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Bluffton surveyed for citywide marketing efforts

Firm hopes to reveal new logos during Street Fair

By JONATHAN SNYDER
Reusser Marketing reported over 700 Bluffton residents responded to its survey for the city's new marketing and rebranding plan. Bluffton contracted Reusser on March 5 to rebrand the city, including making a new logo and

color set, and bringing the core values of Bluffton together into one comprehensive document. Surveys for the plan were sent out July 16 with various Common Council members sharing the surveys on their Facebook pages. The overarching theme of the plan focuses on the local com-

munity. Reusser's Senior Product Designer Joe Beste, who grew up in Uniondale, stated Bluffton is unique because so many parts of Wells County call the city home. While cities in other areas sometimes have their own separate ideologies, the people of Wells all have some stake in Bluffton,

according to Beste. "So many residents of Wells County call Bluffton home," Beste said. "Everyone kind of migrates to Bluffton. It was really cool just thinking about that. How many people in southern Wells will travel to Bluffton on a daily basis and same with people in northern Wells, how ... everything they need is down in Bluffton too. It's not just Bluffton residents that call

this place home. I think everyone in Wells County is connected to Bluffton in some way." The amount of public feedback amazed Director of Creative Tommy Moore. Moore stated that similar projects have yielded around 300 responses on average. Moore noted that more responses means a better idea of what the people want to see in the (Continued on Page 2)



Curbs for Interurban Trail installed

Recently, workers have installed ADA compliant curbs for the Interurban Trail leading to Lancaster Park. Parks Department Superintendent Brandy Fiechter stated that work to fix the parking lot at Lancaster Park is completed. Crews are set to re-mobilize Monday. (Photos by Jonathan Snyder)



Feedback on Indiana's diploma overhaul plan continues to pour in

By CASEY SMITH
Indiana Capital Chronicle

As state education officials pump the brakes on a plan to overhaul Indiana's high school diplomas, concerns from Hoosier teachers, students and families are mounting over the proposed graduation requirements. With the deadline fast approaching for the State Board of Education to finalize the changes, state leaders are asking for more statewide feedback — including what's expected to be a lengthy public forum scheduled for next week.

Although the original plan was for the state board to vote on the new diplomas in September, Indiana Secretary of Education Katie Jenner said at a board meeting last week that — in response to feedback received already — the process is slowing down, at least somewhat.

Jenner said the board will hear a revised draft proposal at the August meeting, followed by a second round of feedback, including a public hearing, before the board releases a final proposal.

Under a law passed by Indiana legislators in 2023, the state must adopt new diploma requirements by December.

Schools could choose to opt in and start offering the new diplomas as early as the 2025-26 academic year. The new diplomas will take effect for all Hoosier students beginning with the Class of 2029, who are entering eighth grade this fall.

Paramount to the new plan, according to state officials, is maximized "flexibility" for students to personalize learning pathways and experiences, including with college courses taken while still in high school, as well as the ability to count internships, apprenticeships, military experience and other work-based learning toward their graduation requirements.

While the plan answers repeat-

ed calls for the state's curriculum to better prepare students for post-high school employment and boost the state's declining college-going rate, the draft plan has garnered increasing criticism for its exclusion of certain course requirements, like those in history, foreign language and fine arts.

Some educators are also worried about plans to eliminate the current Academic Honors diploma, linked to college-going.

What's proposed, so far?

Currently, Hoosier students can work toward one of numerous diploma designations, including the general, Core 40, academic honors, or technical honors options. Some schools additionally offer the International Baccalaureate diploma, which is dependent on successful completion of specific assessments and examinations during grades 11 and 12.

State education officials conceded that the existing diploma system is outdated and confusing for both parents and students. Jenner previously said it especially lacks options for students to get hands-on training or earn high-value credentials, given the various course requirements. The move now, however, is to be less "course-obsessed."

As laid out in the proposal, Indiana's future diplomas would include the "Indiana GPS Diploma" — a more flexible, personalized version of the current Core 40 diploma — and the "Indiana GPS Diploma Plus."

Three transcript seals added to their diplomas would allow students to show they're ready for enrollment, employment or enlistment.

Ron Sandlin, the state education department's senior director of school performance and transformation, said the proposed seals would focus on readiness — but not eligibility. Each seal track would have required courses, and (Continued on Page 2)

Chinese, Russian bombers patrolling off Alaska raise concerns

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
and DIDI TANG
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Russian and Chinese bombers flew together for the first time in international airspace off the coast of Alaska, in a new show of expanding military cooperation that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Thursday raises concerns.

The flights Wednesday were not seen as a threat, and the bombers were tracked and intercepted by U.S. and Canadian fighter jets.

But it was the first time that Chinese bomber aircraft have flown within the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone. And it was the first time Chinese and Russian aircraft have taken off from the same base in northeast Russia.

"This is a relationship that we have been concerned about throughout — mostly because we're concerned about China providing support to Russia's illegal and unnecessary war in Ukraine," Austin told reporters.

The North American Aero-

space Defense Command, or NORAD, detected, tracked and intercepted the two Russian Tupolev Tu-95 long-range bombers and the two Chinese H-6 bombers. The aircraft, said Austin, didn't enter U.S. airspace and only got within about 200 miles of the coast.

They were, however, within the ADIZ, which begins where sovereign airspace ends, and aircraft must be easily identifiable and file flight plans for authorization in order to meet national security

requirements.

China and Russia both acknowledged what they called a joint patrol over the Bering Sea, which divides Russia and Alaska.

Their growing military relationship has triggered concerns both among NATO allies and with nations in the Asia-Pacific. NATO allies have called China a "decisive enabler" of Russia's war against Ukraine through its "no-limits partnership" with Russia and its large-scale support for Russia's defense industrial base.

The allies issues a sternly worded statement, approved by the 32 members at their summit in Washington earlier this month.

The Russian Defense Ministry said the patrol also flew over the Chukchi Sea, which is on the north side of the Bering Strait, and that the exercises lasted more than five hours.


The joint patrol tested and improved coordination between the two air forces, said Zhang Xiaogang, a spokesperson for (Continued on Page 2)

Inside
Local/Area
Police Notebook . . . 3
Indiana News 3

Opinion
Christine Flowers . . 4

Also...
Sports6
Classifieds7
Diversions5

Outside



Today has a pocket full of sunshine and sunscreen

Today	Saturday	Sunday
High 80	High 83	High 84
Low 55	Low 62	Low 69

More Weather on Page 2

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Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City:
 Wednesday, 2:24 p.m., 1500 block of Greenfield Lane. Report of people fishing on private property.
 Wednesday, 3:04 p.m., West Dustman Road and Ridge Plane. Driver cited for no financial responsibility.
 Wednesday, 3:16 p.m., 300 block of South Liberty Street. Report of couch left on sidewalk.
 Wednesday, 5:48 p.m., 400 block of South Indiana Street. Report of fraud.
 Wednesday, 5:55 p.m., Pak A Sak North. Report of loose dogs.
 Wednesday, 6:36 p.m., Wells County Annex. Officer jump started vehicle.
 Thursday, 7:48 a.m., UTZ Quality Foods. Report of terminated employee refusing to leave.

Thursday, 1:05 p.m., 1100 block of West South Street. Report of domestic issues.
County:
 Wednesday, 1:22 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Kodi Hamilton.
 Wednesday, 1:35 p.m., S.R. 124 and North 300W, Bluffton. Driver attempted to evade officer by pulling into residence. Got cited for speeding anyway.
 Wednesday, 1:40 p.m., North 600E and East 100N, Bluffton. Caller reported goats on the road in the intersection. Electric fence stopped working, goats took advantage of the technological failure.
 Thursday, 6:18 a.m., North 450E and East 300N, Bluffton. Driver cited for speeding 69 in a 55 mph zone.
 Thursday, 10:47 a.m.,

Clean Fuels National. Caller reported a license plate was stolen in another state.
ARRESTS
 Kodi Jo An Hamilton, 27, Bluffton; criminal conversion, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$1,500.
 Jason Boyd Cook, 46, New Haven; false informing, a Class B misdemeanor. Bond set at \$1,000.
 Noah James Turner, 25, Angola; probation violation, a Class A misdemeanor. No bond set.
 Ashlen Jade Ramer, 24, Bluffton; probation violation, a Class B misdemeanor and probation violation, a Class C misdemeanor. No bond set.
 Gregory Tyrone Paul Marshall, 25, Ossian; leaving the scene of a crash, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$1,500.

INDOT to launch camera speed enforcement pilot for construction zones

By **LESLIE BONILLA MUÑIZ**
 Indiana Capital Chronicle

The Indiana Department of Transportation will begin piloting camera speed limit enforcement in Hoosier highway construction zones next month, the agency announced Wednesday.
 It'll target speeding of 11 miles per hour over the speed limit and greater.
 In 2023, Indiana recorded more than 8,000 crashes in work zones — injuring 1,750 people and killing 33. About 270 people have died in work zone crashes over the last decade, per INDOT.
 "The goal of the Safe Zones program is to slow drivers down, reduce crashes, and most importantly, save lives," INDOT Commissioner Mike Smith said in a news release.
 "Speed continues to be a factor in work zone crashes and changing driver behavior is crucial to making work zones safer for drivers and road workers," he continued. "For everyone's safety, I urge drivers to wear their seat belts, avoid distractions and follow the posted speed limit."

Lawmakers authorized the five-year pilot during the 2023 session.
 The agency will kick its pilot off August 14, in Hancock County's Interstate 70 construction zone, but plans to add other sites to the program "over time," according to the release.
 House Enrolled Act 1015 authorizes INDOT to use the camera systems in up to four sites per year.
 The law requires the agency to post signs at worksite entrances notifying drivers that an automated speed control system is in use.
 The camera system, which must be calibrated annually by an independent laboratory, will use speed timing devices to monitor vehicle speeds.

When it determines a vehicle is traveling 11 miles per hour or more above the speed limit, it'll take a picture of the rear license plate. Under Indiana law, the pictures can only be used to enforce traffic offenses under the pilot, can't be publicly disclosed and must be destroyed within two years.
 "After the data is validated, violations will be certified and issued to the owner of the vehicle by mail," the release reads.
 INDOT will begin the pilot with a pre-enforcement period. It'll sent out courtesy notices, but won't fine drivers.
 Once that ends, a first violation will result in a zero-fine warning. A second violation will lead to a \$75 civil penalty and a third to a \$150 penalty. The money will go to the state's General Fund. Because they're civil penalties, drivers will see no points added to their driver's licenses.

Drivers can contest the violations by submitting proof that they didn't own the vehicle, weren't driving it, or that it was reported stolen — and was unrecovered — at the time of the alleged speeding. They can also dispute the system's accuracy, or argue that workers weren't present at the time.
 However, the Indiana Safe Zones' answers to frequently asked questions indicate that just because drivers can't see construction workers doesn't mean they're not there. Crews behind barriers are also considered active workers.
 INDOT will collect data for the program, but can't use it for surveillance or other law enforcement programs under state law. Instead, the agency will report its findings in public annual reports.
 The agency is responsible for building and maintaining interstate highways, U.S. routes and state roads in Indiana, including overpasses, ramps, signs and traffic signals.



Indiana University released an independent review with recommendations on future "expressive activity." (Niki Kelly/Indiana Capital Chronicle)

IU releases review of April protest activity and enforcement

BY **MIA HILKOWITZ**
 Indiana Capital Chronicle

Almost three months after police arrested 57 protesters at a pro-Palestine encampment at Indiana University-Bloomington, a new independent review released Thursday found the university's inconsistent enforcement of its own policies created "confusion and frustration" and made governing the campus difficult.
 In a 77-page report, law firm Cooley LLP presented new findings about the events leading up to and following these arrests, IU's campus climate and its administration's response.
 In a press release, Rebekah Donaleski, a lead investigator for Cooley LLP, said the recommendations will help the university and its community move forward.
 "We found that the university's actions were driven by a focus on campus safety and free speech in a challenging and rapidly evolving situation," Donaleski said.
 According to an IU press release, Cooley LLP had "unrestricted access" to IU during its investigation and interviewed campus representatives — including administrators, students, faculty and IUPD officers — along with the Monroe County prosecutor and ISP officers. The law firm also reviewed more than 10,000 internal documents and emails and 100 hours of video footage related to the events.
 The report also found that an IU ad hoc committee decision to change a decades-long expressive policy — a change that prohibited the use of temporary structures in Dunn Meadow without prior approval — the day before the start of the encampment, was made in "good faith."
 "However, doing so the night before the planned encampment caused a number of unintended negative consequences," the report continues.
 The report also states that IU asked protesters to remove the structures and

continue the protest without them, but some protesters refused.
 "Ultimately, using the Indiana State Police's assistance was the safest option available to remove the encampment," the report said.
 Additionally, Cooley LLP found IUPD's understaffing caused "a myriad of negative effects."
Recommendations
 The law firm presented eight recommendations for the university.
 The first recommendation was to approve a new expressive activity policy before the start of the fall semester, which kicks off Aug. 26.
 IU administration shared a draft of a new expressive policy with students and faculty in late June. The policy regulates and protects most forms of protest — such as assemblies and carrying signs — but explicitly does not allow overnight encampments. It also would allow university or law enforcement officials to enforce the policy. Some campus stakeholders — including leadership for the IU Student Government and the Bloomington chapter of the American Association of University Professors — have criticized the policy for vague language and a lack of student and faculty involvement in decision making, among other concerns.
 The IU Board of Trustees convene for a special meeting at 1 p.m. July 29 at IU Bloomington. The meeting will take place in the Peterson Room at the IU Foundation, 1500 N. State Road 46 Bypass.
 Trustees will use this meeting to discuss the proposed policy on expressive activity.
 Similarly, the group also recommends IU establish a plan to implement the new expressive activity policy, and start new training, communication and audit procedures to ensure it consistently applies the policy.

Mistrial declared in case of Indiana man accused of fatally shooting 5, including pregnant woman

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — A judge declared a mistrial in the case of an Indianapolis man accused of fatally shooting five people, including a pregnant woman, after a witness verbally confronted the defendant in front of the jury.
 Marion County Superior Judge Chris Miller declared the mistrial Tuesday in the trial of Raymond Ronald Lee Childs III, who faces six counts of murder in the January 2021 slayings in an Indianapolis home.
 Childs, 20, was arrested a day after the attack and accused of killing his father, stepmother, two teenage relatives, a woman nearly due to give birth, and her unborn son.
 The mistrial came after a key witness in the case, Elanso Valez, testified that in the hours after the killings, he had picked up Childs and drove him around Indianapolis. He said Childs later covered his eyes and wept while laying on a bed at Valez's home in Plainfield, just west of Indianapolis.
 "Y'all remember that?" Valez asked Childs from the witness stand, WXIN-TV reported.
 The defense and pro-

secution teams quickly sought to cut Valez off, and the judge tried to intercede from the bench, but Valez continued, asking: "Why did you do it, Raymond?"
 The judge admonished Valez for his comments in front of the jurors and sent them from the courtroom so he could speak with attorneys and then each juror individually.
 Miller then declared a mistrial, saying he's "firmly convinced that Mr. Childs cannot get a fair trial." He set a status conference for Monday with the attorneys.
 The killings followed an argument over Childs, who was 17 at the time, staying out late, according to court records. Prosecutors said Childs methodically went from room-to-room, shooting the victims.
 The attack killed Childs' father, Raymond Childs Jr., 42; his stepmother, Kezzie Childs, 42; the couple's daughter, Rita Childs, 13; son Elijah Childs, 18; and Elijah's 19-year-old girlfriend Kiara Hawkins, who died at a hospital along with her unborn son.
 Childs' 15-year-old brother also was shot but

survived after fleeing the house to escape the gunfire.

VISITATION & SERVICES
Aiden Andrew Nunley
 Calling: 3 - 7 p.m.
 Sunday, July 28 at the funeral home.
Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home
 308 W. Washington St.
 824-3850
www.thomarich.com

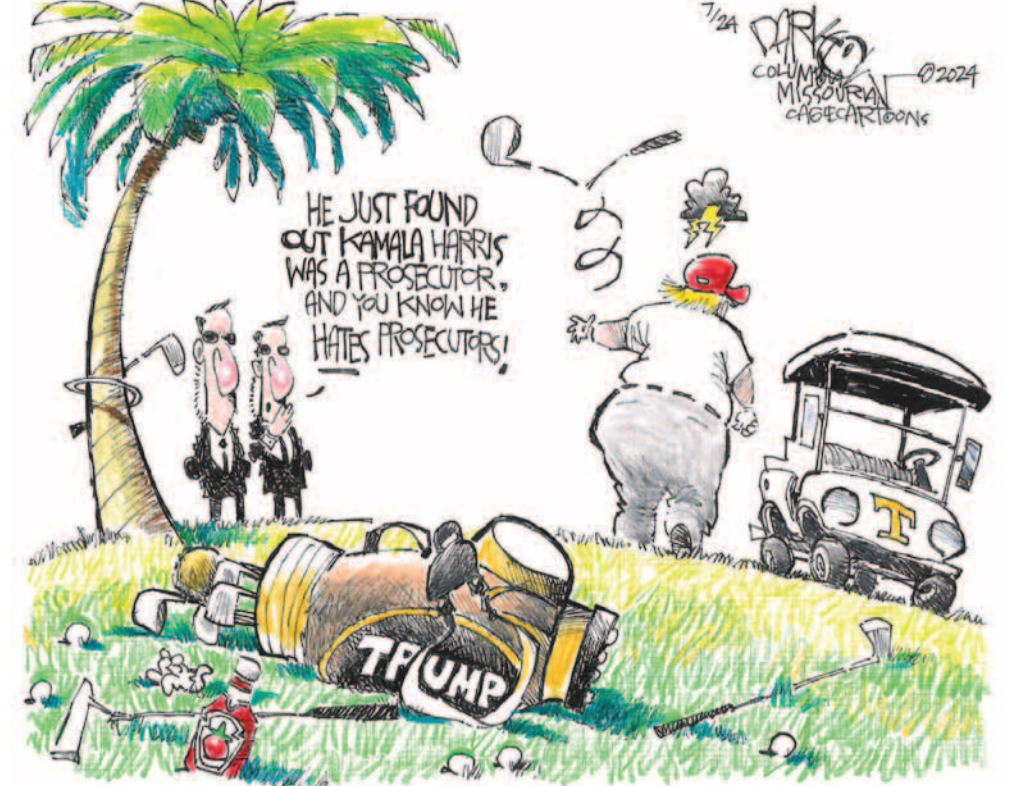
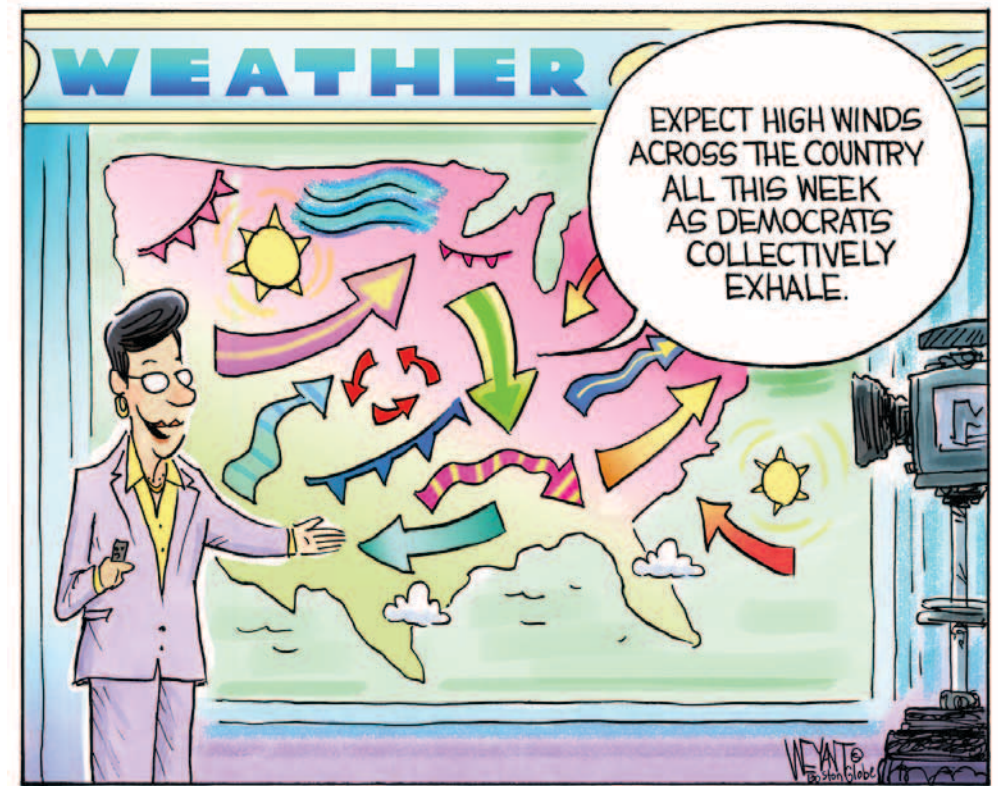
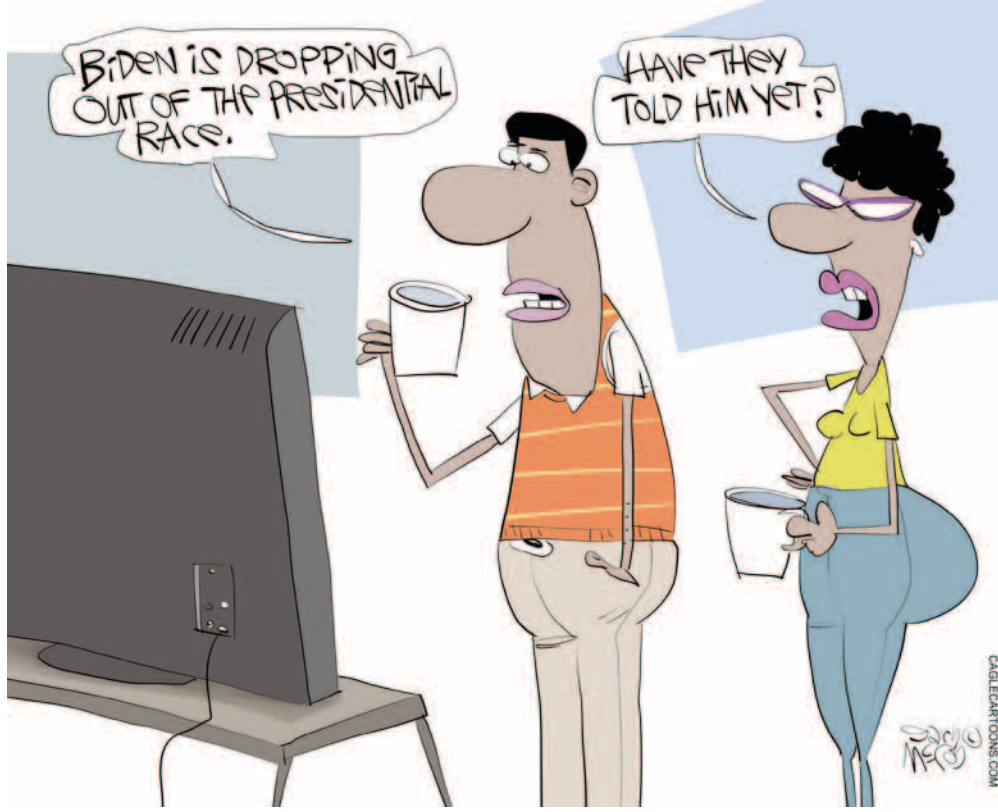
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Elizabeth A. (Dunwiddie) Meyer
 Calling: 9 - 10:30 a.m.
 Saturday, August 3 in the Auditorium of Swiss Village Retirement Community.
Celebration of Life:
 10:30 a.m. Saturday, August 3 at Swiss Village Retirement Community.
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The 2024 Election Cometh, Vol. 2 - a look through cartoonists' eyes...



Dems and Joe Biden: A classic lesson in modern betrayal

One of the most famous phrases in history is one that my high school Latin teacher Sister Mary David intoned with deep solemnity as we were studying Caesar: Et tu, Brute?

Literally it translates into "And you, Brutus?," words spoken by a dying despot who, bleeding from many stab wounds, was likely killed by the final blow from his adopted son. But over the centuries it has taken on a more universal meaning, namely, the cry of ultimate betrayal.

I thought of what Sister Mary David would say about the Democrats ultimately successful but tortured campaign to remove Joe Biden from the presidential race. The diminutive Mercy nun would have likely looked me directly in the eye and said "that was a bloodless assassination."

It may be tasteless to invoke virtual assassination only days after someone tried to commit an actual assassination against Donald Trump. But we cannot ignore the parallels between what happened to Caesar and what the triumvirate of Pelosi, Obama and Schumer-along with their lesser accomplices-did to Joe Biden.

Let's dispense with the obvious differences first: Joe Biden is not a despot, nor was he killed. While I find his character and politics anathema, no honest person would call him a dictator. Crazy-in-the-head conspiracy theorists can blather on about forced vaccination plots, and more reasonable folk can legitimately condemn his positions on abortion and Title IX, but he is not Caesar. For that matter, neither is Trump. The rhetoric from the insane wings of both parties is dangerous, and should be ignored.

And, although his cadence, pallor and ability to communicate in an articulate manner would suggest otherwise, he is not actually dead.

The Democrats employed everything short of physical intimidation to get him to step down from the race. They pretend their efforts began in earnest only after they saw his horrific debate performance in June. But they knew, and we knew they knew, for many months. Independent reports and comments made on deep background, as well as a few on the record, indicate that Biden's diminished capacity was obvious to everyone inside his inner circle for a long time. They only appear to have started the campaign to unseat him when what they knew was televised for everyone to gape at.

Which brings us to the central question: did the Dems push for Biden's withdrawal because they care about the nation, or about their own power? In the case of Brutus, a Republican in the ancient sense, his treachery was motivated by a desire to resurrect the Roman Republic and neutralize a dictator. The fact that the dictator was his beloved adopted father made it a deeply difficult task, and a great betrayal.

It's hard to see the nobility in what the Dems have done. If they cared about the country, they would have demanded Biden's withdrawal when the signs of age-related dementia became obvious to them. Instead, they waited until it became obvious to us. There is no honor in desperation.

Some might argue they are trying to save the country from Trump, who they consider a fascist. But what do you call people who thwart the will of the electorate by essentially coercing the primary winner to step down? Are they patriots? Traitors? Or something in between?

So the deed is done. We wait for the fallout. We wait to see who will succeed to the throne, so to speak. We will see if there is a bloodless but bitter battle between Octavian and Antony, or Kamala and whoever.

In the meantime, we come neither to praise Biden, nor to bury him. We come to mourn the state of our nation and its flawed and unworthy leaders.

Christine Flowers is an attorney and a columnist. cflowers1961@gmail.com.



Christine Flowers

So much for civility. Harris vs. Trump will be as ugly as it gets.

Brace yourself, America. And be prepared to wince.

We don't need a fortune teller to know that this presidential election is going to get really ugly or that it's all going to happen in a hurry.

Now that Vice President Kamala Harris has emerged as the likely Democratic presidential nominee, and with Donald Trump already having been named the Republican nominee, it's not difficult to imagine what it's going to look like when these two finally square off.

To say that Harris and Trump don't like each other would be a massive understatement.

In fact, both are already drawing contrasts with one another. For Harris — who hasn't picked her running mate yet but has racked up scores of endorsements and nailed down commitments from most of the Democratic delegates — this election is a choice between a felon and a former prosecutor. And she's confident that she is in the stronger position because of her life experience.

"Before I was elected as vice president, before I was elected a United States senator, I was elected attorney general ... to California. Before that I was a courtroom prosecutor. In those roles I took on perpetrators of all kinds," Harris told staffers just one day after President Biden exited the race and endorsed her to take his place. "Predators who abused women. Fraudsters who ripped off consumers. Cheaters who broke the rules for their own gain. So hear me when I say: I know Donald Trump's type."

Clearly, the vice president isn't pulling any punches, and she is just getting warmed up. According to media reports, Harris' campaign is also likely to flip the age script on the Republicans and argue that, at 78, Trump is too old to serve another term in the White House. Expect Democrats to bring up Trump's age and mental acuity often, in fact.

Harris is 59, and Trump's running mate, J.D. Vance, is 39. Voters have eyes, and they're going to draw contrasts between the candidates — even those on the same ticket. Trump will not fare well in the process.

Meanwhile, Trump is starting to zero in on Harris. He challenged her intelligence in a post on Truth Social this week, as he continued to pivot away from attacking Biden and toward bashing the person who is most likely to take his place — the vice president.

"Wow, just watching the Fake News, and they're doing their very best to turn the Worst President in the History of our Country into a "Brilliant and Heroic Leader" (He was heroic because he quit!), and to turn "Dumb as a Rock" Kamala Harris from a totally failed and insignificant Vice President into a future "Great" President. No, it just doesn't work that way!" he wrote with indignation.

The Harris campaign is going to hit Trump on what he might do if elected, such as implement Project 2025 — a wish list of far-right policies drafted by the ultraconservative Heritage Foundation with input from former Trump staffers. The Trump campaign will counter-punch by looking backward and criticizing Harris for something she didn't do: alleviate the border crisis by addressing the "root causes" of migration — as she was tasked to do by Biden.

You can bet that conservatives are going to dedicate their best efforts to caricature the former district attorney and attorney general as "anti-law enforcement" and favoring an open border.

This is a fool's errand. Reality is more complicated. Living in Southern California, one of the epicenters of immigration into the United States, I know a lot of people in the pro-immigrant movement. They can't stand Harris, who — although she is from California, and she is the daughter of immigrants — has never shown much interest in the immigrant community or done much to make their lives better.

Sadly, Harris' idea of a solution was to tell desperate migrants with few options to stay home. During a quick visit to Guatemala in June 2021, the vice president appeared at a news conference with Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei. She told those who might be thinking of going north: "Do not come. Do not come. The United States will continue to enforce our laws and secure our borders." To that end, she warned: "If you come to our border, you will be turned back."

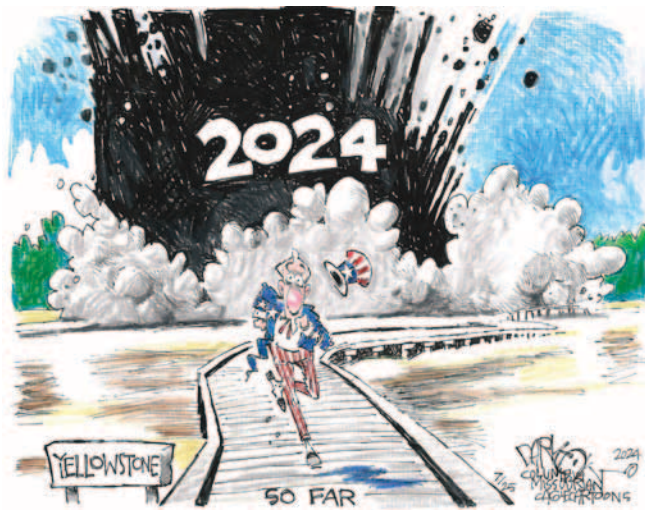
Such odd behavior for someone who, according to Republicans — who have a long track record of telling whoppers about immigration — wants to open the border and welcome even more migrants.

That reminds me. You know what's really ugly? Dishonesty.

crimscribe@icloud.com.



Ruben Navarette



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