

The News - Banner

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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2024

BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection

\$1.00



Opening Day

The Bluffton Free Street Fair kicked off yesterday with its opening parade, featuring grand marshal Erin Prible (pictured above, at left) alongside her husband, Mark. (Photo by Jonathan Snyder) Kids who completed 1,000 books before kindergarten at the Wells County Public Library, were also featured in the parade, pictured below. At right, Naivee Brinneman enjoys the merry-go-round. (Photos by Holly Gaskill) At bottom, Captain America and Spiderman carried a welcome sign through the parade, with a police officer from the Bluffton Police Department briefly chatting, one hero to another. **More photos on Page 6.** (Photo by Sydney Kent)



Southern Wells will replace roof and add AC in Raider Dome

By HOLLY GASKILL

Southern Wells plans to accomplish multiple school improvement projects — including adding air conditioning to the Raider Dome — by issuing a \$3 million bond.

The board of trustees for Southern Wells Community Schools approved issuing the bond, as well as several associated project resolutions, during their regular meeting Tuesday evening. According to Superintendent Trent Lehman, the bond will have a \$0.06 impact on the district's current debt service rate, \$0.1244. However, with increased assessed value within the district, the total impact will be \$0.02.

Lehman said repairing the high school's roof will be the district's priority, as leaks have increased. They also hope to add air conditioning to the Raider Dome and administrative offices, replace ceiling tiles on the Raider Dome, renovate the locker rooms, make sewage improvements, roof replacement of the agriculture building, replace loading dock doors, buy a mower, and potentially other items. No one gave public comment on the project or bond resolu-

tions.

"We plan to pursue the construction replacement and our upgrade to these items as soon as possible after securing funding, and are seeking completion of all items in under two years," Lehman said.

A new auxiliary gym was not included in the bond resolution, as had been originally discussed. Lehman said the district felt it was better to prioritize taking care of their current facilities rather than expanding. However, SWCS may still pursue the project in the future.

In the last month, all three Wells County districts have issued similar bonds for facility improvements — Bluffton-Harrison Metropolitan Schools approved a \$1.1 million bond on Monday and Norwell Community Schools approved a \$3.3 million bond in August.

Also Tuesday, Lehman told the board that SWCS families had surveyed overwhelmingly in favor of starting later in the 2025-26 calendar year, beginning school on Aug. 13 and ending May 28. Board member Delora Schneider asked if it correlated with

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Water Department will purchase leak analyzers to cut down on water waste

By JONATHAN SNYDER

Newly purchased leak analyzers, approved by the Board of Public Works and Safety on Tuesday, will help the Water Department locate line leaks in an effort to cut down on wasted water.

The department will purchase 10 analyzers for \$17,150. The analyzers will send alarms to the water department when a leak is detected. The purchase comes in response to a water leak survey that was presented to the Board of Works on Aug. 20.

Water Department Supervisor Dave Hendricks stated that all major leaks have been patched, with only small leaks in fire hydrants left to fix. Hendricks stated that the new equipment will allow the department to bring some of the leak analysis process in-house. Board member Josh Hunt stated that the analyzers are a great idea, citing

that it will give them a starting point for leak detection with expansion opportunities later.

"I think it's a wise move," Hunt said. "It's a good way to get our feet wet, no pun intended."

Additionally, Utility Director Jon Oman updated the board that Virginia Transformers, the transformer provider for the Cherry Street Substation Project, is willing to compromise on the testing and assembly fee for both transformers. Oman stated that their revised offer will be available in two weeks.

The board also approved raises for Deputy Clerk Treasurer Marcy Wayman and Water Department Equipment Operators Jack Pezo and Wyatt Mayer. The board also paid a \$124,553 SRF Claim expense for the Dustman Road Interceptor Project.

jonathan@news-banner.com

FBI investigating suspicious packages sent to election officials in more than 15 states

By SUMMER BALLENTINE and STEVE LeBLANC

Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — The FBI and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service on Tuesday were investigating the origin of suspicious packages that have been sent to or received by elections officials in more than 15 states, but there were no immediate reports of injuries or that any of the packages contained hazardous material.

The latest packages were sent to elections officials in Alaska, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York and Rhode Island. Mississippi authorities reported a package was delivered there Monday, and the Connecticut Secretary of State's office said the FBI alerted it of a package that was intercepted.

The FBI is collecting the packages, some of which contained "an unknown sub-

stance," agency spokesperson Kristen Setera in Boston said in a statement.

"We are also working with our partners to determine how many letters were sent, the individual or individuals responsible for the letters, and the motive behind the letters," she said. "As this is an ongoing matter we will not be commenting further on the investigation, but the public can be assured safety is our top priority."

It's the second time in the past year that suspicious packages were mailed to election officials in multiple states.

The latest scare comes as early voting has begun in several states ahead of the high-stakes elections for president, Senate, Congress and key statehouse offices, causing disruption in an already tense voting season. Local election directors are beefing up security to keep workers and polling

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Outside



Sunny and hot today the rest of this week

Today	Thursday	Friday
High 85	High 85	High 88
Low 57	Low 57	Low 62

More Weather on Page 2

Online

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Vol. 95 No. 271

WEDNESDAY
September 18, 2024

Lakeview Duplexes



Independent Living Units

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www.christiancarer.org

CHRISTIAN CARE Retirement Community

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Southern Wells

(Continued from Page 1)

other Wells County districts; Lehman said the superintendents had spoken about it. On Monday, BHMSD approved the same start and end dates.

The board did not approve the calendar on Tuesday to allow time for public feedback.

Elementary Principal Kristen Wall and Jr.-Sr. High School Principal Kim Conner also discussed their school improvement plans, which will be submitted to the Indiana Department of Education in early October. The schools largely track with or above state averages in student data; the principals want to continue to target growth, particularly in maintaining school attendance.

Schneider thanked the principals for how they spoke about the students' growth, saying, "Thank you for supporting them as they are, not as we want them to be, because that's what in the long run makes them successful."

Lehman further noted how encouraging it has been to see the legacy the teachers leave with their students. "I've always heard that more is caught than taught, and living in the community, seeing teachers, staff, parents — people that have



Board members for Southern Wells Community Schools heard from the related arts teaching staff on Tuesday, and practice bucket drumming to the tune of "Eye of the Tiger" by Survivor. (Photo by Holly Gaskill)

created a legacy here of the way to do life is such a big deal," he said.

In a Spotlight on Raider Success, the Related Arts spoke about their programs and upcoming events, allowing the board to participate in a bucket drumming exercise to "Eye of the Tiger" by Survivor. The district will offer a robotics club soon, in addition to its extremely popular clubs for archery, walking and others.

Also during the meeting, the board:

- Recognized the retire-

ment of bus driver Christina Furnish, who has worked for the district for 29 years.

- Approved employment recommendations for Mark Gates and Michael Haigh to split the athletic event sponsor position, Greg Penrod to coach eighth grade girls' basketball, Mike Carter and Caleb Sleppy to split elementary boys' intermural basketball and Brett Vickery as a baseball assistant coach.

- Accepted a donation from Poneto Baptist Church for elementary library lost/damaged book fines.

- Approved the following fundraiser requests: jeans for teachers, girls' basketball to sell a variety of food items at events during the fall season when other groups are not selling and host an annual pork chop dinner on Dec. 6, Business Professionals of America to sell suckers, Sunshine Society to sell caramel brownies and Southern Wells Jr./Sr. High School to sell Wick's Pies and Nothing Bundt Cakes.

The board's next meeting is 5:30 p.m. Oct. 15.

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Suspicious packages

(Continued from Page 1)

places safe while also ensuring that ballots and voting procedures won't be tampered with.

The National Association of Secretaries of State condemned what it described as a "disturbing trend" of threats to election workers leading up to Nov. 5, as well as the second apparent assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump.

"This must stop, period," the group said. "Our democracy has no place for political violence, threats or intimidation of any kind."

The Colorado Secretary of State's Office said a package containing white powder and with the sender listed as "U.S. Traitor Elimination Army" was intercepted at a mail facility. It said the package was similar to those sent to other states and that early indications suggest the powder was harmless.

On Tuesday, the FBI notified the Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth's office that postal service investigators had identified a suspicious envelope delivered to a building housing state offices. The package was intercepted.

Packages also were sent to secretaries of state and election offices in Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Wyoming this week. The packages forced evacuations in Iowa, Oklahoma and Wyoming. Hazmat crews quickly determined the material was harmless.

The Mississippi Secretary of State's Elections Division said it received a package similar to those sent to other states and that the state Department of Homeland Security was testing it. The division said it has notified county election officials to be on the lookout.

Oklahoma officials said the material sent to the election office there contained flour.

"We have specific protocols in place for situations such as this," Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate said in a statement after the evacuation of the six-story Lucas State Office Building in Des Moines.

A state office building in Topeka, Kansas, was evacuated due to suspicious mail sent to both the secretary of state and attorney general, Kansas

Indiana secretary of state's office receives suspicious 'powdery substance'

By LESLIE BONILLA MUÑIZ
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Indiana Secretary of State employees on Tuesday reported getting a "suspicious" envelope containing a "powdery substance" — joining election officials in numerous states.

Local, state and federal authorities responded to the State Government Center to secure the immediate area, conduct tests and remove the contaminated mail, according to a news release.

Responding agencies included the Indiana Capital Police, Indiana State Police, State Fire Marshall, Indiana Department of Homeland Security, State and Post Office hazardous materials units, and the Federal Bureau of Investigations.

They determined — preliminarily — that the contents in the envelope were non-hazardous, per the release.

"We take every precaution to ensure the safety of our employees and the public. I want to especially thank members of my team; our

law enforcement partners and other first responders for their swift and professional response," Secretary of State Diego Morales said. "We are relieved that everyone is safe."

Powdery packages were also delivered this week to election-related offices in at least a dozen states, The Associated Press reported: Connecticut, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Wyoming.

Morales' office said he had made county clerks aware of the situation.

Spokeswoman Lindsey Eaton also noted that, earlier this year, Morales hand-delivered and mailed instructions on spotting and handling suspicious email — plus, doses of Narcan nasal spray — to county clerks' offices throughout the state.

She also highlighted recent regional election security and safety conferences for county election administrators, emergency management offices and local law enforcement agencies.

Highway Patrol spokesperson April M. McCollum said in a statement.

Topeka Fire Department crews found several pieces of mail with an unknown substance on them, though a field test found no hazardous materials, spokesperson Rosie Nichols said. Several employees were exposed to it and were being monitored.

In Oklahoma, the State Election Board received a suspicious envelope in the mail containing a multi-page document and a white, powdery substance, agency spokesperson Misha Mohr said. Testing determined the substance was flour.

State workers in an office building next to the Wyoming Capitol in Cheyenne were sent home Monday pending testing of a white substance mailed to the secretary of state's office.

Suspicious letters were sent to election offices and government buildings

in at least six states last November, including the same building in Kansas that received suspicious mail Monday. While some of the letters contained fentanyl, even the suspicious mail that was not toxic delayed the counting of ballots in some local elections.

One of the targeted offices was in Fulton County, Georgia, the largest voting jurisdiction in one of the nation's most important swing states. Four county election offices in Washington state had to be evacuated as election workers were processing ballots cast, delaying vote-counting.

The letters caused election workers around the country to stock up the overdose reversal medication naloxone.

Election offices across the United States have taken steps to increase security amid an onslaught of harassment and threats following the 2020 election and the false claims that it was rigged.

Weather

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

(24-hour observations at 11:12 p.m. Tuesday)

High: 84; Low: 54; Precipitation: None

Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.08 feet at 9:45 p.m. Tuesday

Wells County forecast

Today: Sunny, with a high near 85. East wind around 5 mph.

Tonight: Mostly clear, with a low around 57. Northeast wind around 5 mph becoming calm.

Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 85. Calm wind becoming east around 5 mph.

Thursday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 57. Calm wind becoming east around 5 mph.

Friday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 88.

Friday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 62.

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 89.

Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 65.

Sunday: A 20% chance of showers after 2 p.m. Mostly sunny, with a high near 84.

Sunday Night: A 20% chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 63.

Monday: A 20% chance of showers. Mostly sunny, with a high near 81.

Monday Night: A slight chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 58.

Hezbollah blames Israel for exploding pagers

BEIRUT (AP) — Pagers used by hundreds of members of the militant group Hezbollah exploded near simultaneously in Lebanon and Syria on Tuesday, killing at least nine people — including an 8-year-old girl — and wounding several thousand, officials said. Hezbollah and the Lebanese government blamed Israel for what appeared to be a sophisticated, remote attack.

A U.S. official said Israel briefed the U.S. on the operation — in which small amounts of explosive secreted in the pagers were detonated — on Tuesday after it was concluded. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the information publicly.

The Israeli military declined to comment.

Among those wounded was Iran's ambassador to Lebanon. The mysterious explosions came amid rising tensions between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah, which have exchanged fire across the Israel-Lebanon border since the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas that sparked the war in Gaza.

The pagers that blew up had apparently been

acquired by Hezbollah after the group's leader ordered members in February to stop using cellphones, warning they could be tracked by Israeli intelligence. A Hezbollah official told The Associated Press the pagers that were a new brand but declined to say how long they had been in use.

At about 3:30 p.m. local time on Tuesday, as people shopped for groceries, sat in cafes or drove cars and motorcycles in the afternoon traffic, the pagers in their hands or pockets started heating up and then exploding — leaving blood-splattered scenes and panicking bystanders.

It appeared that many of those hit were members of Hezbollah, but it was not immediately clear if others also carried the pagers.

The blasts were mainly in areas where the group has a strong presence, particularly a southern Beirut suburb and in the Beqaa region of eastern Lebanon, as well as in Damascus, according to Lebanese security officials and a Hezbollah official. The Hezbollah official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the press.

BLUFFTON Street Fair

PARADE SCHEDULE

"Passport to Fun"

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2024
7pm - Grand Opening Parade - Midway
Grand Marshal: Erin Prible

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2024
5:45pm - Antique Tractor Parade - Midway
6pm - Antique & Classic Car Parade - Midway
6:15pm - High School Band Parade - Midway

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2024
6pm - Industrial Parade - Midway

Entry Forms: www.blufftonstreetfair.com
or Call The Fair Office at 260-824-4351

ENTERTAINMENT

2024 BLUFFTON Street Fair

Sept 17-21

"Passport to Fun"

WEDNESDAY
12-5:30 pm - Antique & Classic Car Show - Along S. Main
7-8:30 pm - Music-Community Worship Night Band - Stage

THURSDAY
8-10 pm - Free Concert - Whoa, Man! - Stage

FRIDAY
7-9 pm - FNX Wrestling - Stage

SATURDAY
11 am - Diaper Derby- Baby crawl Race - Stage
11:15 pm - OPTIMIST Tractor Pull - 3-7 Year old - W Washington
11:30 pm - Kids Big Wheel Race- 6-8 Year old - W Washington
6-8 pm - Street Fair Idol - Main Event - Stage
9 pm - CONCERT: The Ultimate Garth Brooks Tribute - Stage

2024 BLUFFTON Street Fair

Sept 17-21

"Passport to Fun"

BRACELET PRICES 2024

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday
Sept. 17, 18 & 19

\$25 - Unlimited Rides (5p.m. — Close)

FRIDAY: \$18 - Unlimited Rides 1 — 7pm

SATURDAY: \$18 - Unlimited Rides 11am — 5pm
\$30 - Unlimited Rides 5pm — Close

TICKETS:
\$1⁵⁰ ea. or 20/\$25
Kiddie Rides take 2 tickets,
all others take 3 or 4 tickets.
**Subject to Change*

OBITUARIES

Shelly Reinhard, 59

Shelly L. Reinhard, 59, passed away Monday morning, Sept. 16, 2024, at her residence following an extended illness.

Shelly was born in Fort Wayne, on Aug. 17, 1965, to Stephen A. and Betty J. (Smith) Rhodes; both parents preceded her in death. She was a 1984 graduate of Norwell High School. Shelly worked for several years at Heyerly's Market in Bluffton and operated her own photography business as well as her own boarding and grooming business. She was a member of the Warren Church of Christ, and was a member of the Decatur Pickleball Club and was an avid bowler with the women's league.

Shelly is survived by two daughters, Sara (Lance) Fiechter and Megan (Logan) Nusbaumer, both of Bluffton; seven grandchildren, Maeley, Tessa, Coy and Ada Fiechter,



and Waylon, Kason and Dalton Nusbaumer; two sisters, Deb Ruble of Bluffton and Theresa (Doug) Hoag of Ossian; a fiancé, Ken G. Linder of Warren; former husband, Kevin L. Reinhard of Bluffton; and several nieces and nephews.

Visitation will be held from noon to 8 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 22, 2024, at Goodwin - Cale 8 Harnish Memorial Chapel. A funeral service will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, Sept. 23, 2024, at the funeral home, with visitation one hour prior to the service. Pastor Mickey Strong will officiate. Burial will follow at the Apostolic Christian Cemetery in Adams County.

In lieu of flowers and gifts, the family request memorials be made in Shelly's memory to the Donor's Choice. Online condolences can be made to www.goodwincaleharnish.com.

Thomas A. Smiley, 76

Thomas A. "Tom" Smiley, 76, of Bluffton, passed away on Monday evening, Sept. 16, 2024, at Lutheran Hospital in Fort Wayne.

Tom was born on Nov. 10, 1947, in Bluffton to Bernard V. & Rosetta J. (Earhart) Smiley. He graduated from Pennville High School with the class of 1965. He played college basketball and baseball on a scholarship at William Penn University. Tom was drafted into the U.S. Army, where he honorably served during Vietnam 1968-70. After returning home from the service, Tom worked construction and retired from Norfolk Southern Railroad as a signal maintainer. On April 8, 1972, at the First United Methodist Church, Tom and Nancy A. (Schaffter) Smiley were married.

He enjoyed playing golf, helping his children and grandchildren with their 4-H livestock projects, and enjoyed attending his children and grandchildren's sporting events. He was a longtime member of the American Legion Post #111 of Bluffton.

Survivors include his wife of 52 years, Nancy of Bluffton; children, Charlie (Sheri) Smiley of Zanesville, Ernie Smiley of Bluffton and Sarah (Pastor Wayne) Ball of Bluffton. He was a loving PAL to his five



grandchildren, Brandon (Chanda) Bennett of Bluffton, Will, Andrew, Gabe and Emma Ball of Bluffton, and a great-grandson, Austin Bennett; along with two sisters, Joleen and Loretta.

He is preceded in death by his parents and a brother, Steve and sister, Darla.

Visitation will take place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 19, 2024, at the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton. Funeral Services will take place at 1 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 19, 2024, at the funeral home with Pastor Wayne Ball and Jeff Lemler officiating. Burial will follow at Fairview Cemetery in Bluffton with full military honors by the United States Army Honor Guard and American Legion Post #111 Honor Guard.

Memorials may be made to the Wells County 4-H Program for the Cattle, Hog & Sheep Barns, or River of Life Community Church, and can be directed to the funeral home.

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the care of the Lemler family of Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton. Friends can send online condolences to the Smiley family at www.thomarrich.com.

Justin Stanley, 37

Justin Cole Stanley, 37, of Bluffton, left this world on Sept. 1, 2024.

Born on April 27, 1987, in Bluffton, Justin was known for his deep kindness and loving spirit. He touched the lives of those around him with his gentle heart and compassionate nature, leaving an imprint on all who knew him. Justin took great pride in being a father to his son, Declan, and they shared many cherished moments together, especially enjoying time outdoors.

A lifelong Dallas Cowboys fan, Justin was passionate about the simple joys of life - whether it was cheering for his favorite team or finding peace in nature. He also dedicated himself to serving the Amish community as a driver, where he was known for his reliability and the friendships he built along the way.

He is survived by his beloved son,



Declan Stanley; mother, Kimberly Stanley; brothers, Cody (Tiffany) Stanley and Chase Stanley; and best friend, Jesse Jesus Benitez. He will be remembered fondly by his extended family of aunts, uncles, cousins and many friends who will forever carry his memory in their hearts.

Justin was preceded in death by his father, Robert Stanley; his grandparents, Bill and Charity Coty; and his cousin, Jami Corle.

In honor of Justin's life, a celebration will be held 2-6 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 20, 2024 at Preble Fireman's Park, 4333 US-22 in Decatur. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Riley Children's Hospital, reflecting Justin's care and concern for children. Condolences can be left online at www.elzey-patterson-rodak.com.

Ossian Rotary to hear from local colorectal cancer survivor

At its weekly meeting on Thursday, Aug. 19, Ossian Rotary will hear from Lisa Craig, an Ossian-based certified public accountant. She will discuss her multi-year journey through colorectal cancer, from which she is now in remission.

Craig is a graduate of Miami University of Ohio with bachelor's of business degrees in accountancy and finance and later a master's in accountancy. Since 2011, she has been a certified public accountant that owns and operates her own business preparing individual income

taxes.

In July, 2020, during the height of COVID, at the age of 38, Craig was diagnosed with colorectal cancer. She had no family history of cancer. To battle the disease, Craig underwent radiation, chemotherapy, and two surgeries, and has now been in remission for three and a half years. She will be discussing the alarming increase in colorectal cancer in younger generations, the importance of screening and early detection, warning signs and symptoms, as well as treatments available.

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. Please note that if Norwell Schools has a weather delay or cancellation, Ossian Rotary will cancel its meeting for that day.

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

Next Thursday, Sept. 26, Ossian Rotary will host Ashleigh King with Imagine Early.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City: Thursday, 11:51 p.m., 600 block of Beth Avenue. Trespassing warning.

Friday, 5:13 a.m., News-Banner. Request for vehicle removal. Note left.

Friday, 5:55 p.m., Bluffton Police Department. Report of scam.

Friday, 6 p.m., Bluffton Family Eye Car. Unwanted party.

Friday, 8:59 p.m., Market and Williams streets. Vehicle parked in no-parking zone. Unable to contact owner, ticket issued.

Friday, 9:21 p.m., Sunset Drive. Report of a missing person.

Friday, 9:26 p.m., 500 block of Silver Street. Parking issue. Unable to contact owner, ticket issued.

Saturday, 7:04 a.m., Market and Williams streets. Two vehicles needed moved for Street Fair tent.

Saturday, 12:32 p.m., Daniels Jewelers. Report of a verbal altercation between a man and a woman.

Saturday, 4:17 p.m., 500 block of West Miller Street. One arrested on warrant.

Sunday, 2:48 a.m., Main Street and S.R. 124. One arrested for driving while suspended with a prior.

Sunday, 12:52 p.m.,

Walmart. Found possible drugs in the lawn and garden section. Collected to be destroyed.

Sunday, 7:08 p.m., 100 block of South Johnson Street. Report of possible child abuse.

Sunday, 10:11 p.m., residence on Pine Grove Court. Report of a verbal altercation between two women.

Monday, 7:25 a.m., Post Office. Semi truck parking problem. Driven notified to move trailer.

Monday, 8:47 a.m., Hiday Chrysler. Driver cited for driving while suspended.

Monday, 10:26 a.m., Cari and Westfield drives. Playground vandalized.

Monday, 2:29 p.m., 800 block of South Oak Street. Report of fence damaged by a golf car.

Monday, 4:06 p.m., Merchant Street and Central Avenue. Sideswiped vehicle.

Monday, 7 p.m., 1200 block of West Washington Street. Report of verbal altercation.

Monday, 8:24 p.m., Hardees. Man refusing to leave the property.

Monday, 10:41 p.m., Wells County Jail. Rebecca Markley arrested on warrant.

Tuesday, 8:29 a.m., First Bank of Berne. Report of man laying in the grass.

Jarred Williams arrested on warrant.

Tuesday, 10:30 a.m., Main Street and Central Avenue. Street Department requested two trucks be moved.

Tuesday, 12:13 p.m., Bluffton Regional Medical Center. Car in no parking spot.

County: Monday, 12:53 p.m., Inteva. Shawn Stinson arrested during traffic stop for driving while suspended and possessing a stolen handgun.

Monday, 1:35 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrants served at the jail.

Monday, 2:45 p.m., 900S and South 50W, Keystone. Report of a deer needing put down.

Monday, 4:31 p.m., South Decker Drive and Western (Continued on Page 6)

Janice A. Anderson Calling: 2-7 p.m. Thursday, September 19. Service: 7 p.m. Thursday, September 19 at the funeral home. Goodwin-Cole & Harnish MEMORIAL CHAPEL A Tradition of Caring Locally Owned and Operated Since 1922 St. Rd. 124 East, Bluffton 824-3852

Poll shows GOP in control of state races

By NIKI KELLY

Indiana Capital Chronicle

A new Emerson College Poll shows Republicans Mike Braun and Todd Rokita with solid leads in their statewide races.

Braun is leading Democrat Jennifer McCormick 45% to 34% in the race for governor, with Libertarian Donald Rainwater at 5.8%. The rest are undecided.

In the Attorney General's contest, Rokita polled at 49% compared to Democrat Destiny Wells at 35%.

Those numbers are starkly different than a poll released by the Wells campaign last week that showed both races within the margin of error.

Third District Congressman Jim Banks, who is running for U.S. Senate, is up 46.6% to 33.3% against Democrat Valerie McCray.

Libertarian Andrew Horning is at 4.6%.

GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump has the highest numbers in Indiana. About 57% of Hoosiers said they would support him if the election were held today, compared to about 40% for Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris.

The survey of 1,000 likely voters was conducted September 12-13 and has a margin of error of 3 percentage points.

In the Wells poll, about 51% of likely voters were Republican, 36% were Democrats and 7% were independents. In the Emerson poll, about 45% were Republicans, 32% were Democrats and more than 23% independents.

The Emerson Poll methodology pairs an automated system that collects data over landline phones with an online panel of participants.

WE HELP YOU GET SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICARE AND MEDICAID READY! Jerry Flack & Associates WE REPRESENT MANY - MANY - MANY INSURANCE COMPANIES WE HAVE ALL THE MEDICARE AND MEDICAID OPTIONS AVAILABLE MARKETPLACE ANNUAL ENROLLMENT IS NOV 1ST - DEC 15TH The Price Tag is the Same Everywhere Consider Local for Better Service MEDICARE ANNUAL ENROLLMENT OCT 15 TO DEC 7 CALL US WHEN YOU HAVE PROBLEMS AND YOU WILL HAVE PROBLEMS YOU WILL HAVE US TO COUNT ON MEDICARE SUPPLEMENTS - MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS - PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLANS. Life Insurance - Long Term Care Insurance - Investments - Individual and Small Group Health - Dental - Vision - Hearing - Cancer Insurance Folks on Medicare A and B and Diabetic can get FREE Nice Looking Diabetic Shoes Every Year from Us We Do FREE Information/ Education Seminars In Your Business (Again Former Teachers) WE CAN MEET: IN OUR OFFICE - IN YOUR HOME - IN A FAVORED LOCATION In the 1882 Building at Main & Market with the mural on the outside wall • 260-824-1618

Sure, Interra offers flexible lending options and certificate specials. We also have excellent competitive checking, electronic services, and flexible lending options. But more than that, at Interra Credit Union we are interested in giving our members the best service, inspired by our communities, and invested in maintaining the highest quality experience. To be a part of it all, visit us online at interracu.com and join in! interracu.com join INterra CREDIT UNION Be A PART OF IT all AMERICAN SHARE INSURANCE Your savings insured to \$250,000 per account. This institution is not federally insured, and if the institution fails, the Federal Government does not guarantee that depositors will get back their money.

Ku Klux Klan: A fever in the heartland

In the early 1920s a resurgent Ku Klux Klan rose to prominence in Indiana. It is estimated that



Ken Ballinger

dues paying membership and participation in Klan activities included nearly 300,000 Hoosiers in a population of approximately three million. Indiana, a state that sacrificed 25,000 lives in the Civil War, had more Klan members than any state in the Union.

A mystery man and demagogue of huge proportions led the movement, beginning in Evansville and moving North through towns and cities familiar to us all (Kokomo, Muncie, Marion, Richmond, Indianapolis, etc.), where he took control of government and police departments all the way to the Governor's office. His goal was to be appointed as U.S. Senator and eventually to run for President. This Grand Dragon of the KKK was W.B. Stephenson. Originally from Texas, Stephenson and his minions made hooded vigilante justice and cross burnings common practice in the Hoosier Heartland. All this from Timothy

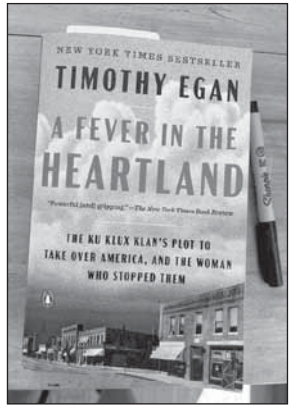
Egan's 2023 book, "A Fever in the Heartland, the Ku Klux Klan's Plot to take over America, and the woman who stopped them."

The KKK sold its ideas on a stated philosophy of temperance, chastity, and chivalry. It successfully promoted fear of the "other" and a yearning for times past. The KKK rejected modernism and its moral failings. All the while, Stephenson and his brutal charges were anything but chaste and temperate in this time of the Roaring Twenties and prohibition. Quite the opposite. The targets of the KKK were Blacks, Jews, homosexuals, Catholics, dark-skinned immigrants, and the teaching of evolution. Dark-skinned immigrants were defined as Italians and Greeks. These groups, so proclaimed, provided an easily identifiable cause for the common man's disaffections. Stephenson was the master promoter of hate.

The KKK in Indiana had a women's division headed by



as well). Originally a Quaker minister, she left or was asked to leave the church as she picked up the torch for the KKK as a fiery revival meeting speaker and proponent of all that the KKK stood for. She



grew the organization throughout the Midwest by enlistment of thousands of women whose job it was to support and aid in the work of the KKK. The core tenant of the KKK was (and still is) pride in race and religion. The very definition of nativism. Surprisingly, core allies of the KKK were the many Protestant churches and faith leaders that promoted its growth either from the pulpit or through defacto support of resigned silence. From the book, "The Klan that spread to the North was steeped in homegrown

Christianity practiced by everyday folks. But instead of love your neighbor, these Klansmen hated many a neighbor."

There are many heroes in this story. Among them, law enforcement, journalists, faith leaders, lawyers, and common citizens. First among them was a young woman, raped and brutalized by Stephenson, whose bedside death testimony eventually brought down the demagogue who previously proclaimed "We (the KKK) are the law itself." Because of these heroes, he was soon to find out that was no longer true.

WHAT'S NEW?

If the past is truly prologue, this story of the rise and demise of the KKK should prove providential. The KKK still exists, though in diminished form. Other nativist hate groups like the KKK who proclaim superiority through race and birthright are plentiful. The Oath Keepers, Proud Boys, Patriot Front, Three Percenters, etc. There are too many to count. Shockingly (sarcasm), they all support the current and most disgusting demagogue of our time, Donald Trump, who, in W.B. Stephenson fashion, disparages immigrants at every opportunity. Mr. Trump has never disavowed his affection for these groups. Add to that the obvious support of Vladimir Putin, who murders his politi-

cal opponents and willingly sacrifices hundreds of thousands of his own citizens to death in an unjust war on a sovereign neighbor, and we find overwhelming evangelical support that requires a good bit of moral gymnastics to justify. I find it sad and unconvincing.

W.B. Stephenson said, "I did not sell the Klan in Indiana on hatred. I sold it on Americanism." This statement is consistent with MAGA reasoning and America First philosophy. The free world watches and is desperate for us, the USA, to be better than this.

Here's The Thing: I do not know who will win the election. However, I do know that a majority voters in the U.S. will vote against Donald Trump. I take some comfort there.

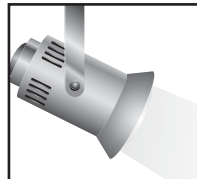
Just a heads up to whoever stole my Biden/Harris yard signs in 2020. I will be placing my Harris/Walz sign out soon. Thought this might help you plan. I'll wave to you.

ken.ballinger@yahoo.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.

Norwell ICE Spotlight award


Elise Boomershine



Senior Elise Boomershine has been selected to receive the Norwell Internship Spotlight award. She is doing her experience in the Lancaster Elementary School Latchkey Program [Bobcat Care] this semester. Elise's mentor is Lillian Lovell. She is the daughter of Jacob and Carissa Boomershine of Craigville.

In the latchkey program, Elise supervises students from Pre-K up to 5th grade. Her top responsibility is to ensure that all of the children are in a safe environment. She also spends a great deal of time interacting and caring for the students. Another key duty for Elise is to lead the children when they do activities at the playground or in the gym.

Upon graduation, Elise would like to study elementary education at Taylor University.



Elise Boomershine
Taylor University.

Pond dwellers studied by Ouabache's Lunch & Learners

By **BARBARA BARBIERI**

People attending the Friends of Ouabache State Park's Lunch & Learn September program were invited to study what lives in a healthy pond as they ate their own sack lunches and cookies provided by Corner Depot Catering.

The program presenter was to have been a naturalist from Fox Island but ably substituting for the program was Jody Heaston, head of volunteers for all of Indiana's state parks. For the program she and Ouabache's naturalist Lydia Ade collected samples of what grows in Kunkel Lake.

At all of the tables there were pans of water showcasing their findings that even included very small fish. Also found were eggs from Dragonflies and the smaller Damselflys, giant waterbugs, small cricket frogs, mud chimneys for crawdads and the chrysalises for a Monarch butterfly. (After being showcased all of the specimens were returned to Kunkel Lake.)

Heaston also shared a hand out showing the things that could be found in a pond, making note of how tolerant they would be to pollution. The finds in Kunkel Lake indicate that it is healthy.

The last Lunch & Learn for the year will be held



Jody Heaston holds up a leaf from an American Lotus plant, also found growing in Kunkel Lake at Ouabache State Park. (Photos by Barbara Barbieri)



Another find beside Kunkel Lake was the chrysalis of a Monarch butterfly attached to a stick.



Can you spot the little fish and the water bug in the water dish? (The little fish is at the upper right and the water bug as at the lower right.)

on Oct. 10, when the topic will be Seed Collecting by

Heaston. The program is free but gate fees apply.

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allow families to get a closer look at the workings of the zoo and meet favorite zoo animals up close and learn about their daily care and the team who take care of them. Registration required at kidszoo.org.

Check out our

Street Fair

PAGE

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BLUFFTON FREE STREET FAIR 2024



Wells County royalty was present for the opening parade of the Bluffton Free Street Fair on Tuesday. Above is Miss Wells County Teen Sophie Meeks, with her sister and 2023 Miss Wells County Gracie Meeks is in the passenger seat. At right is 2024 Miss Wells County Eve McElhaney. (Photos by Holly Gaskill)



It wouldn't be the Street Fair without games and goldfish, and Westlyn Baumgartner (at left) has her eyes on the prize.

Police Notebook

(Continued from Page 3)

Avenue, Bluffton. Marcus Randall Driver pulled over for operating vehicle without obtaining a license and speeding, advised charges would be filed. Driver released from scene.

Ossian:

Monday, 10:17 p.m., 1100 N and 100 E, Ossian. Report of driver shooting at ground to intimidate caller. No evidence of driver or shooting found.

ACCIDENTS

City:

Wednesday, Sept. 11, 3:15 p.m., 1169 N Main St. Thomas Huffman, 63, Bluffton, was backing a 2018 Ram 1500 and failed to see a 2013 Chrysler 300 driven by Christina S. Debrise Harr, 38, Fort Wayne. Harr complained of neck pain but denied EMS attention. Damage did not exceed \$2,500.

Thursday, 5:45 p.m., 712 Lancaster St. Douglas E. Coffman, 59, Hartford City, was backing a 2015 Chevrolet Express and failed to see a 2007 Buick Terraza driven by Sara Sexton, 37, Bluffton. Damage did not exceed \$5,000.

Thursday, 10:23 p.m., 937 N Main St. Grace Vandentop, 23, Yoder, was backing a 2005 Buick Rendezvous and struck an unoccupied 2003 Chrysler PT Cruiser. Damage did not exceed \$10,000.

Friday, 12:34 p.m., 960 N Main St. Caitlin N. Baumlough, 27, Bluffton, was backing a 2015 Cadillac SRX from a parking stall and failed to see a barrier pole. Damage did not exceed \$5,000.

Friday, 8:39 p.m., S.R. 1 just south of Jackson Street. Brian M. Baultemeir, 56, Ossian, was driving a 2021 Chevrolet Equinox northbound and struck a deer. Vehicle towed by Pemberton's. Damage did not exceed \$5,000.

Saturday, 9:22 a.m., Superwash. Joshua L. Shu-

maker, 36, Montpelier, backed his 1997 Dodge Ram 1500 to create space for another vehicle, but did not see a 2020 Cadillac XT5 driven by Brock David Smith, 36, Zanesville. Damage did not exceed \$1,000.

County:

Monday, 4:50 p.m., S.R. 116 and Church Road, Vera Cruz. Michael Huber, 64, Portland, drove through the intersection after stopping at the stop sign. Huber did not yield to oncoming traffic and the rear driver side of his Chevrolet Express was struck by a Chevrolet Silverado driven by James Stalker, 58, Bluffton. Damages did not exceed \$50,000.

FIRES

City:

Friday, 9:23 a.m., 1529 Lancaster St., Bluffton. Fire alarm.

Friday, 6:09 p.m., Christian Care Retirement. Fire alarm. Panel reset.

Saturday, 5:47 p.m., 957E S.R. 124, Bluffton. Structure fire. Bluffton, Markle, Liberty Township fire departments responded. Fire under control at 6:03 p.m.

Saturday, 2:58 p.m., 4175W 1100S, Montpelier. Vehicle fire. Ossian and Chester Township fire departments responded. Fire under control at 3:26 p.m.

Monday, 1:18 p.m., 8200N S.R., Ossian. Grass fire. Fire out at 1:37 p.m.

ARRESTS

Shawn Travis Stinson, 43, Bluffton; theft of a firearm, a Level 5 felony, and driving while suspended — prior, a Class A misdemeanor. No bond set.

Kelly Johanna Crawford, 43, Jarrettsville, Maryland; theft, a Class A misdemeanor, Bond set at \$1,500.

Kelly Johanna Crawford, 43, Jarrettsville, Maryland; theft of a vehicle, a Level 6 felony. Bond set at \$5,000.

Cole McKenzie Randol, 24, Fort Wayne; probation violation, a Level 6 Felony. No bond set.

Rebecca L. Markley, 61, Bluffton; possession of methamphetamine, a Level 4 felony, possession of a legend drug, a Level 6 felony, possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$16,150.

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Unbeaten ACAC conference season

The Southern Wells girls' golf team defeated the Jay County Patriots Tuesday night at Dogwood Glen Golf Course. With that win, the Raiders finish the regular season undefeated in the Allen County Athletic Conference. At right, the Raiders' golf team takes their preseason team photo. Members of the team are from left to right: Callie Ripperger, Collena Reeves, Kolbie Beavans, Erika Beavans and Sophie Meeks. At bottom left, Ripperger (left) and Reeves high-five after a good drive during the match. At bottom right, Erika Beavans putts during the match against Jay County. (Photos by Ryan Walker)



Raiders defeat Patriots, end the ACAC regular season undefeated

By RYAN WALKER

WARREN — Southern Wells' golf team celebrated an undefeated conference regular season Tuesday night.

The Raiders finished the Allen County Athletic Conference regular season undefeated with a 209-224 final score over Jay County at Dogwood Glenn. Their overall match record for the year was 13-1.

The team also celebrated Callie Ripperger and Collena Reeves, the team's two seniors with gifts and a cake after the match.

Ripperger led the way with an impressive score of 42, earning the medalist honors. She was followed by Collena Reeves at (54), Kolbie Beavans (55) and Erika Beavans (58).

The Raiders' accomplishments this season is something to be proud of. Going out for six matches and not losing a single one in the ACAC. But the conference doesn't recognize the regular season champion, or else a plaque would have had a slice of cake after the match.

Instead, the ACAC just honors the meet champion, in which Bluffton won first, South Adams second and

Southern Wells third.

"To go head to head with your conference opponents and go undefeated — some home, some away — that's six different rounds that we had to play well and win," Southern Wells head coach Ross Palmer said. "So it's kind of unfortunate that it's not recognized as a championship, like a regular season championship, but it's a huge accomplishment for our girls, and I think they take a lot of pride in that as well. I know I do."

Saturday's conference meet had its challenges, where one of the Raiders' best golfers had a 103-degree fever during the course of 18 holes. Palmer said if she had golfed her average, the Raiders might have had the hardware coming back to Poneto.

Another crack at the postseason will come shortly, as the sectional next Saturday is just days away at Arbor Trace. Palmer expects six schools to compete for the three spots necessary to advance to the regional, Bluffton being one of them.

Palmer's golf program has been on fire lately, winning the 2022 ACAC and sectional meets along with this year's unbeaten conference record.

The 2022 class graduated four of its five starters, leaving only Ripperger from varsity and Kolbie Beavans, who played junior varsity that season. There was a learning curve, as Southern Wells dropped from first to sixth in the conference at the ACAC meet last year. But one season later, the team scraped 65 strokes off their game and got back on the map.

Part of it was due to the fact that Palmer had new golfers to the team, including Reeves who was a late addition to last year's squad. A few freshmen, Sophie Meeks and Erika Beavans, have also gained a year's worth of experience.

Palmer said that the team has vastly improved in understanding the game of golf and learning the twists and turns of it, including the mental standpoint. Learning how to navigate nine to 18 holes and have a good day are crucial to success at this level.

All of their hard work for the five members has been worth it for a tightly-knit group that loves to play with one another.

(Continued on Page A2)

Sports Roundup

Norwell sweeps Marion in volleyball

Norwell swept their third straight game in volleyball Tuesday night at The Castle.

The Knights defeated Marion and won by scores of 25-8, 25-15 and 25-5. Their record is now 10-7 on the season.

Stat leaders: Vanessa Rosswurm with nine kills, Autumn Lee six aces, Emma Vachon 28 assists, Mekynzi Beck with two blocks and Rebecca Settle eight digs.

Norwell also won the junior varsity contest 2-0 (25-7, 25-7).

Norwell will be at Leo to begin conference play at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 19.

Knights edge Bulldogs in NE8 tennis

Norwell bounced back and won a conference match in boys' tennis Tuesday night.

The Knights defeated New Haven on the road 3-2 and improved to a 7-5 record on the season.

Individual results:

- Gavin Reynolds (NW) defeated Cordell Roberson 6-0, 6-0 at No. 1 singles.

- Braylonn Troutt (NW) defeated Gavin Smith 6-1, 6-1 at No. 2 singles.

- Jacob Turnwald (NH) Landon Diver 6-2, 6-2 at No. 3 singles.

- Eddie Archbold and Ayden Quintanilla (NW) defeated Caiden Rowland and Ethan Goodwin 6-4, 7-5 at No. 1 doubles.

- Corwynn Koberson and Mason Ehrman (NH) defeated Rylan Heyerly and Dylan Randol 6-1, 6-2 at No. 2 doubles.

Norwell also won the junior varsity match 3-1.

Results for JV:

- Ethan Williamson and Ryan Ewing (NW) defeated Braylon Eddington Cameron Evans 8-2.

- Levi White and Jasper Kreigh (NW) defeated Brady Exner and Tylan Amos 8-0.

- Christian Werling and Greyson Chavis (NW) defeated Brady Exner and Tylan Amos 8-3.

- Braylon Eddington and Cameron Evans (NH) defeated Jensen Miller and Bradon Hoag 8-2.

Norwell will be at East Noble to continue NE8 play at 5 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 19.

Mann's 3 goals lead Knights vs. Panthers

Norwell defeated Eastbrook on the road 4-0 Tuesday night.

Grace Mann scored a hat trick and picked up an assist on the night, tallying her goal total to now 23 on the season. Aubrey Meyer scored and Karrigan Melcher added an assist. Norwell improves its record to 7-4 on the season.

Shae Brooks and Emma Garner were in net for the Knights.

Norwell tied the junior varsity match 0-0. Maggie Neuenschwander, Garner and Brooks were in net for Norwell.

Norwell will be at South Adams at 5 p.m. Thursday Sept. 19.

Raiders fall to Patriots in ACAC V-ball

Southern Wells fell 3-0 on the road in volleyball to Heritage on Tuesday.

The Raiders lost by scores of 25-20, 25-8 and 25-16. They're now 8-8 (0-2) on the season.

Abbie Powell had eight kills and 16 digs for the Raiders, while Aly Green had four kills and Kaylea Coffel 10 digs.

Southern Wells will be at home against ACAC and county rival Bluffton at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 17.

High School Calendar

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 18

BOYS TENNIS: Luers at Bluffton, 5 p.m.
GIRLS GOLF: Luers/South Adams at Norwell, 4:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 19

BOYS TENNIS: South Adams at Bluffton, 5 p.m.; Norwell at East Noble, 5 p.m.

GIRLS GOLF: Bluffton at Woodlan, 4:30 p.m.
GIRLS SOCCER: Norwell at South Adams, 5 p.m.
VOLLEYBALL: Bluffton at Southern Wells, 7 p.m.; Norwell at Leo, 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 20

GIRLS GOLF: (Sectional) Norwell at Chestnut Hills, 9 a.m.
FOOTBALL: Jay County at Bluffton, 7 p.m.; New Haven at Norwell, 7 p.m.; Southern Wells at Woodlan, 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 21

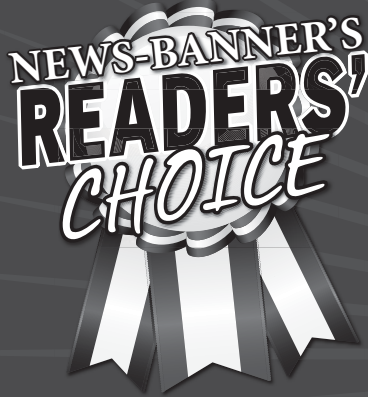
CROSS COUNTRY (co-ed): Bluffton, Southern Wells at South Adams Invitational, 9 a.m.; Norwell at Riverview Health Invitational (Westfield), 9 a.m.

GIRLS GOLF: (Sectional) Bluffton at Arbor Trace, 9 a.m.
VOLLEYBALL: Bluffton at Canterbury Invitational, 9 a.m.

MONDAY, SEPT. 23

BOYS SOCCER: Norwell at DeKalb, 6:30 p.m.
BOYS TENNIS: Adams Central at Bluffton, 5 p.m.; Norwell at Snider, 4:30 p.m.

VOLLEYBALL: South Side at Norwell, 7:30 p.m.
GIRLS SOCCER: DeKalb at Norwell, 6:30 p.m.



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Seeking closure when a close friend disappears

Dear Annie by Annie Lane



Dear Annie: My adult daughter was very close friends with a woman, her husband and their two teenage daughters. When her friend moved across the country, my daughter was heartbroken. However, they continued to talk, text and email almost daily. My daughter even traveled across the country and considered the possibility of moving to a nearby town.

already got your answer. The best advice I can offer you and your daughter is to find a way to let it go. Sometimes, we don't get the explanations we're hoping for, and that's a hard truth we have to accept. While you can't control how others respond, you do have control over how you react to them.

Suddenly, and without any apparent reason, her friend "ghosted" her — stopped replying to texts, phone calls and emails. My daughter is devastated and can't think of any explanation for this abrupt change.

It seems that this friendship may have run its course, and perhaps it wasn't built on the qualities that are essential for a healthy relationship — qualities like trustworthiness, empathy, loyalty and openness. It sounds like this person may not fully understand what it means to be a true friend.

She took a small potted flower and a card to her friend's house, expressing love and concern, and asking for help in understanding what happened. The friend's response was shocking: She texted my daughter, telling her to stay away, not to contact her or her family, and even accused her of "stalking."

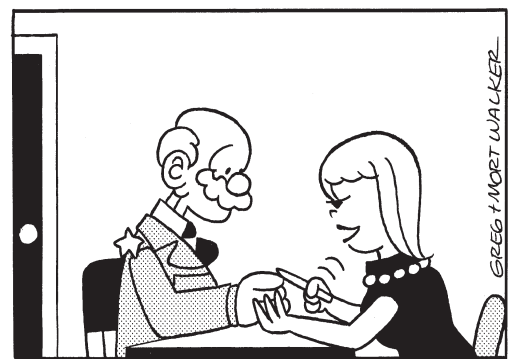
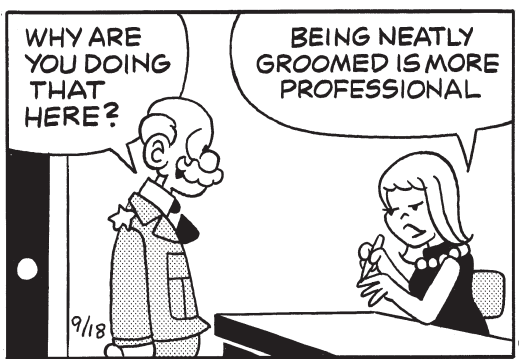
Encourage your daughter to focus on the positive relationships in her life, where those values are present and appreciated. Over time, the pain of this loss will lessen, and she'll be stronger for having gone through it.

I just want her friend to explain what went wrong. Is that asking too much? In the name of common decency, a simple sentence explaining what led to this sudden end to their friendship would mean a lot. The two of them had recently discussed a similar situation happening to someone else, and they both agreed it would never happen to them.

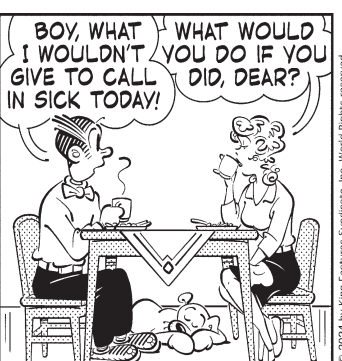
"How Can I Forgive My Cheating Partner?" is out now! Annie Lane's second anthology — featuring favorite columns on marriage, infidelity, communication and reconciliation — is available as a paperback and e-book. Visit http://www.creatorpublishing.com for more information. Send your questions for Annie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

My daughter is devastated and just wants to understand what happened. Any suggestions? — Need Some Answers Dear Need Some Answers: You've

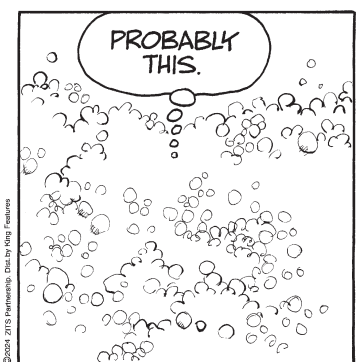
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My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



Devil seeks to destroy the people of the world

Question: Is it true that people who love the world filled with evil must surely love the devil more than God? — L.W.

Answer: It is not loving the people of the world that is wrong; it is loving the things of the world — the world's system.

Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son ..." (John 3:16, NKJV). Loving the world — the people of the world — is something that only comes from God in Heaven. The devil does not love the world at all; in fact, the Bible tells us that Satan "deceives the whole world" (Revelation

12:9, NKJV). There is no love in deception. The devil seeks to destroy the people of the world by enticing them to reject God's ways and follow evil.

Satan goes along the road of life dropping things on the pathway that he knows will entice us. Maybe it is fame, maybe it's money. Or perhaps it's a title or enjoying popularity. If we hunger for things that come ahead of God, they are sinful and will lead us astray.

The story is told of an old farmer walking down the road to market as his pigs followed behind him. Other farmers were having a difficult time keeping their pigs on the pathway.

One farmer asked the old man how he got his pigs to follow him. The old man answered, "It is very simple. Every step I take, I drop a bean, and the pigs like beans, so they follow."

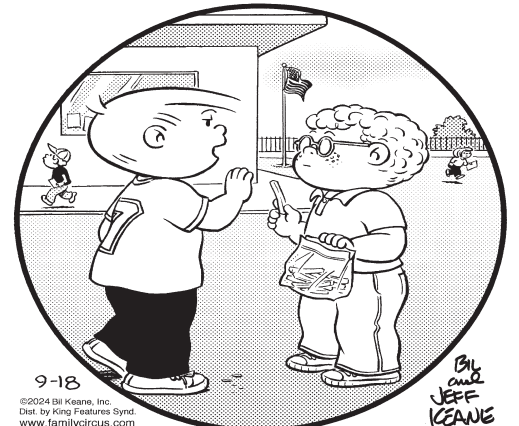
Satan wants to lure us into his traps, and he knows exactly what kind of "bait" will appeal to us. This is why it is important to stay close to the Lord through faithfully reading His Word and obeying His truth.

(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



"No thanks. I don't do carrot sticks."

The LOCKHORNS



"I'VE LEARNED A GREAT DEAL ABOUT HOW TO HANDLE LEROY BY READING MOMMY BLOGS."

Table with columns for date, channel, and program details. Includes sections for Cable Channels and a detailed program schedule.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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Solution time: 23 mins.

Yesterday's answer 9-18

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers indicating starting positions for clues.

Homes near Houston under evacuation orders as pipeline fire burns

By JUANA LOZANO and SEAN MUPRHY Associated Press
DEER PARK, Texas (AP) — A pipeline fire that erupted in a suburban Houston neighborhood burned for a second day Tuesday with still no definitive word on when the blaze would finally go out, when nearby residents may be able to return home or why a car drove through a fence and hit a valve before the destructive explosion.
 Although the fire was getting smaller, the disruptions caused by the Monday morning explosion in a grassy corridor between a Walmart and a residential neighborhood left some locals increasingly weary. On Tuesday, people could be seen returning to their homes to get clothes and other items before quickly leaving again.
 “We literally walked out with the clothes on our backs, the pets, and just left

the neighborhood with no idea where we were going,” Kristina Reff said. “That was frustrating.”
 Over 24 hours after the blast — which shot towering flames like a blowtorch above the suburbs of Deer Park and La Porte — authorities have provided few details about the circumstances leading up to the explosion.
 Investigators said it happened after the driver of a sport utility vehicle went through a fence near the Walmart and struck an above-ground valve. As of Tuesday evening, authorities had not still not identified the driver or said what happened to them.
 Deer Park officials have said police and FBI agents found no preliminary evidence to suggest the explosion of the pipeline, which carried natural gas liquids, was a coordinated or terrorist attack. In a statement Monday night, the city said

it “appears to be an isolated incident” but officials have not provided details on how they came to that conclusion.
 The car was incinerated by the explosion, which scorched the ground across a wide radius, severed power transmission lines, melted playground equipment and ignited some homes.
 The valve, which appears to have been protected by a chain-link fence topped with barbed wire, is located within a long grassy field where high-voltage power lines run. Several pipelines run underground.
 Authorities evacuated nearly 1,000 homes at one point and ordered people in nearby schools to shelter in place. By Tuesday afternoon that number was down to just over 400.
 “The fire is still burning, but the good news is that the pressure within the pipeline is continuously

dropping, which means we are getting closer to the fire going out,” Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo said in a statement.
 Operators shut off the flow after the explosion, but Hidalgo has said that 20 miles of pipeline stretched between the two closed valves and the chemicals inside had to burn off before the fire would stop.
 Robert Hall, a senior advisor at the nonprofit Pipeline Safety Trust, said it’s not surprising that it’s taken more than a day for the material to stop burning.
 “You’re talking about 20-inch pipelines and miles between valves, so it takes a long time to burn down,” Hall said.
 Houston is the nation’s petrochemical heartland and is home to a cluster of refineries and plants and thousands of miles of pipelines. Explosions and fires are a familiar sight, and some have been deadly, raising

recurring questions about industry efforts to protect the public and the environment.
 Hall, who previously oversaw pipeline and hazardous materials investigations for the National Transportation Safety Board, said there are few regulations that govern the location of pipelines near homes and businesses.
 “That becomes a very local issue, community by community,” Hall said, adding that some jurisdictions require bollards — sturdy pipes filled with concrete — to prevent vehicles from crashing into sensitive infrastructure.
 Hidalgo said Tuesday that Energy Transfer, the Dallas-based owner of the pipeline, has said it was working to isolate parts of the pipeline closest to the fire by clamping it on each side.
 Energy Transfer did not

immediately respond to a question about what safety precautions were in place near the valve.
 Hall said regulations from 2022 aimed at reducing deaths and environmental damage from ruptures were geared toward gas lines, not those carrying liquids, and would not have applied to this pipeline. He added that many new safety regulations that have been put in place do not apply retroactively to pre-existing pipelines.
 Both Energy Transfer and Harris County Pollution Control were conducting air monitoring in the area and have found no health issues, according to Deer Park officials.
 Since leaving home, Reff and her family have been staying in a hotel room paid for by Energy Transfer. But they were eager to return.
 “It would be nice to be in our own beds,” she said.

Instagram makes teen accounts private as pressure mounts on the app to protect children

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer
 Instagram is making teen accounts private by default as it tries to make the platform safer for children amid a growing backlash against how social media affects young people’s lives.
 Beginning Tuesday in the U.S., U.K., Canada and Australia, anyone under 18 who signs up for Instagram will be placed into restrictive teen accounts and those with existing accounts will be migrated over the next 60 days. Teens in the European Union will see their accounts adjusted later this year.
 Parent company Meta acknowledges that teenagers may lie about their age and says it will require them to verify their ages in more instances, like if they try to create a new account with an adult birthday. The Menlo Park, California company also said it is building technology that proactively finds teen accounts that pretend to be grownups and automatically places them into the restricted teen accounts.
 The teen accounts will be private by default. Private messages are restricted so teens can only receive them from people they follow or are already connected to. “Sensitive content,” such as videos of people fighting or those promoting cosmetic procedures, will be limited, Meta said. Teens will also get notifications if they are on Instagram for more than 60

minutes and a “sleep mode” will be enabled that turns off notifications and sends auto-replies to direct messages from 10 p.m. until 7 a.m.
 While these settings will be turned on for all teens, 16 and 17-year-olds will be able to turn them off. Kids under 16 will need their parents’ permission to do so.
 “The three concerns we’re hearing from parents are that their teens are seeing content that they don’t want to see or that they’re getting contacted by people they don’t want to be contacted by or that they’re spending too much time on the app,” said Naomi Gleit, head of product at Meta. “So teen accounts is really focused on addressing those three concerns.”
 The announcement comes as the company faces lawsuits from dozens of U.S. states that accuse it of harming young people and contributing to the youth mental health crisis by knowingly and deliberately designing features on Instagram and Facebook that addict children to its platforms.
 While Meta didn’t give specifics on how the changes might affect its business, the company said the changes may mean that teens will use Instagram less in the short term. Emarketer analyst Jasmine Enberg said the revenue impact of the changes “will likely be minimal.”
 “Even as Meta continues to prioritize teen safety, it’s unlikely that it’s going

to make sweeping changes that would cause a major financial hit,” she said, adding that the teen accounts are unlikely to significantly affect how engaged teens are with Instagram “not in the least because there are still plenty of ways to circumvent the rules, and could even make them more motivated to work around the age limits.”
 New York Attorney General Letitia James said Meta’s announcement was “an important first step, but much more needs to be done to ensure our kids are protected from the harms of social media.” James’ office is working with other New York officials on how to implement a new state law intended to curb children’s access to what critics call addictive social media feeds.
 Others were more critical. Nicole Gil, the co-founder and executive director of the nonprofit Accountable Tech, called Instagram’s announcement the “latest attempt to avoid actual independent oversight and regulation and instead continue to self-regulate, jeopardizing the health, safety, and privacy of young people.”
 “Today’s PR exercise falls short of the safety by design and accountability that young people and their parents deserve and only meaningful policy action can guarantee,” she said. “Meta’s business model is built on addicting its users

and mining their data for profit; no amount of parental and teen controls Meta is proposing will change that.”
 Sen. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.), the co-author of the Kids Online Safety Act that recently passed the Senate, questioned the timing of the announcement “on the eve of a House markup” of the bill.
 “Just like clockwork, the Kids Online Safety Act moves forward and industry comes out with a new set of self-enforcing guidelines,” she said.
 In the past, Meta’s efforts at addressing teen safety and mental health on its platforms have also been met with criticism that the changes don’t go far enough. For instance, while kids will get a notification when they’ve spent 60 minutes on the app, they will be able to bypass it and continue scrolling.
 That’s unless the child’s parents turn on “parental supervision” mode, where parents can limit teens’ time on Instagram to a specific amount of time, such as 15 minutes.
 With the latest changes, Meta is giving parents more options to oversee their kids’ accounts. Those under 16 will need a parent or guardian’s permission to change their settings to less restrictive ones. They can do this by setting up “parental supervision” on their accounts and connecting them to a parent or guardian.

Employee: Titan sub tragedy could have been prevented

By PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press
 A key employee who labeled a doomed experimental submersible unsafe prior to its last, fatal voyage testified Tuesday that the tragedy could have been prevented if a federal safety agency had investigated his complaint.
 David Lochridge, OceanGate’s former operations director, said he felt let down by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s decision not to follow through on the complaint.
 “I believe that if OSHA had attempted to investigate the seriousness of the concerns I raised on multiple occasions, this tragedy may have been prevented,” he said while speaking before a commission trying to determine what caused the Titan to implode en route to the wreckage of the Titanic last year, killing all five on board. “As a seafarer, I feel deeply disappointed by the system that is meant to protect not only seafarers but the general public as well.”
 Lochridge said during testimony that eight months after he filed an OSHA complaint, a caseworker told him the agency had not begun investigating it yet and there were 11 cases ahead of his. By then, OceanGate was suing Lochridge and he had filed a countersuit.
 About 10 months after he filed the complaint, he decided to walk away. The case was closed and both lawsuits were dropped.

OSHA officials did not immediately respond to a request for comment Tuesday.
 Earlier in the day, Lochridge said he frequently clashed with the company’s co-founder and felt the company was committed only to making money.
 Lochridge was one of the most anticipated witnesses to appear before a commission. His testimony echoed that of other former employees Monday, one of whom described OceanGate head Stockton Rush as volatile and difficult to work with.
 “The whole idea behind the company was to make

money,” Lochridge said. “There was very little in the way of science.”
 Rush was among the five people who died in the implosion. OceanGate owned the Titan and brought it on several dives to the Titanic going back to 2021.
 Lochridge’s testimony began a day after other witnesses painted a picture of a troubled company that was impatient to get its unconventionally designed craft into the water. The accident set off a worldwide debate about the future of private undersea exploration.
 Lochridge referenced

a 2018 report in which he raised safety issues about OceanGate operations. He said with all of the safety issues he saw “there was no way I was signing off on this.”

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