midwest League Glance

Monday's Games

No games.

Tuesday's Games

Dayton 12, Fort Wayne 7

Wednesday's Games

Fort Wayne at Dayton, 7:05 p.m.

Thursday's Games

Fort Wayne at Dayton, 7:05 p.m.

TRANSACTIONS

Tuesday's Transactions

BASEBALL

Major League Baseball

American League

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Agreed to terms with LHPs Hagen Smith, Blake Larson, Justin Sinibaldi, Liam Paddock and Nick Pinot, RHPs Phil Fox, Aaron Combs, Jack Young, Blake Shephardson, Pierce George, Mason Moore, Lyle Miller-Green, SS Caleb Bonemer, OFs Nick McLain, Casey Saucke, Cole McConnell, Nathan Archer and T.J. McCants, INF Sam Antonacci and C Jackson Appel on minor league contracts. Agreed to terms with free agents Cs Jorge Corona and Grant Magill, INFs Bryce Eblin, Alec Makarewicz and Miguel Santos, RHPs Colton McIntosh and Gray Thomas and SS Grant Smith on minor league contracts.
 KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Signed TWP Jac Caglianone.

MINNESOTA TWINS — Sent RHP

Justin Topa to Fort Myers (FSL) and SS Royce Lewis to St. Paul (IL) on rehab assignments.

NEW YORK YANKEES — Agreed to terms with RHPs Bryce Cunn- ingtonham and Tony Rossi and OF

Joe DeLossantos on minor league contracts.

National League

CHICAGO CUBS — Placed LHP

Luke Little on the 15-day IL, retroac-
 tive to July 13.

CINCINNATI REDS — Agreed to terms with RHPs Trent Hodgson, Will

Cannon, Luke Holman, LHP Tristan Smith and 3B Edwin Rios on minor league contracts. Recalled RHP

Lyon Richardson from Louisville (IL).
 Optioned RHP Casey Legumina to Louisville.

COLORADO ROCKIES — Reinstated

INF/OF Kris Bryant from the 10-day
 IL. Optioned OF Sean Bouchard to
 Albuquerque (PCL).

MIAMI MARLINS — Recalled RHP

Kyle Tyler from Jacksonville (IL).
 Designated RHP Yonny Chirinos for
 assignment.

MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Agreed to terms with 1B

Blake Burke on a minor league contract.

PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Agreed to terms with LHP

Josh Hartle on a minor league contract.

ST. LOUIS CARDINALS — Agreed to terms with SS

J.J. Wetherholt, RHP Brandt Thompson and C Josh Kross on minor league contracts.

SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS — Claimed CF

Derek Hill off waivers from Texas.

WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Recalled LHP

D.J. Herz from Rochester (IL). Optioned RHP Eduardo Salazar to Rochester.

FOOTBALL

CINCINNATI BENGALS — Placed

OT Trent Brown on the active/non-
 football injury (NFI) list.

CLEVELAND BROWNS — Agreed to terms with WR

Amari Cooper on a one-year restructured contract.

GREEN BAY PACKERS — Signed

QB Jacob Eason. Released LS Peter Bowden.

NFL 18-game season

(Continued from Page A1)

said. "You look at what we were able to do with some of our young guys last year, and how important they were to us winning, but there's a process to it. If you don't get them developed or get them enough reps to where they help you, then — that's the only thing. That's what you lose, so there again, we'll make it work. It's a long season right now, and we'll make it work either way."

Many players already want the league to add another bye week because playing football is physical-ly demanding and they want more time to rest and heal their bodies. That extra bye would have to be a major part of negotiations.

"Eighteen games is definitely a big ask. That's not easy adding that extra game," Cincinnati Bengals star quarterback Joe Burrow said. "Obviously, it would be great for revenue, but I feel like adding that bye week, if you're going to have the 18-game schedule, is pretty critical for our bodies. If you keep that first bye

week, and some teams have the bye in Week 5, Week 6, and then you're going 12, 13 games in a row, that's not easy. Probably a Thursday night game thrown in there, too, so that's never easy. Those two byes are pretty critical."

Beyond getting more money through a larger revenue share and an extra game check and an additional bye, the union could seek lifetime healthcare for players. Currently, vested players — guys with at least three credited seasons — receive five additional years of benefits after retirement.

Eliminating funding rules to help make guaranteed contracts more feasible could be another priority for the NFLPA. The current CBA requires owners to pre-fund contract guarantees by putting the entire sum in escrow. Teams argue they can't fully guarantee contracts because of that financial commitment.

"Our membership is interested in a myriad of things before we even get to the number of games: health and safety, field sur-

face, OTA makeup, compensation, what percent of their annual compensation is guaranteed," Howell told the Post. "So there are many things before we get to (the) 18th game. ... It's a negotiable point."

Reducing the preseason schedule to two games and adding an 18th game and a second bye means the Super Bowl would take place on President's Day weekend — a dream scenario for the NFL.

"I mean, 18 games seems kind of lofty right now. ... It just would depend on things," New York Jets tight end Tyler Conklin said. "You hear about how the offseason might change with OTAs and just kind of coming back at the beginning of July or the end of June and just going all the way through the year. I guess there's just so many variables in how they structure that that'll determine, and you're not going to know if you like it until you do it. And once you do it, there's no going back. So, I guess whatever happens, you control what you can control and we'll do it."

Mahomes is a unanimous choice for top spot in AP's QB rankings

By ROB MAADDI

AP Pro Football Writer

Patrick Mahomes has separated himself from all the other quarterbacks.

The three-time Super Bowl MVP was a unanimous choice by The Associated Press for the NFL's No. 1 quarterback in a preseason survey.

A panel of eight AP Pro Football Writers ranked the top five players at QB, basing selections on current status entering the 2024 season. First-place votes were worth 10 points. Second through fifth-place votes were worth 5, 3, 2 and 1 points.

Despite a subpar regular season — by his lofty standards — Mahomes had another exceptional post-season, leading the Kansas City Chiefs to a repeat Super Bowl victory and their third title in five seasons.

Josh Allen, reigning NFL MVP Lamar Jackson, C.J. Stroud and Brock Purdy each received second-place votes.

Aaron Rodgers, Jalen Hurts, Dak Prescott, Tua Tagovailoa, Matthew Staf-

ford and Justin Herbert also received votes.

1. PATRICK MAHOMES, Kansas City Chiefs

Mahomes posted the lowest passer rating (92.6) of his career last season, throwing for 4,183 yards, 27 touchdowns and a career-high 14 interceptions. But he stepped up in the playoffs, leading the Chiefs to a rout over Miami, road wins in Buffalo and Baltimore and an overtime victory in the Super Bowl against San Francisco.

Mahomes only turns 29 in September and already has a chance to become only the fourth quarterback to win four Super Bowls.

2. JOSH ALLEN, Buffalo Bills

Despite being plagued by playoff frustrations, Allen earned the No. 2 spot in the AP rankings with four second-place votes and appearing on seven of eight ballots. Allen threw for 4,306 yards with 29 TDs and a career-high 18 picks last season while also racking up 15 scores.

The Bills have won four

straight AFC East titles but have lost in the divisional round of the playoffs in three consecutive seasons.

3. LAMAR JACKSON, Baltimore Ravens

Jackson was a near-unanimous choice for his second NFL MVP award following an outstanding regular season in which he threw for 3,678 yards and 24 touchdowns and ran for 821 yards and five scores while leading Baltimore to 10 wins over teams that finished with a winning record.

But Jackson and the Ravens lost to Mahomes and the Chiefs in the AFC championship game, a bitter ending to a fantastic season. The Ravens fell to 2-4 in the playoffs under Jackson, who was left off two ballots.

4. JOE BURROW, Cincinnati Bengals

Burrow was slowed by a calf injury at the start of the season before wrist surgery ended his year in November. Still, he earned the No. 4 spot with two third-place votes and three fourth-place selections.

Ohio State, defending champ Michigan, dominate Big Ten's top preseason position honors

By PHILLIP B. WILSON

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Players from defending national champion Michigan and Ohio State claimed seven of the Big Ten's 12 positional honors on Tuesday.

They were selected by a media panel on the first of three conference media days in Indianapolis.

The Buckeyes had four selections — safety Caleb Downs, receiver Emeka Egbuka, running back TreVeyon Henderson and defensive end JT Tuimoloau. The Wolverines selections consisted of defensive tackle Mason Graham, defensive back Will Johnson and tight end Colston Loveland.

"It's preseason, so we haven't done anything yet," Egbuka said. "I'm definitely blessed to be a part of that group, but you've got to put it together on the field. It's an honor, but at the same time, we know what we've got to do."

Dillon Gabriel, who left Oklahoma for Oregon, was named the league's top quarterback. Iowa linebacker Jay Higgins, Penn State defensive end Abdul Carter and Rutgers running back Kyle Monangai rounded out the selections.

Fifty-four players and 18 coaches will be in Indianapolis for the annual media day festivities at Lucas Oil Stadium. Ohio State was one of six schools to open the first day on the three-day schedule.

Major Change

Last July, Northwestern coach David Braun inherited a program coming off a 1-11 season while taking over a program mired in a hazing scandal that prompted such a backlash, Wildcats players boycotted their appearance in Indy.

One year later, Braun returned with the usual cast around him and the interim tag removed after being named 2023 Big Ten Coach of Year. He led the Wildcats to an 8-5 mark and a Las Vegas Bowl victory over Utah.

"I'm very excited and thrilled for what's ahead for this program," Braun said. "It's been a really unique year for us. Going through a first cycle as a head coach, a lot to learn."

"It's not a David Braun program. It's our program. It's our players' program. It's our alumni's program," he added. "But really having to be self-reflective on what we want that to look like, moving forward especially in a changing landscape. At the end of the day it's about staying true to our values at Northwestern."

And this year, Braun was surrounded by a much smaller press corps and three smiling players who played a key role in Northwestern's incredibly fast turnaround.

"He's super humble," linebacker Xander Mueller said of Braun. "That's honestly the main character trait I would put for him. He

just cares about other people. He cares about us as more than just football players."

There's still work to do.

Northwestern has embarked on a two-year, \$800-million renovation of its home site, Ryan Field, forcing the Wildcats to play all but two of their home games at a temporary stadium that seats just 15,000. Games against Ohio State and Illinois will be at Wrigley Field.

And Braun was part of that, too. He and his family made a six-figure commitment to help convert the soccer/lacrosse stadium into

Mother's perfect life is driving me crazy

Dear Annie: I am so jealous of my mother; it is ruining my life. It is all I obsess about. Three years ago, she met a younger man at a supermarket where she worked. He was 40 then, and she was 52. Three years later and they are happily married and she has become the most spoiled woman I know. She was always slim and beautiful but now dresses in elegant designer clothes, has tennis lessons twice a week, a personal trainer, a cleaner who comes twice a week and a weekly allowance that's more than I make in a month. She never lifts a finger, and they live in a beautiful house and travel constantly.

Her husband even cooks all the meals and cleans up afterward. He makes more than enough money to support them, and she hasn't worked a day since they started going out. Whenever we are together, everyone turns to look at her, not me, even though she has gray hair.

She has changed completely in the last three years. She has ghosted all her old friends and now hangs out with a completely different crowd. Her husband lost his wife five years ago to cancer and has two children in university. They love her and all go on long holidays together every year. Her life is so perfect now it drives me crazy.

I now live in my mother's old house, and she has turned over the ownership to me. I should be happy that my mother found happiness.

Her husband is handsome, successful, generous, intelligent and so in love with her I can't stand it. He is closer to my age than her age, and that just irks me.

How can I stop obsessing about my mother and get on with my life? — Jealous of Mom

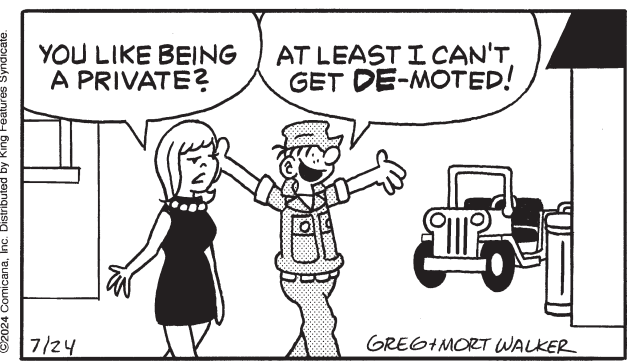
Dear Jealous: It is understandable that you are jealous. But know that jealousy is just a sign of what you really want in your life. You want this type of life and relationship. Instead of focusing your energy on what you're lacking, use your mother's example as a role model for you. Focus on finding a boyfriend of your own, one who has all the qualities of Mom's new husband. Best of luck to you in finding a partner.

"How Can I Forgive My Cheating Partner?" is out now! Annie Lane's second anthology — featuring favorite columns on marriage, infidelity, communication and reconciliation — is available as a paperback and e-book. Visit http://www.creatorspublishing.com for more information. Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearianne@creators.com. © 2024 CREATORS.COM

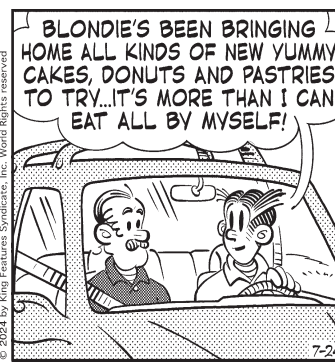
Dear Annie by Annie Lane



BEETLE BAILEY



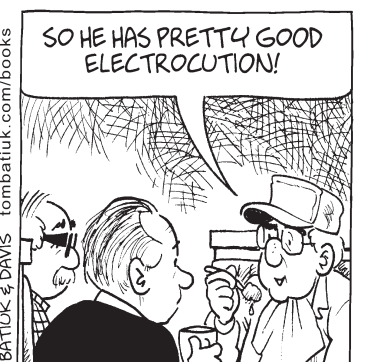
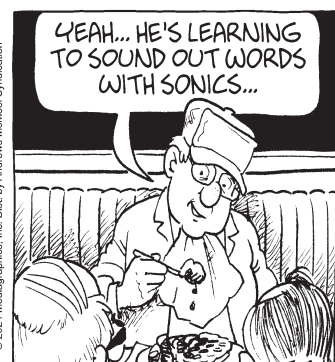
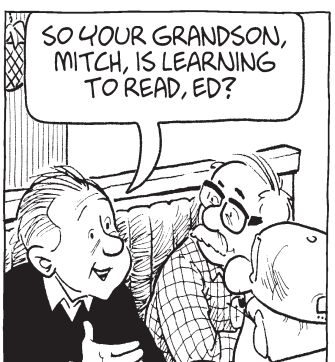
BLONDIE



ZITS



CRANKSHAFT



My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



We must lament our sins before we can rejoice in a Savior

Question: Is it true that we only feel God's strength when we admit our weakness? That really isn't taught in church anymore, and I wonder if it's because we as Christians have become more educated, or are we dismissing the most important part of the Gospel message — acknowledging our sin and asking for forgiveness? — G.S.

Answer: Before we can become wise, we must first realize that we're foolish. Before we can receive power, we must first confess that we are powerless. We must lament our sins before we can rejoice in a Savior.

Mourning, in God's sequence, always comes before exultation. Blessed are those who mourn their unworthi-

ness, their helplessness, and their inadequacy. Isaiah, the mighty prophet of God, knew by experience that one must bow the knee in mourning before one can lift the voice in jubilation.

When Isiah's sin appeared ugly and venomous in the bright light of God's holiness, he said, "Woe is me, for I am undone! ... For my eyes have seen the King" (Isaiah 6:5, NKJV).

We cannot be satisfied with our goodness after beholding the holiness of God. But our mourning over our unworthiness and sinfulness should be of short duration, for God has said, "I am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember

your sins" (Isaiah 43:25, NKJV). Isaiah had to experience the mourning of inadequacy before he could realize the joy of forgiveness.

If we have no sense of sorrow for sin, how can we know the need of repentance? In God's company, a person must go down into the valley of grief before scaling the heights of spiritual glory. One must become tired and weary of living without Christ before finding His fellowship. One must come to the end of "self" before truly living.

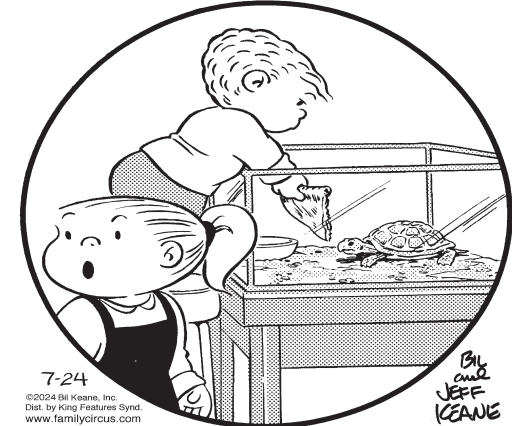
(This column is based on the words and writings of the late Rev. Billy Graham.)

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THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane

The LOCKHORNS



"Jeffy's tryin' to feed pizza to our turtle again."

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BUY IT SELL IT RENT IT FIND IT FILL IT GET IT DO IT IN THE CLASSIFIEDS! Place Your Ad 24/7/365! www.news-banner.com

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Yesterday's answer 7-24 crossword puzzle grid.

Table with columns for date, time, and program details including channel, program name, and time slot.

The Classifieds

SUDOKU

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

King Classic Sudoku

				5				
5	4	3					1	7
9			7	8				
							4	3
	9			2		1		
		8				9		
8			2					
4	9	5		1	8			
		1				3	7	9

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Difficulty: ★★★

7/24

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Public Sale Calendar

JULY 27- 10 a.m. - Elmer J. Jr. & Delila Mae Graber, owners. 8350S 850W, South Whitley. Productive, tillable land, home, outbuildings, Whitley County. Offered in 4 Tracts, 38±A. Tract 1: 12.5±A farm-land, soils: Pewamo, Blount loam, Glynwood loam. Tract 2: 5.5±A, 7 bedroom home, outbuildings. Tract 3: 2±A, 40'x90' pole building. Tract 4: 18±A farmland, soils: Pewamo, Glynwood loam, Blount loam. Purchase individually or combination. Sale manager, Ritter Cox, 260-609-3306, *Schrader Real Estate and Auction Company, Inc.*, *SchraderAuction.com*, 800-451-2709.

JULY 28 - 4 p.m. - Online Only - Multiple consignors, owners. 1,000+ lots! 50+ firearms, long guns & hand guns, large selection of ammo, gun safe, Honda generator, hand tools, household items, lawn & garden, 300 lots of collectible vintage dollhouses, mini dollhouse furniture sets with

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This Week's Garage Sales



HUGE MULTI-FAMILY SALE 1639 E 300 N, Bluffton, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Getting rid of kids toys, clothes, jewelry, shoes, home decor, furniture, DVD/CD/VHS.

4900 W 200 S, Liberty Center, July 26 & 27, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Two dryers, freezer, treadmill, exercise bike, puzzles, girls clothing, sofa, chairs, entertainment center, bunk and twin beds, barbecue grill, books.

ANNUAL GARAGE SALE Fri.-Sat., July 26, July 27, 8:30-4:30, 922 South Main Street, Bluffton. Coins, hunting & fishing items, hardware & household items, men's & women's clothing, tools, stamps & collectibles, antiques, and more.

1010 FARMINGTON DR. BLUFFTON, IN 46714 GARAGE SALE, COME BUY OUR STUFF! Women's clothing sizes small through XXL, Men's clothing sizes medium and large, Baby girl clothes sizes 3M - 12M, kitchen ware, home decor, bar cabinet and more! Jul. 24 9:00 AM-2:00 PM, Jul. 25 9:00 AM-2:00 PM, Jul. 26 9:00 AM-2:00 PM Rain or Shine

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PLACE A THREE day garage sale line classified ad in the Bluffton News-Banner and receive a free garage sale kit. Contact the office at 125 N. Johnson St., 260-824-0224, or www.news-banner.com and click on classifieds.

Lottery Numbers

Tuesday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY Cash 5 — 06-17-19-31-32

Cash4Life — 08-11-24-32-38, Cash Ball: 04

Quick Draw Midday — 08-12-19-21-23-27-33-34-39-43-47-48-51-57-65-67-69-70-73-75, BE: 65

Daily Three-Midday — 04-00-07, SB: 06

Daily Three-Evening — 07-00-00, SB: 01

Daily Four-Midday — 07-03-01-08, SB: 06

Daily Four-Evening — 09-03-06-04, SB: 01

Quick Draw Evening — 06-09-19-20-23-24-25-31-40-46-47-49-55-56-60-61-67-69-77-80, BE: 47

Hoosier Lotto — Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$17.9 million

MEGA MILLIONS 03-09-14-26-51; Mega Ball: 21; Megaplier: 4X.

POWERBALL Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$114 million

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July

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Public Notice

NOTICE In accordance with Indiana Code 5-15-6-3 requiring prior notification to individuals when records will be destroyed: Notice to any individuals born in the year 2002, who received special education services in Adams and/or Wells Counties. Please contact Adams Wells Special Services no later than August 9, 2024 if you wish to receive copies of your special education records. All records requested for pick-up and not picked up and non-requested records for persons born in the year 2002 will be permanently destroyed after August 16, 2024. If you wish to request records, you must call (260)824-5880 to do so. Records must be picked up by the person who received services unless otherwise legally designated.
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accessories and much more! Preview July 25, 3-5 p.m., 812 Elm Street, Decatur. Pick up July 29, 1-6 p.m., July 30, 9 a.m.-noon. *Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC*, 260-724-7402, *kjauction.com*.

AUGUST 8 - BIDDING OPEN FROM 9 A.M. TO 6 P.M. - Online only - The Estate of Richard W. Stultz - 1420 Brookhaven, Bluffton, IN - 1,920 SF tri-level home in the desirable Old Creek Neighborhood. Featuring 2 possible 3 bedrooms, an oversized 4-car garage, and a large lot, this property offers prime location and offer "Renovation Opportunities". Explore the Possibilities - Open Houses; July 30th from 5pm to 6pm and August 6th from 5pm to 6pm. *The Steffen Group Inc.*, 824-3006, *www.steffengrp.com*.

BIDDING STARTS CLOSING AUGUST 11 - 6 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. EST - Jeanette Furhman & Robert Furhman estate, owner. 6 p.m.: Cape Cod style, 3 bedroom, 3 1/2 bath, 3,093 sf, full basement w/Hitzer stove, Geothermal w/backup LP furnace, Generac 11 kw whole house generator, pole barns, 2-car attached garage, sitting on 10+/- wooded acres! 6:30: John Deere Gator, Gehl Track loader, John Deere mower, Chevy Silverado, 51k miles, Massey Ferguson tractor, 3 point attachments, tilt bed trailer, outdoor items, large selection of hand & power tools, long & hand guns, antiques, primitives, furniture, household, more! Preview July 29, 5-7 p.m., 4182 W 900 N, Decatur. Pick up Aug. 12, 2-6 p.m. *Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC*, *kjauction.com*, 260-724-7402.

BIDDING ENDS AUGUST 18 AT 2 P.M. - Online only - Various Consignors, sellers. Huge 900+ lot. 2003 Polaris 4 four wheeler, Honda motorcycle, 2008 Lazer EXmark zero turn riding lawn mower, antiques, collectibles, primitives, modern furniture, fishing equipment, vintage toys, farm toys, musical instruments, very early wood canoe, early high school score board, complete in working condition, more. Preview: Aug. 13, Aug. 15, 3-6 p.m., 102 S. Jefferson St., Ossiain. Sale managers Rod Fetters, 260-557-8451, Patrick Carter, 260-273-8294. *The Steffen Group Inc.*, 260-824-3006, *steffengrp.com*.

BIDDING NOW OPEN & STARTS CLOSING AUGUST 18 - 6 p.m. EST - Kathy Stark, owner. Real estate 6 p.m.: Four bedroom, 1 full bath w/ heated flooring, 2,328 sq. feet, basement, screened in back porch, 28'x30' heated detached garage, beautiful 36'x66' bank barn, famous Minion silo, all sitting on 2.41+/- acres! Personal property 6:30: Vintage outdoor Christmas decorations, extension cords, violin, saxophone, guitars, music, books, power tools, fishing tackle, household items, dog pool, Kobalt air compressor, table saw, sectional sofa/bed/recliner, firetruck bed, dining table & chairs, microwave, Seven Dwarfs cement statues, Brother sewing machine, & much more! Preview Aug. 5, 5-6 p.m., 9841 N 750 E, Ossiain, IN. Pick up Aug. 19, 2-6 p.m. *Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC*, 260-724-7402, *kjauction.com*.

SUDOKU ANSWER

6	7	8	9	4	7	1	5	2
2	9	8	1	8	9	6	7	4
1	5	4	7	6	2	8	9	8
5	2	6	8	1	9	8	7	7
9	8	1	4	2	7	9	6	8
8	7	7	9	8	6	2	1	9
7	8	9	8	7	1	9	7	6
7	1	2	6	9	8	4	8	9
8	6	9	2	5	4	7	8	1