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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2024

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As the parade passes by

Thursday night marked the Bluffton Free Street Fair's annual industrial parade. At top, Norwell High School's cheer team led the district staff in the parade, stopping at the corner of Main and Market streets to lift Kylie Huffer. Katie Wheeler (pictured above) joined the YMCA in the parade. Bluffton Common Council member Scott Mentzer (at right) carried one of the flags for the Wells County Republican Party. (Photos by Holly Gaskill)

Meridian Health Services acquires county clinics

By **HOLLY GASKILL**

Lutheran Health Physicians and two other medical groups announced the sale and transition of eight clinics to Meridian Health Services.

The sale includes eight total general care and pediatric clinics — three in Bluffton, two in Peru, and one each in Ossian, Warren and Markle.

A press release states that the transition is expected "on or about" Nov. 1, maintaining their current locations, providers, and staff. No hospital-based services at Bluffton Regional Medical Center will be affected.

The clinics are currently owned by LHP, Bluffton Medical Group and Dukes Medical Group and are part of the Lutheran Health Network. However, Meridian has operated the internal medicine and pediatrics clinics in

(Continued on Page 2)

Law enforcement grant focuses on combating OWIs

By **JONATHAN SNYDER**

A federal grant program for county and city will see officers paid more for combatting drivers operating while under the influence.

The program, called the Comprehensive Hoosier Highway Injury Reduction Program, will allow officers to sign up for extra hours outside of normal shifts to focus on finding and stopping drivers under the influence, enforcing stop arm violations with school buses and reckless driving. On these extra shifts, officers will be paid double time for their work, which will then be reimbursed by the state.

"That's the state's incentive to get people to do it outside of the normal work dates," Sheriff Scott Holliday said. "The state is dedicating funding for traffic safety and ... to entice people to use these funds they are paying double time."

Seatbelt violations and motorcycle visibility are also focuses of the program, but do not have extra paying shifts available. OWIs are one of the top reasons for arrests in Wells County, Holliday reports.

Holliday added that they can reapply for funding next year while changing the programs they prioritize.

"We're getting started with this," Holliday said. "We

(Continued on Page 2)

Jimmy Carter given peace prize

By **HILLEL ITALIE, AP National Writer**

NEW YORK (AP) — Less than two weeks before his 100th birthday, former President Jimmy Carter is receiving a lifetime achievement award from the Dayton Literary Peace Prize Foundation, which has set aside its longstanding rule that the winner accept the honor in person.

The Ohio-based foundation announced Thursday that Carter was this year's winner of the Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke Distinguished Achievement Award, named for the late diplomat. In 2002, Carter was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his human rights advocacy and for brokering such agreements as the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel.

Carter, who turns 100 on Oct. 1, is in hospice care in Plains, Georgia. His grandson, Jason Carter, will accept the prize on his behalf during a November ceremony that will honor the former president's peace efforts and his authorship of more than 30 books — what the foundation calls "the power of the written word to foster peace, social justice, and global understanding."

"For the past 17 years, one of the standing requirements to receive the Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke Distinguished Achievement Award was a guaranty that the recipient would appear in person in Dayton, OH for an on-stage interview and an awards ceremony," Nicholas A. Raines, executive director of the Dayton foundation, said in a statement. "This year we have decided to waive that requirement and present the award in absentia, to President Jimmy Carter."

Jason Carter said in a statement that two of his grandfather's "most enduring interests have been a devotion to literature and a near-constant pursuit of a peaceful resolution to conflict."

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Hezbollah vows retaliation against Israel for attacks on devices as both trade strikes

By **KAREEM CHEHAYEB and BASSEM MROUE**
 Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The leader of Hezbollah vowed Thursday to keep up daily strikes on Israel despite this week's deadly sabotage of its members' communication devices, and said Israelis displaced from homes near the Lebanon border because of the fighting would not be able to return until the war in Gaza ends.

Hezbollah and Israel launched fresh attacks across the border as Hassan Nasrallah spoke for the first time since the mass bombing of devices in Lebanon and Syria that he described as a "severe blow" — and for which he promised to retaliate.

The two days of attacks targeting thousands of Hezbollah pagers and walkie-talkies have been widely blamed on Israel, heightening fears that 11 months of near-daily exchanges of fire between Hezbollah and Israel

will escalate into all-out war. Israel has neither confirmed nor denied involvement in the attacks.

During Nasrallah's speech, Hezbollah struck at least four times in northern Israel, and two Israeli soldiers were killed in a strike earlier in the day. Israeli warplanes flew low over Beirut while Nasrallah spoke and broke the sound barrier, scattering birds and prompting people in houses and offices to quickly open windows to prevent them from shattering.

Israel also launched attacks in southern Lebanon on Thursday, saying it struck hundreds of rocket launchers and other Hezbollah infrastructure, though it was not immediately clear if there were any casualties. The army claimed the launchers were about to be used "in the immediate future."

At the same time, the army ordered residents in parts of the Golan Heights and northern Israel to avoid public gatherings, minimize movements and

stay close to shelters in anticipation of possible rocket fire.

In recent weeks, Israeli leaders have stepped-up warnings of a potential larger military operation against Hezbollah, saying they are determined to stop the group's fire to allow tens of thousands of Israelis to return to homes near the border.

In a Thursday briefing, the Israeli defense minister said Hezbollah would "pay an increasing price" as Israel seeks to make conditions near its border with Lebanon safe enough for residents to return.

"The sequence of our military actions will continue," he said.

The attack on electronic devices appeared to be the culmination of a monthslong operation by Israel to target as many Hezbollah members as possible all at once — but civilians were also hit. At least 37 people were killed, including two children,

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Outside

Hot and sunny before a perfect Street Fair night

Today	Saturday	Sunday
High 89	High 87	High 84
Low 64	Low 61	Low 63

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Online

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Meridian Health Services

(Continued from Page 1)
Bluffton since 2020. "This is good news for our patients, staff and providers, as well as each community and we know all will be in good hands," said Julie Thompson, chief administrative officer of BRMC, in a statement.

Meridian is a federally qualified health center, which allows the group to offer primary and preventative care services regardless of a patient's ability to pay. According to the release, Meridian offers \$4.2 million in "charity care" to 45,000 Indiana patients

annually. "We believe in treating the 'whole person' by caring for the physical, mental and social well-being of people to help achieve their optimum health," said Seth Warren, president and chief executive officer of Meridian Health Services,

in a statement. "This acquisition fits our mission to help make communities healthier, and we are well equipped to fully take on operation of these clinics and the dedicated staff who serve patients in each location."

holly@news-banner.com

Law enforcement grants

(Continued from Page 1)
picked three that we thought were important for our county and the things that we've been seeing. And we may, when it comes to filing for the grant next year, we may say, 'Hey ... school buses were pretty good. We didn't see many problems. Let's focus on seat belts next year.'"

influence as a whole, which includes drug violations. Officers will have specific time slots where they can sign up for the extra shifts, due to funding constraints. Detective Quinton Greer stated that the Sheriff's Department will be receiving approximately \$40,000-\$48,000. The original ask was for \$60,000, but the state received \$11 million in requests for its \$5.4 million budget for the program.

The grant program will start in October, with funds available for the whole year afterwards. Greer stated that these extra shifts will

be more prevalent during areas of increased incidents. OWI-focused shifts will be prevalent on the holidays, while enforcement of stop-arm violations will be common at the start of the school year. Greer also said that these shifts will be split between county and city departments.

"We only have so much money that they (Indiana) gave us in the grant," Holaday said. "He (Greer) calculates that out into approximate hours, and then he'll post them."

Greer stated that the Sheriff's Department will send out notifications when

they plan to focus on stop-arm incidents, as notice is required for grant funding. Greer also said that OWI focused shifts do not require any notice.

"It will be public notice that these blitzes will happen," Greer said. "Not saying that it's going to be all the time, OWI is not one that you have to put out, but around the holidays we'll put out notice for bus driving and things like that. ICJ does a really good job of giving you the documentation for it, it's just a matter of you sharing it and moving forward with it."

jonathan@news-banner.com

Jimmy Carter

(Continued from Page 1)
"It is gratifying to have the Dayton Literary Peace Prize Foundation choose to honor my grandfather with the Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke Distinguished

Achievement Award for a lifetime of work melding two of his loves — literature and peace," Jason Carter added.

On Thursday, the Foundation also announced that

Paul Lynch's "Prophet Song" won the Dayton Literary Peace Prize for Fiction and Victor Luckerson's "Built from the Fire" won for nonfiction.

Lynch and Luckerson

each will receive \$10,000. Fiction runner-up, "The Postcard" author Anne Berest, and nonfiction finalist, "Red Memory" author Tania Branigan, each get \$5,000.

Weather

Friday, September 20, 2024
(24-hour observations at 10:07 p.m. Thursday)
High: 88; Low: 58; Precipitation: None
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.08 feet at 7:45 p.m. Thursday

Wells County forecast

Today: Sunny, with a high near 89. Southeast wind around 5 mph becoming southwest in the afternoon.
Tonight: Partly cloudy, with a low around 64. Calm wind.
Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 87. Calm wind becoming northwest around 5 mph in the afternoon.
Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 61. Northwest wind around 5 mph becoming calm.
Sunday: A slight chance of showers, then a chance of showers and thunderstorms after 2 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 84. Chance of precipitation is 30%.
Sunday Night: A 50% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 63.
Monday: A 50% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny, with a high near 79.
Monday Night: A 40% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 60.
Tuesday: A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny, with a high near 75. Chance of precipitation is 30%.
Tuesday Night: A 20% chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 56.
Wednesday: A 30% chance of showers. Partly sunny, with a high near 73.
Wednesday Night: A chance of showers. Partly cloudy, with a low around 53.
Thursday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 75.

News-Banner Website

The News-Banner encountered technical difficulties this week, but the issue has since been resolved and we're working to update stories and links. Thank you for your continued understanding.

— Doug Brown, president and publisher

Hezbollah vows retaliation

(Continued from Page 1)
and some 3,000 wounded in the explosions Tuesday and Wednesday.

Nasrallah said the group is investigating who the bombings were carried out.

"Yes, we were subjected to a huge and severe blow," he said. "The enemy crossed all boundaries and red lines," he said. Pointing to the number of pagers and walkie-talkies, he accused Israel of intending to kill thousands of people at one time. "The enemy will face a severe and fair punishment from where they expect and don't expect."

He said Hezbollah will continue its barages into northern Israel as long as the war in Gaza continues, vowing that Israel will not be able to bring its people back to the border region. "The only way is stop the aggression on the people of Gaza and the West Bank," he said. "Neither strikes, nor assassinations nor an all-out war will achieve that."

Earlier Thursday, Hezbollah said it had targeted three Israeli military positions near the border, two of them with drones. Israeli hospitals reported eight people lightly or moderately injured.

Hezbollah says its near daily fire is a show of support for Hamas. Israel's 11-month-old war with Hamas in Gaza began after its militants led the Oct. 7 attack on Israel.

Israel has responded to Hezbollah's attacks with strikes in southern Lebanon, and has struck senior figures from the group in the capital Beirut. The exchanges have killed hundreds in Lebanon and dozens in Israel and forced the evacuation of tens of thousands of residents on each side of the border.

Israel and Hezbollah have repeatedly pulled back from an all-out war under heavy pressure from the United States, France and other countries.

But in their recent warnings, Israeli leaders have said they are determined to change the status quo dramatically.

Speaking to Israeli troops on Wednesday, Gallant said, "We are at the start of a new phase in the war — it requires courage, determination and perseverance." He made no mention of the exploding devices but praised the work of Israel's army and security agencies, saying "the results are very

impressive."

He said that after months of fighting Hamas in Gaza, "the center of gravity is shifting to the north by diverting resources and forces."

Israel began moving more troops to its border with Lebanon on Wednesday as a precautionary measure, Israeli officials said. Israel's army chief, Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi, said plans have been drawn up for additional action against Hezbollah, though media reported the government has not yet decided whether to launch a major offensive in Lebanon.

Lebanon is still reeling from the deadly device attacks of Tuesday and Wednesday.

The explosions have rattled anxious Lebanese fearing a full-scale war. The Lebanese Army said it has been locating and detonating suspicious pagers and communication devices, while the country's civil aviation authorities banned pagers and walkie-talkies on all airplanes departing from Beirut's international airport until further notice.

The attack was likely to severely disrupt Hezbollah's internal communication as it scrambles to determine safe means to talk to each other. Hezbollah announced the death of five combatants Thursday, but didn't specify if they were killed in the explosions or on the front lines.

The blasts went off wherever the holders of the pagers or walkie-talkies happened to be in multiple parts of Beirut and eastern and southern Lebanon — in homes and cars, grocery stores and cafes and on the street, even at a funeral for some killed in the bombings, often with family and other bystanders nearby.

Many suffered gaping wounds on their legs, abdomens and faces or were maimed in the hand. Tuesday's pager blasts killed 12 people, including two children, and wounded some 2,300 others. The following day's explosion killed 25 and wounded more than 600, Health Minister Firas Abiad said, giving updated figures.

Abiad told reporters that Wednesday's injuries were more severe than the previous day as walkie-talkies that exploded were bigger than the pagers. He praised Lebanon's hospitals, saying they had managed to deal with the flood of wounded within hours. "It was an indiscriminate attack. It was a war crime," he said.

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Street Fair

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PUBLIC AUCTION

SATURDAY September 28, 2024
Personal Property at 9:00 am

Location: 3898 East 400 North Bluffton IN 46714

Motors- Tools
Lister 6.5 2000 RPM Hit & Miss Engine; Cushman 1 1/2 HP; Maytag Motors; Fairbanks Morse; Edwards motor on Cart; GE 10 hp Display; Delco Light Plant Generator; Kohler- Briggs Stranton - Robin - Gas Motors (4 hp, 5hp, 6 1/2 hp, 7 hp, 12 hp); **over 100 Electric Motors**; 3 hp single phase; New 1 hp DC; gear reductions; Electric Meters; Transformers; Aqua Blast Hot Water Pressure Washer; Honda 6500 Generator; Pressure Washer Honda 11 HP; Anvil; Commercial Drain Snake(no motor); Chainsaws; Push Mowers; Log Chains; Snow Blower; Walk Behind Weed Mower; Bolt Bin; Wire Shelves; New 48" Roll up door; new Buggy Wheels; **SCRAP IRON**; Fellows Paper Shredder; Garden Tractor Tires(Lots); 48" tall Wheels 6.50 x 36; **Collectibles -12"** Brass Bell; Brass Bed; Old License Plates; LawnBoy Service Manuals from 1954-1970; Stop Sign; Speed Limit Sign; Railroad Crossing Signs; Railroad Crossing Lights & Bells; Old Maytag Washing Machine; Old Gas Reel Push Mowers; Lots of Mower Parts; White Gas Lights; Bose Speaker; Honda Push Mower;; Gun Stocks; John Deere Push Mower
This is the last auction for the Bertsch Estate. There is a lot more items that we are still finding. Cleaning out 2 Semi trailers and a couple of barns. Check out pictures online
Terms: Cash, Check or Credit Card **Auction Preview: Friday Sept 27th 3-6pm**

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OBITUARIES

Ellen Reff, 95

Ellen Reff, 95, of rural Bluffton, passed away on Thursday morning, Sept. 19, 2024, at Lutheran Life Village in Fort Wayne.

Funeral Services will take place at 3 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 27, 2024, at the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton with Pastor Clark Stoller officiating. Burial will follow at Stahl Cemetery.

Visitation will take place from noon to 3 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 27, 2024, at the funeral home prior to the service. Preferred memorials can be made to Living Water United Church or payable to Samaritan's Purse for the Operation Christmas Child Program.

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

Huntington North threats were hoax, police say

The Huntington Police Department have identified the teen who made safety threats at Huntington North High School Wednesday.

In a press release Thursday, Chief Cory Boxell said that at the conclusion of the interviews, a confession was obtained from a student at Huntington North High School indicating the threat was a hoax.

The initial threat was a vague and general statement overheard by the bus driver and other students on their bus ride home. This statement was also captured by the bus surveillance system and provided to law enforcement.

An investigation was initiated which included school administration, SROs, Huntington City Police Department, Huntington County Sheriff's Office, Warren Police Department, Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Huntington County Prosecutor's Office.

Multiple juveniles were located and interviewed. As the investigation was ongoing, information was shared on social media which prompted the potential of additional threats. These potential threats were also investigated and determined to have generated from the initial statement overheard on the bus.

This case will be forwarded to the Huntington County Prosecutor and the Huntington County Probation Department with the request of formal charges as the individual involved is a juvenile. The juvenile suspect is presumed to be innocent unless and until adjudicated a delinquent. No additional information regarding the juveniles involved will be provided according to Indiana law.

Panel hears testimony on signal jammers with 'terrorism' potential

By LESLIE BONILLA MUÑIZ
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Until June, Vanderburgh County Sheriff Noah Robinson hadn't considered the kind of havoc signal jammers could wreak upon law enforcement operations.

That's when his office discovered one in the back of a car. Robinson told an interim legislative committee last week that the office got a call about a burglary in progress. Staff used camera systems within the subdivision to locate a vehicle carrying the alleged burglars.

When an officer pulled the car over, his radio and computer stopped working, according to Robinson.

Signal jammers can block Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, GPS, and more — impacting devices like phones, Ring doorbells and wireless alarm systems. Robinson said the one his office discovered had a mile range.

He spoke to an interim panel focused on criminal code, asking the lawmaker-dominated body to consider a new law criminalizing importation and various uses of the devices.

"One doesn't have to take this too much further to see this has other uses as well, particularly from the terrorism aspect," Robinson warned.

He offered scenarios in which bad actors could interrupt medical devices at hospitals, police communications through surveillance towers, everyday Hoosiers' mobile phones via cellular towers, and even traffic flow controlled by wirelessly operated traffic signals.

Signal jammers are illegal on the federal level. The Federal Communications Commission prohibits marketing, selling or using any device that interferes with authorized radio communications.

Sen. Lonnie Randolph, D-East Chicago, asked why Indiana lawmakers should look at changes when the devices are banned federally.

Robinson replied that there's no state statute giving Indiana officers "immediate" authority to enforce the law.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City:

Wednesday, 2:16 p.m., Walmart. Report of theft.

Wednesday, 2:20 p.m., Washington and Williams streets. Missing person. Located at 2:59 p.m.

Wednesday, 2:21 p.m., Hampshire Court Apartments. Report of vandalism.

Wednesday, 2:22 p.m., Walmart. Report of theft.

Wednesday, 2:55 p.m., 600 block of Beth Avenue. Report of threatening messages.

Wednesday, 3:24 p.m., Cherry and Marion streets. Parking problem. Semi was delivering food to the fair, was able to make it out.

Wednesday, 5:07 p.m., Hardees. Parking problem. Both vehicles moved by drivers.

Wednesday, 6:22 p.m., Hardees. Parking problem. Owner said it would be moved.

Wednesday, 8:29 p.m., 712 Main St. Semi attempted to use caller's driveway to turn around and damaged front yard. Report to follow.

Wednesday, 9:27 p.m., Pak A Sak North. Parking problem. Both vehicles moved.

County:

Wednesday, 1:01 p.m., 6300 South S.R. 1, Bluffton. Report of broken down semi in lane.

Wednesday, 5:05 p.m., Wells County Jail. Two protection orders served to Kelby Gerber.

Wednesday, 6:32 p.m., S.R. 116 and Southwest Church Road, Bluffton. Report of subject running stop sign, causing driver to collide with barrier.

Wednesday, 8:45 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Zachary Berkey.

Thursday, 10:07 a.m., S.R. 1 and East 1150S, Montpelier. Report of accident involving multiple vehicles.

Ossian:

Wednesday, 8:52 p.m., 8400N 450E, Ossian. Report of two vehicles on side of road, caller unsure if assistance was needed. Driver advised that his vehicle it was overheating, and another vehicle was towing it with a tow strap home to Allen County.

ACCIDENTS

City:

Monday, 11:25 a.m., S.R. 1 at Oak Forest Drive. Keturah Bradford, 18, Bluffton, was turning her 1997 Buick Century south out of Oak Forest Drive onto to S.R. 1 and did not have enough time to clear the intersection. William Wallis, 27, Fort Wayne, said he was unable to stop his 2012 Peterbilt 265 garbage truck in time and T-boned the driver's side of the vehicle. Bradford's vehicle was off the roadway in a residential landscape area when the investigating officer arrived. Both vehicles were towed from the scene. Damage did not exceed \$25,000.

Monday, 4 p.m., Merchant Street, 100 ft. north of Central Avenue. Paige L. Chapman, 25, Bluffton, was driving a 2015 Nissan Sentra south on Merchant Street and went to turn into her driveway and struck a 2021 Kia Forte driven by Destiny Howard, 24, Berne, who had been attempting to go around the vehicle. Howard said Chapman had pulled into the

northbound side of the road and stopped, so Howard proceeded in her own lane. Chapman admitted to failing to use her turn signal. Damage did not exceed \$5,000.

Tuesday, 3:07 p.m., S.R. 1. Abigale C. Schreier, 17, Ossian, was driving an

2011 Ford Explorer when the vehicles in front of her stopped suddenly and she was unable to stop before hitting a 2023 Tesla Model Y driven by Mike Springer, 54, Bluffton. Schreier's vehicle was towed by Freeman's. Springer said he was slowing traffic when his vehicle had been struck. He reported minor back and neck pain at the scene. Damage did not exceed \$10,000.

Wednesday, 12:09 p.m., Washington Street at Williams Street. David Meadows, 70, Bluffton, stopped a 2023 Ford Maverick northbound at the intersection and failed to see an eastbound 2015 Ford Focus driven by Julie Coons, 39, Montpelier. Coons had the right of way, and said she also did not see Meadows' vehicle. Damage did not exceed \$10,000.

Wednesday, 8:12 p.m., Dairy Queen. Jaden C. Summers, 20, Bluffton, was driving a 2011 Nissan Titan through the drive thru at Dairy Queen and, in attempt to get closer to the window, backed into a parked 2014 Chevrolet Impala. Damage did not exceed \$1,000.

Wednesday, 8:39 p.m., 712 Main St. Hayat Hamjari, 31, Detroit, ignored road closure signs on Main Street in a 2022 Freightliner Cascadia, and attempted to turn the semi around once realizing the road was closed. While

Turning, Hamjari went into the front yards of 711 S Main St. and 712 S Main St., creating large ruts and chunks of grass. Damage did not exceed \$5,000.

County:

Thursday, 10:09 a.m., S.R. 1. Carl Wentz, 60, Pennville, was driving a Chevrolet Astro Van behind a Polaris ATV driven by Jan Van Del Laar, 42, Keystone. Wentz advised he did not see the ATV turning until the last second, and he attempted to miss the vehicle by swerving into the South bound lane as the ATV was turning left, causing the vehicles to collide. Van Del Laar was transported to the hospital for injuries. Both drivers were advised they were partially to blame as Wentz was following too closely, and Van Del Laar was not supposed to be operating the ATV on a state highway. Damages did not exceed \$25,000.

FIRES

Wednesday, 7:05 p.m., 20 Woodlawn St., Bluffton. Report of gas leak in home. Bluffton Fire Department responded. Gas shut off.

ARRESTS

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

Zachary James Berkey, 31, Bluffton; domestic battery against family member less than 14 years old, a Level 6 felony. Bond set at \$25,000.

Brittany Deann Vaughn, 26, Bluffton; possession of a hypodermic needle or syringe, a Level 6 felony, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class B misdemeanor. Bond set at \$6,000.

Holcomb taps new appellate judge from northwest Indiana

By NIKI KELLY
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Gov. Eric Holcomb on Wednesday praised high-energy Porter County Circuit Court Judge Mary DeBoer as he announced her as the newest member of the Indiana Court of Appeals.

It is his 7th appointment to the Indiana Court of Appeals during his time in office and 113th judicial appointment overall.

DeBoer will replace retiring Judge Patricia Riley.

"She leans in, she's innovative, she's hyperactive in the community," Holcomb said while also noting her integrity and intellect.

He said during the interview process one colleague said he cannot "count the number of families that have stated Mary's transparency, fairness and support have changed their lives for the better. And that's the bottom line, changing lives for the better."

As circuit court judge in Porter County, she handles a mix of civil and criminal cases, from malpractice to murder. She oversees the juvenile justice center and leads the juvenile services team. She also leads the alternative dispute resolution program and the local domestic violence committee.

"My childhood had some unusual twists and turns that brought joy and heartache.

Figuring out how to direct my energy in a positive and productive way was therapeutic, and as it turns out, those efforts brought me closer and closer to this special day," she said. "I used to think that my story wasn't what judges were made from, but somehow deep inside, I knew I was wrong

about that. My story makes me as perfect for my field as anyone, because I have lived through adversity and heartache and I have made mistakes from which I have learned."

DeBoer, who starts her day at 5:30 a.m., also made assembled family, friends and colleagues laugh when

she said she doesn't "have a slow speed" and "doesn't do anything halfway."

She has started two problem-solving courts for juveniles, one focused on truancy and another on mental health. And she hopes to focus more broadly on keeping kids in school in her new post.

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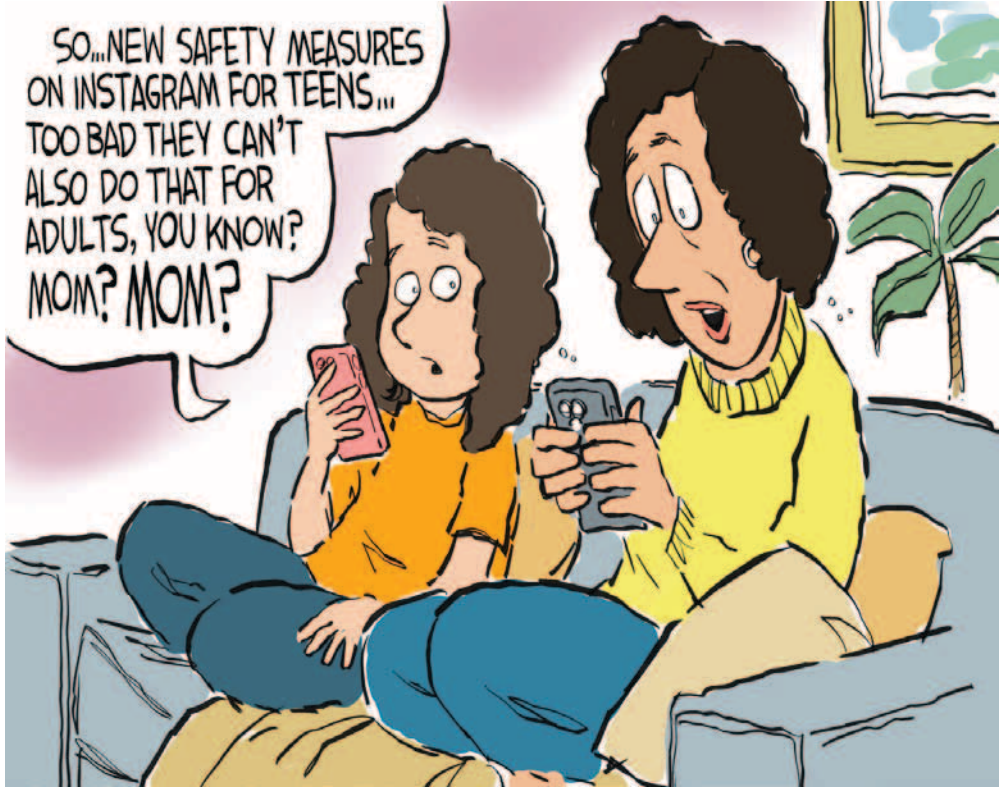
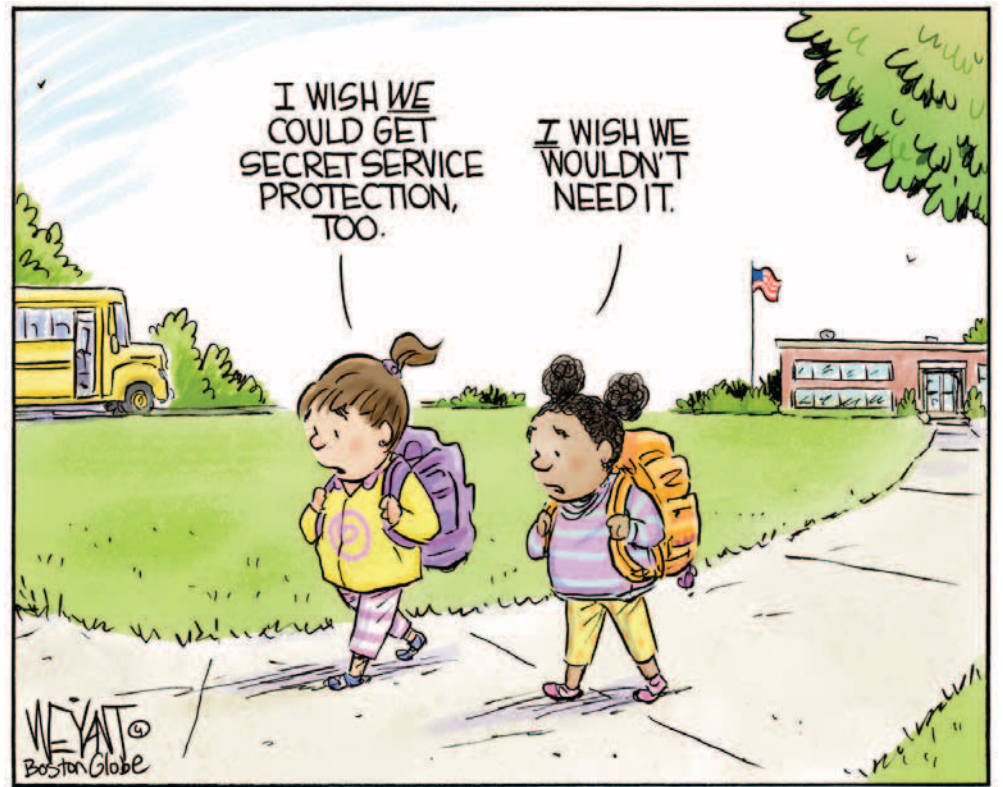
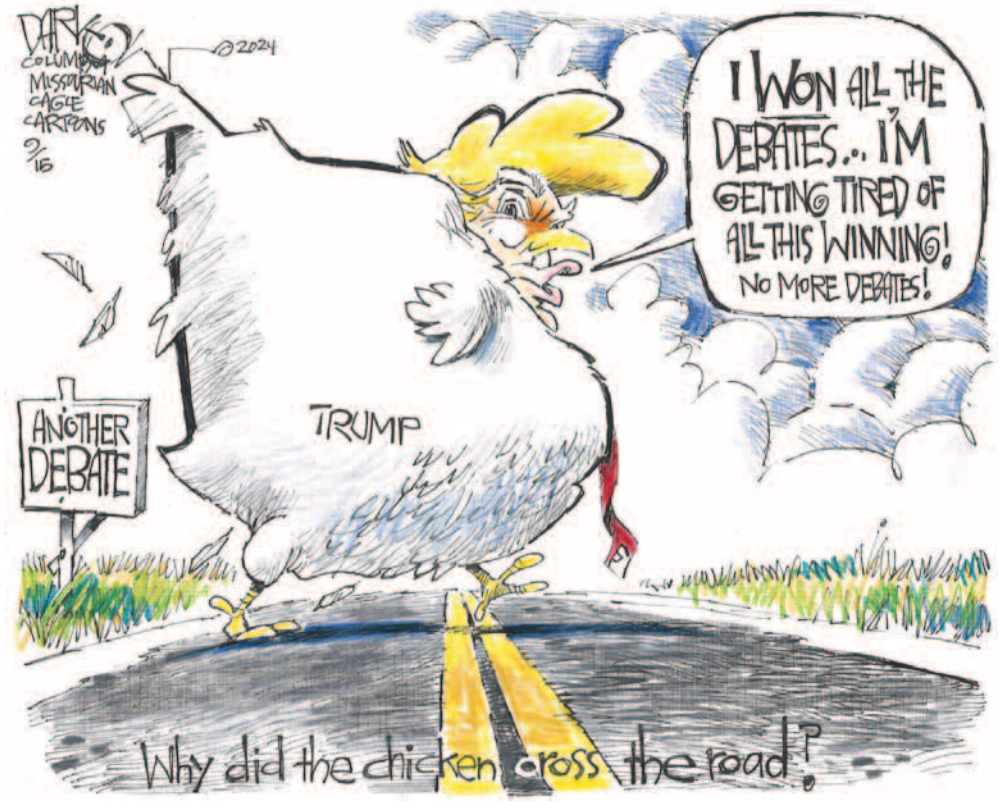
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The Week That Was - a look back through cartoonists' eyes...



Other Opinions

The coming subprime student loan debt crisis

It's a dirty job, but someone has to tell you about the federal government's budget tricks. The latest is exposed in a new Congressional Budget Office report that shows how the 2010 Democratic takeover of student debt has created a new and vast entitlement.

CBO examined a sample of federal student loans that entered repayment between July 2009 and June 2013 to measure the extent borrowers were making progress on repaying their debt before the three-and-a-half years of pandemic forbearance. Short conclusion: They weren't.

During the first six years after borrowers were supposed to begin making payments, CBO estimates that loans were in repayment status for only 45% of the time—about 32 months. Borrowers weren't making payments for most of that time because they were either in default, forbearance or deferment.

It gets worse. CBO says "borrowers made payments greater than \$10 in only 38 percent of the months" in which a payment was due. That means that even most borrowers who were making payments were doing so inconsistently and often in token amounts.

One reason is that the Democrats' 2010 income-based repayment plans capped payments at 10% of discretionary income—i.e., income exceeding 150% of the poverty line—and canceled debt after 10 to 20 years. As a result, many borrowers had negligible required payments. But then their loan balances ballooned as they accrued interest.

After six years in repayment, the typical borrower owed 8% more than his beginning balance. A quarter of borrowers owed 30% or more debt. More than 75% of those in income-driven repayment plans had rising balances. Borrowers in such plans made payments of more than \$10 a month in only about a third of the months.

Democrats say the student debt "crisis" is caused by for-profit colleges. But CBO shows that many students at nonprofit and public colleges are failing to repay their loans. After six years, the typical borrower who attended a nonprofit or four-year public college had paid down only 1% or 2% of his starting balance.

Unlike private lenders, the government has no incentive to ensure borrowers are making payments. The political imperative is to conceal the taxpayer losses on student loans by reducing defaults while effectively turning the program into a new entitlement.

This is what President Biden's SAVE debt-forgiveness plan does. It eliminates payments for millions of borrowers while reducing them for most others to negligible amounts. Uncle Sam simply waives away unpaid interest. Wouldn't it be nice if your credit card company did the same?

This accounting trick prevents the government's \$1.6 trillion in student debt from ballooning as borrowers fail to pay down their loans. Mr. Biden's SAVE plan is estimated to cost \$475 billion over a decade, which is on top of hundreds of billions that were already set to be written off.

To sum up: Democrats conned taxpayers by claiming their student loan takeover would save the government money. Now they're trying to obfuscate the cost of their entitlement by expanding it. And they wonder why Americans don't trust government?

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

IEDC's unhappy 20th anniversary

The Indiana Economic Development Corporation turns 20 years old in early 2025. In 2005, Indiana had 104,854 businesses, 2.96 million jobs and 6.28 million people. In the most recent year for all these data, 2021, Indiana had 99,280 businesses, 3.23 million jobs and 6.81 million residents.

If the state had grown at the same pace as the rest of the nation, we would have 110,305 businesses, 3.23 million jobs and 7.05 million people. That leaves Indiana with a two-decade growth shortfall of more than 11,000 businesses, 151,000 jobs and 240,000 people.

Unfortunately, the truth about business attraction policies is even worse than this otherwise tragic data suggests. The IEDC was formed to attract primarily new manufacturing firms. Since its formation in 2005, Hoosier factory employment has declined by almost 55,000 jobs, or 10 percent. Indeed, since Indiana's LEAP district was announced, the state has shed a further 14,000 factory jobs, while the nation as a whole added 166,000 manufacturing positions.

Over the past two decades, average real wages for manufacturing workers in Indiana dropped by a stunning 14.4 percent. Nationwide, they rose by just under 1 percent.

These stunning data cannot come as a surprise to state or local elected leaders, or to economic development board members. To be clear, this is broad policy failure in its purest, most unadulterated form. But, these dismal data do not reveal a failure of the Indiana Economic Development Corp. Rather, they indicate a failure of state economic growth priority.

Economic development organizations at the local or state level do not create jobs, nor do they really attract businesses. At best, they act as a concierge for businesses already seeking to expand or relocate to Indiana. These organizations represent the region to new businesses, but they cannot make a place attractive to businesses—or, more importantly, people.

As a guy who studies these things, I believe there is good evidence that IEDC is consistently among the better state development organizations in the country. I've published work on the Regional Cities Initiative operated by IEDC and reviewed their operations a decade ago.

Still, the IEDC is tasked with representing a state with increasingly poor economic fundamentals. As bad as the last two decades have been, the future looks even worse. Again, this surely cannot come as a surprise to Hoosier elected officials, or those who sit on economic development boards. If so, they just aren't paying attention.

For the first time in history, Indiana has entered what will be a long period of declining educational attainment. The real funding cuts to state universities are now more than 15 years old and have left us with a 10-year cohort of declining attendance and graduation. Even if we were to reverse the trend today, we are stuck with half a generation of declining educational attainment.

We're doing little to reverse the trend. The inaction is particularly stark when compared to other poorly educated places, like Mississippi, where one-third more high school graduates attempt college each year than here in Indiana.

The lack of action on college completion removes from our economic development organizations the single most important aspect of a region's future economic performance—educated young people.

To illustrate this disaster, we can look to the recent

past. Since 1980, 72 percent of population growth, and almost all job growth, went to the 15 percent of U.S. counties with the highest educational attainment. There are only six of those in Indiana—four in the Indianapolis suburbs and the host counties of Purdue and Indiana University.

Over the same four decades, the least well-educated half of Indiana counties lost 13,764 people. This will inevitably worsen in the decades to come. Education is now more, rather than less, important to economic growth and prosperity.

The remedy is so simple, it hardly merits explaining. Indiana must become a place where education and skills of people form the central mission of state and local economic development policies. Nothing remotely like that is the case.

It bears noting that had Indiana spending on higher education simply kept pace with our tepid economic growth, we'd be spending more than \$1.8 billion more each year. Today, in inflation-adjusted terms, Indiana spends less per student on K-12 education than we did in 2010. One result is that the average college graduate working in one of Indiana's public schools is paid less than they were in 2004. On top of that, Indiana's proposed high school curriculum will make it among the weakest in the nation.

I understand that it is very difficult for state policymakers to improve educational outcomes. There's no silver bullet and never has been one. But the surest and quickest way to reduce educational attainment is to cut budgets and standards. To put it in perspective, if spending on K-12 had grown as fast as our slow-growing economy, we'd spend \$1.7 billion more per year.

The policy failure is simply this: At a time when global economic growth is almost entirely centered on highly educated adults, Indiana chose to cut funding to education across the board. Had Indiana simply spent the same share of its total economy on K-12 education today as we did in 2010, per-student funding would be about \$1,650 higher. Had we spent the same on higher education, there'd be an additional \$1,300 each year for every 18-to-24-year-old to pursue post-secondary education.

It is ironic that most of the budget shift went to programs that mitigate the effects of poverty and poor educational attainment—at the expense of spending that prevents it. A result of those policy choices are the worst two decades of state economic growth since the Great Depression, a state that is relatively poorer than it was in 2010, with fewer businesses and worsening long-term economic prospects. The gap between Indiana and the rest of the nation is steadily widening.

Indiana's flagging economy was not caused by the Indiana Economic Development Corp., and it cannot be reversed by anything the IEDC does or does not do. No LEAP district, or READI grant or any other policy will pull us out of our slow growth economy. No amount of cheerleading, foreign visits, tax incentives or happy stories about capital investment records will make any difference to Indiana's economy.

The choice is clear. Either Indiana gets a lot more kids to finish college each year, or it gets used to slow growth, declining relative incomes, fewer businesses, wage declines and economic stagnation.

Michael Hicks is the George and Frances Ball Distinguished Professor of Economics and the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research at Ball State University.



Michael Hicks

Hoosier Opinions

The IEDC is tasked with representing a state with increasingly poor economic fundamentals

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Opinions expressed on this page do not necessarily represent the views of this newspaper.

Rebuilding trust after an affair

Dear Annie: I've been married for 22 years, and my husband and I have three teenagers together. My issue is, I caught my husband cheating three years ago and found out that his affair had lasted six years. He claimed that he wasn't getting his needs met at home. Nonetheless, it broke my heart and my trust.

I don't know what I have to do to get past this. I even thought about or wished that someone could just knock it out of my brain. But triggers pop up everywhere. We can't even watch a show together without someone having an affair, and it just triggers me and ruins the whole night. We continue to work on our marriage, as we both want it to work, but there are some days that I feel like I'm just being stupid and I should just leave.

We've tried couples counseling, and that didn't work well. It just continued to bring up the past, and I didn't want to. I'm not so sure if it's the cheating that bothers me so much as the length of time he cheated on me, and how the heck did I not see it for that many years? — Lost in NJ

Dear Lost: Trust takes years to build, seconds to break, and forever to repair.

Regaining your husband's trust is difficult but possible, and unfortunately, it DOES require bringing up the past. Avoidance will not make you forget. With the help of a counselor, you need to face the trauma and betrayal you endured so that you can move forward once and for all.

Dear Annie: I have a friend in her late 30s who is pregnant with her second baby. We are not the closest of friends, but we've been friends for over 20 years. She recently shared the baby name she and her husband like

the most so far. Unfortunately, in my family, there have been two babies who were given this specific name, and both were still-born. You can imagine how unsettled I was when I learned she was considering it.

I'm not very superstitious, but I feel like it's bad luck, and I can't help but get chills every time I hear that name. Should I share this with her? Thank you for your advice. — Haunted by a Name

Dear Haunted: Unless your friend asks you outright for your thoughts, keep your family's history with this name to yourself. For your friend and her husband, it brings joy and excitement, and learning of your experience with it can only make them anxious and stressed, which isn't good for any parent-to-be.

What happened in your family isn't guaranteed to happen in theirs. Maybe their baby will be a new spark of positivity around this name for you.

"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 dearnnie@creators.com.

Dear Annie by Annie Lane



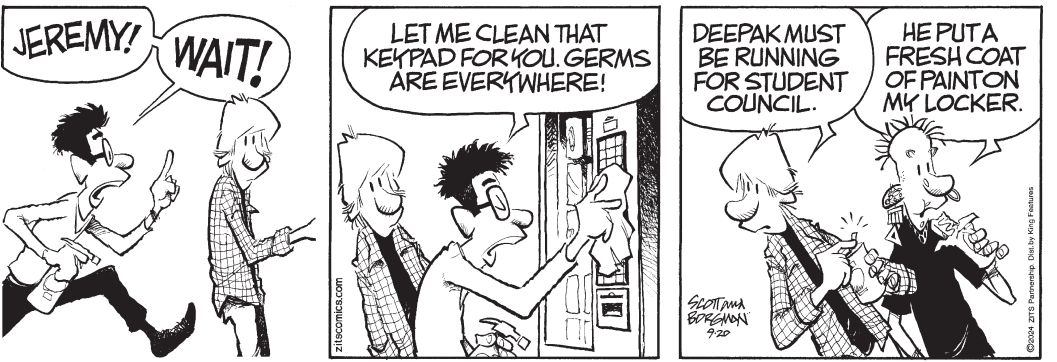
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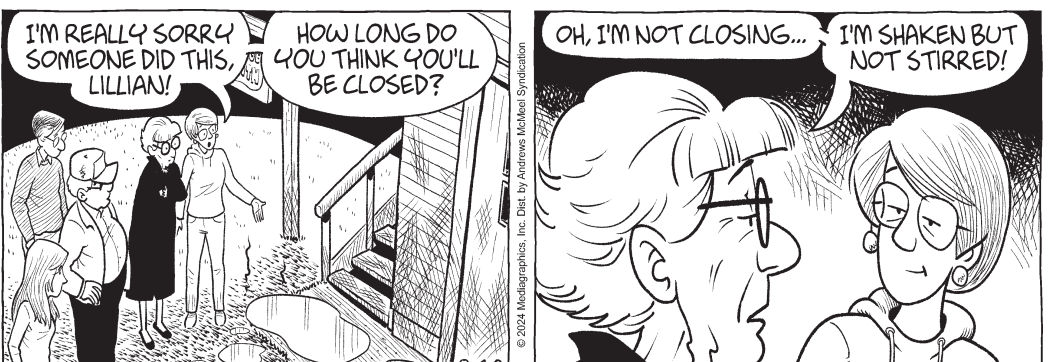
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My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



Marriage the most serious long-term contract a couple will make

Question: I attended a funeral recently and the husband of the deceased claimed that no amount of money can bring health back to someone at death's door. My wife's response to this was livid. She gave several examples of money providing last minute, life-saving miracles that brought people back from the doorstep of death. She is so focused on wealth that we have no quality of a healthy marriage at all. What is the truth about what really brings contentment in the good times and bad times? — M.H.

Answer: Someone has said, "A man's wealth consists not in the abundance of his possessions,

but in the fewness of his wants." We have confused needs with wants.

Heaven in this life and heaven in the life to come are not on a monetary standard. Nor can flesh and blood find the door to the kingdom of Heaven with its peace, joy, and happiness. Only those who are rich toward God will experience true contentment.

Marriage is the most serious long-term contract a couple will make in their lifetime, but many enter into it with a lack of maturity and knowledge.

When a husband and wife are concerned only about their own individual desires, the stage is set for conflict. The Bible warns that money cannot buy happiness. Money

cannot buy true peace. Money cannot buy peace of heart and contentment. Today many couples put their hopes in materialism as the marker for success.

What is the answer? Turn to the Lord with everything that concerns your marriage. Husbands and wives will find answers if they both place their trust in the Lord and at the center of their marriage — and pray about everything, that the Lord will lead your minds to be one.

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

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Table with columns for time slots (09:20 to 12:30) and rows for various TV channels (WINM, CBS, etc.) listing programs and their durations.

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes 'Solution time: 25 mins.' and 'Yesterday's answer 9-20'.

Grid for the crossword puzzle with numbers 1 through 57 indicating starting positions for clues.

Tigers respond to Raiders' 1st set win, takes final 3 sets in Wells County match

By RYAN WALKER

PONETO — Southern Wells made a statement in the first set on the court, but Bluffton's was just bigger the rest of the game.

The Raiders (8-9, 0-3 ACAC) made their case in the first set, drilling the Tigers (3-11, 1-3 ACAC) 25-10. But a switch was flipped. Bluffton wasn't about to let their Wells County rivals have it easy.

In sets two through four, the Tigers held a firm lead and won three in a row 25-23, 25-17 and 25-20.

Bluffton head coach Caylee Pyle has had a rocky road with her young group, trying to get them to play a full game at their highest level. In every five-set game (or three sets in tournaments), the team has fallen short. She wanted consistency, and she finally got it, and it was rewarding.

"It was 110% our mentality," Pyle said. "We came in with the confidence that I've been trying to build in them in the past couple of months. They're finally starting to believe it. We're having great practices and we're seeing it. To be witness to that is something so special and I'm so proud of my girls and all of their hard work, and for trusting me. To watch them grow and flourish is amazing."

On the other sideline, Southern Wells started fast and ended short. Head coach Whitney Powell's Raiders have improved significantly from last year after going 1-23 to now at 8-9. But there's still room to grow, as Powell would like to see the team, like Pyle's, get to their highest point and stay there.

"Adversity hits and we get tight and we start to shut down instead of getting that grit of 'I'm going to do this' or 'This ball is not scoring on us.' We've just got to learn to get that (grit)," Powell said.

Pyle said that there were two differences between the first set and the rest.

The first was that she made a lineup adjustment. Not to any one player from the bench, but the order of them. She switched her No. 1 hitter from Isla Gibson to Rori Drayer. This allowed for Sophie Eisenhut, a 5'11" middle hitter, to have the first look at the front of the net. Maryn Schreiber started to serve and worked her way to the front.

That way, the Tigers always had strong members on the front and back row.

The second part was that the seniors took

control of the team after the first-set loss.

"Our seniors really just stepped up and said 'I'm tired of how we've been playing. I want it because this is my last year,' and the girls finally listened."

Southern Wells played in the first set like it had been for most of the season. It also has a young roster, learning from Powell how to play the game.

There were flashes of excellence and determination. Toward the end of the second set, the Raiders were down 24-19 and crawled back to 24-23. If it wasn't for an unlucky hit, they had a shot to send it into overtime.

Freshmen captain Abbie Powell contributed again on the stat sheet, producing 19 kills and increasing her ACAC-leading 208 for the year. Sophomores Kila Shelley had six kills and Kaylea Coffel 16 digs. Senior Aly Green had six kills as grown.

Powell wasn't discouraged at all with her team after the game, but took the loss as a chance to get better and understand where they can be.

"I was really relaxed and comfortable before the game," Powell said. "I just had good vibes and felt good about what we were doing. We had a really good warmup and we played great in Game 1. Just looking at that, I'm proud of where we're able to go to, but that's not where we want to peak out at. We've just got to figure out how to push through that."

She said that the girls were emotional in the locker room following the loss, and Powell was happy that they took it hard so they could get back in the gym and work.

"I told them 'That means you care.' We're getting somewhere, we're just not there yet," Powell said.

Bluffton's stat leaders for the night were Schreiber with 16 kills, Gibson 30 assists, Marly Drayer four aces, Rori Drayer 14 digs and both Schreiber and Eisenhut two blocks.

Bluffton won the junior varsity match 2-0 (25-21, 25-17). Satt leaders: Lucy Mace eight kills and four aces, Jaida Mills 12 digs, Kamryn Ault 16 assists and Bridget Steffen one block.

Bluffton will be at the Canterbury Invitational at 9 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 21.

Southern Wells will be at Canterbury at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 24.

ryan@news-banner.com



Bluffton's Konley Ault (right) tries to spike over Southern Wells' Emma Parks outstretched hands.



Southern Wells' Abbie Powell (left) sets a strategic spike toward Bluffton's Rori Drayer (No. 12), avoiding middle hitter Maryn Schreiber (right) during the ACAC Wells County match at The Raider Dome Thursday night. The Tigers got the best of the Raiders in four sets. (Photos by Ryan Walker)



Tigers' Rori Drayer (right) smiles and shows sportsmanship with Raiders' Lexie Fiechter after the rivalry game.

Sports Roundup

Tigers top Starfires, now one step away from ACAC title

Bluffton improved to 2-0 in the ACAC with a home victory over South Adams Thursday night.

The Tigers sweated out a 3-2 win, and is now set up for an ACAC championship match with Adams Central at 5 p.m. Monday, Sept. 23.

Individual results:

- Nolan Lambert (B) defeated Kade Sprunger 6-0, 6-1 at No. 1 singles.
- Cole Hyman (SA) defeated Anthony Hartman 6-4, 3-6, (11-9) at No. 2 singles.
- Kane Sturwold (SA) defeated Jacob Ribich 6-3, 6-2 at No. 3 singles.
- Ben Maggard and Coy Lantz (B) defeated Gabe Neuenschwander and Griffin Hill 6-1, 6-2 at No. 1 doubles.
- Kade Abbott and Dane Schlagenhauf (B) defeated Isaiah Conrad and Ben Dubach 6-1, 6-0 at No. 2 doubles.

Bluffton's lone junior varsity match ended up in an 8-2 victory for Braden Lemler over Alex Stutzman 8-2.

Tigers finish girls' golf regular season with win at Warriors

Bluffton defeated Woodlan in its final regular season match of the season at Whisperring Creek on Thursday.

The Tigers shot a 194 to the Warriors' 196. Eve Corkwell was the medalist with a 47, followed by Addison Kauffman (48), Tressa Renner (49), and both Isabella Stout and Piper Morgan (50).

Bluffton's junior varsity squad also golfed for their final match of the season. The four girls shot a 228 with Sy'Annha Jordan-Turner leading the way shooting a 48, followed by Rylee Todd and Madelyn Funk's 59 and Addison Gehring (62).

Bluffton will be at Arbor Trace for the sectional meet at 9 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 21.

Mann nets four goals, Knights rout Starfires

Norwell defeated South Adams 6-1 on the road in girls' soccer Thursday night. The Knights record is now 8-4 with the win.

Grace Mann netted yet another hat trick, scoring four goals in the game. Karrigal Melcher and Aubrey Meyer tallied the other goals. Issie Isch had an assist.

The defense was led by a strong performance from Madison Mashuda, according to head coach Dan Batdorff.

Norwell will be at home next to host DeKalb in conference play at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 23.

Norwell falls to East Noble in conference boys' tennis

Norwell fell 4-1 at East Noble in boys' tennis Thursday night.

Individual results:

- Ettore Bona (EN) defeated Gavin Reynolds 6-2, 6-0 at No. 1 singles.
- Gray Mullins (EN) defeated Braylon Trout 6-4, 7-5 at No. 2 singles.
- Silas Edwards (EN) defeated Landon Diver 6-1, 6-7 (2-7), 10-5 at No. 3 singles
- Jackson Leedy and Ethan Jackson (EN) defeated Eddie Archbold and Ayden Quintanilla 6-1, 6-1 at No. 1 doubles.
- Rylan Heyerly and Dylan Randol (N) defeated Cole Thompson and Mason Monaghan 6-1, 6-0 at No. 2 doubles.

Norwell fell in the junior varsity match 5-2.

Results for JV:

- Ethan Williamson and Ryan Ewing (N) defeated Drew Smith and Isaac Spencer 9-8, 8-6.
- Jasper Kreigh and Greyson Chavis (N) defeated Owen Diehl and Karsten McKinley 8-6.
- Jacob Spencer (EN) defeated Levi White 8-0.
- Jackson Strycker (EN) defeated Christian Werling 8-0.
- Braxton Hardesty (EN) defeated Levi White 8-4.
- Dallas Wilson and Brayden Jarrett (EN) defeated Brady Watkins and Carter DeWeese 8-6.
- Devin Sutton and Sebastian Palmer (EN) defeated Jensen Miller and Braden Hoag 8-1.

Norwell will be at Snider at 4:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 23.

(Continued on Page 7)



Bubba Wallace signs an extension with 23XI Racing

By JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Bubba Wallace signed a multi-year contract extension with 23XI Racing, the team announced Wednesday.

"From day one Bubba has been an integral part of 23XI," the team said in a social media post. "We're excited to announce that he has signed a multi-year renewal and will continue to play a key role in helping 23XI grow and succeed. #ForwardTogether."

Wallace, who failed to make the Cup Series playoffs this season, heads to Bristol Motor Speedway winless on the year and ranked 19th in the standings for Saturday night's elimination race.

Wallace has driven for 23XI since its inception when Denny Hamlin saw a rumor on social media that he and Michael Jordan were partnering to start a NASCAR team centered around Wallace. Hamlin thought the idea seemed strong — Wallace at the time was landing multiple major sponsorship deals after calling on NASCAR to ban the display of the Confederate Flag at its events — and called Jordan about the rumor.

The team was up and running in 2021 and Wallace has won two races, but none since 2022. He did, however, qualify for the playoffs for the first time in his career last season and finished a career-high 10th in the final standings. Wallace is the only Black driver at NASCAR's top level.

23XI Racing won the regular-season title this year with driver Tyler Reddick, who is ranked sixth in the 16-driver playoff field. Four drivers will be eliminated from title contention Saturday night at Bristol with team co-owner Hamlin, who drives for Joe Gibbs Racing, among those in danger of being cut.



Bubba Wallace

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Sports Roundup

(Continued from Page 6)

Knights fall in volleyball to Leo in NE8 opener

Norwell fell at Leo in volleyball in straight sets on the opening night of NE8 Conference play Thursday night.

Norwell lost the junior varsity match 2-0 (25-16, 25-22) and won the freshman match 2-0 (25-18, 25-7).

Knights lose to Braves in JV football

Norwell's junior varsity football team 16-7 on Thursday. On offense, Lance Meriwether scored the only touchdown with an 8-yard run.

High School Calendar

FRIDAY, SEPT. 20 GIRLS GOLF: (Sectional) Norwell at Chestnut Hills, 9 a.m. FOOTBALL: Jay County at Bluffton, 7 p.m.;

7 p.m.; Norwell at Columbia City, 7:30 p.m.; Southern Wells at Canterbury, 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 25 BOYS TENNIS: Huntington North at Bluffton, 5 p.m. GIRLS SOCCER: Norwell at Heritage, 5:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 26 BOYS SOCCER: Heritage at Norwell, 7 p.m. BOYS TENNIS: Concordia at Bluffton, 5 p.m.;

FRIDAY, SEPT. 27 FOOTBALL: Bluffton at Southern Wells, 7 p.m.; Norwell at East Noble, 7 p.m.

News-Banner Scoreboard

FOOTBALL

NFL

Thursday's Games Buffalo 31, Miami 10 Sunday's Games Cleveland 18, Jacksonville 13 Green Bay 16, Indianapolis 10

x-clinched playoff spot Wednesday's Games No games scheduled. Thursday's Games Washington 92, Indiana 91

BASEBALL

MLB AMERICAN LEAGUE East Division W L Pct GB z-New York 89 64 .582 4

14-8), 7:05 p.m. Minnesota (Festa 2-6) at Boston (Fitts 0-0), 7:10 p.m. Seattle (Kirby 12-11) at Texas (deGrom 0-0), 8:05 p.m.

BASKETBALL

WNBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE W L Pct GB x-New York 32 8 .800 4 x-Connecticut 28 12 .700 4

Wednesday's Games Oakland 5, Chicago Cubs 3 Atlanta 7, Cincinnati 1

Wednesday's Games Oakland 5, Chicago Cubs 3 Atlanta 7, Cincinnati 1

The Classifieds

SUDOKU

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

King Classic Sudoku

9x9 grid for King Classic Sudoku with some numbers filled in.

Difficulty: ★★★★★

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SUDOKU ANSWER

9x9 grid with the completed Sudoku puzzle solution.

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.

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Search for suspect in highway shooting ends with discovery of body

By BRUCE SCHREINER
Associated Press
FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP) — A body found in rural southeastern Kentucky is believed to be the man suspected of shooting and wounding five people on an interstate highway, authorities said Wednesday night. The search ended with two private sleuths joining in the dramatic discovery.

Kentucky State Police Commissioner Phillip Burnett Jr. said the body located earlier in the day was believed to be Joseph Couch, of Woodbine. Authorities hoped the discovery signaled the conclusion of an intense, nearly two-week search that had area residents on edge.

“People have been in fear,” Laurel County Sheriff John Root said. “That’s not the normal here in Laurel County. So now that this has been discovered, I hope that our county can get back to what’s normal.”

A dozen vehicles were hit and five people wounded in the Sept. 7 shooting on

Interstate 75 near London, a city of about 8,000 people roughly 75 miles south of Lexington.

Burnett said Wednesday night that accessories found with the body led authorities to conclude it was Couch. He had no details on the cause of death, saying that would be determined in an autopsy, but he said a weapon was found at the site. He didn’t know how long the body had been there.

“We are very confident this brings the closure to the search for Joseph Couch,” Burnett said.

Root said the discovery of the body wasn’t the outcome authorities wanted.

“I don’t think nobody on this stage wished that we would have found him in the condition that we found,” Root said at a news conference in London. “I’d rather he’d been alive and he could have paid for what he’s done.”

The body was found following an exhaustive search of the rugged and hilly terrain in the area where the attack

happened. Teams combed 28,000 acres in the search.

But it is a private couple who will reap a \$25,000 reward for their part in the discovery.

YouTube streamers Fred and Sheila McCoy from Kentucky said they searched the area for about six days and were looking for signs of vultures in the air. Fred McCoy said he saw some near the I-75 exit Wednesday, and they followed the rough terrain down a valley. They then picked up on a bad smell.

“Hey guys, you won’t believe it, we found him, oh my goodness gracious,” Sheila McCoy said while filming the search. “Now this little area (London) can rest.”

State police troopers had searched the area all day and also noticed vultures hovering above and then detected a strong odor, Burnett said Wednesday night. While moving through the woods to locate the odor, the troopers heard voices, identified themselves and asked the others to do so, he said.

It turned out to be the McCoys, who told the troopers they also were searching for Couch.

“Almost immediately after that interaction between troopers and the McCoys, the troopers and the McCoys stumbled upon an unidentified body,” Burnett said.

The highway shootings led some schools to shut down and shift to virtual learning for several days as authorities warned residents to be extra vigilant. Schools reopened Tuesday with bolstered police security in the county where the shooting happened.

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear called the shootings an “act of violence and evil.”

Authorities said the shooter fired 20 to 30 rounds, creating a chaotic scene. The five victims survived, but some suffered serious injuries.

After sending the text message vowing to “kill a lot of people” to a woman before the attack, Couch sent another saying, “I’ll kill myself

afterwards,” investigators said in an affidavit. The document did not describe the relationship between Couch and the woman. However, the two have a child together but were never married, according to an attorney who handled the custody arrangement for their son, born in 2016.

Early in the search, authorities found Couch’s abandoned vehicle near the crime scene and a semi-automatic weapon that investigators believe was used in the shooting. An Army-style duffel bag that was found had “Couch” handwritten in marker, and a phone believed to be Couch’s was found without a battery.

Authorities said he purchased the AR-15 weapon and about 1,000 rounds of ammunition at a London gun store hours before the shooting.

Couch had a military background in the Army Reserve. The U.S. Army said he served from 2013 to 2019 as a combat engineer. He was a private when he

left and had no deployments.

The search focused on a densely wooded area about 8 miles north of London that a state police official described as “walking in a jungle.” Aided by helicopters and drones, search teams on the ground contended with cliffs, sinkholes, caves, waterways and thick brush.

When the ground search was suspended at night, specially trained officers were deployed in strategic locations to prevent the gunman from slipping out of the area. On Tuesday, authorities said they were pulling searchers from the woods to bolster patrols in nearby communities in hopes of calming fears among residents.

As the mystery of Couch’s whereabouts appeared to be solved Wednesday, the sheriff urged prayers for the shooting victims and for the suspect’s family, who he said have cooperated with authorities.

“The family cannot be blamed for the misfortune that this guy’s caused,” Root said.

Springfield residents hunker down, pray for political firestorm to pass

SPRINGFIELD, Ohio (AP) — In the quiet corners of Springfield, Ohio — out of sight of the drumbeat of politicians and journalists, troopers and newly installed security cameras — the people who live here are taking a breath, praying and attempting to carry on.

Between the morning bomb sweeps of Springfield’s schools and the near daily afternoon media briefings, a hush comes over the city of 58,000 that residents say is uncanny, haunting even. It’s fear. It’s confusion — dismay at being transformed overnight into a target for the nation’s vitriol.

Pastor Andy Mobley, who runs the Family Needs Inc. food pantry on the city’s south side, said people are hunkered down out of the public eye. He said they’re hoping the attention sparked by former President Donald Trump spreading unsubstantiated rumors about the city’s legal Haitian immigrants eating house pets during last week’s presidential debate will blow over.

Trump and his vice presidential running mate, Ohio’s junior Sen. JD Vance, have used the cat-eating rumors to draw attention to the city’s 15,000 Haitian immigrants, whose arrival to fill manufacturing, distribution and warehouse jobs has put a severe strain on local resources.

Since the Republican candidates’ initial comments, more than two dozen bomb threats — mostly from foreign actors seeking to sow discord — have prompted the state to send in additional state troopers and install surveillance cameras around the city in order to reopen schools and government buildings.

“We’ve got good people here. Republican, Democrat. They’re good people,”

Mobley said Tuesday, as the pantry tended to a steady stream of clients seeking clothing and food.

Resident Josh Valle said the situation is unsettling.

“We definitely need answers,” said the 35-year-old tool and die repairman, who has lived in Springfield for decades. “It’s affecting my kids and my community and my neighbors. With the bomb threats and the influx, it’s something new every day. And this used to be a really chill town, you know, it used to be just a small town Ohio.”

The area around Springfield City Hall, where Valle spoke, sat largely silent Tuesday afternoon, until a news conference with state and local officials prompted a brief swarm of activity. Local families are avoiding schools in the wake of earlier bomb threats, even though dozens of troopers have fanned out across the Springfield City School District to stand guard. Some 200 of 500 students were absent Tuesday from a single elementary school, officials said.

Still, there are signs of hope.

“Home Sweet Springfield” tea towels adorn the window of Champion City Guide & Supply on a downtown block that bustles with activity over the lunch hour. One line of mugs and clothing items reads: “Speak a Good Word for Springfield — or say nothing.”

Across town, a small group of kids whose parents kept them home on Tuesday horsed around together at a makeshift lemonade stand they set up to make a few bucks. They delighted in the revving motor of a passing muscle car and, when sales were slow, swigged back the merchandise.

David Graham, who visits communities in crisis as

The Praying Cowboy, positioned himself in Springfield this week to show support. “Agenda: Pray, worship, witness, smile, honor, esteem,” he wrote in a Facebook post from the city, accompanied by his hands holding an open Bible with a newly installed surveillance platform in the background. He added lines with black electrical tape to a small heart placard he posted nearby, to represent Springfield hearts being broken.

He wasn’t the only one trying to help. A bipartisan group of area mayors met with Springfield Mayor Rob Rue on Monday to figure out how they can help — including with resources to address the traffic, health care, social services and housing needs prompted by the increase in the Haitian population and their language barrier.

Andrew Ginther, the Democratic mayor of Ohio’s capital, Columbus, and president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, said in a statement: “Mayors across America will continue to stand by Springfield and all cities working to responsibly address an increased number of migrants, which we can do without losing sight of our shared humanity.”

Years ago, Family Needs Inc. was designated one of President George H.W. Bush’s “thousand points of light,” honoring its dedication to volunteerism. The organization has helped Haitians arriving in Springfield for years now, Mobley said — providing them translation services and co-signing their rental agreements.

He recalled working with Haitian immigrants as far back as 2016, the year Trump was elected — though census figures show the population remained at only about 400

until a few years ago.

“In 2016, we started signing contracts. Through the pandemic, we were doing things for the Haitian community,” he said. “Has that all been forgotten? They have been here, and we’ve been dealing with this, and we’ve been asking

for help through two different administrations. And no administration has helped us, until now this thing has become public.”

Whitesburg, Ky. (AP) — A judge in a rural Kentucky county was shot and killed in his courthouse chambers Thursday, and the local sheriff was charged with murder, police said.

The preliminary investigation indicates Letcher County Sheriff Shawn M. Stines shot District Judge Kevin Mullins multiple times following an argument inside the courthouse, according to Kentucky State Police. Mullins, who held the judgeship for 15 years, died at the scene, and Stines surrendered without incident.

Kentucky Supreme Court Chief Justice Lurance B. VanMeter said he was “shocked by this act of violence” and that the court system was “shaken by this news.”

Letcher County’s judge-executive signed an order closing the county courthouse on Friday.

Mullins, 54, was hit multiple times in the shooting, Kentucky State Police said.

Stines, 43, was charged with one count of first-degree murder.

The investigation is continuing, police said.

Responding to the shooting, Gov. Andy Beshear said in a social media post: “There is far too much violence in this world, and I pray there is a path to a better tomorrow.”

Kentucky Attorney General Russell Coleman said his office will collaborate with a commonwealth’s attorney in the

region as special prosecutors in the criminal case.

“We will fully investigate and pursue justice,” Coleman said on social media.

The shooting occurred at the Letcher County courthouse in Whitesburg. The Appalachian town in southeastern Kentucky is 146 miles southeast of Lexington, Kentucky.

Mullins served as a district judge in Letcher County since he was appointed by former Gov. Steve Beshear in 2009 and elected the following year.

Mullins was known for promoting substance abuse treatment for people involved in the justice system and helped hundreds of residents enter inpatient residential treatment, according to a program for a drug summit he spoke at in 2022. He also helped develop a program called Addiction Recovery Care to offer peer support services in the courthouse. The program was adopted in at least 50 counties in Kentucky.

Mullins also served as a founding member of the Responsive Effort to Support Treatment in Opioid Recovery Efforts Leadership Team.

After the shooting, several area schools were briefly placed on lockdown, including Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College and Letcher County Schools, according to media reports.

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Kentucky sheriff charged in slaying of judge at courthouse

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