



Steve Reinig (pictured) driving his 1965 'Drag-U-La' replica through the Ossian Days parade last week. (Photo by Sydney Kent)

A visit from 'Drag-U-La'

 More photos on Page 10 By SYDNEY KENT Steve Reinig of Ossian has been building cars for much of his life. Whether a 1970 Roadrunner, pickup trucks from

the 1950s, or "woodie" Station Wagons – he's interested. One of Reinig's most recent and jaw-dropping projects, The 1965 "Drag-U-La" replica from The Munsters television show, was parked alongside rows of classic cars in the annual antique car show at the Bluffton Street Fair on Tuesday.

"All of it is handmade. The first time I saw this car," Reinig grinned. "I was only seven-years-old. It stuck in the back of my mind."

The head-turning replica took Reinig approximately twoand-a-half years to build and paint. He then spent an addi-(Continued on Page 2)

Wells Republican Party caucus for county recorder will be Oct. 5

By HOLLY GASKILL

The Wells County Republican Party will hold a caucus for the county recorder directly following its monthly breakfast, 8 a.m. Oct. 5.

Party Chairman Zachary Rodgers told the Election Board about the upcoming caucus during the board's meeting Tuesday. Current Recorder Carolyn Bertsch was appointed via a caucus to replace Ossian Clerk-Treasurer Angie Ealing, who's retiring from the role, on Dec. 1.

Rina Stuck is the only candidate running for the position in the general election, and currently the only one for the October caucus

Also during their meeting, the board

discussed raising the cost of preparing a list of registered Wells County voters sometimes requested by campaigning candidates - from \$5 to \$10. Clerk Beth Davis said she put the item on a future agenda; Republican board member Roy Johnson was present Democrat board member Larry Sell was absent on Tuesday.

Davis also reminded board members of their upcoming public test of voting equip-ment, 2 p.m. on Oct. 1. Voter registration is open until Oct. 7 and early voting begins on Oct. 8. Davis has directed those interested in helping with election day to their party chairman.

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Parade on the midway

Wednesday night at the Bluffton Free Street Fair brought all the heavy metals to midway, with the tractor, car and marching band parades. A line of John Deer tractors kicked off the tractor parade, pictured above. Sierra Baughman with

unveil new statewide apprenticeship plan

Indiana's industry leaders

By CASEY SMITH Indiana Capital Chronicle

A coalition of nearly 200 Indiana leaders released a new statewide education pathway Tuesday that seeks to create additional classroom and work-based learning opportunities, especially in the form of apprenticeships, for high school students.

Known as CEMETS iLab Indiana, the coalition said the strategic plan, detailed in a new report, is meant to address Indiana's talent shortages by supplementing the traditional high school-to-college pathway. It ultimately will prepare students for indemand careers while simultaneously developing a new talent pipeline for employers.

If the plan is implemented as expected and supported by state education officials - the new pathway will welcome students in at least one occupation starting with the 2025-2026 school year.

"The iLab's strategic plan is the culmination of eight years of research and learning. Hoosiers need more pathways to well-paying jobs, and we are excited to move forward with this broad and engaged coalition on clear next steps for building and scaling a system that could welcome students as soon as the 2025-2026 school year," said Claire Fiddian-Green, co-chair of CEMETS iLab Indiana. She's also the president and CEO of the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation, which has so far provided more than \$12 million in funding to support the creation of a statewide youth apprenticeship system.

The pathway announcement comes as Indiana's top education officials are continuing to hash out a massive high school diploma redesign meant to maximize "flexibility" and allow students to personalize learning pathways and experiences, including with college courses taken while still in high school. Internships, apprenticeships, military experience and other work-based learning will also be allowed to count toward

(Continued on Page 2)

Bluffton High School's color guard is pictured below.

At left, Matthew Gerber speaks during the community worship event later that evening. (Photos by Holly Gaskill)



Fed signals end to inflation fight with half-point rate cut

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER **AP Economics Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Federal Reserve on Wednesday cut its benchmark interest rate by an unusually large half-point, a dramatic shift after more than

two years of high rates that helped tame inflation but also made borrowing painfully expensive for American consumers.

The rate cut, the Fed's first in more than four years, reflects its new focus on bolstering the job market, which has shown clear signs of slowing. Coming just weeks before the presidential election, the Fed's move also has the potential to scramble the economic landscape just as Americans prepare to vote.

The central bank's action lowered its key rate to roughly 4.8%, down from a two-decade high of 5.3%, where it had stood for 14 months as it struggled to curb the worst inflation streak in four decades. Inflation has tumbled from a peak of 9.1% in mid-2022 to a three-year low of 2.5% in August, not far above the Fed's

2% target.

The Fed's policymakers also signaled that they expect to cut their key rate by an additional half-point in their final two meetings this year, in November and December. And they envision four more rate cuts in (Continued on Page 2)



LOCAL/NATION

'Drag-U-La'

(Continued from Page 1) tional year and a half finishing the car. Reinig explained that when he first had the idea, he told a friend about it. Six months later, his friend called him after finding a casket.

Though he didn't think he had the time, he said he had to buy it.

While a typical casket is seven feet long, Reinig explained that it was not large enough to fit himself and the necessary parts to function. A friend at a nearby car dealership allowed him to use an industrial press to bend the metal. The process took six hours between two sessions.

"It is an inch-and-ahalf shy of nine foot long," Reinig said. "I set the motor and transmission in there and built everything else around it."

The car features a royal purple lining with a transparent window, which fully closes. The back of the window says the word "DRAG-U-LA". The gold exterior is lined with intri-



Steve Reinig (pictured) at the Bluffton Street Fair on Wednesday. (Photo by Sydney Kent)

cate details, much like the original, and the entire vehicle is made of metal. The original creation was comprised of fiberglass. Two hands were needed to put the hood into place.

actor known for playing Eddie Munster in the iconic series, signed the vehicle himself. It was a proud moment for Reinig.

Reinig said he hopes to add a few finishing touches, Butch Patrick, the first such as a headstone that mir-

rors the original.

"I can't get away from old cars," Reinig laughed. "They're fun and neat, and it's even better to see the younger people out enjoying the cars this year."

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(Continued from Page 1) 2025 and two in 2026.

In a statement and in a news conference with Chair Jerome Powell, the Fed came closer than it has before to declaring victory over inflation.

"We know it is time to recalibrate our (interest rate) policy to something that's more appropriate given the progress on inflation," Powell said. "We're not saying, 'mission accomplished' ... but I have to say, though, we're encouraged by the progress that we have made.

"The U.S. economy is in a good place," he added, "and our decision today is designed to keep it there.'

Though the central bank now believes inflation is largely defeated, many Americans remain upset with still-high prices for groceries, gas, rent and other necessities. Former President Donald Trump blames the Biden-Harris administration for sparking an inflationary surge. Vice President Kamala Harris, in turn, has charged that Trump's promise to slap tariffs on all imports would raise prices

for consumers even further. Rate cuts by the Fed should, over time, lead to lower borrowing costs for mortgages, auto loans and credit cards, boosting Americans' finances and supporting more spending and growth. Homeowners will be able to refinance mortgages at lower rates, saving on monthly payments, and even shift credit card debt to lower-cost personal loans or home equity lines. Businesses may also borrow and invest more. Average mortgage rates have already dropped to an 18-month low of 6.2%, according to Freddie Mac, spurring a jump in demand for refinancings. "It's a step in the right direction," Laura Rosner-Warburton, senior economist of MacroPolicy Perspectives, said of Wednesday's Fed move.

she said, will "prevent risks from building and the unemployment rate from rising. They are trying to keep the economy in good shape."

In an updated set of projections, the policymakers collectively envision a faster drop in inflation than they did three months ago but also higher unemployment. They foresee their preferred inflation gauge falling to 2.3% by year's end, from its current 2.5%, and to 2.1%by the end of 2025. And they now expect the unemployment rate to rise further this year, to 4.4%, from 4.2% now, and to remain there by the end of 2025. That's above their previous forecasts of 4% for the end of this year and 4.2% for 2025.

Powell was pressed at his news conference about whether the Fed's decision to cut its key rate by an unusually large half-point is an acknowledgement that it waited too long to begin reducing borrowing rates.

'We don't think we're behind," he replied. "We think this is timely. But I think you can take this as a sign of our commitment not to get behind. We're not seeing rising (unemployment) claims, not seeing rising layoffs, not hearing from companies that that's something that's going to happen." He added: "There is thinking that the time to support the labor market is when it's strong and not when you begin to see the lavoffs. We don't think we need to see further loosening in labor market conditions to get inflation down to 2%." The Fed's next policy meeting is Nov. 6-7 immediately after the presidential election. By cutting rates this week, soon before the election, the Fed is risking attacks from Trump, who has argued that lowering rates now amounts to political interference. Yet Politico has reported that even some key Senate Republicans who were interviewed expressed support for a Fed rate cut this week.

Apprenticeship plan

(Continued from Page 1) graduation requirements.

iLab members said they're monitoring the diploma changes and advocating for the number of days per week that students spend at employer sites to be aligned with new state requirements for high school schedules.

The proposed pathway combines classroom instruction with paid, onthe-job experience. Fiddian-Green and industry leaders said the program is expected to provide new opportunities to tens of thousands of Hoosier students, including those who otherwise may not have opted to attend college or pursue training after high school. The pathway will also enable students to transfer to the college pathway, if they choose to do so.

The iLab's goal is that a statewide youth apprenticeship pathway will serve a cumulative total of 50,000 students by 2034. That equates to almost half of expected new job growth in the next decade.

If successful, that could make Indiana a "Top 10" destination for employers seeking to expand existing businesses and entrepreneurs working to launch new businesses, industry leaders said in Tuesday's report.

"This new pathway is a win-win for students and employers. For employers, the pathway will bring in eager, motivated Hoosiers who can grow and innovate within our industries." said David Becker, co-chair of theiLab Indiana and chairman and CEO of First Internet Bank. "For students, it's an opportunity to gain hands-on experience, build valuable skills, and start on their career path."

A lack of industry-created occupations, standards and curriculum that has impeded the ability for a largescale apprenticeship program.

Inflexible high school schedules, like high school diploma credit hour requirements that limit apprentices' time outside of the school building.

Too few transportation options, making it difficult for students to have consistent workplace schedules.

A lack of "comprehensive, labor market-aligned career advising" for students. In addition, few counselors have access to real-time, statewide labor market projections, which makes it challenging for students to select the best education and training pathway for their desired career.

No formally recognized credential that accounts for skills learned at the workplace. (Currently, an apprentice's only option to earn a credential recognized by employers and the higher education system is to earn an associate degree or higher.)

A "fragmented" work-based learning landscape involving multiple education, intermediary and government actors.

"Indiana simply isn't meeting that demand," iLab leaders said in Tuesday's report, emphasizing that by 2031, 72%of jobs in the United States will require education or training beyond high school, but only 39% of Indiana adults 25 or older have an associate degree or higher. "We don't have enough Hoosiers attending - and finishing - college, and we provide limited opportunities for those who don't pursue a college degree. It's time for another approach.

pation," according to the report.

Health care apprentices should study subjects such as biology and anatomy, for example, while banking apprentices should study math and economics.

And due to the "rigorous design" of apprenticeships and the time required for on-the-job learning at the workplace, high school classroom time requirements "should decrease in recognition of competencies gained during apprenticeships that meet high school credit requirements," per the iLab report. That should still allow time for apprentices to pursue extracurricular activities such as athletics, however.

A model for the future

iLab Indiana initially focused on five industries - banking, insurance, health care, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing — where there are "significant projected talent shortfalls and strong, existing executive-level support from Indiana employers for creating a professional pathway," according to the coalition's report.

Four additional industries have since emerged as priorities for the iLab in 2025: information technology (spanning all industries); construction; entertainment, sports and hospitality; and microelectronics.

The iLab coalition's next steps are to identify priority occupations and recruit more employers before creating a statewide system that allows learners to move up or across college and professional career paths.

Weather Thursday, September 19, 2024

(24-hour observations at 11:45 p.m. Wednesday at the Fort Wayne International Airport) High: 87; Low: 54; Precipitation: None

Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.09 feet at 8:45 p.m. Wednesday

Wells County forecast

Today: Patchy fog before 10 a.m. Otherwise, sunny, with a high near 86. East wind around 5 mph.

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

Friday: Sunny, with a high near 89. Calm wind becoming southwest around 5 mph in the afternoon.

Friday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 63. South wind around 5 mph becoming calm.

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 89. Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 62. Sunday: A 20% chance of showers after 2 p.m. Mostly sunny, with a high near 87.

Sunday Night: A 30% chance of showers, mainly after 2 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 63.

Monday: A 30% chance of showers and thunderstorms, mainly after 2 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 82.

Monday Night: A 40% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 59.

Tuesday: A 30% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly sunny, with a high near 80.

Tuesday Night: A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy, with a low around 57.

Wednesday: A slight chance of showers. Partly sunny, with a high near 75.

Inflation

Expanding apprenticeships and other training

Indiana's first youth apprenticeship pilot program launched in 2019. Currently, there are seven sites operating youth apprenticeship programs and two more in the planning phase.

The program starts in 11th grade and requires 650 hours at the employer site, alongside traditional high school classes and dual credit courses. Successful participants receive a high school diploma and an industry credential.

Indiana now has more than 100 employers and 40 schools partnered to serve 450 students in youth apprenticeship programs in 13 counties, according to the iLab report.

But in the last five years, youth apprenticeship intermediaries and their employer and school partners have identified multiple "systems barriers." iLab leaders noted:

To address those barriers, the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation awarded a grant leading to the creation of Indiana's iLab, which officially launched late last year.

Through the iLab, Hoosier industry leaders are looking to model Indiana's statewide program after the renowned system in Switzerland, where apprenticeships start in high school.

Switzerland's dual system combines learning on the job - and being paid a learning wage — with one to two days of theory at school. Nearly two-thirds of Swiss youth aged 16-18 participate in apprenticeships.

To maximize value for both the apprentice and employer, the iLab recommended students spend a minimum "of 50%, and ideally closer to 65%" of their time in workplace training and working time during the apprenticeship. Academic instruction, on the other hand, "should differ depending upon the occu-

The plan also prioritizes the creation of a "labor market-aligned career advising system" starting in middle school.

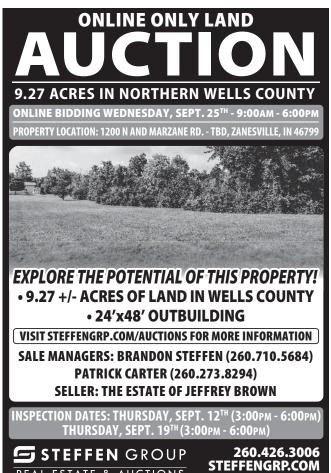
"Ån employer-led professional and education pathway – where employers identify in-demand occupations within their industries and the related competencies, partner with educators to develop curricular content, and deliver on-the-job education and training - enables employers to play a leading role cultivating the talent needed to meet their evolving workforce needs," the report said. "

Implementing this new pathway requires establishing a statewide system to ensure students in every community can access it, and that the competencies they gain result in a formal credential recognized by both employers and the higher education system. Together, the existing college pathway and new professional pathway can operate as part of a comprehensive education and training system that engages the vast majority of Indiana's high school students.'

The additional rate cuts it indicated it will make,







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LOCAL/AREA

OBITUARIES

Atlas White

Atlas Malcolm White was born sleeping on Sept. 15, 2024, to parents Kane White and Nickole Billington.

Surviving are his parents, Kane White and Nickole Billington of Bluffton; paternal grandparents, Shad White and Heather White; maternal grandparents, Melinda Lee and Kirk Billington; paternal great-grandparents, Greg and Valarie Adams and Doug and Nancy Gilland; and maternal great-grandparents, Fred and Cindea Frantz.

He is preceded in death by his sibling and paternal great-grandfather, Terry White, and paternal greatgrandmother, Karen Criswell.

A service will be held at 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 28 at the residence of his parents, 528 W. Spring St. in Bluffton

Glancy Funeral Homes, 109 W. Windsor St., Montpelier, is overseeing the arrangements.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City: Tuesday, 3:07 p.m., Main Street and 250 N. Multiple vehicle accident. Report to

follow. Tuesday, 6:10 p.m., 400 block of West Market Street. Parking problem.

Tuesday, 6:41 p.m., Hardess. Parking problem.

Tuesday, 6:53 p.m., Paka-Sak North. Parking problem. Owners moved vehicles.

Tuesday, 8:23 p.m., Pak-a-Sak North. Parking problem. Owner unable to be located and vehicle towed.

Tuesday, 10:34 p.m., Save On Liquor. Vehicle hit building, causing several bottles of alcohol to break inside. Subject said the vehicle was left in neutral and rolled into building. Driver did not have insurance and was given permission to leave the vehicle on the property until it could get towed or insured tomorrow.

Tuesday, 12:22 a.m., News-Banner Publications. Parking problem. Owner moved vehicle.

Tuesday, 12:50 a.m., 407 N Main St. Driver cited for no insurance.

Tuesday, 11:12 a.m., 700 block of South Marion Street. Report protective order violation.

Tuesday, 12:09 p.m., Washington and William streets. Two-vehicle crash. Report to follow.

Tuesday, 12:54 p.m., Bobcat. Possible traffic hazard, semi parked in middle turn lane.

County:

Tuesday, 3:50 p.m., 1000 West Wabash Street, Bluff-

Tuesday, 7:39 p.m., 6400 W 900 S, Warren. Report of wanted subject potentially on property. Subject not located.

Wednesday, 3:07 a.m., S.R. 218 and 500 West, Poneto. Report of cows in roadway.

Wednesday, 8:14 a.m., 1000S and S.R. 1, Keystone. Report of accident involving semi and several vehicles.

Wednesday, 11:50 a.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served.

Ossian:

Tuesday, 9:39 p.m., 5700 N 450 E, Ossian. Caller complained about squealing tires and potential drinking and driving.

ACCIDENTS **County:**

Wednesday, 8:12 a.m., S.R. 1 and 1000S, Nottingham. Amarjit Singh, 30, Grand Island, New York, was driving behind a Ford Fusion driven by Ashley Junk, 23, Montpelier. As Junk signaled a left turn, Singh attempted to pass the fusion on the left, causing the right side of his Volvo Conventional Cab Truck to sideswipe the driver side door of the fusion. Damages did not exceed \$10,000.

FIRES

Tuesday, 6:01 p.m., 1000 S and 200 W. Wires down.

Wednesday, 1:14 a.m., Markle Health & Rehabilitation. Fire alarm. Leak in fire suppression system, no fire.

Wednesday, 1:28 p.m., 510 Cottonwood Court. Structure fire. Already out at the time of call, but wanting assistance.

ARRESTS

Gubernatorial candidate Braun includes teacher pay, K-12 curricula in education platform

By CASEY SMITH

Indiana Capital Chronicle School choice, increased teacher pay, career-focused curricula and parental rights are key in Republican gubernatorial candidate Mike Braun's education plan, released Tuesday.

Braun's policy agenda emphasizes seven specific points — mostly in line with existing Indiana GOP positions and initiatives.

School safety and building out the state's teacher pipeline are also high on Braun's list.

Like with other platform topics, Braun said he partnered with Hoosiers for Opportunity, Prosperity & Enterprise, a nonprofit arm of the campaign based in Terre Haute, to develop the education proposals.

"As a father and former school board member, I know parents are the primary stakeholders in their kids' education," Braun said in a statement.

His opponent, Democrat Jennifer McCormick, released her education priorities last month. Among her top issues are school accountability and "academic freedom." Like Braun, McCormick also listed teacher pay and school curriculum changes - especially those that emphasize post-high school career preparedness - in her gubernatorial platform.

Braun's 'Freedom and **Opportunity' agenda**

"Universal school choice" is chief among Braun's platform points. That includes expanding and reforming Indiana's school choice program which enable parents to receive state-funded vouchers to enroll their students in private schools - and "doubling" the Education Scholarship Account Program for families with special needs.

In 2022, state lawmakers expanded the Choice Scholarship program to be nearly universal and open to almost all Hoosier families. That led the private school voucher program to grow by 30% in the 2023-2024 school year - the largest increase in the number of students in 10 years.

Braun's plan, per the HOPE white paper, would reform the Choice Scholarship Program "to allow every Hoosier family, regardless of income, race, ZIP code, or other factors, to choose the school that best fits their children's educational needs." School choice programs put parents in the driver's seat, allowing them to choose schools that prioritize their children's needs," the white paper continued. "Providing universal school choice will ensure every Hoosier family has the same freedom to choose their best-fit education.' He's also seeking to double the size of the ESA program, which maxed out for the first time this school year. In years where the program has leftover funding, Braun proposed that children in foster care and active-duty military families could apply for grants. Braun's agenda further calls for raises to Hoosier

teachers' base salaries, and "guaranteed" professional benefits like new parent leave, as well as improved health insurance options.

The HOPE white paper does not indicate a specific teacher pay minimum, nor does it detail how much the proposal would cost, overall.

Rather, Braun's plan would "guarantee teacher access to professional benefits, including by ensuring that every teacher is eligible for new parent leave and supporting individual teachers by providing a state-funded liability insurance plan," according to the white paper.

Teachers' would additionally be allowed to choose between their local health plan and the state employee health plan. If the state employee health plan is less expensive, teachers could "capture the savings in their paycheck or their defined contribution retirement account," the HOPE analysis explained.

Recent data shows the average teacher salary in Indiana was \$58,531 during the 2022-23 academic year. The lowest teacher salary reported that year was \$38,000. The highest was about \$108,000.

Also included in Braun's teacher plan is a focus on recruitment and retention of "the next generation of high-quality teachers.' Braun said the state "must .. contend with teacher shortages in the immediate term" by adopting "entrepreneur-ial solutions," like "cutting red tape and leveraging data to prioritize the recruitment of high-need teachers."

HOPE's white paper pointed to expanding flexible certification licensing requirements, and working directly with specific Hoosier school districts that are struggling most with teacher shortages.

McCormick, on the other hand, gave fewer specifics but said she'll fight for a minimum base salary of \$60,000 for Hoosier teachers, and adjustments for veteran teachers' salaries "to reflect their non-educator peers."

School safety, curricula and parents

In terms of school safety, Braun said he further wants to establish an Indiana Office of School Safety, which HOPE said would "streamline and enhance existing authorities" at the Indiana Department of Education, Department of Homeland Security and Indiana State Police. The office would be led by "an individual with experience in emergency response and the K-12 environment," according to the white paper. Braun's platform also mentioned increased funding for security grants, and implementing cyber safety training for students. The white paper said new coursework could educate kids on information about online safety, financial scams and phishing attempts, secure passwords, and the responsible use of online platforms - including generative artificial intelligence and social media.

looks to make improvements to the state's K-12 academic standards. Doing so would involve using "evidence-based materials" for reading and math, focusing dollars on "the classroom and student achievement," maintaining "accountability with clear metrics," and enforcing recently-passed legislation that limits cell phone use in schools, Braun's campaign said.

The goal, according to HOPE's white paper, is to build on the state's ongoing efforts to improve third grade literacy proficiency and "universal fifth grade numeracy and proficiency with fractions."

As for classroom curricula, the white paper said Braun's education plan would see "institutional safeguards" developed against "divisive, non-curricular materials like Critical Race Theory and gender identity from being taught in our public schools." Legislative attempts to do this in the past by the Republican General Assembly have failed.

If elected, he would also direct IDOE to study the "long-term learning loss and mental health impact of school lockdowns and mask mandates for children that were enrolled in Indiana schools during the COVID-19 pandemic," the white paper noted.

Like McCormick, Braun's plan also aims to better prepare students for post-high school employment.

The HOPE white paper said Braun would incorporate Indiana's new diploma rule - still being finalized by state education officials - into the school funding formula by "rewarding schools" for graduating students with honors readiness seals in each of the newly proposed pathways, and providing "enhanced incentives" for graduating students with honors plus seals.

He'd additionally continue to direct state funds into the Career Scholarship Account program, which provides eligible high school students with \$5,000 scholarships to pay for apprenticeships, career-related coursework or certification.

Attention to parental rights rounds out Braun's platform.

"Parents are the best advocate for their child's wellbeing, and are the decisionmakers in their children's lives, education, and upbringing," the HOPE white paper said. "The rights of Hoosier parents to participate in their children's education, safeguard their wellbeing, and protect them from divisive ideologies should never be in doubt.'

The white paper emphasized that parents should be able to "access information about their children's education, including the curriculum and assigned reading materials for their children's classes, performance on statewide tests, progress towards earning a diploma and honors readiness seals, and other information as determined by the school."

Schools should also be required to "respect and uphold the rights of parents as the decisionmakers in their children's lives, education, and upbringing." That includes "directly notifying parents about any physical or mental health concerns that arise at school, such as requests to use a name or pronouns that are inconsistent with biological sex,' per the white paper.

In 2023, lawmakers passed HEA 1608, which includes a mandate for Indiana schools to notify parents when a student asks for name or pronoun changes.



Calling: 12 - 4 p.m. Friday, September 20. Masonic Memorial Service: 4 p.m. Friday, September 20 at the funeral home. Goodwin - Cale & Harnish MEMORIAL CHAPEL A Tradition of Caring Locally Owned and Operated Since 1922 St. Rd. 124 East, Bluffton 824-3852

ton. Protective order served to Ryland and Terry Christianson.

Report of dead deer.

Tuesday, 7:28 p.m., 1200S and S.R. 1, Montpelier. Driver arrested for no valid license, taken to hospital for blood draw for possible substance use.

Jared Isaac Williams, 34, Bluffton; possession of hypodermic syringe, a Level Tuesday, 4:14 p.m., 6 felony, and possession of 6100E 100S, Bluffton. a schedule 1 substance, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$6,500.

> Joshua Aaron Keeton Ashby, 39, Fort Wayne; probation violation, a Class A misdemeanor. No bond set.

Obituary Policy

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

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

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

More broadly, Braun also



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



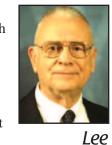


ΟΡΙΝΙΟ

Congress has a lot to accomplish in a short time. Don't expect much.

Congress went back into session after its summer recess on Sept. 9 with a full plate of competing demands. With the fall elections less than two months away, members want to walk away with some accomplishments but not spend much time achieving them. Or as Roll Call put it, they want "to get out of Washington as quickly as possible while doing just enough to avoid a government shutdown."

This is nothing new and it's entirely understandable. There is a point in every cycle when a politician's focus changes from crafting policy - or stop-



Hamilton

Hoosier **Opinions**

ping policy from being passed — to getting re-elected. The reason, of course, is simple: You don't get to focus on policy without getting elected, and that requires playing politics. With an election looming, the pressure to be out on the hustings is intense. And so is the need to keep the election in mind while back in Washington.

This year especially, lawmakers have to legislate in the face of deep uncertainty. They're looking at a presidential election in which Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump are essentially neck-and-neck in the polls. Democrats narrowly control the Senate this fall, but this year's electoral map gives the edge to Republicans, so the possibility of a GOP takeover there is in the back of everyone's mind. Similarly, the GOP currently has a House majority, but the prospect of a Democratic takeover is very real; control come January will likely come down to a relative handful of districts.

As one GOP senator said recently, "There's a lot of handwringing going on and a lot of anxiousness about where this election is headed." He could have been speaking for either party.

With the looming election in the back of legislators' minds, it's no surprise that the politicking around the remainder of this session has grown intense. It's been made even more so because the first order of business for Congress is to fund the government before the end of September; unless it does so, we face a government shutdown beginning October 1.

The most likely way forward is a so-called "continuing resolution" that would fund federal agencies into next year, but some Republican House conservatives - and Trump - have pushed to attach a measure requiring proof of citizenship in order to vote, a move Democrats argue is unnecessary because it's already illegal for non-citizens to vote, and that has virtually no chance in the Senate. House Speaker Mike Johnson is promoting the idea along with his bid to fund the government into the next administration, but even within his own caucus there's opposition. Expect a lot of pushing and pulling around this as the deadline nears government shutdowns tend to boomerang against Republicans, and GOP members in tight races have very little appetite for one as they head into an election.

There are other pitfalls ahead, as well. Defense officials argue that the proposed continuing resolution, which would fund the military at 2024 levels, will harm US readiness. The federal farm bill lapses at the end of September, and pressure will be intense on farm-state members to extend it, possibly as part of a continuing resolution. There are bills focused on China, the possibility of a vote in the Senate on legislation supporting access to fertility treatments like IVF, rumblings among GOP hard-liners in the House favoring an attempt to impeach President Joe Biden, and more. In a sense, the policy specifics are less notable than the moment. Especially this time around - as we're in the very unusual situation of members in both the House and the Senate recognizing that control of their chamber could well flip in January, not to mention that who will win the White House is very much up in the air. With just weeks to go until the election, expect political tactics to reign supreme. It may not be pretty, but that's probably as it should be at this moment. We make our system work through politics; it's the price legislators pay for the chance to serve as legislators.



A Kamala Harris crowd: Big and happy

WILKES-BARRE, PA. — In the days before Vice President Kamala Harris came here, on Friday the 13th, some Trump supporters in this northeastern Pennsylvania town speculated that she would have trouble attracting a big crowd to her rally. Even when attendees began to show up, the detractors said the number was small and perhaps they had been paid to attend.

Former President Donald Trump himself promoted the idea a few days earlier at his debate with Harris. "People don't go to her rallies," Trump said. "There's no reason to go. And the people that do go, she's busing them in and paying them to be there."

The idea of the Wilkes-Barre rally was for the Harris campaign to go into a Trump stronghold. The former president won surrounding Luzerne County by 14 points over Joe Biden in 2020 and by 19 points over Hillary Clinton in 2016. The point was not to win Luzerne County in November but to make progress there as part of winning Pennsylvania overall.

Trump has paid a lot of attention to the area. He has held rallies there several times, most recently on Aug. 17 at the Mohegan Arena, which can accommodate somewhere between 8,000 and 10,000 people, depending on how it is set up. Some accounts called Trump's August crowd "near capacity" — the exact crowd size has gotten caught up in a lot of trolling from the Harris campaign and some media outlets. But Trump undoubtedly drew a lot of people.

Entering Republican territory, Harris set a lower bar for herself, holding the rally at the McHale Athletic Center at Wilkes University. It's a good deal smaller than Mohegan, and not designed to accommodate arena-size crowds. Harris filled it up; local news reports said officials let just over 4,100 people into the event.

The day before, Harris held two rallies in North Carolina. In Greensboro, located in heavily Democratic Guilford County, which Biden won by 23 points over Trump in 2020 and Clinton won by 20 points over Trump in 2016, Harris drew a crowd estimated at 17,000. In Charlotte, where in Mecklenburg County Biden won by 35 points over Trump in 2020 and Clinton won by 30 points over Trump in 2016, the Harris campaign said it drew 7,500 people at the Bojangles Coliseum.



aren't bused in and they aren't paid. Some of the Republican grumbling going on now is reminiscent of 2012, in the Barack Obama-Mitt Romney race, when a number of Republicans convinced themselves that the polls were "skewed" and Democrats were demoralized. A visit to an Obama rally or two would have proved otherwise, but those Republicans chose to ignore the Democratic enthusiasm in front of their faces. Now, Republicans should be seeing a lot of Democratic enthusiasm in front of their faces.

York More than anything, the Wilkes-Barre

crowd seemed happy. Really happy. Harris didn't have to do much to please them; at one point, she literally said, "We're all in this together," and they cheered wildly. They often broke into chants of Kama-la! Ka-ma-la! Ka-ma-la! evoking memories of the Obama cult of personality in the 2008 campaign.

Many members of the audience fit the Harris/Democratic profile – they were social workers, teachers, students, school administrators, nurses, psychologists. In the course of several conversations, all described themselves as lifelong Democrats. Just one said he had feared the party had been heading toward defeat under Biden — "He's old, man" — while the rest said they fully supported Biden. Now, they're just as fully on board for Harris. All were ecstatic about Harris' performance against Trump in the debate a few days before.

As far as issues are concerned, when asked their most important issue, every woman said abortion or "women's issues," by which they meant abortion. Some of the men said so, too, but several others said that preserving democracy was the most important issue to them. That was it. Certainly, they have other concerns, but when asked the simple question of what is most important to them, they listed Harris' strongest issue, and the issue Biden sought to make the center-

Lee Hamilton is a distinguished scholar with the IU School of Global and International Studies. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Sept. 19, the 263rd day of 2024. There are 103 days left in the year.

Ťoday in history: On Sept. 19, 2022, Great Britain and the world said a final goodbye to Queen Elizabeth II at a state funeral that drew presidents and kings, princes and prime ministers - and crowds who thronged the streets of London.

Also on this date:

In 1796, President George Washington's fare-

well address was published. In it, America's first chief executive advised, "Observe good faith and justice toward all nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all.'

In 1881, the 20th president of the United States, James A. Garfield, died 2 1/2 months after being shot by Charles Guiteau; he was succeeded by Vice President Chester A. Arthur.

In 1955, President Juan Peron of Argentina was ousted after a revolt by the army and navy.

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> Holly Gaskill, Editor Mark Miller, Opinion Page Editor

Quibble with the numbers if you want; crowd size has long been a point of contention in political battles. But Harris has been drawing big crowds, and they

piece of his campaign.

Harris' rallies are real-life illustrations of the standard poll question about voter enthusiasm. For months, when Biden was their candidate, Democrats lagged in the question of which party was more enthusiastic about the race. Now Democrats are ahead. That's not the only measure of what is important in an election, and it doesn't mean things can't change in the next several weeks. But it's something Republicans need to realize about the other side.

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Potatoes of yesterday, today, and the future

Bluffton Free Street Fair vendors offer a variety of items boiled in liquid fat. Meat. Pastries. Cheese. Veggies include corn wrapped around

meat on a stick, popped kernels ending with a sugar coating, and fish or pork coated with dust so they'll crisp up and hold more of the fat before being served in a bun. It's unhealthy, but one of the features that draws tens of thousands to the streets' festivities.

Potatoes as fries, a Street Fair feature starting before the birth of any of today's fair-goers, can be obtained as traditional sticks or wedges. Toppings besides salt are varied and optional.

In 1859, 39 years prior to Street Fair's 1898 debut, a local newspaper offered tips to those planting potatoes. Potatoes grow "eyes" from which become the plant to produce a new generation. The eyes' first nourishment comes from the white of the potato. Some plant a row of whole potatoes.

Someone discovered back in 1859 that only the eyes were needed to begin a plant. The remainder of the potato could be consumed. In 1789 Paris street vendors already sold French fries on the Pont Neuf bridge.

Use the point of a narrow knife and rim out the eyes on sprouting spuds. Plant the small eyes three to a hill. Separate hills by one foot. Cultivate to keep weeds down and the ground stirred and mellow, the news writer added. Potatoes grown in that way one and a half centuries ago ended up with a fine yield of large potatoes in every hill. No smalls, an important consideration at harvest. Zero diseased or unsound spuds were found in that growing method.

Angelkeep Journals

reverted back to the whole-potatoplanting scheme last spring when a bag of finger potatoes were overlooked too long. Eyes turned

to sprouts larger than the potatoes. Cutting off the eyes would have left little or nothing to eat, thus three whole potatoes begging to be planted received their dirt home in a damaged garbage pail filled with dirt used as a planter.

Alan

Daugherty

Last year that pot grew pole beans of Jolly Green Giant height. Green beans were picked off of a 12-foot step ladder. Angelkeep's potato crop, as yet unearthed, grew five-foot vines up, over the bin rim, and to the ground. Perhaps the potatoes should have been harvested and displayed during Street Fair in the Community Building, as done by so many in days long ago.

Reminder: Try those five-foot long curly fries, or corkscrew potato chipfries, at Street Fair with plenty of sea salt and ketchup. This variety began in Bluffton years ago when cut by a drill blade held in a mounted Craftsman electric hand drill.

Bluffton Free Street Fair corkscrew fries heaped high and overflowing on a paper dinner plate are not like Arby's curly fries. That style can actually be traced back to an 1824 publication of "The Virginia Housewife." Did that author steal a



in 1992 when Vice President Quayle became the lead news story by mistakenly correcting a sixth grade student's spelling. VPOTUS suggested "potato-with-an-e." Quayle was never "e"-lected to any political office again.

Angelkeep once grew potatoes with only peelings tossed into a compost pile after the preparation of some good old mashed spuds.

One absolute post-walleye sandwich must came as this year's partaking of a Street Fair Nacho Potato sold on West Market. Order with plenty of jalapenos. This iconic local vendor offers a Taco Potato. Angelkeep never ate one. After a year's craving for a nacho variety, the possibility of trying a Taco Potato was simply unthinkable. However, nachos with meat are supreme.

Don't be fooled. Rice cauliflower never will substitute as spuds.

Brits and Aussies call French fries "chips," as in fish and chips. Many Europeans call deep fried potatoes "pommes frites." Some European vendors create them as deep fried, and then place them in a steamer to soften. It's a preferred consumption style of non-Americans.

When will Bluffton Free Street Fair find a vendor offering French fries served under a ladle of sausagebacon gravy?

Angelkeep will see you at "The Fair.

Mr. Daugherty is a Wells County resident who, along with his wife Gwen, enjoy their backyard and have named it "Angelkeep."

Angelkeep



Sorority donates supplies to Grace & Mercy

Pam Tuttle, second from right, dropped off household supplies to Grace & Mercy Transitional Housing that were donated by members of Sigma Phi Gamma Sorority, Epsilon Zeta Chapter. (Photo submitted)

Swiss Stitchers to meet Sept. 23 at Berne Fire Station

Sept. 23 in the Berne Fire Station at 7 p.m.

Swiss Stitchers will meet Monday, wants us to know." Carol has also agreed to add her thoughts. As always we will end with show and

There will be a short business meeting. Yvette will present the program, talking about "what our long-arm quilter Vivian Lemmon (260) 692-6227.

tell. Guests are welcome. If you have questions please contact

Rendezvous on the Reserve Sept. 20-22

A Fur Trading Era Living History Camp will be presented on the weekend of Sept. 20-22 at the Blackford County Reservation of Myaamia Chief Francois Godfroy. The site is located at 4400 North 800 East, Montpelier.

Admission is \$6 (cash only) for adults with those under 12 free. Hours will be from 9 to 5 on Friday, 9 to 6 on Saturday and 10 to 4 on Sunday. Golf cart tours will be offered on Saturday.

The Mississinewa Confederation Native Village will be set up and visitors may visit with settlers, traders, trappers and Johnny Appleseed. Fiddlers will provide live music. Other activities will include Muzzleloading, archery, hawk and knife and women's and kid's games. Janel Franks will be on hand with linens and wool. Food (ham & beans and Prairie dogs & burgers) will be available.

For more information check out www.rendezvousthereserve.weebly. com

A Talk with Tego

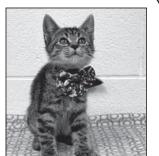


Cupid is a Spayed Female Gray Tabby 4mo.



Sassy is a 2mo Female tiaer

Tego's Tips: Use social media or post fliers if a pet is



Sissy is a 2mo Female tiger.



Wagon Wheel productions

Current productions and the 2025 summer season for the Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts have been announced.

Current production is Neil Simon's Rumors on the weekend of Sept. 27-29 and tickets are \$20. (Note: This productions contains gunshots, strong language ad reference to suicide).

Zombie Night (the Musical) will be on stage the weekend of Oct. 25-27. A Not So-Haunted Open House begins one hour before curtain time. Admission is \$20.

Miracle on 34th Street (musical) will be presented the weekends of Dec. 6-8, 13-15, 20-22.

2025 Summer Season Joseph & the amazing technicolor dreamcoat: June 5-14; South Pacific: June 19-28; Sister Act: July 3-12; Steel Magnolias: July 17-26; Grease: July 31-Aug. 9

Ticket sales are offered through Sept. 30 with season tickets priced at \$195 (after Oct. 1 the price increases to \$225). Information at wagonwheel.org or at 866-823-2618.

Harvest Festival at Salomon Farm Park

Harvest Festival, a two day celebration of the American farm, will be held at Fort Wayne's Salomon Farm Park on Sept. 27 & 28. Admission is free with parking being \$5.

Food, flowers, pumpkins, pony rides and face painting available for purchase. There will be wagon rides, a children's maze and Barrel Train rides.

Demonstrations will include wheat threshing, saw mill, corn shredding and rock crushing.

Hours on Saturday are from 10 to 3 and Sunday 10 to 5.





Tues., Sept. 24!

These are just a few pets available for adoption at the Wells County Animal Shelter, 1613 W. Cherry St., Bluffton. For more information call 824-6063.



Tego

Interpretive programs **Ouabache State Park**

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

Interpretive Naturalist: Lydia Ade

Friday, Sept. 27

4:30 p.m.: Phenology Friday: meeting at the Park Office to study the seasons and how things change while looking for birds, mammals, plants and more. Bring binoculars and hiking boots if desired.

Saturday, Sept. 28

FREE fishing day (bag and size limits still apply)

10 a.m.: Bison Feeding, meeting at the Bison Enclosure to learn about our national mammal and watch them being fed.

12:30 p.m.: Fishing 101, meeting at the steps leading up to the lake to learn basic fishing techniques. Poles and bait will be provided while materials last.

2:30 p.m.: Fish Printing, meeting at the Lakeside Shelter to make some Gyotaku-style fish prints and learn about the kinds of fish in Kunkel Lake.

Sunday, Sept. 29

FREE admission day! 10 a.m.: Breakfast with the Birds, meeting at the Lakeside Shelter to enjoy some donuts and coffee, while supplies last, then go on a casual walk around the lake to look for birds.

12 p.m.: Spotted Lantern Fly Detection Dogs. Meet at the Lakeside Shelter to see a special demonstration by Kallie Bontrager and learn about techniques used to detect invasive insects.

LSM Fall Golf Tourney October 5 Loving Shepherd Ministries will be hosting a Fall Golf Tournament on Saturday, Oct. 5, at the Timber Ridge Golf Course. Registration begins at

8 a.m. with tee off time at 9 a.m. Cost is \$400 for a 4-player team. More information from Rick Schwartz, Golf Event Coordinator at rick@loving-shepherd.org.

IEW HOURS Monday - Thursday 8-3 Friday 8-3 (Closed every other week) Saturday & Sunday Closed

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Raiders' volleyball makes massive turnaround from '23

Southern Wells has gone from one win to eight – and changing the culture in the process

By RYAN WALKER

PONETO - If you walk around Southern Wells' famous Raider Dome, you'll see the history of the school's athletic accomplishments.

One side has all of the recent sectional and ACAC champions in picture frames for boys' and girls' basketball, cross country, girls' golf and others. Another side has wrestling state qualifiers. The far end of the gymnasium holds banners for every sport the Raiders have won a sectional, regional, semi-state and state championship banners.

Whitney Powell and her daughter, Abbie, noticed when they moved from the Muncie area to Southern Wells in 2020 is that there are no banners for volleyball. Not a single picture, banner or mention of anything related to volleyball.

Recent history hasn't been much better either. Southern Wells hasn't had a winning record in a long time. Online sites like Max-Preps don't have far enough history to show the last season that had more wins than losses

Ever since the Powells came to town, Southern Wells has won nine games compared to 101 losses in four seasons.

Like most years, the Raiders struggled in 2023, going 1-23. It was the first year under head coach Whitney Powell, formerly the head coach at both Delta and Cowan with 22 years worth of coaching experience at the club level as well.

She took over the Southern Wells program intending to build a culture and grow the volleyball program similarly to her previous stops. She went on a mission, and perhaps just accomplished it in only a year-anda-half.

As of Sept. 18, the Raiders are 8-8. This is the most wins the program has seen since in at least seven years. There are still nine games left in the season, not including the ACAC Tournament and the sectional games.

It's the first time Southern Wells has had a pulse of life within the program in years.

"Over the last couple years, (the girls have) been putting in the work," Powell said. "They were putting the work in last year. We just weren't figuring it out quite yet, but I think they've started to figure it out. They're working hard. They put the work in in the off-season, they're putting the work in and practices, and I think they're starting to see it pay off."

Being a .500 team record-wise will still

Knights beat Starfires,

Bishop Luers in girls' golf

and Bishop Luers in girls' golf Wednesday

night.

and Bishop Luers 251.

Norwell hosted and defeated South Adams

The Knights shot a 176, the Starfires 213

Ellie Gatton was the medalist with a 40,

have its hiccups, but the Raiders are clearly a different ballclub even through their losses. Matches that they wouldn't have been close in the past are now much tighter with more competitive efforts set by set.

The team made its arrival early this year, where, on back-to-back nights in August, the Raiders tied their win total from last season and surpassed it on the next. Those were games No. 3 and No. 4.

Notably, the team has played more inspired, with more joy, excitement and fun. It's made volleyball a sport where players are proud to get back in the gym and practice and go into matches with a chance to win rather than an automatic loss.

But don't just take it from a wins and losses point of view - take it from Aly Green, a senior who has endured the past five seasons with one win, two wins and five win seasons.

"There's been so much more fun," Green said. "I feel like the biggest difference is the mindset and mentality surrounding the team. We don't go into games scared anymore, and we go in thinking that we're going to win with more confidence. So that makes it a lot more fun."

"Overall, like the goofiness of the team this year, everyone together is so funny, and

it's like such a special bond," Green said. "I'm really happy that Aly has stuck it out and she's put the work in to reap the benefits from it," Powell said. "Because now, she's starting to see what all that hard work pays off for.

When Powell's family moved to Southern Wells, she wanted to get acquainted with the program and help in any way she could. She pled her case to a coach running the lower levels of the Raiders' middle school teams, only asking to volunteer. Powell was denied.

It took a late resignation from the seventh grade coach before tryouts for Powell to garner any consideration. At first, she was still ignored, but taking it to higher-ups in the athletic building, she earned the spot with her experience being the main factor.

Powell was again coaching her daughter, running practices with an audience of Principal Kim Conner and Dustin Buecler, the athletic director at the time.

A year later, the varsity coaching position opened. Powell jumped right in on it, perhaps aided by Conner and Beucler's prior (Continued on Page 7)

Sports Roundup

Henry 8-4.

• Billy Dellinger (FWBL) defeated Kenny Mercer 7-5.

 Cole Keirns and Atticus Levon (FWBL) defeated Jed Logan and Braden Lemler 9-7.

• Graham Linderwell and Jace Draper (BLU) defeated Adam Middleton and Louie Henry 8-4.

• Kenny Mercer and Carter Williams (BLU) defeated John Henry and Billy Del-



SPORTS

Southern Wells' freshman Abbie Powell (left), head coach Whitney Powell (middle) and senior Aly Green have all contributed to the Raiders' turnaround in volleyball this season. There's still more left to play, but Southern Wells has already improved seven games from last season. (Photos by Ryan Walker)



Coach Powell (middle), gives a post-practice talk to her team Wednesday night. Powell is in her second season with the program

Tarik Skubal earns 17th win as Tigers sweep the Royals

By KARL ZINKE Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) - Tarik Skubal allowed three hits over five innings for his 17th win and the streaking Detroit Tigers beat the Kansas City Royals 4-2 on Wednesday night to move within a half game

wild card. The Orioles and Twins both lost earlier Wednesday.

Skubal struck out major league batting leader Bobby Witt Jr. twice before hitting him with a pitch in the fifth. Witt, who became the first player in major league history with multiple seasons of 30 home runs and 30 steals in his first three seasons Tuesday, broke Hal McRae's 1977 franchise record with his 87th extra-base hit of the season with a bloop double to lead off the eighth. Salvador Perez, who finished with two hits, then drove in Witt with a single off reliever Brenan Hanifee. Sean Guenther preserved the 4-2 lead with a double play and a fly out. Guenther got the first out of the ninth and Will Vest got the final two for his second save. Royals starter Alec Marsh (8-9), coming off a career-high 11 strikeouts in his last start, lasted only 2 2/3 innings, allowing four runs (three earned) on five hits and three walks. Greene slugged a 427-foot home run to right, his career-high 24th, to lead off the third. Trey Sweeney made it 4-1 with a tworun double down the right-field line later in the inning. Perez and Gurriel, who is hitting .385 since the Royals acquired him from Atlanta, each had two hits for the Royals.

followed by Jordyn Shroyer (43), Savanna Simerman (46), Emma Burnau (47) and Jessica Bynum (54).

Norwell will be at the sectional next at Chestnut Hills at 9 a.m. Friday, Sept. 20.

Tigers sweep Bishop Luers in boys' tennis

Bluffton swept the visiting Bishop Luers Knights in boys' tennis on Wednesday.

The Tigers improve to 9-4 with the victory.

Individual results:

• Nolan Lambert defeated Jack Keirns 6-4, 6-4 at No. 1 singles.

• Anthony Hartman defeated Pete Allen 6-3, 6-0 at No. 2 singles.

 Jacob Ribich defeated Matthew Keirns 6-0, 6-0 at No. 3 singles.

• Ben Maggard and Coy Lantz defeated Zach Calderon and Brady Hike 6-4, 6-4 at No. 1 doubles.

• Kade Abbett and Dane Schlagenhauf defeated Jude Serrani and Vincent Knipp 6-1, 6-0 at No. 2 doubles.

Bluffton also won the junior varsity match 6-3.

Results for JV:

• Lincoln Rodgers (BLU) defeated Cole Keirns 9-7.

• Jared Moser (BLU) defeated Atticus Levon 8-2.

• Grant Reifsteck (BLU) defeated Adam Middleton 8-4.

• Louie Henry (FWBL) defeated Chase Houser 8-4.

• Carter Lehman (BLU) defeated John

Innger 8-5.

Bluffton will host ACAC rival South Adams at 5 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 19.

Tigers beat Warriors, St. Charles in MS football

Bluffton defeated Woodlan in eighth grade football and St. Charles in seventh grade Tuesday night.

The Tigers' eighth grade team won by a score of 36-6, improving to 4-0 on the season. Chase Kistler ran wild again, rushing for 86 yards on eight carries for three touchdowns. Ethan Ribich went 6-8 passing for 127 yards and two touchdowns. Maddox White caught three passes for 96 yards and a score, while Croy Stout had a 31-yard touchdown catch.

Cameron Simpson led the defense with six tackles, followed by three each from Stout, Kistler, Jabraylon Hamer and Cooper Affolder.

The seventh grade team won 22-6, improving to 3-1. Davin Drayer also ran wild, rushing 10 times and picking up 175 yards and three touchdowns. Kreigh Ault went 6-8 with 65 yards. Easton Schipper had two catches for 35 yards, Riker Beste 2-24 and Wes Kunkel 2-6. Kole Kiefer went 2-2 on extra points.

Beste led the team with five tackles and a sack, Kierfer four tackles and a sack, Drayer four tackles, Simeon Terry and Maddox Kauffman three tackles, Ault two tackles and an interception and Cliver Gerber two tackles and a sack.

of a playoff spot with 10 games remaining.

Riley Greene hit a go-ahead home run as the Tigers (80-73) won their fourth straight and ninth in the last 11 games. With the series sweep, Detroit won for the 25th time in 35 games to move within a half game of Minnesota (80-72) for the third AL wild-card spot.

Skubal (17-4), who has won his last five decisions, made his case for the AL Cy Young Award stronger by matching Atlanta's Chris Sale for the major league lead in wins and lowered his AL-leading earned run average to 2.48. He walked one and struck out seven.

Skubal had struggled against the Royals in the past, entering Wednesday with a 2-9 record and 5.05 ERA in 12 starts over 14 appearances. After allowing three hits and Yuli Gurriel's two-out RBI single in the first inning, he threw four hitless innings.

The Royals (82-71), who lost their fourth straight, were swept for the first time at home this season and the third time overall. They remained 2 1/2 games behind Baltimore for the first wild-card spot and $1 \frac{1}{2}$ games ahead of Minnesota for the second

UP NEXT

Tigers: Detroit has not announced a start-

Rocchio's single in 10th gives Guardians win over Twins

By BRIAN DULIK Associated Press

CLEVELAND (AP) - Brayan Rocchio singled in Andrés Giménez with the winning run as the AL Central-leading Cleveland Guardians scored three times in the 10th inning to beat the Minnesota Twins 5-4 on Wednesday night, reducing their magic number for clinching a playoff berth to one.

Kyle Manzardo and Will Brennan had RBI singles off Ronny Henriquez (1-1) before Michael Tonkin entered and gave up Rocchio's second career walk-off hit, a chopper to right through a drawn-in infield.

The Guardians, who now have a major league-leading 41 comeback victories this season, can lock up a postseason spot Thursday with a win over Minnesota.

Josh Naylor hit a pair of solo homers and scored three times for Cleveland, which leads the division by six games over Kansas City with nine games remaining. Naylor's first shot was a 445-foot rocket to right-center, giving him his initial 30-homer season.

"The biggest game of the year and look what we do," Brennan said. "The youngest guys on the team get it done. These guys are so prepared, it's unbelievable."

Hours: T-F - 10-5 | SAT - 10-2 | or by Appointme

High School Calendar

Open by Appointment Monday thru Friday

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

FLOORING



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 Heath Invitational (Westfield), 9 a.m.

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1415 South Main Street, Bluffton, IN 46714



SPORTS Raiders' volleyball

(Continued from Page 6)

attendance, and she was named head coach.

In the 2023 Fall Sports Preview in The News-Banner, Powell shared that her coaching style is patient, yet demanding. She said that the girls needed to learn the fundamentals and have a better understanding of the game to compete at a higher level

Luckily, Powell only had two players graduate from her first team and allowed her to coach her group fpr more than one season. Green is the only senior on this year's team, so the Raiders won't be going away any time soon.

"What's exciting to me is that we have such a core group that's going to be back next year as well," Powell said. "And we're not done yet this year. Looking at our schedule, I really feel like we should be coming out positive at the end of this year, and that makes it more enjoyable for me, and more enjoyable for the players. But we're starting to get a crowd to come to our games. We're starting to get some of those middle school kids that are now wanting to come, and they're admiring these high school girls. That'll just keep building the program.'

The team's success is attributed to the vast improvement of playing together and hard work. Freshman Abbie Powell has been the cherry on top.

She does not look like the typical 14-15-year-old playing at the varsity level for the first time. She's the tallest member on the team and is commonly the most vocal.

In her lifetime, Abbie has grown up on the volleyball floor, watching her mom, coach from the sidelines and following along the way. She played under her mom as well as playing for some of the highest levels of club volleyball in the country.

Coach Powell shared that in the last three seasons, Abbie's teams have seen as high as fifth place in the national tournament. The team played in Orlando for the national championships again this summer for the Chipmunks.

Coming with this perspective, she wanted to jump right in and make an impact.

"I just wanted to make this better," Abbie said. "After seeing one win, I wanted to get

more wins and I can keep contributing to everything and something that's going to make (the team) better. Always talking to them and encouraging them rather than getting on the ground and falling asleep, and always talking to them about what they can do and how I can help them."

In her first season so far, Abbie leads the team and the ACAC conference with 189 kills, 67 more than second place. Her hitting percentage (0.552) is top in the state regardless of class size, according to MaxPreps.

But like her mom, Abbie doesn't just want to change the culture for just volleyball, but for all sports at Southern Wells.

When asked what they wanted to accomplish at the end of the season, both Green and Powell answered with culturebuilding responses rather than winning more games or a sectional championship.

"Just changing the idea of sports at Southern Wells," Green said. "From having the mindset of, 'Oh, they're gonna lose,' to a confident mindset and knowing that we can win things and I see a really bright future for the girls coming up in the next couple years, and I think it's going to be really good and they're going to win.'

"I want us to come out thinking that we all got a lot better this year, and we all made each other better people and better volleyball players," Abbie said. "I think that's really important, rather than just looking back (and saying), 'Oh, we lost so many games,' but we also got a lot better in the process, and we became better friends and better people.'

Before the season started, Coach Powell asked her team to write down goals. Powell left the room, and the girls wrote about the mentality of how they view not only their team, but all the athletics at Southern Wells.

The team vowed to speak positively about all sports and encourage others to hard work and enjoy the sports they play. The volleyball team, increasing its win total by eight times from last season, is an embodiment of that.

"I'm loving that they're wanting to change the mindset of the school," coach Powell said. "Their work ethic that they're putting in is starting to show that mindset paying off."

ryan@news-banner.com

WNBA awards Portland an expansion franchise that will begin play in 2026

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

The WNBA is headed back to Portland, with Oregon's biggest city getting an expansion team that will begin play in 2026.

The team will be owned and operated by Raj Sports, led by Lisa Bhathal Merage and Alex Bhathal, who also own the Portland Thorns of the National Women's Soccer League. They paid \$125 million for the franchise.

"This is huge for Portland. We are so honored and humbled to be the vessel that delivers this WNBA franchise to Portland,' Bhathal Merage said. "And that's really how we consider ourselves. Portland is this incredibly diverse, enthusiastic community. We saw the passion first-hand when we started looking into the Portland Thorns and this is Basketball City. So we're very excited about the future."

Some 300 invited guests attended a kickoff event at Portland's Moda Center on Wednesday afternoon with the Bhathals, WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert and U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden and other state and local officials. Afterward, there was community-wide event outside the stadium.

The Bhathals started having conversations with the WNBA late last year after a separate bid to bring a team to Portland fell through.

The city is well known for its embrace of women's sports. In addition to the Thorns, who are drawing more than 18,000 fans on average to each home game, Portland is home to the nation's first bar exclusively for women's sports, the Sports Bra, which opened in 2022 and recently announced plans for additional franchises.

"It really wasn't our intention when we came to the Portland community, but we saw the opportunity, the stars aligned and here we are. We are at the epicenter of women's professional sports," Bhathal Merage said.

It's the third expansion franchise the WNBA will add over the next two years, with Golden State and Toronto getting the other two. The Golden State Valkyries will begin play next season and Toronto in 2026.

"We've been working on Portland for a while, so when we did our original data analysis, I guess two and a half years ago, Portland was one at the top of the list, after the Bay Area," Engelbert said. "So I've had my eye on Portland.'

Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek was unable to attend at the Moda Center, home of the Portland Trail Blazers, but issued a statement.

"The decision to choose Portland for the next WNBA team is just as much a recognition of our past as it is about faith in our future," Kotek said. "Portland has an unequivocal love of women's sports.

Engelbert has said she hopes to have more teams by 2028 but doesn't think that the league will be adding any more that will start playing before 2027.

Portland had a WNBA team, the Fire, from 2000 until it folded in 2002. That franchise averaged more than 8,000 fans when games were played at the Rose Garden. The new franchise will play at the same arena, now known as the Moda Center, and the Bhathals plan to build a dedicated practice facility for the team as well.

The new Portland WNBA team is not yet named. The Bhathals said they wanted to tap into the community to select one.

Nick Foligno named captain of the Chicago Blackhawks

By JAY COHEN AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO (\overline{AP}) — Nick Foligno took on a leadership role for the Chicago Blackhawks before he played his first game for the team.

That was only the beginning.

Foligno became the 35th captain in franchise history on Wednesday. The move was announced by the organization on the eve of its first official practice of training camp.

"I don't take this lightly," Foligno said when he addressed the team after his three children presented him with his new jersey - with a C on the front. "I'm excited about where we're heading. I love the group already.

"And I know what's come before us, you know, the leadership group that was here before us, the success that's been here. And I'm excited to get us back to that, with your help.'

captain since 2008.

Foligno, who turns 37 on Oct. 31, quickly became one of the team's most popular players after he was acquired in a June 2023 trade with Boston. He was one of Chicago's alternate captains in his first year with the team.

The role of captain – especially with Connor Bedard still just 19 and beginning his second season in the NHL - seemed like a natural fit for Foligno all along.

'Nick's commanding presence in the locker room has been instrumental in helping the team find its identity," general manager Kyle Davidson said in the release announcing the move. "He has served as a mentor to many of our young players both on and off the ice while also heading up the leadership group comprised of our veteran players, and we are beyond confident that he will flourish in the role of captain as we usher in a new era of Blackhawks hockey."

Chicago finished last in the Central Divi-

News-Banner Scoreboard

FOOTBALL

NFL

Thursday's Games Buffalo 31, Miami 10 Sunday's Games Cleveland 18, Jacksonville 13 Green Bay 16, Indianapolis 10 L.A. Chargers 26, Carolina 3 Las Vegas 26, Baltimore 23 Minnesota 23, San Francisco 1 Minnesota 23. San Francisco 17 N.Y. Jets 24, Tennessee 17 New Orleans 44, Dallas 19 Seattle 23, New England 20, OT Tampa Bay 20, Detroit 16 Washington 21, N.Y. Giants 18 Arizona 41, L.A. Rams 10 Kansas City 26, Cincinnati 25 Pittsburgh 13, Denver 6 Houston 19, Chicago 13 Monday's Games Atlanta 22 Philadelphia 21 Thursday, Sept. 19 New England at N.Y. Jets, 8:15

13 innings San Diego 4, Houston 0

No games scheduled. Saturday's Games No games scheduled.

BASEBALL

MLB AMERICAN LEAGUE

San Francisco 10, Baltimore 0 Tampa Bay 8, Boston 3 Oakland 4, Chicago Cubs 3 Detroit 3, Kansas City 1, 10 innings Tevas 13, Toronto 8 Texas 13. Toronto 8 L.A. Angels 5, Chicago White Sox 0 N.Y. Yankees 11, Seattle 2 Houston 4, San Diego 3, 10 innings Wednesday's Games Oakland 5, Chicago Cubs 3 L.A. Angels 4, Chicago White Sox 3,

Tuesday's Games Minnesota 4, Cleveland 1

San Francisco 5, Baltimore 3 Boston 2, Tampa Bay 1

Houston 4, San Diego 3, 10 innings Wednesday's Games Oakland 5, Chicago Cubs 3 Arizona 9, Colorado 4

San Diego 4, Houston 0 Atlanta 7, Cincinnati 1 San Francisco 5, Baltimore 3 L.A. Dodgers 8, Miami 4 N.Y. Mets 10, Washington 0 Milwaukee 2, Philadelphia 1 St. Louis 10, Pittsburgh 5

Thursday's Games San Francisco (Webb 12-10) at Bal-timore (Eflin 10-9), 1:05 p.m. Atlanta (Sale 17-3) at Cincinnati

Attanta (Sale 17-3) at Cincinnati (Aguiar 2-0), 1:10 p.m. L.A. Dodgers (Flaherty 12-7) at Miami (Cabrera 4-7), 4:40 p.m. Arizona (Pfaadt 9-9) at Milwaukee (Myers 8-5), 7:15 p.m. Philadelphia (Walker 3-6) at N.Y. Mets (Severino 10-6), 7:15 p.m. Pittsburgh (Ortiz 6-6) at St. Louis (Fedde 8-9), 7:15 p.m. Washington (Corbin 6-13) at Chi-

Washington (Corbin 6-13) at Chi-

cago Cubs (Assad 7-5), 7:40 p.m. Friday's Games

Sunday, Sept. 22 Chicago at Indianapolis, 1 p.m. Denver at Tampa Bay, 1 p.m. Green Bay at Tennessee, 1 p.m. Houston at Minnesota, 1 p.m. L.A. Chargers at Pittsburgh, 1 p.m. N.Y. Giants at Cleveland, 1 p.m. Philadelphia at New Orleans, 1 p.m.

Carolina at Las Vegas, 4:05 p.m. Miami at Seattle, 4:05 p.m. Baltimore at Dallas, 4:25 p.m. Detroit at Arizona, 4:25 p.m. San Francisco at L.A. Rams, 4:25 p.m.

Kansas Citv at Atlanta, 8:20 p.m Monday, Sept. 23 Jacksonville at Buffalo, 7:30 p.m. Washington at Cincinnati, 8:15 p.m.

BASKETBALL

WNBA Tuesday's Games Minnesota 78, Connecticut 76 New York 87, Washington 71 Atlanta 86, Chicago 70 Las Vegas 85, Seattle 72 Phoenix 85, Los Angeles 81 Wednesday's Games No games scheduled. Thursday's Games Atlanta at New York, 7 p.m. Chicago at Connecticut, 7 p.m. Indiana at Washington, 7 p.m. Los Angeles at Minnesota, 8 p.m. Dallas at Las Vegas, 10 p.m. Seattle at Phoenix, 10 p.m.

Friday's Games

Cleveland 5. Minnesota 4. 10 innings Texas 2, Toronto 0 Detroit 4, Kansas City 2 N.Y. Yankees at Seattle, late Thursday's Games San Francisco (Webb 12-10) at Bal-timore (Eflin 10-9), 1:05 p.m. Minnesota (Woods Richardson 5-5) at Cleveland (Cantillo 2-3), 1:10 p.m. Toronto (Gausman 12-11) at Texas (Rocker 0-0), 2:35 p.m. N.Y. Yankees (Schmidt 5-3) at Seattle (Gilbert 7-11), 4:10 p.m. Boston (Criswell 6-4) at Tampa Bay (Littell 7-9), 6:50 p.m. L.A. Angels (Suarez 1-2) at Houston (Kikuchi 9-9), 8:10 p.m. Friday's Games Toronto at Tampa Bay, 6:50 p.m. Detroit at Baltimore, 7:05 p.m. Minnesota at Boston, 7:10 p.m. Seattle at Texas, 8:05 p.m. L.A. Angels at Houston, 8:10 p.m. San Francisco at Kansas City, 8:10

p.m. Cleveland at St. Louis, 8:15 p.m. Chicago White Sox at San Diego, 9:40 p.m. N.Y. Yankees at Oakland, 9:40 p.m.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Tuesday's Games San Francisco 10, Baltimore 0 Miami 11, L.A. Dodgers 9 Cincinnati 6, Atlanta 5 N.Y. Mets 10, Washington 1 St. Louis 3, Pittsburgh 1 Philadelphia 5, Milwaukee 1 Oakland 4, Chicago Cubs 3 Colorado 8, Arizona 2

Washington at Chicago Cubs, 2:20

p.m. Pittsburgh at Cincinnati, 6:40 p.m. Atlanta at Miami, 7:10 p.m. Philadelphia at N.Y. Mets, 7:10 p.m. Arizona at Milwaukee, 8:10 p.m. San Francisco at Kansas City, 8:10 p.m.

Cleveland at St. Louis, 8:15 p.m. Chicago White Sox at San Diego, 9:40 p.m. Colorado at L.A. Dodgers, 10:10

p.m.

Midwest League Midwest League Playoffs Championship (Best-of-3) Lake County 2, Wisconsin 1 Sunday, Sept. 15: Wisconsin 5, Lake County 4 Tuesday, Sept. 17: Lake County 6, Wisconsin 2

Wednesday, Sept. 18: Lake County 9, Wisconsin 4

TRANSACTIONS

BASEBALL Major League Baseball National League CHICAGO CUBS — Reinstated LHP Justin Steele and RHP Jorge Lopez from the 15-day IL. Optioned RHP Daniel Palencia and Jack Neely to Iowa (IL). CINCINNATI REDS — Placed LHP

Brandon Williamson on the 15-day IL. Recalled LHP Brandon Leibrandt from Louisville (IL).



www.lengerichmeats.com

The Blackhawks played without a captain last season after the franchise decided to move on from Jonathan Toews, a three-time Stanley Cup winner. Toews had been the

sion last season with a 23-53-6 record. But it was active in free agency and it is hoping to turn a corner with its rebuilding project this year.



NASCAR Cup Series Bass Pro Shops Night Race. Schedule: Friday, practice, 4 p.m.; qualifying, 5:05 p.m.; Saturday, race, 7:30 p.m. (USA Network)

Last race: Chris Buescher led five non-playoff drivers for an overtime win at Watkins Glen, a wild road race that will be remembered for the high number of championship contenders enduring wrecks, torn tires and aggressive driving.

Next race: Sept. 22, Kansas City, Kansas. **NASCAR Xfinity Series** Food City 300

Site: Bristol, Tennessee.

Schedule: Friday, practice, 2 p.m.; qualifying, 2:40 p.m.; race, 7:30 p.m. (CW)

Next race: Sept. 28, Kansas City, Kansas.

NASCAR Truck Series

UNOH 200 presented by Ohio Logistics

Site: Bristol, Tennessee.

Schedule: Thursday, practice, 3 p.m.; qualifying, 3:35 p.m.; race, 8 p.m. (FS1)

Last race: Second-generation NASCAR driver Layne Riggs, 22, was the surprise winner of the playoff opener at the Milwaukee Mile on Aug. 25.

Formula 1

Singapore Grand Prix

Site: Singapore.

Schedule: Friday, practice 1, 5:30 a.m.; practice 2, 9 a.m.; Saturday, practice, 5:30 a.m.; qualifying, 9 a.m. Sunday, race, 8 a.m. (ESPN).

Last race: Oscar Piastri overtook Charles Leclerc to win the Azerbaijan Grand Prix as F1 title challenger Lando Norris staged a comeback to finish ahead of standings leader Max Verstappen.

Next race: Oct. 20, Austin, Texas.

IndyCar

Last race: Alex Palou claimed his second consecutive IndyCar championship and third in four years at Nashville Superspeedway when challenger Will Power's seatbelt came loose minutes into the season-deciding finale.

NHRA Drag Racing

Carolina Nationals, Concord, North Carolina. Next event: Sept. 27-29, Madison, Illinois.

World of Outlaws

Dennis Roth Classic, Tulare, California. Next events: Sept. 27, Orrville, Ohio; Sept. 28, Hartford, Ohio.

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When cutting ties with a parent is the only way to heal

Dear Annie: This is not a letter to you can, because play the victim, so please hear me out. one day she will My mother has caused me so much be gone." I need hurt for as far back as I can remember. When I was a kid, I was sexually abused by my brother. I told her, and she said I was lying. I used to think I was adopted because there was no way a parent could be so mean to a biological child.

When I became pregnant at age 17, she gave me three days to get out of the house.

Fast-forward to adulthood: When my son got killed in a car accident 13 years ago, she posted on Facebook that I got what I deserved. When I finally got up the nerve to divorce the man my parents forced me to marry at age 17, she posted on his Facebook how she would always love him. She taught me that you stay, no matter what. My dad and her have been married for 50 years, even though she says when she hears my dad pull up to the house, she gets sick to her stomach.

My 9-year-old daughter was sexually abused by her father and I reported it immediately. He signed over his rights, and my new husband (her stepdad) adopted her. My mom defended the ex, saying, "That is still her dad."

At one point I told her I was sorry I had not been to see her in a while. Her response was, "You are just like your dad. It's always something."

The last straw was I enrolled in college to get my degree, and when I was about to graduate, I asked her if she would attend. She said hatefully, "Where's it even at?"

Being in the same room as her makes me physically ill, and it really triggers my emotions. Everywhere you read or turn, people will say, "That's your mom, you better love her while

some sort of validation to protect my mental health, to go nocontact with her, because I am almost to that point. Forty-eight years is enough. Help

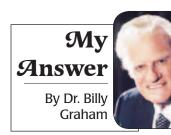
Dear Help: Normally, I try to advocate for

making amends. After all, you only get one mother, and beneath all the hurt and pain, there is usually a trace of love.

But your situation is different. Your mother's behavior has been repeatedly abusive, malicious and narcissistic. You need to focus on your own survival, as well as the well-being of your children. That will require reframing your expectations for your mother, as well as limiting - if not completely eliminating – contact with her. Communicate your feelings with her before vou take such a measure, whether it be in a letter or in a conversation. That way, if she decides she does want to be a part of your life, she will know what she needs to do.

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

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Question: A wellknown preacher made the comment recently that there is no such thing as PTSD, but rather the human mind is tormented by the disease of sin. Can't miracles cause these diseases to vanish? -MA.

Answer: Suppose by some miracle all the past could be straightened out and all of life's tangles could be unraveled? Such a cure would cause worldwide joy! There is such a joy. There is such a cure. People can be forgiven of all sin by humbling ourselves.

Look to God for peace

we will only look to God who will heal our wounds, forgive our trespasses, and bring peace to the human heart.

Years after the Civil War, two Americans were crossing the Atlantic and began to sing, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." Another man with a rich voice joined in. One of the men asked if he had been in the war. The singer said, "Yes, I was on sentry duty at the edge of the woods. I was frightened because the enemy was near. I felt homesick and so weary. To comfort myself I began singing, 'All my trust on Thee is stayed / All my help from Thee I bring / Cover my defenseless head / with the shadow of Thy wing.' After I sung those words, peace came to me."

Dear Annie by Annie Lane







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+MORT WALKER



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MY REPORT,

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THE FAMILY CIRCUS



The LOCKHORNS By Bil Keane



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The sin and disillusionments of life can be replaced by righteousness and contentment, if

want joy to replace their sorrow, look to God for peace. He will meet you in your need.

The other man

responded that he had

been fighting on the other

side, and when he and

his men heard the soldier

singing this great hymn,

he said to the man with

the mighty voice, "We

were ready to fire at you,

but when we heard you

sing that song, we low-

ered our rifles and depart-

ed with those words in

weary, for those who

For those who are

our minds."

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

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Place Your Ad 24/7: GO TO www.news-banner.com AND CLICK ON "Classifieds" OR CALL 824-0224 MON-FRI 8-5 • TOLLFREE 800-579-7476 • FAX 824-0700 WE ACCEPT

 $\sum_{k=1}^{n}$ SEE your ad published every day in Wells County homes ... All ads are searchable at classifieds.news-banner.com...

DOKU

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

King Classic Sudoku

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Difficulty: $\star \star \star$

VEHICLES Campers/RV's

THOR HURRICANE, 2018 Model 31Z, Class A RV, \$79,000, 260-307-3225.

SERVICES

Services

HANDYMAN SERVICES. NO job too big or too small, 260-353-9339.

SEPTEMBER 23-SEPTEM-BER 30 - (Online Only) - Various consignors, seller. Firearms consisting of Springfield, Hopkins & Allen, Colt, Browning, Stevens, Glock, Winchester. Open House Sept. 28 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., 215 E Market St, Bluffton, IN. Sale manager, Isaac Stoller, *The* Steffen Group Inc., 260-824-3006, www.steffengrp.com.

SEPTEMBER 24 - 2 p.m. 6 p.m. ET - Online - Don A. Heckber, farm. Property loca-tion: 11648 N SR 1 Ossian, IN. 31.63+/-total acres, agriculture prime farmland, 31.5+/- tillable,



dryer, dishwasher, tools, 4x8 trailer, 2003 Grand Caravan car, furniture and many more items. John Deer rider. 3604 SE St Rd 116, Bluffton, IN 46714

EMPLOYMENT Help Wanted

BEST-ONE OF MONROE is looking for individuals to perform tire related services as AG Tire Technicians. Duties include, but not limited to, mounting, balancing, rotating, and repairing AG Tires. This is a fast paced, strong customer service mindset and the ability to communicate with team members and customers ef-fectively is a must. High School diploma or equivalent; valid driver's license; frequent lifting up to 75 pounds. Previous experience appreciated, but not required. Please forward resume and/or application to HCook@bestoneofmon roe.com. We are an Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action Employer.

ing William P. Silva oil paint-ings, 2006 Pontiac Torrent,

2005 Toyota highlander, ster-

ling silver, primitive and early

American antique furniture,

country primitives; glassware,

early collectibles. Open houses

Oct. 8 and Oct. 10 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 102 S. Jefferson St., Ossian, IN. Rod Fetters, sale manager, *The Steffen Group*

Inc., www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006.

OCTOBER 6-OCTOBER 13

(Online Only) - Boots Estate, Seller. 366 W 300 N., Bluffton.

1993 Ford F150; Boat; Mini

9/19

CONSTRUCTION

Services

Room additions, fix old saggy

floors, all types remodeling. Redo bathrooms, old founda-

tion repairs. Marv Schwartz:

SERIOUSLY INJURED IN an

AUTO ACCIDENT? Let us fight

for you! Our network has recov-

ered millions for clients! Call today for a FREE consultation!

Public Sale Calendar

Chuck was an avid collector of

engines, motors and anything

electrical. This auction has

some hit and miss engines,

over 100 motors, gas engines

(4 hp to 12 hp), Honda 6500

generator, Aqua Blast hot water

pressure washer, brass bell, Maytag motors, lots of lawn

mower parts, scrap iron, Ham-mer drill, welder, anvil and lots

more. Preview Sept. 27, 4-6

p.m. Miz Lehman Realtors/Auc-

tioneers, 260-589-2903, www.

mizlehman.com. BIDDING NOW OPEN &

MARV'S

260-525-8877.

844-517-6414 (I)

Help Wanted

TOWN OF WARREN, Indiana Hiring Utility Manager. An application period for the position of full time Utility Manager is now open through October 15, 2024, due to retirement. Depart-ments to oversee include water, sewer, electric, parks and streets. Duties include employee management, project planning, maintenance of positive relationships with the public, all employees and officers of the Town, representation at workshops and meetings, scheduling of regular day to day and long term operations. The position is a mix of office and field work. Must hold at least a WT3 or DSM license, have at least eight years experience with managerial a plus. Knowl-edge of Electric Utility also a plus. Base pay of \$28.50 per hour adjusted upward based on experience. Benefit Package available. For information contact Lee Poulson, Utility Manager, at 260-375-3424 or utility1@citznet.com or Clerk Treasurer Marilyn Morrison at townofwarrenin@gmail.com at 260-375-2656. Application form can be found at warrenindiana.us or by requesting through above contacts. Please include resume.

ENTRY LEVEL

NEED MORE EMPLOYEES? Place a 20 word, line classified ad for a month for \$52. Add a graphic or photo for an addi-tional \$5. Contact the Bluffton News-Banner office, (260) 824-0224, 125 N. Johnson St., or www.news-banner.com and click on classifieds.

Lottery Numbers

Wednesday's Drawings

HOOSIER LOTTERY Cash 5 - 01-04-17-20-35

Lotto Plus — 05-11-26-35-41-44

Cash4Life - 17-19-20-49-50, Cash Ball: 02

Quick Draw Midday -01-02-09-10-15-16-29-34-35-38-42-50-57-61-63-66-

71-33-77-78, BE: 02

RENTALS

Apartments for Rent **BLUFFTON SENIOR VILLAS**

55+ Affordable Apartments 1 & 2 Bedroom Units Available Call 260-824-5820

Need more employees! A 20 word, line classified in the Bluffton News-Banner for a month is \$52. Contact the office at 125 N. Johnson St., 824-0224, or submit on-line at

classifieds.news-banner.com

Public Notices

90C01-2409-EU-000028 STATE OF INDIANA SS: COUNTY OF WELLS

IN THE WELLS SUPERIOR COURT 2024 TERM IN THE MATTER OF

STEPHEN SHAVER, deceased

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION Notice is hereby given that Jada Haldeman was on the 9th day of September 2024, appointed Per-sonal Representative of the estate of Stephen Shaver, deceased, who died on January 20, 2024.

All persons who have claims against this estate, whether or not now due, must file the claim in the office of the clerk of this court within three (3) months from the date of the first publication of this notice, or within nine (9) months after the decedent's death, whichever is earlier, or the claims will be forever barred.

Dated at Bluffton, Indiana, this 9th day of September, 2024. Clerk, Wells Superior Court

By Beth Davis Deputy

/s/ Cassee L Vivian Cassee L. Vivian, Attorney for Personal Representative 221 NW Fifth Street

Evansville, Indiana 47708

cassee.vivian@iacksonkellv.com Indiana Attorney Number 35285-82 nb 9/12, 9/19 hspaxlp

Notice of Public Hearing Town of Markle Water

Utility Improvements Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) to obtain assistance from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Loan Program The Town of Markle will hold

a public hearing at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, October 2, 2024 at the Markle Town Hall, 154 E. Morse Street, Markle, Indiana 46783. The Town of Markle's programming concultant will propert engineering consultant will present the recommended upgrades to the Town of Markle's drinking water infrastructure, which will include improvements to the water plant and within the distribution system. The project will be funded through a DWSRF loan. At this hearing, there will be the opportunity for questions and comments from the public. Participa-tion is welcomed and encouraged. If special assistance is required at the meeting, please contact the Town Hall at (260) 358-6604. Cop-ies of the PER are available for public viewing starting Septem-ber 20, 2024 (10 days prior to the Public Hearing) through October 7, 2024 (5 days following the Pub-lic Hearing). Written comments regarding this project should be sent to Mike Grant, Town Manag-er at 154 E. Morse Street, Markle, Indiana 46770, prior to October 7, 2024.

Public Notices

VISA

NOTICE

The City of Bluffton Parks is seeking bids to stabilize 1,100 feet of the Wabash River using rip rap, embedded root wads, and live stakes. Bid packets are available at https://tinyurl.com/2uf3r7p6 and are due in the Clerk Treasurer's office on Oct 8th by 4:30 pm. nb 9/19,9/26

hspaxlp

Town of Ossian, Indiana Notice of Receipt of Bids Project: Archbold Wilson Park

Access Driveway ("Project"). Summary: Within Archbold Wilson Park in Ossian, Indiana, the Project shall generally consist of widening and extension of an access drive from the intersection access drive from the intersection of Melching Dr & Lafever St to the existing parking area north of the park pavilion (base bid stone with alternate asphalt), relocation of existing park amenities, asphalt trail construction, common excava-tion, stormwater drainage improvements, site lighting, erosion con-trol, and surface restoration. All qualified Contractors are invited to bid the work

General Plans and Specifi-cations: Complete digital project bidding documents are available at <u>www.questcdn.com</u>. Quest CDN will serve as the Issuing Office will serve as the Issuing Office and maintain the plan holder list. Digital Bidding Documents may be downloaded for a non-refundable fee of \$22 by inputting Quest proj-ect number QuestCDN eBidDoc #9319207 on the website's proj-ects search page. Please contact QuestCDN Customer Support at DF2 232 1622 or info@guestcdb 952.233.1632 or info@questcdn. com for assistance in member-ship registration, downloading, and working with digital project informa-tion. No paper copies will be pro-vided by the Owner.

Pre-Bid Meeting: Beginning at 10:00 a.m., on Tuesday, October 1, 2024, a pre-bid meeting will be 1, 2024, a pre-bid meeting will be held at the Ossian Town Hall, 507 N. Jefferson Street, Ossian, Indi-ana 46777. Prospective bidders are strongly encouraged to attend. Bids: All bids must be submit-ted to the Town of Ossian by noon, Thursdey, October 10, to be one.

Thursday, October 10, to be con-sidered for the work. Bids submit-ted prior to 11:45 a.m. on October 10, 2024, shall be submitted at the Ossian Town Hall, 507 N. Jeffer-son Street, Ossian, IN 46777. Bids submitted after 11:45 a.m. on October 10, 2024, must be delivered to the Ossian Town Council meeting location at Collier's Comfort, 215 N. Jefferson St., Ossian, IN. Bidders are responsible for the timely delivery of their bids. All bids shall be in sealed envelopes bearing the Project title, "Town of Ossian Archbold Wilson Park Access Driveway" and include the name and address of the bidder. All bids shall include fully completed and executed Contractor's Bid for Public Work - Form 96 and E-Verify and Iran Investment Certification. Bids shall be accompanied by a bidder's bond or certified check equal to 5% of the bid amount. Bids arriving after the time set will be returned unopened and only complete bids with all required materials will be

0.13+/- non-tillable, Topography: Level, Zoning: Agricultural, School District: Norwell Community Schools. Rick Johnloz, 260 827 8181, rickj@ halderman.com, Jason Johnloz, jasonj@halderman.com, 260-273-9177, Halderman Real Estate & Farm Management, 800-424-2324, halderman.com. SEPTEMBER 24 - 9 a.m.-6 p.m. - Online Only - The Estate of Jeffrey Brown. Two story country home situated on 2.41+/- acre lot with 2 outbuildings totaling 866 SF, Wells County. This 1,876 SF home features 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, large living room, eat-in kitchen, utility room and 1 car garage. Open houses: Sept. 19 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 7721 N. 300 W. Markle, IN. Sale managers Brandon Steffen, 260-710-5684, Pat Carter, 260-273-8294, The Steffen Group Inc., steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006. SEPTEMBER 24-OCTOBER 1 - (Online Only) - Grover, seller. Tractor, mower, tools, woodworking, primitives. Open House Sept. 28 from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m., 8726 S 600 W-90, Warren, IN. Sale manager, Isaac Stoller, The Steffen Group Inc., 260-824-3006, www.steffengrp.

SEPTEMBER 25 - 9 a.m.-6 p.m. - Online Only - The Estate of Jeffrey Brown. 9.27+/- acre prime building site in Union Twp., Northern Wells County. Property features open land, wooded acreage, 24'x48 pole building. Perfect home site, country estate. "Explore the potential of this property. Open houses: Sept. 19 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 1200 N (Scott Street) and Marzane Rd. -TBD, Zanesville, IN. Sale managers Brandon Steffen. 260-710-5684, Pat Carter, 260-273-8294, The Steffen Group Inc., 260-824-3006, steffengrp.com. SEPTEMBER 28 - 9 a.m. Charles (Chuck) Bertsch. 3898 East 400 North. Bluffton. This is the 3rd and final auction for the Bertsch Estate.

com.

SUDOKU ANSWER

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STARTS CLOSING SEPTEM-BER 29 - 6 p.m. EST - Max & Vivian Minnich, owners. Online only real estate auction! Five bedroom, 1 full bath, 2,178 sq. feet home, hardwood floors throughout, full basement, 2 car detached garage, 20'x42' pole barn, 2.055 acres, Marion Township, Allen County, Indiana, East Allen County School Corporation. Auction preview Sept. 16, 5-6 p.m. or by appointment, 13045 Wayne Trace, Hoagland. Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC, 260-724-7402. kiauction.com. SEPTEMBER 29-OCTO-

BER 6 - (Online Only) - The Estate of Wayne E. Penrod, seller. Artifacts, tools, furniture, household. Open house Oct. 5 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., 69 W 1st St., Poneto, IN. Sale man-ager, Isaac Stoller, The Steffen Group Inc., 260-824-3006, www.steffengrp.com. OCTOBER 2 - 6 p.m. - Ruby

Johnson, Brant Johnson, owner. Auction location: Lighted Gardens Reception Hall, 10794 N. State Road 1, Ossian Property location: 14631 Smith Rd., Yoder. 48+/- acres offered in 4 tracts and combinations. Productive tillable land, excellent road frontage and access along Smith Rd., 2,400+ sq. ft. sprawling brick ranch home on full basement with 20x30 out-building, Allen County. Inspection Sept. 16, 5-7 p.m. Auction manager Jared Sipe, 260-750-1553, Schrader Real Estate and Auction of Fort Wayne, SchraderFortWayne.com, 866-340-0445

OCTOBER 3 & 4 - 9 a.m. -Secured creditors & various consignors, owners. 815 Adams St., Decatur. Two day truck & equipment auction. Day 1 (Online bidding only): Over 300+ lots including skid loader attachments, tool boxes, workbenches, iron gates, chains & binders, 1 trip 40' high side shipping container w/side doors, dome shelter containers, & much more! Day 2 (Onsite and Online bidding): Offering 600+ lots! 100+/- municipal units! Cars, SUV, 1/2 ton & 3/4 ton pickup trucks, cargo & passenger vans, large group of Chevy Impalas, Tahoes, & Dodge Chargers, dump trucks, large group of box trucks, day cabs, sleepers, utility trucks, bucket trucks, mobile food trailer (like new), utility & semi trailers, SUV's, pickup trucks, 100+ various skid loader attachments & much more! Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC, 260-724-7402, kjauction.com OCTOBER 5-OCTOBER 12

- Private Family Collection, sellers. Fine art work includ-

Bike; Wagons; Pyrex; Corningware; Glassware; Advertising; Furniture; Household; Board Games; Open Houses: Thursday, October 3 and Thursday, October 10 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Bobby Perry, Sale Manager, The Steffen Group Inc., www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-

OCTOBER 12 - 6 p.m. -(Online Only) - The Estate of Robert McNabb, seller. Spectacular 7,700 SF lake front home on 1.32 acres w/200 of lake frontage on Hamilton Lake. Luxury home features 5 bedrooms, 7 baths, expansive entertaining space, 4-car attached garage. Selling absolute at or above 1.4 million dollars. Seller's have over 4.5 million invested in this one of kind lake property. Open houses Sept. 21, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Oct. 1, 5-7 p.m., Oct. 12, 9 a.m.-noon, 1180 LN 150 Hamilton Lake, Hamilton, IN. Brandon Steffen, sale manager, 260-426-0633, The Steffen Group Inc., www.steffengrp.com

OCTOBER 13-OCTOBER 20 - (Online Only) - The Estate of Larry N. Curry, seller. 1997 Chevy Express Conver-sion van, 2013 Chevy Impala with 73,000 miles, John Deere LA115 riding lawn mower, rare Schwinn bikes, tools, furniture, household. Open houses Oct. 15 and Oct. 17 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 419 W. Roe St., Össian. Rod Fetters, sale manager, The *Steffen Group*, www.steffengrp. com, 260-824-3006.

OCTOBER 24 - (Online Only) - The Estate of Larry N. Curry, seller. Excellent 1,400 SF, three bedroom, 2 bath ranch home in Rose Ann Heights on 1/2 acre lot. This home has a ton of potential. "Explore the Possibilities." Open houses: Oct. 15, Oct. 17 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Oct. 22 from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m., 419 W. Roe St., Ossian. Brandon Steffen and Rod Fetters, sale managers, The Steffen Group Inc., 824-3006, www.steffengrp.com. NOVEMBER 14 - 6 p.m. Becher Family Farms LLC, sellers. Auction location: Adams Co. 4H Expo Hall, 160 W. Washington St., Monroe, IN. Four tracts, Washington Township, Adams County. Tract 1: 82.88 acres, County Rd. 200 West, Sec 18. Tract 2: 80.2 acres, County Rd. 450 North, Sec 8. Tract 3: 35.05 acres, County Rd. 450 North, Sec 9. Tract 4: 39.97 acres, County Rd. 400 North, Sec 9. Heartland Auction & Realty, Inc., 260-724-3499, heartlandauctionrealty.com.

Daily Three-Midday 03-06-03, SB: 01

Daily Three-Evening -05-03-00, SB: 06

Daily Four-Midday

05-01-08-08, SB: 01 **Daily Four-Evening** — 08-04-07-03, SB: 06

Quick Draw Evening -06-13-15-19-29-34-36-38-40-44-49-53-56-58-59-61-62-69-73-75, BE: 59

Hoosier Lotto — 07-17-20-27-36-40

MEGA MILLIONS Estimated jackpot (for

Friday): \$47 million POWERBALL

01-11-22-47-68 Power-

ball: 07; Power Play: 4X

Public Notices

Public Notice The Town of Ossian, Indiana, 507 N Jefferson St., Ossian, IN 46777 is submitting a Notice of Intent to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management of our intent to comply with the requirements of Construction Stormwater General Permit (CSGP) to discharge storm water from construction activities associated with Archbold Wilson Park Access Driveway located at Archbold Wilson Park at the intersection of E. Lafever and Melching Streets, Ossian, IN 46777. Runoff from the project site will discharge to the Eightmile Creek. Questions or comments should be directed to Crystal Chapman of the Town Of Ossian at 260-622-4251.

oj, nb 9/19 hspaxlp

Request For Proposals

for Guaranteed Savings Contract

Notice is hereby given tha the Southern Wells Community Schools shall receive proposal for a Guaranteed Savings Contrac until 2:00 p.m. (local time) on Octo-ber 28, 2024, at the Central Office located at 9120 S 300 W, Poneto IN 46781. Proposals will be in accordance with IC 36-1-12.5 and the Request for Proposals (RFP guidelines. For more information contact Trent Lehman, Superinten dent at (765) 728-5537.

All Bids must include a propos al with the content and in the for mat described within the RFP.

The Board reserves the right to terminate this project prior to bids being received, to reject any and all proposals, to waive informalities or irregularities in responses to this RFP, and to be the sole judge of the value and merit of the propos als offered.

nb 9/19, 9/26 hspaxlp considered. Review and Consideration: All bids timely received shall be publicly opened and read aloud at Collier's Comfort, 215 N. Jefferson St., Ossian, IN at noon, October 2024. The Town of Ossian, Indiana, reserves the right to reject all bids, waive defects and amend the Project's scope. It is anticipated that the Ossian Town Council will take bids received under advise-ment and that a determination may be made by October 14, 2024

By: Crystal Chapman, Town Manager

Town of Ossian, Indiana Advertisement Dates: oj, nb 9/19, 9/26 hspaxlp

NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS OF ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS

nb 9/19

hspaxlp

Notice is hereby given to the Taxpayers of the City of Bluffton, Wells County, Indiana, that the Common Council of said City will, at the Council Chambers, 128 East Market Street, Bluffton, Indiana, meet on of October 1, 2024 at 5:30 o'clock P.M., to consider the following additional appropriations in excess of the 2024 budget.

CEDIT FUND		200,000
	APPROPRIATE TO:	. ,
Cedit Budget		
443.080 County R	oad 200 S Project	\$60,000
Midland #2		\$45,000
	APPROPRIATE TO:	
Midland #2		

438.020 RTT Bond Payment

\$45,000 Taxpayers appearing at said meeting shall have the right to be heard The additional appropriations as finally made will be automatically referred to the Department of Local Government Finance. The Department will make a written determination as to the sufficiency of funds to support the appropriations made within fifteen (15) days of receipt of a Certified Copy of the action taken.

Bri Lautzenheiser City Clerk Treasurer

nb 9/19 hspaxlp

NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS OF ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS

Notice is hereby given the taxpayers of Wells County, Indiana, that the County Council of said County, will meet at the Courthouse Annex in Bluffton, Indiana at <u>7:00 O'clock p.m.</u> on <u>Tuesday, the 8th day of October</u> 2024, to consider the following additional appropriations more than the t for the current vear

	buuget ior the current year.		
at	SHERIFF		
y	Overtime		
S	(1000-11700-000-0005)	\$4,455.00	
ct	Equipment Repairs		
)-	(1000-30800-000-0005)	\$10,000.00	
е	CIRCUIT COURT		
D,	Translation Services		
n	(1000-30121-000-0232)	\$5,000.00	
d	JAIL		
)	General Repairs		
n	(1000-30402-000-0380)	\$10,000.00	
۱-	Meals		
	(1000-30603-000-0380)	\$35,000.00	
S-	LIT-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		
r-	Roads & Bridges		
	(1112-40306-000-0000)	\$181,734.16	
0	<u>LIT PUBLIC SAFETY – CO SHARE</u>		
s	Utilities		
d	(1170-30306-000-0000)	\$9,000.00	
S	Equipment		
is	(1170-40104-000-0000)	\$44,950.00	
of	INNKEEPERS TAX COLLECTION		
5-	Contractual Services		
~	(7304-30125-000-0000)	\$20,000.00	
6			oj, nb 9/1
n			henav

19 hspaxlp

A VISIT FROM 'DRAG-U-LA'



Butch Patrick (pictured), an actor known for playing Eddie Munster, posed with Reinig's replica. (Photo submitted)



Bill Huguenard (left) helped Steve Reinig (right) place the hood back onto the car. (Photo by Sydney Kent)



Bill Huguenard (left) and Steve Reinig (right) stand with the 'Drag-U-La' at the fair on Wednesday. (Photo by Jonathan Snyder)

Blinken: Surprise escalations threaten to derail talks for a cease-fire in Gaza

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) - U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken expressed frustration Wednesday at surprise escalations that threaten to derail efforts to broker a cease-fire deal in Gaza, noting that the United States is assessing a deadly attack that caused pagers used by Hezbollah to explode in Lebanon.

Blinken spoke to reporters in Cairo, where he traveled for talks on the ceasefire negotiations and U.S.-Egyptian relations. While Israel has not publicly spoken on responsibility in the pager attack, a U.S. official has said Israel briefed the United States after the explosions.

The United States, Egypt and other international partners are working for an agreement between Israel and Hamas to halt nearly a year of war in Gaza and release hostages held by the militant group. The U.S. says such a deal is the best chance at tamping down wider regional tensions, with Israeli leaders threatening to step up military action against Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants in Lebanon and the pager attack risking further escalation.

"Time and again" when the U.S. and other mediators believe they are making progress on a cease-fire deal in Gaza, "we've seen an event that ... threatens to slow it, stop it, derail it," Blinken said in response to a question about the previous day's explosions in Lebanon.

Personal pagers used by Hezbollah in Lebanon exploded nearly simultaneously Tuesday, killing at least 12 people, including two children.

Blinken reiterated that the U.S. was still gathering information on the circumstances of the pager attack and declined to make more specific comments. In other unexpected events that have put a cease-fire deal at risk, Blinken spoke of the discovery this month of the bodies of six hostages who Israel said had been recently killed by Hamas. They were among those still held in Gaza following Hamas' Oct. 7 attacks in Israel that launched the war.

When news came of their deaths, negotiators had been making progress on the timing and other details of a swap that would have freed hostages in exchange for the release of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention, America's top diplomat said.

Blinken, who had meetings with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi and Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, said the most dire need in the troubled cease-fire negotiations was for both sides to show they actually wanted a deal.

He headed to his 10th trip to the Middle East since the war in Gaza began without the optimistic projections that the Biden administration has previously conveyed of a breakthrough in the negotiations. The U.S., Egypt and other allies say a deal is essential to quelling escalated attacks by Iranian-backed groups in Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq and Syria.

Israeli leaders warned this week of a possible military offensive in Lebanon to stop what have become daily exchanges of rockets and missiles between Hezbollah and Israel across the southern Lebanese border.

Abdelatty, the Egyptian foreign minister, said Wednesday the region was on the brink of wider war and spoke critically of Tuesday's targeted explosions in Lebanon.

"Any escalation, including what happened yesterday, certainly hinders reaching a cease-fire deal and the release of hostages and detainees," he said.





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