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The couple and their calliope

A lifelong love of Street Fair

By HOLLY GASKILL

For nearly 40 years, Dick and Beverly Smitley have joined the tradition of the Bluffton Free Street Fair with their calliope.

The unique keyboard with steam whistles, often known in circuses and steamboats, has been pulled through one of the

week's parades almost every year. Dick gets the "circus wagon" and generator attached to his truck, and Bev sits at the keys, often wearing bright, patriotic colors.

"Patriotic music sounds best," Bev smiled. "You don't want something real slow — you've got to have that 'oom-pah-pah' beat."

It's a simple, sweet tradition — and a remarkable part of their lives and love story.

In 1957, 19-year-old Dick Smitley met 18-year-old Bev Singer on the corner of Main and Market streets during the fair. He was from Berne. She was from Decatur. Their friends introduced them, and they spent the whole evening together, walking through the streets of downtown Bluffton.

Smitley told one of his friends, "I'm going to marry that girl." Their first official date was just a few days later, on Saturday night of the fair.

"And I thought, 'That's the craziest thing I've ever heard,'" Bev laughed.

Sixty-seven years later, sitting in their home together, Dick's not quite sure why he said it — but he knows he was right.



The couple met at the Bluffton Free Street Fair in 1957 and married in 1960. Their wedding getaway car is pictured above. (Photo provided)



Beverly and Dick Smitley of Berne have traveled to the Bluffton Street Fair with their calliope nearly every year for 40 years. (Photo by Holly Gaskill).

Dick married Bev on June 11, 1960, at the old First Methodist Church in Decatur. The two moved into Dick's childhood home in rural Berne and had three children, Suzie, Stacy and Eric.

Bev got the calliope in 1985. It had been a long-time dream, following in the footsteps of her father, Dowell Singer. He had fixated on getting a calliope ever since seeing one at Dierkes Implement in Decatur.

By Bev's recollection, some carnival workers had left a calliope as collateral

for goods they couldn't buy. They never returned, and the calliope sat for sale for months.

"My dad was always looking that over always, every little part of it," Bev recalled. "He kept looking at every little detail and he'd come home and say, 'You know what, we ought to buy that.'" Bev playfully reenacted her mother, Georgianna, sternly replying, "We don't need that — there's things that we need to spend

(Continued on Page 2)

Former Walmart employee pleads guilty to theft

By SYDNEY KENT

A woman who repeatedly stole from Walmart while working for the company received no jail time for the charges.

Morgan Rowles, 24, was charged with corrupt business influence, a Level 5 felony, and 19 counts of theft, all Class A misdemeanors.

Rowles pled guilty to one count of theft, a Level 6 felony, and was sentenced to 2 years and 182 days at the Indiana Department of Correction with all time suspended. All other charges were dismissed.

Rowles's husband was also involved in the case. Brett Rowles, 28, was charged with one count of corrupt business influence, a Level 5 felony, and 23 counts of theft, all Class A misdemeanors.

According to a probable cause affidavit, in January, charges were filed after an employee with Walmart Asset Protection reported a series of ongoing thefts using the

"scan and go" technology.

The couple would reportedly add items to their cart and scan several products while leaving the store without scanning other items.

Between Oct. 29 and Jan. 16, video footage of the thefts revealed that approximately \$3,881.69 of products were stolen from multiple Walmart locations. Both Morgan and Brett Rowles were employed by the company at the time.

In late August, Brett Rowles was sentenced to three years in prison with three years suspended and time on probation. He received 29 days of jail credit, with all 23 counts of theft dismissed as part of a plea agreement with the state.

Both parties are ordered to jointly and severally pay restitution to Walmart for \$3,881.69.

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Street Fair smiles

The Bluffton Free Street Fair festivities continued Friday. Above, Ryder Gearheart focuses as he plays on the bungee jump.

At right, Summer Bertsch readies to throw a ball onto glass rings for a prize. Averri and Hayley Neuenschwander, left and middle, smile with their friends. (Photos by Jonathan Snyder)



Israeli airstrike in Beirut kills Hezbollah commander

By BASSEM MROUE and JULIA FRANKEL
Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Israel launched a rare airstrike that killed a senior Hezbollah military official in a densely populated southern Beirut neighborhood on Friday. It was the deadliest such strike on Lebanon's capital in decades, with Lebanese authorities reporting at least 14 people killed and dozens more wounded in the attack.

The Israeli military's chief spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said the strike on Beirut's southern Dahiya district killed Ibrahim Akil, a commander of Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force, as well as 10 other Hezbollah operatives.

"We will continue pursuing our enemies in order to defend our citizens, even in Dahiya, in Beirut," said Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, describing the Israeli

strike that targeted Akil as part of "a new phase of war."

Several hours later, Hezbollah confirmed Akil's death. In a statement, the Lebanese militant group described Akil as "a great jihadist leader" and said he had "joined the procession of his brothers, the great martyr leaders, after a blessed life full of jihad, work, wounds, sacrifices, dangers, challenges, achievements, and victories."

Akil served on Hezbollah's highest military body, the Jihad Council. He was sanctioned by the United States for his alleged involvement in the 1983 bombing that killed more than 300 people at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut and the U.S. Marine Corps barracks.

Last year, the U.S. State Department posted a \$7 million reward for information leading to his identification, location, arrest

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Friday night face off

It was an all-out brawl in the city gym Friday night, as FNx wrestling hosted several heated matches for the Bluffton Free Street Fair. At left, Anthony Toatele yells as he enters the ring, where he faced off against Dacobra (above, at right). Lovely Miss Lakan eggs on the ringside photographers above left. (Photos by Holly Gaskill)

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Outside



A beautiful day to enjoy the last of Street Fair

Today	Sunday	Monday
High 87	High 83	High 76
Low 62	Low 63	Low 60

More Weather on Page 2

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Tuesday night was the final Street Fair parade for the Smitleys. Beverly Smitley said she felt "just awful" to say goodbye to their tradition, but the two expressed their thankfulness for the fair. (Photos by Jonathan Snyder)



The couple and their calliope

(Continued from Page 1)
money on around here."

After months of dwelling on the purchase, Dowell finally announced that he was taking off work at noon and buying the calliope. Bev, who took piano lessons, was ecstatic.

"And when I got home from high school that night, and he came in and he said, 'Well, I hate to disappoint you, but I didn't get the calliope,' and I thought, 'He's lying,'" Bev said. "Because my dad did things like that, he liked to kid and joke."

It was not a joke. The calliope had sat in the store for months, and the Decatur Shriners purchased it just moments before Dowell came in. They still have it, said club treasurer Larry Macklin.

Bev smiled. "And Dad said, 'Don't worry about it. I looked at that enough — I can make one, and I'm going to make us one.'"

Dowell started with a small calliope, which still sits on a shelf just by the Smitleys' front door. He started on a full-size calliope in 1957 but died before completing it. The instrument sat unfinished in their garage for some time before Georgianna finally announced she was selling it if Bev wasn't playing it.

"And I don't know what I said, but I didn't think she really meant it, and I didn't realize that I didn't mean it," Bev said. "I don't know how long after that, but not very long, someone — he was a carnie and he was a crook — he found out about it (and) come to my mom ... She sold that thing for \$350 and he took it right away, obviously." Dick had told Bev at the time that the motor alone



Beverly Smitley is pictured with her new calliope and "circus wagon." She and Dick purchased the instrument and had the trailer built in 1985. The Street Fair was one of her their parades. (Photo provided)

would've cost as much. "When I came from work ... I just couldn't believe it. I sat at the kitchen table and I just sobbed."

Bev acknowledged that the calliope isn't to everyone's taste. It really only has one volume — loud — and there's a select amount of music you can play on the instrument. But to Bev, it's a joyful noise. It reminds her of her adolescence. And it reminds her of her dad.

Dick and Bev looked for her dad's calliope for years to no avail. In the '80s, she and Dick embarked on buying their own calliope and building a "circus wagon."

They bought a calliope made by a man in Iowa who was transitioning from the computer business. Bev's brother-in-law helped make the trailer to carry the instrument, which they painted to be authentic to the circus. They painted "Bev's Calliope" on either side and "85"

on the back.

"And so that was the first year I started playing," Bev said. "I think the Bluffton fair is one of the first places that I played, and I've been doing it ever since ... I think because my dad loved it so much and was so excited about us doing that. There's a lot of times I always would say before I start, 'Well, this is for you, Dad.'"

Tearfully, she added, "That and the idea that, well — Street Fair's where we met. I guess it's a sentimental thing."

Dick and Bev have traveled to fairs and festivals all around the Midwest and beyond, but the Street Fair has always been a special stop for them. Every year, the two have walked those same streets together again. Bev likes a Mettler's fish sandwich and an ice cream cone, while Dick always gets an Italian sausage and pineapple whip.

This year, however, marked the last turn through the Midway with the calliope. Now in their mid-80s, it's gotten a lot harder physically to participate in the parade, particularly since Dick has had back and neck surgery.

Bev spoke emotionally about the final parade. "I just feel awful. It will be a miracle if I can get through that parade (without crying)," then added with a laugh, "but I'll have my glasses on — nobody will know."

And so on Tuesday, Dick got the wagon ready with his truck, and Bev sat at the keys, swapping her stars and stripes for a red T-shirt in the muggy weather. And for one last time, they rounded Main and Market with streets lined with smiling faces.

"We've been really lucky to do it all these years," Bev said. "It's bittersweet, but they're all good memories." *holly@news-banner.com*

Israeli airstrike

(Continued from Page 1)

or conviction, citing his role in the embassy bombing and in the taking of American and German hostages in Lebanon in the 1980s.

The strike came as a new cycle of escalation between the enemies raised fears of a full-out war erupting in the Middle East.

Hours before the Israeli strike, Hezbollah pounded northern Israel with 140 rockets as the region awaited the revenge promised by Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah over this week's mass explosions of pagers belonging to members of the Shiite militant group.

The Israeli military did not provide the identities of the other Hezbollah commanders allegedly killed in its strike on the crowded neighborhood just kilometers from downtown Beirut.

Lebanon's Health Ministry said at least 14 people were killed and 66 others were wounded in the attack,

which leveled the apartment building where the Israeli army claimed Akil had been meeting with other militants in the basement. Nine of the wounded were in serious condition, the ministry added.

Local networks in Lebanon broadcast footage showing first responders sifting through the rubble of a collapsed high-rise in the Jamous area in the heart of Dahiya, where Hezbollah conducts many of its political and security operations.

The rescue operation continued into the late hours of Friday, hours after the attack, as first responders wrestled to remove the rubble to reach the basement of the building where apparently many of the bodies were located.

Friday's airstrike — the deadliest such attack on a neighborhood of Beirut since Israel and Hezbollah fought a bloody, monthlong war in 2006 — hit during rush hour, as people were leaving work and children heading home

from school.

At Beirut's St. Therese Hospital near the scene of the airstrike, crowds flocked to donate blood for those wounded in the attack.

"We are all together in this situation, so it's my obligation," said Hussein Harake, who lined up to donate blood.

From Israel, Gallant said he briefed senior military officials on the strike and vowed Israel would press on against Hezbollah "until we achieve our goal, ensuring the safe return of Israel's northern communities to their homes."

The strike came after Hezbollah launched one of its most intense bombardments of northern Israel in nearly a year of fighting, largely targeting Israeli military sites. Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system intercepted most of the Katyusha rockets. The few that got through sparked small fires but caused little damage and no Israeli casualties.

Weather

Saturday, September 21, 2024
(24-hour observations at 10:11 p.m. Friday)
High: 90; Low: 59; Precipitation: Trace of rain
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.06 feet at 8:45 p.m. Friday

Wells County forecast

Today: Patchy fog before 9 a.m. Otherwise, mostly sunny, with a high near 87. Calm wind becoming northwest around 5 mph in the afternoon.

Tonight: Partly cloudy, with a low around 62. Calm wind.

Sunday: A slight chance of showers and thunderstorms, then a chance of showers after 11 a.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 83. Calm wind becoming southwest around 5 mph in the morning. Chance of precipitation is 50%.

Sunday Night: A chance of showers and thunderstorms, then showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm after 8 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 63. Southwest wind around 5 mph. Chance of precipitation is 70%. New rainfall amounts between a quarter and half of an inch possible.

Monday: Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm before 11 a.m., then showers likely between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., then showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm after 2 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 76. Chance of precipitation is 60%. New rainfall amounts between a quarter and half of an inch possible.

Monday Night: Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 60. Chance of precipitation is 70%.

Tuesday: Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm before 2 p.m., then a chance of showers and thunderstorms after 2 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 74. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

Tuesday Night: A 30% chance of showers and thunderstorms before 2 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 56.

Wednesday: Partly sunny, with a high near 73.

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OBITUARIES

Lena "Ellen" Reff, 95

Lena "Ellen" Reff, 95, of rural Bluffton, passed away peacefully on Thursday morning, Sept. 19, 2024, at Lutheran Life Villages at Inverness in Fort Wayne. She was born on Aug. 7, 1929, in Wells County to Paul and Mary (Dowty) Gilbert. She graduated from Rockcreek Center High School in 1947.



of Madison, Alabama; and six great-grandchildren, Jordan, Milo, Liora, Lylah Barkley, and Emersyn and Everett Black.

She is preceded in death by her parents and her husband, Wayne Reff; and siblings, Duane Gilbert, Margaret Sheets, Keith Gilbert, Gene Gilbert, and Lyle Gilbert.

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. Visitation will take place from noon to 3 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 27, 2024, at the funeral home prior to the service.

Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton with Pastor Clark Stoller officiating. 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 project.

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

Bluffton Parks & Rec News & Notes



By Brandy Fiechter

Destination Recreation

We have been delighted to see how many people are enjoying Lancaster Park, and pavilion rentals are quickly booking up for families eager to use the new space. Traffic on the new section of the interurban trail has been encouraging as we see people enjoying a fall stroll or bike ride. Now that we are putting the finishing touches and preparing for final inspections, we are happy to announce that a date has been set for the ribbon cutting. Please join us as we celebrate the construction of Lancaster Park and the Interurban Trail on Friday, Oct. 4, at 11:30 a.m. at Lancaster Park.

the community about the need to bring back a baby pool for small children. Pool design options have come a long way in the last 50 years, and zero-depth entries with water playgrounds have become popular areas for little kids while providing easy access for people with mobility issues. We are very excited about the possibilities.

Fortunately, there are funds/grants to help offset the costs of building a new pool, and the Common Council is proactively working with our department to support efforts to provide the community with a pool that includes features that will attract visitors to Bluffton. Together, we are ready to roll up our sleeves and bring a facility our community can be proud of while we continue providing life-saving services, exercise opportunities, and family fun.

As we close out the month of September, we want to remind you that we still have openings in the Hue Can Paint Class for ages seven and up to paint a Halloween Scene on Monday, Sept. 30, from 6-7:45 p.m. at Washington Park. The \$15 fee is due at the beginning of class. Call 824-6069 to register, and space is limited.

Free Senior Snippets classes kick off this Monday. Class topics include managing a stress-less mentality, cooking for 1 or 2, fall prevention, coloring for relaxation, Wells County history, easy fall crafts, movie club (The Sound of Music), and crochet lessons. Call 824-6069 for more details and to sign up.

Remember to stop by the free Theater Thursday program at the Wells County Public Library this week on Sept. 26. We will be showing "Ordinary Angels," rated PG, at 10 a.m. Snacks will be provided.

Enjoy the last day of Street Fair!

Local Roundup

Bluffton Board of Works to meet Tuesday afternoon

The Bluffton Board of Public Works and Safety will meet at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 24, in the Council Chambers on the second floor of City Hall, 128 E. Market St.

Norwell school board will meet Tuesday evening

The board of the Norwell Community Schools will meet at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 24, at the school district's central office, 312 N. Jefferson St. in Ossian.

Topics on the agenda include:
• "Minibus Brigade" recognition.
• Consideration of 2025 budget and bond resolutions.
• Review of a proposed 2025-26 school calendar.

Wells County BZA will meet Tuesday evening

The Wells County Board of Zoning Appeals will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 24, in Room 214 on the ground floor of the Wells Carnegie Government Annex, 223 W. Washington St. in Bluffton.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

County: Thursday, 11:11 p.m., Save On Liquor North. Driver cited for no valid license and expired plates.

Ossian: Thursday, 6:43 p.m., North 450E and East 1000N, Ossian. Caller reported traffic control device being repeatedly removed on Thiele Road. Officer moved them back and watched for

traffic. A driver later went around barricades running the stop sign, and did not stop when the officer signaled his lights. Driver stopped later and issued ticket.

Thursday, 11:11 p.m., North 450E and East 1000N, Ossian. Construction barriers replaced.

Friday, 10:30 a.m., North 450 East and U.S. 24, Ossian. Removed tire treads from the roadway.

Shelly L. Reinhard

Calling: 12 - 8 p.m. Sunday, September 22. Service: 10:30 a.m. Monday, September 23 at the funeral home.



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Fire demonstration

Bluffton's Fire Department showcased their methods for extracting individuals from a wrecked vehicle Friday during the Bluffton Free Street Fair. The department's objective was to rescue and give medical attention to three victims trapped after a car wreck. At top, Fireman Taylor Elzey cuts away a piece of the wreckage. Above, from left to right, firemen Jordan Ehrman and Cameron Rittmeyer watch as Elzey uses hydraulic equipment to make space for personnel and other equipment. (Photos by Jonathan Snyder)



From our family to you ...

The Reimschisel family at Family Ford of Bluffton hope that you will take a few moments at least once each week to spend some time with what really matters during these "interesting times."

This short essay is from Our Daily Bread®

— a free publication we would love to share with you. Stop in anytime. There is no cost or obligation.

Family Ford of Bluffton 970 N. Main St., Bluffton 824-2300

JOHN 16:31-33 SATURDAY | SEPTEMBER 21 I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. [JOHN 16:33]

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF LIFE

A Facebook memory popped up, showing me a picture of my triumphant five-year-old when she'd won a fun and competitive game of Chutes and Ladders. I'd tagged my brother and sister in the post because we'd often played this board game when we were kids. Chutes and Ladders is based on a game that's been played for centuries, helping people learn to count and providing the thrill of being able to climb a ladder and win the game by getting to 100 the fastest. But watch out! If you land on spot 98, you slide far down the chute, delaying—or even prohibiting—victory.

Isn't that just like life? Jesus lovingly prepared us for the ups and downs of our days. He said we'd experience "trouble" (JOHN 16:33), but He also shared a message of peace. We don't have to be shaken by the trials we face. Why? Christ has overcome the world! Nothing is greater than His power, so we too can face whatever comes our way with "the mighty strength" He's made available to us (EPHESIANS 1:19).

Just like in Chutes and Ladders, sometimes life presents a ladder allowing us to happily ascend, and other times we tumble down a slippery slide. But we don't have to play the game of life without hope. We have the power of Jesus to help us overcome it all.

KATARA PATTON

What challenges do you need help to overcome today? How can focusing on Jesus' power in overcoming life's trials and troubles encourage you?

Dear Jesus, thank You for the reminder that You've overcome the world! Help me to rely on Your power to handle the ups and downs of life.

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Some tax free advice

As a self-employed writer, I've become knowledgeable about how high my income taxes really are. Every now and then I like to reply to readers with tax advice.

Q: Dear Tom, they say the only things certain in life are death and taxes, but could I still pay taxes when I am gone? (Curious in California)

A: Dear Curious, you could. Every now and then the federal government raises taxes retroactively. When this happens, the recently dead must pay higher taxes on their prior year's income. But it's not like they are going to complain about it.

Q: Dear Tom, my dog won't stop howling. What could it be? (Ned from Nevada)

A: Dear Ned, you appear to have the wrong advice column, but let me try to help. It could be that your dog is self-employed and he just realized how high his income taxes really are.

Q: Dear Tom, someone also told me I'm paying taxes on gasoline, utility bills, retail goods and in many other ways I'm not even aware of. (Really Mad in Madison)

A: Dear Mad in Madison, you are correct, sir. If you were to calculate all the taxes you are paying, you would soon discover that more than half of your money is supporting some government body somewhere.

Q: Dear Tom, my dog is still howling, but now I have a bigger problem. My wife is howling, too. (Ned, still from Nevada)

A: Dear Ned, don't worry. Your wife is probably worried about taxes going up even more, depending on who the next president is. Maybe you should give your wife some scotch.

Q: Dear Tom, didn't FDR say of Social Security that "No damn politician will ever take it away?" (Curious in Columbus)

A: Dear Curious, yes, FDR did say that, and he was right. However, politicians will have to keep taking more of our money through taxes, or cut Social Security payments, to keep the program going.

Q: Dear Tom, what is a tax bracket? (Annoyed in Minnesota)

A: Dear Annoyed, a tax bracket is a heavy metal object that the government uses to hit you over the head every time you succeed in pushing your income up.

Q: Dear Tom, then what is the capital gains tax? (Still Annoyed in Minnesota)

A: Dear Still Annoyed, the capital gains tax is a heavy metal object that the government uses to hit you over the head every time you succeed in selling an asset for more than you paid for it.

Q: Dear Tom, European countries pay a lot more in taxes than we do. We don't pay enough. (Higher Taxes Are Good)

A: Dear Higher Taxes Are Good, many European countries have higher unemployment and slower economic growth as a result. At 7.3%, France's unemployment rate is double the rate in the U.S. Of course, our government has spent \$35 trillion more than it has taken in in taxes and our taxes are eventually going to have to go up to pay for years of reckless spending.

Q: Dear Tom, my dog and wife are still howling, but now we're out of scotch. What should I do? (Ned, still from Nevada)

A: Dear Ned, give your dog and wife gin, bourbon, valium or anything else you can find. And if you have anything you can spare, please share it with me. Thanks to all this talk about taxes and government debt, I suddenly can't stop howling, either.

Tom Purcell is a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review humor columnist. tom@TomPurcell.com

Letters to the Editor

A bad plea deal for 9/11 criminals

I would like to comment on the 9/11 memorials that occurred on Sept. 11, 2024, 23 years after the attack on our country. My sympathy to all the families that suffered a tremendous loss from the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York City and Shanksville, Pa.

My family has been to Shanksville and it is truly a beautiful memorial to a horrible event. However our U.S. government has never given peace and closure to the families that deserve this by never handing out the appropriate punishment to the scoundrels that perpetrated this event.

The following is an excerpt from CNN News:

"CNN—August 21 news report: The US has reached a plea deal with alleged 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and two other defendants accused of plotting the 2001 terror attacks, according to the Defense Department.

The pretrial agreement — reached after 27 months of negotiations — takes the death penalty off the table for Mohammed, Walid Bin Attash, and Mustafa al Hawsawi, prosecutors said in a letter, obtained by CNN, sent to the families of 9/11 victims and survivors shortly before the Department of Defense announced the news in a press release

Wednesday evening.

After beginning negotiations in March 2022, the three men agreed to plead guilty to all charges, including the murder of the 2,976 people listed in the charging sheet, the families were told.

Mohammed and his co-defendants will enter guilty pleas at a plea hearing that could come as early as next week, according to the letter.

"The decision to enter into a pre-trial agreement after 12 years of pre-trial litigation was not reached lightly; however, it is our collective, reasoned, and good-faith judgment that this resolution is the best path to finality and justice in this case," prosecutors wrote in the letter.

"This is the least bad deal in the real world that would ever happen," said Peter Bergen, a terrorism expert and CNN national security analyst who has written extensively about Osama bin Laden.

So this is the best our government can do??? Shouldn't they be executed instead of being in prison and receiving three meals a day?

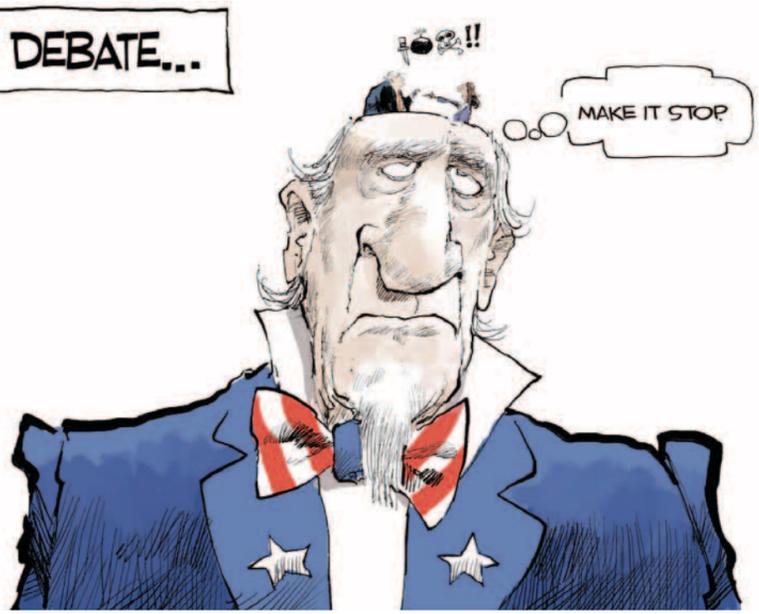
The government ought to be ashamed of themselves. Just my thoughts.

ED RAHN
Ossian



Tom Purcell

THE DEBATE...



Voters don't want Harris' or Trump's campaign policies

Neither Vice President Kamala Harris nor former President Donald Trump, The Wall Street Journal reported on Wednesday's front page, has any proposals to cut the rapidly increasing national debt. Instead, both are proposing to hand out goodies to strategically positioned voters.

Harris, with an eye on polls showing young voters not as pro-Democratic as in the past, has been talking about providing \$25,000 for down payments to first-time homebuyers. With an eye on young families and single parents, she has also called for restoring part of the refundable child tax credit that was part of what President Joe Biden has now conceded was the misnamed 2021 Inflation Reduction Act.

Trump, hoping to win the electoral votes of Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, as he did in 2016 and did not in 2020, has called for cutting taxes on domestic manufacturing firms and reducing taxes on overtime pay.

Nevada, 70% of whose voters live in Clark County, with its hordes of gambling and hospitality workers in Las Vegas, has come in for attention as well. Trump was the first to propose eliminating income tax on tips. Harris, hoping to carry the state as Biden did, endorsed the same policy.

You will search long and hard for statements from major economists and policy experts associated with either party for serious arguments supporting these policies, just as you can find few serious advocates of Trump's proposed 10% tariff on imports from all foreign countries or from Harris' hints that she'd institute something such as national rent control.

On the contrary, serious analysts will point to likely unintended consequences — home sellers will just increase their asking prices by \$25,000 — and, of course, to burgeoning federal budget deficits and increasing national debt.

They are proposals of undisciplined candidates with little interest in serious public policy arguments who are locked in a close race for president. There's an obvious note of political desperation here but also, I think, a less obvious reliance on outdated political theory.

That theory is that large masses of voters are in serious need of additional cash, whether from tax cuts for Nevada casino employees and waitresses, or factory workers on overtime shifts.

Yes, almost everyone would like a few extra bucks on their credit or debit cards. But just as the United States already has the most progressive redistributionist federal tax system of advanced countries, over the years it has incrementally built generous income supplements for those with the lowest 60% of incomes.

That conclusion finds solid support in "The Myth of American Inequality," by former Texas Sen. Phil Gramm and two nonpartisan coauthors. Their conclu-



Michael Barone

sion, as I reported in a 2023 Washington Examiner column, is that "government takes and redistributes enough resources to elevate the average bottom-quintile household," the lowest 20% of earners, "into the American middle class."

Democrats imagine that advancing redistributionist policies will win them votes of whites without college degrees, and Hispanics who have been trending Republican on cultural issues. But American policy has long since moved past the New Deal and European welfare states. Democrats, and Trump in imitation, are supplying policies for which there is little demand in the political marketplace.

The proof comes in the dog that didn't bark. The Biden-Harris 2021 legislation expanded the child tax credit from \$2,000 to as much as \$3,600 and made it refundable, which means that low-income earners who don't pay federal income taxes got \$15 billion in monthly checks from the government.

The argument for refundability is that it helps those with the lowest incomes. The argument against it is that, in discouraging work, it threatens to reverse the 1996 bipartisan welfare reform that resulted in higher work participation, lower teenage birthrates and better conditions for children.

That expansion of the child tax credit expired in Dec. 2021. Do you remember the mass demonstrations by modest-income parents angry when the checks stopped coming in? You don't? Neither do I. We've had mass movements to defund police, to reinstate Roe v. Wade, to stop Israel from defending itself from Hamas terrorists. But not much more than a peep to restore the 2021 child tax credit.

Voters are hugely miffed about the inflation they believe was triggered by the 2021 legislation. But the folks who were receiving those refundable tax credit checks seem to have been able to cope without them.

Which leads me to a broader but tentative conclusion that voters, for all their vocal discontent with parties and politicians, actually are not demanding major changes in economic policy. In six of the last eight presidential elections, from 1992 to 2020, both political parties have won trifectas, control of the White House and both houses of Congress — Democrats in 1992, 2008 and 2020, Republicans in 2000, 2004 and 2016.

Both parties have seized these opportunities to make serious economic policy changes, with some success. But none of those trifectas lasted more than two years, and the Democratic presidents who were reelected in 1996 and 2012 faced Republican majorities.

So what we have now is Harris and Trump advancing crass campaign promises that lack the seriousness of the policies of former Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Maybe that's what voters want — for now.

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The new radical norm at elite colleges

The remarkable thing about Russell Rickford is that there is nothing extraordinary about him.

The Cornell University professor gained notoriety in the immediate aftermath of Oct. 7 by declaring that he found the terror attack "exhilarating."

He wasn't specific about what was more exciting to him — the slaughter of hundreds of people at a music festival, including wounded people at point-blank range, the mass hostage-taking, the burning of people alive or the horrific sexual violence.

For the committed anti-Zionist, there must be so many exciting moments to choose from.

Afterward, Rickford apologized for his "horrible choice of words." But his remarks at a pro-Palestinian rally at the Ithaca Commons on Oct. 15 weren't a matter of mere vocabulary. He didn't say "exhilarating" when he meant to use a word that means the opposite, or something less positive.

He was affirming throughout his comments about a cruel massacre. He said that " Hamas has challenged the monopoly of violence," that " Hamas has shifted the balance of power," that " Hamas has punctured the illusion of invincibility," and that " Hamas has changed the terms of the debate."

All of this was unmistakable praise. Then, Rickford added to his toxic brew the contention that Palestinians and Gazans on that day " were able to breathe, they were able to breathe for the first time in years. It



Rich Lowry

was exhilarating. It was energizing. And if they weren't exhilarated by this challenge to the monopoly of violence, by this shifting of the balance of power, then they would not be human. I was exhilarated."

The problem with this passage isn't that the sentiment is expressed imprecisely — it's the sentiment itself. Sadly, Rickford was correct that many Palestinians exulted in innocent Israeli civilians getting gunned down in cold blood, but this was the perverse reaction of a people twisted by hatred that no one with an ounce of humanity could excuse, let alone share in.

Rickford stipulated that he "abhors" violence and the targeting of civilians. This caveat doesn't mean much, though, if you are full of admiration for ... a violent attack that targeted civilians. It's a little like saying, "I wholeheartedly oppose harm coming to any Olympic athletes, but the 1972 Munich massacre sure was thrilling. I have never felt so enthusiastic."

After the controversy over his warm words for Oct. 7, Rickford took a "voluntary leave" and is now back in the classroom.

What's outrageous isn't that he hasn't been disciplined by the school, but that he fits in so seamlessly. If Rickford, a history professor, went elsewhere to ply his wares, he'd in all likelihood be replaced by someone with equally pernicious views. What

are the odds that Cornell is going to find — or want — a more fair-minded, down-the-middle instructor for its Socialism in America course?

Elite colleges are suffused with a deeply anti-Western ideology that defines the humanities, and makes the likes of Rickford more the norm than the fringe.

Cornell faculty members joined in the anti-Israel encampment at the school last spring, and a diversity and inclusion officer expressed admiration for the Palestinian "resistance" upon the occasion of the Oct. 7 attack, hailing the struggle "against settle[r] colonization, imperialism, capitalism, white supremacy, [of] which the United States is the model."

If the purveyors of such dreck enjoy free-speech protections, they are not evenly applied. We can assume that a faculty member using "poor word choice" to praise the tiki torch marchers in Charlottesville would have gone on a "voluntary leave" that never ended.

That elite institutions, blessed with such enormous resources and given such influence over the development of young people, are so hostile to our own civilization is one of the scandals of the age.

Thoughtless radicalism is commonplace, indeed banal. And so it is that a Russell Rickford, spouting his poisonous clichés, is only a symptom of a disease. It'd be less disturbing if he were a straggler rather than part of the fabric of contemporary academic life.

Rich Lowry is on Twitter @RichLowry

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boehmerumc.org
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1532 N. Main St.
9 a.m. - Worship.

CHESTER CENTER
900S-300W, Poneto
9:30 a.m. - Sunday School. 10:30 - Worship.

CHRISTIAN NEW LIGHT
1011 W. Washington St.
9:45 a.m. - Sunday School. 10:30 - Worship. 6 p.m. - Praise & worship.

CHURCH OF CHRIST
735 S. Marion St.
10 a.m. - Bible Study. 10:45 - Worship.

COVENANT CHAPEL
3550 S. SR 1
mycovenantchapel.org
9:15 a.m. - Sunday School. 10:15 - Worship. (Children's Church for ages 6-12).

DILLMAN UNITED BRETHREN
8888S-1100W-90, Warren
9 a.m. - Worship. 10 a.m. - Sunday School.

DOMESTIC CHURCH OF CHRIST
9 a.m. - Sunday school. 10 a.m. - Church service.

EPWORTH UNITED METHODIST
1204 W. Cherry St.
9:30 a.m. - Worship. 10:40 a.m. - Sunday School.

FAIRVIEW CHURCH OF GOD
5511 W. Yoder Rd., Yoder
fairviewlife.com
9 a.m. - Sunday School. 10 a.m. - Worship.

FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST
210 W. Townley
fbc-bluffton.com
10 a.m. - Worship. 11 a.m. - Discipleship.

FIRST BAPTIST
202 W. Cherry St.
fbcbluffton.com
10:15 - Worship.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF OSSIAN
1001 Dehner Dr.
9:30 a.m. - Sunday School. 10:30 a.m. - Worship. 6:30 - Service.

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST
909 W. Spring St.
FCCfamily.com
9:30 & 11 a.m. - Worship.

FIRST CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
1515 Clark Ave.
blufftonnazarene.org
9 a.m. - Sunday School. 9-10 a.m. - Free ESL classes. 10:15 - Worship. 6 p.m. - Service.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
215 E. Dustman Rd.
firstpcbbluffton.org
9:30 a.m. - Children/youth & Adult Sunday School. 10:30 - Worship.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN (EVANGELICAL)
123 S. Jefferson St., Ossian
www.OssianChurch.com
8:45 a.m. - Sunday school. 10 a.m. - Worship. 11 a.m. - Harvest luncheon.

FIRST REFORMED CHURCH OF BLUFFTON
301 W. Cherry St.
9:15 a.m. - Sunday School. 10:30 - Worship.

Time to Take a Devotional Break

PURE IN OUR OWN EYES
Mirrors are interesting things.

Sometimes, these inanimate objects bring great joy as they reflect our image wearing a memorable outfit. Other times, the mirror can cause frustration or hopelessness when we view something less than pleasing.

Mirrors reveal what another human being sees with a glance—hair out of place, unflattering clothing choices, a dirty face, even spinach stuck between our front teeth. Most of us use these convenient “truth-tellers” daily - especially before work or school. But sometimes we are rushed and imagine ourselves presentable, forgetting to check with the mirror, only to find the embarrassing truth written on the face of a colleague or fellow student.

A recent devotional reminded me that in our faith, the Bible is the best measure of Truth ever to confront a believer with the reality of their standing before God.

Proverbs 30:11-12 describes “a generation that curses its father and does not bless its mother...that is pure in its own eyes, yet is not washed from its filth.”

Whether a child argues that washing dirty hands

before a meal is unnecessary or an adult refuses to check their appearance after dressing, mankind often assumes that they are “good enough” to meet God’s standard of purity without following His guidelines. They are “pure in [their] own eyes, yet...not washed from [their] filth.”

Fortunately, the Bible mirrors the Truth about man’s condition without God.

Without divine intervention, man’s heart is not a reliable representation of our true spiritual condition (Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21-23).

Without divine intervention, man can never meet God’s standard for holiness (Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23, 24; Romans 8:8).

The Bible clearly shows sinful man how to meet the requirements of a holy, sinless Creator. God leaves nothing to chance, freely sharing the path to salvation and restoration.

Acts 4:12, 1 John 1:9, and Romans 10:9 assure us that Jesus Christ fulfills God’s demand for holiness. Only by relying on HIS sacrifice will we find our sin-debt paid.

Today is always the right time to check God’s spiritual mirror - His Word - for your heart’s reflection.



by Martha Paxson

FIRST UNITED METHODIST
325 W. Washington St.
blufftonfirstumc.com
9:30 a.m. - Worship. 10:45 - Sunday School.

FORGIVEN CHURCH
1409 S. Main St.
forgivenonline.org
9 a.m. - Worship.

GRACE BAPTIST
1621 S. 350 E.
Stogdill Rd. Ext.
gbcbluffton.com
9 a.m. - Sunday School. 10 a.m. & 6 p.m. - Worship.

GRACE BIBLE
6626 Village Way, Berne
gracebibleberne.com
9 a.m. - Sunday classes. 10 a.m. - Collective Worship.

HARVEST TIME BIBLE
11015S-600E, Keystone
9:10 a.m. - Prayer. 10 a.m. - Worship.

HOPE MISSIONARY
429 E. Dustman Rd.
hope4thefamily.com
8 a.m., 9:30 & 11 a.m. - Service at Main Campus. 9:30 & 11 a.m. - Service, north campus, Ossian.

KEYSTONE CHURCH
10556S-200W
9:30 a.m. - Worship. 10:30 - Sunday School.

KINGDOM HALL OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES
2803 N. Main St.
jw.org
10 a.m. - Worship.

LANCASTER CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST
4510 E 400N, Craigville
9 a.m. - Sunday School. 9:40 - Fellowship. 10 a.m. - Worship.

LIBERTY CENTER BAPTIST
3071 W. Cherry St.
8:30 a.m. - Pastor/Deacon's Prayer. 9 - Sunday School. 9:55 - Fellowship. 10:15 - Worship.

LIBERTY CENTER COMMUNITY CHURCH
8:45 a.m. - Choir practice. 9 a.m. - Coffee, donuts, conversation. 9:30 - Worship w/infant nursery & children's church. 10:45 - Sunday School.

LIFE COMMUNITY
428 S. Oak St.
lifecommunity.net
10:30 a.m. - Service (Children's programs available).

LIVING FAITH MISSIONARY
17718 Bluffton Rd., Yoder
10 a.m. - Worship. 11:30 - Sunday School.

LIVING WATER UNITED CHURCH
6486 S 700E, Bluffton
8:45-9 a.m. - Prayer. 9 a.m. - Sunday School. 10 a.m. - Worship.

MARKLE CHAPEL HILL SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST
470 E. Morse St.
Saturday: 9:30 a.m. - Worship. 10:45 - Sabbath School (Bible study).

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455 E. Morse St.
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9 a.m. - Adult Bible study groups. 10:30 - Worship. Children's & student programming both hours.

MARKLE RIVERSIDE 316
145 W. Morse St.
10 a.m. - Worship.

MURRAY MISSIONARY
1117 N. Washington St., Murray
murraymc.org
9:30 a.m. - Worship. 11 a.m. - Sunday School.

NEW BEGINNING
2187 W. SR 218
10 a.m. - Sunday School. 10:30 - Worship.

NEW HOPE LUTHERAN
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8824 N. SR 1, Ossian
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9 a.m. - Sunday School & Adult Bible study. 10 a.m. - Worship.

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9:30 - Sunday School. 10:30 & 6 p.m. - Worship.

OSSIAN CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
302 N. Metts St.
ossiannaz.org
9:15 a.m. - Bible study. 10:30 - Service.

OSSIAN UNITED METHODIST
201 W. Mill St.
ossianumc.org
9 a.m. - Numc, Worship child care nurse. 10 a.m. - Fellowship. 10:15 - Adult Sunday School.

PARK COMMUNITY
617 S. Bennett St.
parkccbluffton.org
10 a.m. - Connection. 11 a.m. - Worship.

PETROLEUM COMMUNITY CHURCH
3625 E. 2nd St.
9 a.m. - Worship. 10:30 - Sunday School.

PONETO BAPTIST
Grape Street
8:30 a.m. - Sunday School. 9 a.m. - Worship.

PONETO FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH
36 E. Walnut St.
9 a.m. - Worship. 10 a.m. - Fellowship. 10:15 - Sunday School.

RIVER OF HOPE
1224 W. Central
11 a.m. - Worship & the Word.

RIVER OF LIFE
122 Lamar St.
Suite 108, 110
riverofflifebluffton.com
10:30 a.m. - Worship.

SIX MILE
4790 SE SR 116
9 a.m. - Sunday School. 10 a.m. - Worship.

SONLIGHT WESLEYAN
2350 S. SR 1
sonlightwesleyan.org
9:30 a.m. - Sunday School. 10:30 - Worship. Nursery & Children's classes available during Sunday School & Worship.

SOUTHERN WELLS COMMUNITY CHURCH
9450 S 300 W, Poneto
9 & 10:45 a.m. - Worship.

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4960W-100N, Decatur
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16933 Thiele Rd.
stmarkfv.org
8:45 a.m. - Sunday School. 10 a.m. - Worship.

ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN (NALC)
5912 N. Sugar St., Uniondale
10 a.m. - Worship. 10:15 - Children's Sunday School.

THE CHURCH AT MCNATT
9221 W 800 S-90, Montpelier
8:30 a.m. - Coffee fellowship. 9:15 - Worship.

THE MEETING PLACE
115 E. Market St.
6:30 p.m. - Bible study.

TOWER LIFE CENTER
11811 N. Wayne St., Zanesville
towerlifecenter.com
9:30 a.m. - TLC Groups. 10:30 - Worship.

TURNPOINTE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
500 W. Logan, Markle
turnpointechurch.com
9:30 a.m. - Fellowship. 10 a.m. - Adult & Children's Worship.

UNIONDALE COMMUNITY CHURCH
5867 N. Main St.
9 a.m. - Worship.

UNIONTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST
11419 N-200W, Ossian
9 a.m. - Sunday School. 10 a.m. - Worship.

VERA CRUZ FAMILY WORSHIP CENTER CCCU
2771 SE Mulberry St., Vera Cruz
9-10 a.m. - Sunday School. 10-10:30 - Fellowship. 10:30 - Worship.

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH
205 S. Adams St., Monroe
9 a.m. - Worship. 10:15 - Discipleship for adults & children.

ZANESVILLE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF GOD
11984 N. Marzane Rd.
9 a.m. - Bible Class. 10 a.m. - Worship.

ZANESVILLE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST
3092 W. Broadway
9 a.m. - Sunday School. 10 a.m. - Worship.

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Knights escape Courtyard with 2-point win over Bulldogs

By ANDREW FEEBACK

A series of big plays early in the game gave the Norwell Knights the cushion they needed to withstand a late charge from the visiting New Haven Bulldogs Friday night.

The Knights (2-3) held on to win 25-24 after racing out to an early 22-0 lead.

Norwell's three touchdowns all came on passing plays.

With New Haven (0-5) failing to convert a fourth down on its opening series, Norwell took over at the Bulldogs' 23-yard-line. Cayden Cassel threw a touchdown pass to Max Babcock on the Knights' first play.

When the Bulldogs punted on their next series, the Knights took over at the 46. Again, only one play was needed as Drew Graft threw a halfback pass to Garry Riley.

Norwell's third possession took a little longer to get going, but the Knights converted a third-and-20 and extended their lead when Cassel threw a four-yard pass to Graft.

"That was huge for us," coach Josh Gerber said. "We saw them in man coverage and thought we could get some looks. The kids ran the right routes, Cassel found the right guys and made some really good throws."

The Norwell defense was also active early on, intercepting New Haven quarterback Dominick Wallace three times in the first half.

The Bulldogs got on the board when D.J. Simpson scored on a 12-yard run early in the second quarter.

But the play that seemed to decisively shift the momentum occurred minutes later, when the Bulldogs blocked a punt and Jesus Diaz recovered it in the end zone.

The Knights began the second half with a nine-play drive that ended with Graft's 24-yard field goal. It extended Norwell's lead, but kept New Haven within two scores.

The teams traded punts, which placed New Haven on its own three-yard-line.

The Bulldogs proceeded to go 97 yards in 17 plays, ending with an 11-yard touchdown run by Simpson. Two offside penalties on the Knights proved costly, one of which came on a fourth-and-one.

It looked like Norwell was going to put it out of reach when Cooper Bunn made a diving catch for a first down in the red zone on third-and-ten.

But on the very next play, Cassel rolled to his right and

threw a pitch. No one was there to receive it, and it bounced into the backfield as a live ball. The Bulldogs pounced on it and suddenly had a chance with 3:50 to play. "Instead of taking advantage of a chance to bury them, we let them hang around and made quite a show out of it," Gerber said. "But we're proud of the way

the guys battled on both sides of the football."

Simpson got loose for a 34-yard scamper, then Wallace threw a dart over the middle to Jamarcus Turner for a 31-yard touchdown pass.

Turner was flagged for excessive celebration after the play, which proved rather important.

The penalty was assessed on the conversion attempt, so instead of trying to take the lead from the three-yard-line, the Bulldogs had to do it from the 18.

Wallace's pass was knocked down in the end zone, and the Knights stayed in front.

They had to punt it away



Norwell's Brady Smith and New Haven's DJ Simpson clash near the sideline during the Northeast 8 Conference showdown at The Courtyard Friday night. The Knights went on to win by one-point, getting two straight victories. (Photos by Johnathan Snyder)

with still two minutes left after failing to pick up a first down, but the Bulldogs didn't get a first down either on their final possession.

Success in the passing game was pivotal for the Knights, who finished with only 47 rushing yards on 29 attempts.

Strangely, in spite of their struggles running the ball and quick scores, they managed to hold a seven-minute advantage in time of possession.

"It really was kind of a total team win," Gerber said. "Offensively we made some plays, not as many as we'd have liked to, and the defense made some huge

stops. Just a real good win for our kids."

Norwell will travel to East Noble next Friday night.

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NORWELL 25, NEW HAVEN 24

At Norwell

Score By Quarters

New Haven 0 12 0 12 — 24

Norwell 22 0 3 0 — 25

Scoring Summary

First Quarter

N—Max Babcock 23 pass from Cayden Cassel (Garry Riley pass from Babcock), 10:38.

N—Riley 46 pass from Drew Graft (Graft kick), 6:57.

N—Graft 4 pass from Cassel (Graft kick), 3:50.

Second Quarter

NH—DJ Simpson 12 run (run failed), 8:55.

NH—Jesus Diaz fumble recovery in end zone (run failed), 5:27.

Third Quarter

N—Graft 24 FG, 7:36.

Fourth Quarter

NH—Simpson 11 run (PAT failed), 9:55.

NH—Jamarcus Turner 31 pass from Dominick Wallace (pass failed), 2:42.

Team Statistics

	NH	NOR
First Downs	12	8
Rushes-Yards	29-205	29-47
Yards Passing	182	199
Passing (C-A-I)	14-30-3	10-18-1
Penalties-Yards	6-50	6-55
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	3-1
Punts-Average	4-34	7-25
Time of Possession	20:05	27:55

Individual Statistics

Rushing: New Haven, DJ Simpson 26-210, Jamarcus Turner 2-0, Dominick Wallace 1-(minus 5), Norwell, Adam Mahnensmith 11-24, Garry Riley 2-5, Drew Graft 5-1, Cayden Cassel 8-5, Max Babcock 1-8, Ben Peterson 2-4.

Passing: New Haven, Wallace 14-30-3-182, Norwell, Cassel 9-17-1-153, Graft 1-1-0-46.

Receiving: New Haven, Aaron Hoffer 3-28, Braydon Kunberger 5-42, Simpson 2-38, Chris Woods 1-4, Jamarcus Turner 3-38, Norwell, Cooper Bunn 1-14, Babcock 2-42, Graft 5-68, Mahnensmith 1-25, Riley 1-46.

Tigers survive home scare to Patriots; improves to 5-0

By RYAN WALKER

Bluffton nearly didn't come out of its own jungle alive, surviving a scare to Jay County on the gridiron Friday night.

The Patriots (2-3, 1-2 ACAC) had the No. 7 Tigers (5-0, 3-0 ACAC) on their heels for a two-point deficit for the majority of the second half and deep into the fourth quarter. But several key plays on offense, defense and special teams had Bluffton coming away with a 34-25 victory.

Jay County was an upset-minded crew last year as well, falling just 19-7 to a Bluffton team that was also unbeaten and marching to their second-straight sectional. But the Patriots are coached by IFCA Region 5 hall of fame coach Grant Zgunda, who is now 210-75 as head coach.

His unit gave everything Bluffton could handle Friday night and were more than prepared for the task.

"Tough game," Bluffton head coach Brent Kunkel said. "Jay County's a good ball club. Coach Zgunda — the guy's won 250 games in his career. He's a hall-of-fame coach and an even better guy ... His kids played hard. Very physical on the inside and their defense gave us a lot of problems there ... (I) feel very fortunate to be able to come out with this win."



Tigers' receiver A.J. Strevler makes a one-handed grab to pick up a crucial first down against the Patriots. (Photo by Lance Moser)

Kunkel's squad needed to play perfect in crucial moments. They did, whether it was three 2-point conversions to fall short for Jay County, several defensive stops after stalled drives on offense, toe-tap completions at the end of the first half and scoring at the buzzer.

None of those is more important than the other, but

the final drive was the grand finale.

Bluffton had the ball at its own 42-yard line with under 2:30 to play. It called for a passing play on second and long that quarterback Axton Beste threw wide of Trey Bustos deep down the field that stopped the clock. It became a third-down situation and 13 yards to go and stopped the clock with 2:18 remaining.

A failure to pick up the first down would give Jay County's offense one final chance to score down 27-25.

Again, the Tigers elected to throw the ball.

Beste looked to his left, then stepped in that direction. He took a 180 spin around and threw to Cooper Craig, who slipped out of the backfield for a screen. It was dialed up to perfection, drawing several defenders to the wrong side of the field. Craig sped down the right sideline past the first down markers and sprinted to the house for 58 yards. That locked it up for the Tigers.

Kunkel said that they worked on the play all week. That half-back screen hasn't been used much of at all this season. The two times they ran it this week, Craig picked up significant yards. His three catches went for 85 yards to go



A swarm of Bluffton Tigers' defenders come together to take down a Jay County Patriots' ball-carrier during the ACAC contest at Bluffton High School Friday night. The Tigers' scored late in the game to seal a 34-25 victory. (Photo by Evan Klopfenstein)

along with his 100-yard day on the ground.

But that was not at all what the Tigers needed to win this game.

Before the half, Jay

County quarterback Sean Bailey connected with Benson Ward for a chunk play of about 40 yards, later scoring on a six-yard pass to Garrett Bennett with 45 seconds left in the half to make it 13-12.

Bluffton was able to pick up a few first downs on the ensuing drive and move

(Continued on Page 7)

Raiders improve, but fall to Warriors in ACAC action

By RICK SPRUNGER

WOODBURN — Woodlan rode a big first quarter to an easy 50-13 victory over Southern Wells Friday night on the winner's field.

The Warriors piled up a 36-0 lead after a first quarter that spun wildly out of control for the Raiders.

After that, Southern Wells played its host on roughly even terms.

But that first quarter was a nightmare.

Woodlan scored five touchdowns in the period, three of them on one-play drives, a fourth on a scoop-and-score by the defense, and two after blocked punts.

"We've got to make tackles," said first-year Southern Wells coach Blake Blaker after the game. "I know Drew Fleek is a tough running back. He's big, and he's probably going to make all-conference," he added about the Woodlan senior who rushed for 72 yards on three carries and scored touchdowns on all three with runs of 29, four and 39 yards.

He also had a fumble recovery return for a touchdown and was never tackled all night.

"We had guys in position, and they just didn't make the stop," Blaker continued.

But despite the breakdowns on defense, Blaker found plenty that he believes he can build on.

"If we have one take-away from tonight," said the new man in charge, "it's that when we do things the right way, it's easy. 'If we run the right routes and throw smart passes and make tackles, things will work out.'"

Although the scoreboard doesn't show it, Southern Wells moved the ball well.

The Raiders rang up 250 yards in total offense and moved the chains 11 times.

They were also successful on two of three fourth-down conversion attempts, one of them on a fourth-and-11 when quarterback Trey Slusher found Levi Blake for 16 yards.

Slusher completed 17 of 37 passes for 187 yards while

rushing for 63 more on 16 carries while Blake had eight catches for 104 yards.

But if Southern Wells had one Achilles heel in its offensive game, it was the turnover.

Seven turnovers, six of them on pass interceptions, killed numerous promising Raider drives.

"We've got to do a better job of taking care of the football," acknowledged Blaker. "We need to fix our route-running, and we need to make better decisions. Sometimes if it's not there, we need to just throw the ball away."

Cooper Smith, a 5-9, 135-pound freshman for Woodlan, picked off three passes by himself.

The game started with Southern Wells converting one fourth down but eventually punting.

But Woodlan blocked the punt at the Southern Wells 29, and Fleek needed just one play to take it the distance.

Smith then got the first of his interceptions, and again

the Warriors needed just one play.

This time, it was Shaiden Snyder, on his only carry of the night, going up the middle, bursting through the line, then outracing the Southern Wells secondary down the left sideline for 58 yards.

The very next play saw Fleek pick up a bad snap that sailed over Slusher's head and take it in for a 22-0 lead.

Fleek got his third touchdown of the quarter after a second blocked punt.

Then, when Woodlan took over on downs at the Southern Wells 42, Ty Loudon found Carter Fleek for the score on his only pass of the night.

Woodlan got two more scores in the second quarter on a 39-yard run by Drew Fleek and a 43-yard burst by Brandon Stauffer on his only carry of the night for the Warriors' fourth one-play scoring drive.

But Southern Wells came off the deck in the last five minutes of the first half.

The Raiders recovered back-to-back fumbled snaps from center by freshman backup quarterback Griffin Clear and took advantage of the two short fields to punch in touchdowns after both.

The first resulted in a six-play 42-yard drive highlighted by Slusher's 15-yard keeper on the first play and his 15-yard scoring flip to Blake.

The second saw the Raiders take over at the Woodlan 21 and then go backwards thanks to a pair of penalties.

But on first-and-25 from the 36, Slusher found Lyrik Maddox for 29 yards and then Blake for six before taking it in himself for the 1.

Maddox finished with seven catches for 55 yards.

The second half was simply a matter of playing out the running clock.

Southern Wells will tee it up next week at home against Bluffton on homecoming night.

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WOODLAN 50, SOUTHERN WELLS 13

at Woodlan

So. Wells 0 13 0 0 — 13

Woodlan 36 14 0 0 — 50

First Quarter

W—Drew Fleek 29 run (Evan Koch kick), 9:16.

W—Shaiden Snyder 58 run (Fleek run), 6:09.

W—Fleek 11 fumble return (Koch kick), 5:54.

W—Fleek 4 run (Koch kick), 2:38.

W—Carter Fleek 42 pass from Ty Loudon (Koch kick), 0:38.

Second Quarter

W—Fleek 39 run (Koch kick), 8:56.

W—Brandon Stauffer 43 run (Koch kick), 7:00.

SW—Levi Blake 15 pass from Trey Slusher (Joshua Aubach kick), 2:05.

SW—Slusher 1 run (kick failed), 0:34.

Third Quarter

No scoring.

Fourth Quarter

No scoring.

Team Statistics

	SW	WL
First Downs	11	8
Rushes-Yards	16-63	28-283
Passing Yards	187	42
Passing (C-A-I)	17-37-6	1-1-0
Penalties-Yards	6-48	2-10
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	3-3
Punts-Average	2-0-0	1-36-0
Time of Possession	28:18	19:42

Individual Statistics

Rushing: Southern Wells-Trey Slusher 15-63, Woodlan-Noah Ames 8-23, Griffin Clear 7-30, Drew Fleek 3-72, Mason Meyers 2-23, Ashton Jacquy 2-17, Jake Ley 2-6, Shaiden Snyder 1-58, Brandon Stauffer 1-43, Ty Loudon 1-7, Liam Hertig 1-4.

Passing: Southern Wells-Trey Slusher 17-37-6 187; Woodlan-Ty Loudon 1-1-0-42.

Receiving: Southern Wells-Levi Blake 8-104, Lyrik Maddox 7-55, Alden Dollar 1-23, Joshua Aubach 1-5; Woodlan-Carter Fleek 1-42.

Bluffton Tigers

(Continued from Page 6)
toward the endzone for one last chance.

With 11 seconds to go, A.J. Strevler made a comeback route at the 12-yard line and toe-taped near out of bounds for a first down. Then, on the next play, Beste rolled to his right, seeking any sort of opening with Patriot defenders lurking. He made one last look and spiraled it to Strevler, coming back to him in the endzone and connecting for another toe-tap catch as the clock struck zero. That pushed the lead to 20-12 at halftime.

The two catches created by Beste were hauled in by Kunkel's star wide receiver and remain another key factor in the game.

"I think when it's all said and done, after the next hopefully several games this year and then the next year, he will be the all-time best receiver we've had in school history," Kunkel said. "He's just so talented with his body control, the way he attacks the ball in the air. The way he just constantly just goes and makes plays. He's a special, special athlete."

Even with the emotional high of the end of the half,

Jay County kept fighting. It stopped Bluffton to force a punt to begin the third quarter. Punter Abram Gehrett booted the ball away and Patriots' return man Grant Wendel housed it back for 62 yards.

Again, Jay County failed the two-point try by another stout effort on defense for Bluffton for a two-point deficit.

Both teams' offenses would stall with punts to follow until late in the fourth.

Bluffton took its time and ended up near the goal line still up by two points. A false start and incompletions forced the offense to throw on fourth and goal at the 12-yard line.

Beste dropped back a few steps and off-platform flung a perfect pass to Strevler, fading on the left endzone for six points.

Jay County took three minutes on the next drive, picking up 10 or more yards on most of its plays and Bailey capped it off with a two-yard keeper. That brought the score back to two points.

But that following drive was Craig's 58-yard score, showing the Patriots back down again.

Time after time, the Tigers found ways to keep

the Patriots from taking the lead. Even through all of the plays that worked out for them, they found a way.

Not to mention, sophomore kicker Gehrett missed four extra points the prior week. His first attempted kick against Jay County went too low, but coach Kunkel kept giving his first-year kicker opportunities.

Gehrett made every kick after, including the ones to keep the score at two possessions and nine points spread out.

Kunkel attributes it to the mentality of the team, which has fought through inexperience and replaced a heavy dose of talent within his program.

"I've been doing this for 21 years, fortunate to be eight years as the head coach," Kunkel said. "And I tell the guys this might be the most mentally tough team that I've had as a head coach. Last year's was really good — they laid the foundation. This group's something special mentally, and I haven't seen them crack yet. There were chances to and we haven't. So again, that's a credit to our leadership in our locker room."

Bluffton will take its unbeaten record to Poneto

next week and face Southern Wells.

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BLUFFTON 34, JAY COUNTY 25
At Bluffton High School
Score By Quarters

Jay Co.	6	6	6	7	—25
Bluffton	6	14	0	14	—34

Scoring Summary
First Quarter
B—Cooper Craig 1-yard run (kick failed), 8:04.
JC—Sean Bailey 45-yard pass to Benson Ward (kick failed), 5:10.
Second Quarter
B—Axton Beste 1-yard run (Abram Gehrett kick), 8:37.
JC—Bailey 6-yard pass to Garrett Bennett (2-pt failed), 0:45
B—Beste 11-yard pass to A.J. Strevler (Gehrett kick), 0:00.
Third Quarter
JC—Grant Wendel 62-yard punt return (2-pt failed), 8:59.
Fourth Quarter
B—Beste 12-yard pass (Gehrett kick), 6:08
JC—Bailey 2-yard run (2-pt failed), 3:11.
B—Beste 58-yard pass to Craig (Gehrett kick), 2:06.

Team Statistics

	BLU	JC
First Downs	18	12
Rushes-Yards	37-140	25-144
Yards Passing	209	134
Passing (C-A-I)	16-24-0	9-20-0
Penalties-Yards	2-10	3-20
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	1-0
Punts-Average	4-37	4-37
Time of Possession	28:55	19:05

Individual Statistics
Rushing: Jay County: Sean Bailey 14-64, A.J. Meyers 8-21, Grant Wendel 1-19, Garrett Bennett 2-11. Bluffton: Cooper Craig 18-100, Axton Beste 16-42, Khamel Moore 1-0. Passing: Jay County: Sean Bailey 9-20-0 132 Bluffton: Axton Beste 16-23-0 209.
Receiving: Jay County: Benson Ward 2-77, Ben Crouch 2-20, Brady Jetmore 2-17, Grant Wendel 2-14, Grant Bennett 1-6. Bluffton: Cooper Craig 3-85, A.J. Strevler 6-59, Trey Bustos 5-51, Eli Bertsch 1-13, Coleston Teeple 1-1.

High School Calendar

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.
GIRLS GOLF: (Sectional) Bluffton at Arbor Trace, 9 a.m.
VOLLEYBALL: Bluffton at Canterbury Invitational, 9 a.m.
MONDAY, SEPT. 23
BOYS SOCCER: Norwell at DeKalb, 6:30 p.m.
BOYS TENNIS: Bluffton at Adams Central, 5 p.m.; Norwell at Snider, 4:30 p.m.
VOLLEYBALL: South Side at Norwell, 7:30 p.m.
GIRLS SOCCER: DeKalb at Norwell,

6:30 p.m.
TUESDAY, SEPT. 24
BOYS TENNIS: Norwell at Huntington North, 4:15 p.m.
VOLLEYBALL: Bluffton at Adams Central, 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.; Leo at Norwell, 5 p.m.

VOLLEYBALL: Bluffton at Eastbrook, 7 p.m.; Norwell at DeKalb, 7:30 p.m.; Whitko at Southern Wells, 7:30 p.m.
FRIDAY, SEPT. 27
FOOTBALL: Bluffton at Southern Wells, 7 p.m.; Norwell at East Noble, 7 p.m.
SATURDAY, SEPT. 28
BOYS SOCCER: Norwell at Columbia City, 11:30 a.m.
BOYS TENNIS: Norwell at Delta Invitational, 8:45 a.m.
CROSS COUNTRY (co-ed): Bluffton, Norwell, Southern Wells at New Haven Classic, 9 a.m.
VOLLEYBALL: Bluffton, Southern Wells at ACAC Tournament (Heritage), 9 a.m.



Norwell's Savanna Simerman (left) takes a cut during the sectional golf meet at Chestnut Hills in Fort Wayne Friday morning. At right, Ellie Gatton putts on the front nine. Norwell finished second behind Homestead, qualifying for the regional meet next week at Noble Hawk. (Photos by Ryan Walker)



Norwell places 2nd at sectional, qualifies for regional next week in girls' golf

FORT WAYNE — The Norwell Knights qualified again for the regional meet in girls' golf. At Chestnut Hills, the Knights shot a 394 and finished in second place Friday, sitting 71 strokes behind a strong No. 12 Homestead team. Individual scores included a fifth-place finish from Ellie Gatton with an 85, and the top golfer not from Homestead, Savanna Simerman followed with a tie for seventh-place finish with a 97, Emma Burnau 13th (104), Jessica Bynum 17th (108) and Jordyn Shroyer

20th (110). Norwell will be at Noble Hawk next week at the regional starting at 8:30 a.m. Friday, Sept. 28.
Top individuals:
T1. Caroline Burns (Homestead, 80), T1. Breana Noll (Homestead, 80), 3. Domenica Casini (Homestead, 81), 4. Kamryn Nevins (Homestead, 82), 5. Ellie Gatton (Norwell, 85), 6. Alyssa Hadaway (Homestead, 86), T7. Savanna Simerman (Norwell, 97), T7. Ella Hockmeyer (Bellmont, 97), T7. Julia Arnold (South Adams, 97), T10. Alexa Coble (Canterbury,

98) and T10. Londyn Smith (Adams Central, 98).
Team scores:
1. Homestead (323 team score), 2. Norwell (394), 3. South Adams (416), 5.

Bellmont (444), 6. Heritage (466), 7. Canterbury (476), 8. Bishop Luers (502), 9. New Haven (507), 10. South Side (509) and 11. Wayne (523).

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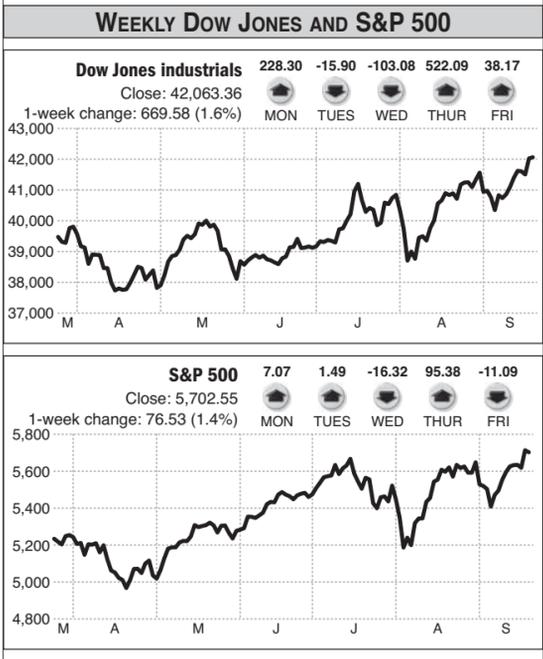
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The Week in Review



STOCK MARKET INDEXES

High	Low	Name	Last	Wk Chg	Wk %Chg	YTD %Chg	12-mo %Chg
42,160.91	32,327.20	Dow Jones Industrials	42,063.36	+669.58	+1.62	+11.60	+23.85
16,413.23	13,471.47	Dow Jones Transportation	15,755.00	+25.39	+1.6	-9.0	+5.12
1,064.49	765.47	Dow Jones Utilities	1,050.86	-3.59	-0.34	+19.19	+20.61
19,471.24	14,638.37	NYSE Composite	19,373.74	+252.24	+1.32	+14.96	+24.43
18,671.07	12,543.86	Nasdaq Composite	17,948.32	+264.35	+1.49	+19.57	+35.85
5,733.57	4,103.78	S&P 500	5,702.55	+76.53	+1.36	+19.55	+32.00
3,143.02	2,322.38	S&P MidCap	3,103.32	+68.98	+2.27	+11.57	+24.36
1,464.59	1,065.49	S&P SmallCap	1,415.08	+31.04	+2.24	+7.34	+23.43
57,429.43	41,178.32	Wilshire 5000	57,100.67	+849.24	+1.51	+18.23	+31.30
2,300.00	1,633.67	Russell 2000	2,227.89	+45.40	+2.08	+9.91	+25.41

STOCK EXCHANGE HIGHLIGHTS

NYSE GAINERS (\$2 OR MORE)				NYSE LOSERS (\$2 OR MORE)				NYSE ACTIVES (\$1 OR MORE)			
Name	Last	Chg	%Chg	Name	Last	Chg	%Chg	Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg
LiCycle rs	2.20	+0.68	+44.7	EmerHldg	4.40	-1.01	-18.7	Palantir	7145531	37.20	+1.61
Amrap	29.96	+7.96	+36.2	FourSeEd	8.82	-1.96	-18.2	NIO	2898733	5.28	-2.7
BauschHl	8.03	+1.71	+27.1	FordM	6.55	-1.32	-16.8	FordM	2677516	10.88	+1.9
GinkgoBi rs	8.01	+1.69	+26.7	B&N Ed rs	9.79	-1.69	-14.7	AT&T Inc	2488797	21.54	-1.0
VistraEn	107.88	+22.55	+26.4	LiveWire	6.20	-0.84	-11.9	BioAm	2313173	40.27	+1.62
NuScale wt	2.66	+0.53	+24.5	FedExCp	254.64	-31.74	-11.1	BroBrad	1996576	2.63	-1.7
Carvana A	173.85	+31.95	+22.9	HippoHl	17.44	-2.12	-10.8	CNH Indl	1900854	10.83	+4.8
ContaInStr	12.22	+2.19	+21.8	DocBout	2.14	-0.25	-10.3	Pfizer	1768759	29.42	+1.5
CompassMn	11.34	+1.92	+20.4	LoDong	2.63	-0.30	-10.2	SpinInc A	1710488	10.05	+5.3
Unifi	7.70	+1.19	+18.3	Sendas	7.08	-0.78	-9.9	Kross g	1580743	9.56	-2.8

NASDAQ GAINERS (\$2 OR MORE)				NASDAQ LOSERS (\$2 OR MORE)				NASDAQ ACTIVES (\$1 OR MORE)			
Name	Last	Chg	%Chg	Name	Last	Chg	%Chg	Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg
BoneBio rs	2.15	+1.35	+169.8	CorbusPh	19.51	-36.30	-65.0	Nvidia s	14617952	116.00	-3.10
Excure rs	4.23	+2.63	+164.4	SBC Med	5.55	-5.50	-49.8	Intel	8262724	21.84	+2.18
Portage rs	8.72	+5.24	+144.9	MulinAuto	6.68	-6.52	-49.4	Apple Inc s	5498146	228.20	+5.70
Galmes rs	9.35	+5.24	+127.5	Knightscp	5.14	-4.91	-48.9	Tesla	4007016	238.25	+7.96
InnovEy rs	10.79	+5.88	+119.8	SkyBio n	3.11	-2.86	-47.7	IntuitMch A	3175244	9.15	+3.80
REET Au rs	5.76	+2.80	+94.3	LuoKung rs	2.67	-2.21	-45.3	AmAirline	3068875	11.01	+3.2
Telesis rs	3.09	+1.49	+93.1	SwvHld A	3.11	-2.27	-42.2	PlugPow h	2683065	1.94	-0.2
XCHG Ltd n	15.00	+7.10	+89.9	SMX Sc A rs	3.50	-2.45	-41.2	OpenDrTc	2552274	2.08	-1.9
Chanson A	2.63	+1.02	+63.4	AligosTh rs	9.14	-5.66	-38.2	SoFiTech	2521234	8.05	+3.1
Immune A	3.21	+1.19	+58.9	Allary rs	2.21	-1.20	-35.2	Amazon	2268374	191.60	+5.11

STOCKS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Name	Div	Last	Wk Chg	Wk %Chg	YTD %Chg	Name	Div	Last	Wk Chg	Wk %Chg	YTD %Chg
AFLAC	2.00	107.92	-0.67	-0.6	+30.8	LinNat	1.80	31.93	+2.48	+8.4	+18.4
AT&T Inc	1.11	21.54	-0.10	-0.5	+28.4	Lowe	4.60	260.14	+4.73	+1.9	+16.9
Amazon	...	191.60	+5.11	+2.7	+26.1	MaxeonS	...	0.09	+0.1	+9.5	+98.7
AmAirlines	4.0	11.01	+0.32	+3.0	+19.9	McDnlds	6.68	296.83	+3.0	+0.1	+1.1
AEP	3.52	102.15	-2.02	-1.9	+25.8	MicAlgo rs	...	2.0	-0.3	-12.9	-97.8
Apple Inc s	1.00	228.20	+5.70	+2.6	+18.5	MicCloud rs	...	25	+0.1	+2.5	-93.1
ApdMatl	1.60	192.16	+3.69	+2.0	+18.6	Microsoft	3.32	435.27	+4.68	+1.1	+5.8
BP PLC	1.74	32.64	+0.80	+2.5	-7.8	NIO	...	6.28	-2.7	-4.9	-41.8
BcoBrad	0.4	2.63	-0.17	-6.1	-24.9	NL Inds	3.2	5.99	+2.4	+3.6	+24.6
BkofAm	1.04	40.27	+1.62	+4.2	+19.6	NIsource	1.06	34.08	+0.2	+0.1	+28.4
BrMySq	2.40	49.41	+0.28	+0.6	-3.7	NorfolkSo	5.40	247.86	+2.06	+0.8	+4.9
Broadcom s	2.12	171.10	+3.94	+2.4	+53.3	Nucor	2.16	146.31	+2.72	+1.9	+15.9
BurgerFi	...	0.08	-0.05	-36.6	-90.3	Nvidia s	0.04	116.00	-3.10	-2.6	+134.2
CampSp	1.48	51.21	+1.12	+0.2	+18.5	OdysMar h	...	83	-4.21	-83.6	-82.3
Caterpillar	5.64	368.82	+23.51	+6.8	+24.7	OpenDrTc	...	2.08	-0.19	-8.4	-53.6
Chevron	6.52	145.68	+0.07	+0.3	-2.3	Palantir	...	37.20	+1.61	+4.5	+116.7
Cisco	1.60	51.97	+2.17	+4.4	+2.9	PepsiCo	5.42	171.18	-6.18	-3.5	+8
Citigroup	2.24	62.14	+4.47	+7.8	+20.8	Pfizer	1.68	29.42	+1.5	+0.5	+2.2
CocaCola	1.94	71.64	+0.23	+0.3	+21.6	PlugPow h	...	1.94	-0.2	-1.0	-56.9
COXSOXBr rs	...	22.70	-0.59	-2.5	...	PrUitPQ	...	70.13	+2.78	+4.1	+38.3
DirSPBr	...	6.91	-0.27	-3.8	-40.2	ProShSP	...	11.08	-0.14	-1.2	-14.7
DxSOXB	...	33.55	+1.12	+0.4	+6.8	PShIQOO	...	7.83	-0.34	-4.2	-41.8
Disney	3.0	93.75	+3.20	+3.5	+3.8	SprDJIA	3.98	420.57	+5.63	+1.4	+11.6
Eaton	3.76	330.60	+24.80	+8.1	+37.3	S&P500ETF	4.13	568.25	+6.24	+1.1	+19.6
EliLilly	5.20	921.49	-2.22	-0.2	+58.1	SignDaySp n	...	26	+13+	+103.1	-77.0
Expior360	...	0.09	+0.03	+51.8	-98.4	SmithM rs	...	97	+4.0	+69.6	-85.3
ExxonMbl	3.80</										

Older moms share their wisdom

Dear Readers: I have thoroughly enjoyed reading your many responses to "Left Speechless," the 55-year-old mother who felt herself struggling with how to reply to strangers when asked if she is her children's mother or grandmother. We have such a supportive and insightful Dear Annie community (filled with many wonderful mothers!).

Here were some of my favorite letters:

Dear Annie: I was also an older mother and was often mistaken for my son's grandmother. I knew it was going to happen, and I was never upset or irritated by it. My response was, "I'm the mom. I was blessed later in life," and I said it with a smile. Not once did the other person ever question me further or give me strange looks. But they ALWAYS smiled back. -- Happy Mom in Kansas

Dear Annie: I was 42 when our last son was born. Like "Left Speechless," people would ask if I was his grandmother (I didn't even look old, just older than most moms). I always smiled and said, "No, we did that all by ourselves." Jerks turned beet red and never asked again. -- Surprised to Be a Mom Again

Dear Annie: I'm so happy for this sweet mother having such love and dedication for her children. Please let her know that people asking a simple question doesn't mean the question is judgmental. She didn't include anything that sounded like judgmental statements -- people are probably just wondering how to address her in regard to her children.

When my children were young, one was blonde-haired, hazel-eyed and the other had brown hair and brown eyes. People regularly asked me if they were both mine. I supposed they thought I might have been babysitting one. These days, I often watch my grandchildren and I have had people ask me if they're mine. It doesn't seem judgmental or

intrusive. People are often just seeking a framework for who they're encountering.

I think we do ourselves and the world a disservice when we assume everything is intended as an offense. I wonder if she could look inside and fortify herself to the point where she no longer feels inferior for being a mom of young children at her age. More power to her and I'd be willing to guess a lot of the people are actually supportive, or at least neutral, versus judging her.

If we're firm in our own identity, no one else has to validate us and we don't have to justify ourselves. I think it's an opportunity for her to embrace her own self on a deeper level, which will serve her for the rest of her life. Just two cents from someone who learned this later in life. -- Older Mom

Dear Annie: I was 46 when my daughter was born, so I got a lot of people asking me, "Is that your granddaughter?" I think a good response is, "Why do you ask?" Of course, it took a couple of years to come up with that. -- A Very Lucky Mom

"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.

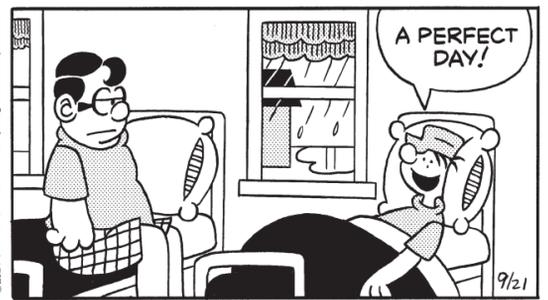
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Dear Annie

by Annie Lane



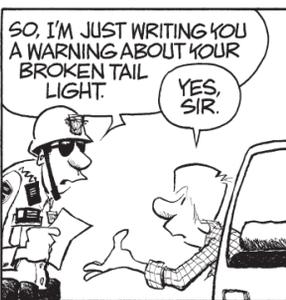
BEETLE BAILEY



BLONDIE



ZITS



CRANKSHAFT



My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



Prayer should not be merely an act; it is a way of life

Question: Our family has a real desire to practice prayer in a way that makes a difference in our lives and a difference in the lives of those we pray for. How can we do this and not be distracted while praying? It is a constant obstacle to us during times of prayer. -- D.D.

Answer: Prayer is more than a wish; it is the voice of faith directed to God. Prayer should not be merely an act; it is a way of life. We must learn to shut out the distractions that come from Satan. He wants to break the fellowship with the Master of our lives so that we become ineffective.

Life is busy for most, but still, we generally find time for the things we

truly want to do. Prayer is for every moment of our lives. This is why the Bible tells us to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17, NKJV). It is an acknowledgment that God knows our thoughts and sees our deeds, but do we actually ever share our hearts with Him?

One of the best ways to prepare ourselves for prayer is to read the Word of God. We must not allow distractions to discourage us. When we keep our eyes fixed on God's promises, we're encouraged. This can only be done by listening to the Word of the Lord on every subject that concerns us. How wonderful it is to make the Bible

central in our lives -- not to just know it, but obey it. We cannot afford to be too busy to pray. In the Bible God speaks to us; in prayer we speak to God. Both are essential. Most Bibles remain unopened and unread and then we panic when our lives begin to falter. If we cling to this Guidebook, it will lead us to the Guide, the Lord Jesus Christ, and His Spirit will "teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1, NKJV).

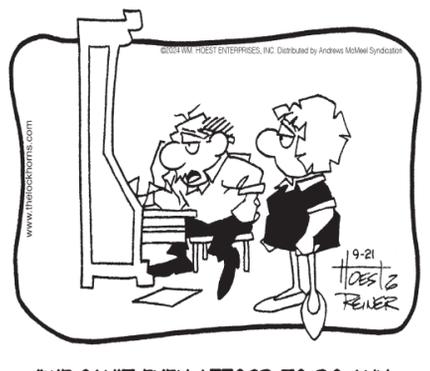
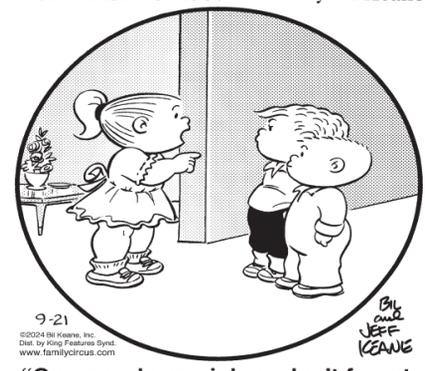
(This column is based on the words and writings of the late Rev. Billy Graham.)

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THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane

The LOCKHORNS



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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes solution time: 26 mins.

Yesterday's answer 9-21 crossword puzzle grid with clues.

Table with columns for date, channel, time, and program name. Includes programs like Music Moments, College Football, and various news and entertainment shows.

VEHICLES

Auto/Trucks

INDIANA AUTO AUCTION, INC. Huge Repo Sale September 26, 2024. Over 100 repossessed units for sale. Money order or cashier's check only. \$500 cashier's check or money order deposit per person required. Register 8 am-9:30 am. No public entry after 9:30 am. All vehicles sold AS IS! 4425 W. Washington Center Road, Fort Wayne. (A)

Campers/RV's

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

SERVICES

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EMPLOYMENT

Help Wanted

ENTRY LEVEL

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

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 effectively 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@bestoneofmonroe.com. We are an Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action Employer.

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. Departments 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. Knowledge 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@citiznet.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.

MACHINISTS & FABRICATORS

Troyer Brothers is looking for Machinists/CNC Operators as well as Metal Fabricators. Please email your resume to michelle@troyerbrothers.net or complete an application at 6691 W State Road 124, Decatur IN 46733. Office hours are M - Th; 8am-3pm.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR; Bluffton, IN; Loving Shepherd International Services & Foundation Inc. is seeking a project & partner development coordinator to fundraise for projects located in Haiti. Applicants should be a problem solver with communication skills to maintain business relationships. It is a full time position with requirement of knowledge of the Creole language. Resumes can be sent to Joe Gerber at joe@loving-shepherd.org

RENTALS

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Buy it, sell it in the News-Banner Classifieds

This Week's Garage Sales

815 W CHERRY, DOOR #8 ON NORTH SIDE OF BUILDING CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS / GUY STUFF After 40 years of doing construction, I have excess materials, tools, trolling motor and MORE! Just come and make an offer on whatever you're interested in! Lots of free stuff (Minnich's Lawn Building) Door # 8 Christian Brothers Remodeling, Herb Reinhard Pull around to the back side of the building, Sep. 21 8:00 AM-11:00 AM Rain or Shine

Public Notices

Alcohol & Tobacco Commission LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Alcohol Beverage Board of Wells County, Indiana will hold a public hearing at 9:00 am on October 01, 2024 at the Wells Carnegie Govt Annex Multi Purpose Room 105, 223 W Washington St in the city of Bluffton in said county, to investigate the propriety of holding an alcoholic beverage permit by the applicants listed herein to wit:

RR9003329 Beer Wine & Liquor - Restaurant (210) RENEWAL

DARKHORSE LLC 103 SOUTH JEFFERSON STREET Ossian IN D/B/A OSSIANTAVERN

RR9027207 Beer Wine & Liquor - Restaurant (210-1) RENEWAL

MARCOS CORPORATION 1595 SOUTH HARRISON PLAZA SUITE #C BLUFFTON IN D/B/A MARIACHI LOCO MEXICAN GRILL

FRANCISCO SANCHEZ-PANI 814 WEST DOROTHY DRIVE Bluffton, President

FRANCISCO SANCHEZ-PANI 814 WEST DOROTHY DRIVE Bluffton, Secretary

RR9035689 Beer & Wine Retailer - Restaurant RENEWAL

300 INC 1231 SOUTH SCOTT ST Bluffton IN D/B/A EZ BOWL

ANGELA TACKETT 1515 ENGLE ST. Huntington, Secretary

EDDIE TACKETT 1515 ENGLE ST. Huntington, President

RR9041628 Beer Wine & Liquor - Restaurant (210) NEW

THE BOURBON MD LLC 209 West Market Street Bluffton IN D/B/A The Bourbon MD LLC nb 9/21 hspaxlp

TO THE OWNERS OF THE WITHIN DESCRIBED REAL ESTATE AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE

By virtue of a certified copy of a decree to me directed from the Clerk of Circuit Court of Wells County, Indiana, in Cause No. 90C01-2211-MF-000038 wherein Deutsche Bank National Trust Company, as Trustee for Soundview Home Loan Trust 2006-WF1, Asset-Backed Certificates, Series 2006-WF1 was Plaintiff, and Donald G. Huss; Vicky L. Huss were Defendants, requiring me to make the sum as provided for in said Decree with interest and cost, I will expose at public sale to the highest bidder, on the 9 day of October, 2024, at the hour of 1:00 PM or as soon thereafter as is possible, at Courthouse 102 W. Market St., 1st Fl. Bluffton, IN 46714, the fee simple of the whole body of Real Estate in Wells County, Indiana.

Part of the Northwest Quarter of Section 17, Township 26 North, Range 12 East, Harrison Township, Wells County, Indiana, described as follows: Starting at the Northwest corner of said Northwest Quarter found per record witness; thence Easterly, 200.00 feet along the North line of said Northwest Quarter to the place of beginning; thence continuing Easterly, 322.00 feet along said North line; thence Southerly, deflecting right 90 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds, 270.56 feet; thence Westerly, deflecting right 90 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds, 322.00 feet parallel with the North line of said Northwest Quarter; thence Northerly, deflecting right 90 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds, 270.56 feet to the place of beginning. Containing 2.00 acres, more or less.

More commonly known as: 1086 East 200 South, Bluffton, IN 46714

State Parcel No.: 90-08-17-200-006.000-003

Together with rents, issues, income, and profits thereof, said sale will be made without relief from valuation or appraisal laws.

Plaintiff Attorney ATTORNEY NO. 15-22-01486 Codilis Law, LLC 8050 Cleveland Place Merrillville, IN 46410 (219) 736-5579

Scott Holliday, Sheriff of Wells County HARRISON TOWNSHIP 1086 East 200 South, Bluffton, IN 46714

Street Address The Sheriff's Department does not warrant the accuracy of the street address published herein.

NOTE: This law firm is a debt collector.

nb 9/7, 9/14, 9/21 hspaxlp

SUDOKU ANSWER

12/6	****	41010101
8	2	7
9	7	9
9	1	6
7	8	2
2	9	6
8	9	2
6	2	9
1	7	8

Public Sale Calendar

SEPTEMBER 23-SEPTEMBER 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 location: 11648 N SR 1 Ossian, IN. 31.63+/- total acres, agriculture prime farmland, 31.5+/- tillable, 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.com.

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. 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, Hammer drill, welder, anvil and lots more. Preview Sept. 27, 4-6 p.m. *Miz Lehman Realtors/Auctioneers*, 260-589-2903, www.mizlehman.com.

BIDDING NOW OPEN & STARTS CLOSING SEPTEMBER 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, kjauction.com.

SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 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 manager, 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 outbuilding, 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, Tahoe's, & 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 including William P. Silva oil paintings, 2006 Pontiac Torrent, 2005 Toyota highlander, sterling 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.

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 Conversion 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., Ossian. 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, heartlandauctionreality.com.

SUDOKU

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

King Classic Sudoku

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

Difficulty: ★★★ 9/21

Lottery Numbers

Friday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY
Cash 5 — 04-11-15-31-45
Cash4Life — 01-07-31-52-53, Cash Ball: 03
Quick Draw MIDDAY — 05-09-12-13-16-17-19-22-27-29-30-34-38-39-42-50-56-65-76-78, BE: 50
Daily Three-MIDDAY — 06-09-05, SB: 08
Daily Three-Evening — 07-07-03, SB: 04
Daily Four-MIDDAY — 00-07-01-04, SB: 08

Daily Four-Evening — 03-03-05-01, SB: 04
Quick Draw Evening — 05-06-21-23-24-28-32-33-39-52-56-57-58-60-66-68-69-72-77-80, BE: 06
Hoosier Lotto — Estimated jackpot (for Saturday): \$22.1 million
MEGA MILLIONS 20-21-40-49-55, Mega Ball: 11, Megaplier: 3X
POWERBALL Estimated jackpot (for Saturday): \$195 million

September GOODS & SERVICES DIRECTORY

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Secret Service report details failures preceding July assassination attempt on Trump

WASHINGTON (AP) — Communication breakdowns with local law enforcement hampered the Secret Service's performance during a July campaign rally where former President Donald Trump was shot and wounded, according to a report released Friday that lays out a litany of missed opportunities to stop a gunman who opened fire from an unsecured roof.

A five-page document summarizing the key conclusions of a yet-to-be finalized Secret Service report lays bare the cascading and wide-ranging failings that preceded the July 13 shooting at the Butler, Pennsylvania, rally at which Trump was struck in the ear by gunfire.

Those include an absence of clear guidance from the Secret Service to local law enforcement, the failure to fix line-of-sight vulnerabilities at the rally grounds that left Trump open to sniper fire and "complacency" among some agents, said Ronald Rowe Jr., the agency's acting director.

Though the failed response has been well documented through congressional testimony, news media investigations and other

public statements, the summary document released Friday marks the Secret Service's most formal attempt to catalog the errors of the day and comes amid fresh scrutiny of the agency following Sunday's arrest of a man who authorities say stalked Trump at a Florida golf course.

"This was a failure on the part of the United States Secret Service. It's important that we hold ourselves to account for the failures of July 13th and that we use the lessons learned to make sure that we do not have another failure like this again," Rowe said at a news conference accompanying the release of the summary.

The report details a series of "communications deficiencies" before the shooting by 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks, who was killed by a Secret Service counter-sniper after firing eight rounds in Trump's direction from the roof of a building less than 150 yards from where Trump was speaking. That building had been identified as a possible hazard before the event, Rowe said, yet officials didn't take appropriate steps to correct the potential problems.

"Line-of-sight issues were acknowledged, but not properly mitigated. Issues were encountered the day of the visit with respect to line-of-sight concerns, but they were not escalated to supervisors," Rowe said. "While some members of the advanced team were very diligent, there was complacency on the part of others that led to a breach of security protocols."

Among the other problems: Some local police at the site were unaware of the existence of two communications centers on the grounds, meaning officers did not know that the Secret Service were not receiving their radio transmissions.

Law enforcement also overly relied on cell phones, instead of Secret Service radio frequencies, to communicate vital information. As officers searched for Crooks before the shooting, details were being transmitted "via mobile/cellular devices in staggered or fragmented fashion" instead of through the Secret Service's own network.

"The failure of personnel to broadcast via radio the descrip-

tion of the assailant, or vital information received from local law enforcement regarding a suspicious individual on the roof of the AGR complex, to all federal personnel at the Butler site inhibited the collective awareness of all Secret Service personnel," the report said. AGR International Inc. operates a manufacturing plant just north of the Butler Farm Show grounds, where the rally was held.

That breakdown was especially problematic for Trump's protective detail, "who were not apprised of how focused state and local law enforcement were in the minutes leading up to the attack on locating the suspicious subject." Had they known, the report says, they could have made the decision to relocate Trump while the search for the gunman was in progress.

The report raises more serious questions about why no law enforcement were stationed on the roof Crooks climbed onto before opening fire.

A local tactical team was stationed on the second floor of a building in the complex from which Crooks fired. Multiple law enforcement entities questioned

the effectiveness of the team's position, "yet there was no follow-up discussion" about changing it, the report says. And there was no discussion with Secret Service about putting a team on the roof, even though snipers from local law enforcement agencies "were apparently not opposed to that location."

The tactical team operating on the second floor of the building had no contact with Secret Service before the rally. That team was brought in by a local police department to help with the event, without Secret Service's knowledge, the report says.

The Secret Service understood in advance that the rally site, selected by Trump's staff because it better accommodated the "large number of desired attendees," was a security challenge because of lines of sight that could be exploited by a would-be attacker. And yet, the report said, no security measures were taken on July 13 to remove those concerns and the Secret Service lacked detailed knowledge about the local law enforcement support that would even be in place.

Tiny Kentucky town is rocked as sheriff jailed in killing of prominent judge

WHITESBURG, Ky. (AP) — Residents of a tiny Appalachian town struggled Friday to cope with a shooting involving two of its most prominent citizens: a judge who was gunned down in his courthouse chambers and a local sheriff charged with his murder.

"It's just so sad. I just hate it," said Mike Watts, the Letcher County circuit court clerk. "Both of them are friends of mine. I've worked with both of them for years."

It wasn't clear what led to the shooting. The preliminary investigation indicates Letcher County Sheriff Shawn "Mickey" Stines shot District Judge Kevin Mullins multiple times following an argument inside the courthouse, according to Kentucky State Police.

Mullins, 54, who held the judgeship for 15 years, died at the scene, and Stines, 43, surrendered without inci-

dent. He was charged with one count of first-degree murder.

The fatal shooting stunned the tight-knit town of Whitesburg, the county seat, with a population of about 1,700 people, 145 miles (235 kilometers) southeast of Lexington.

Stines was deposed on Monday in a lawsuit filed by two women, one of whom alleged that a deputy forced her to have sex inside Mullins' chambers for six months in exchange for staying out of jail. The lawsuit accuses the sheriff of "deliberate indifference in failing to adequately train and supervise" the deputy.

The now-former deputy sheriff, Ben Fields, pleaded guilty to raping the female prisoner while she was on home incarceration. Fields was sentenced this year to six months in jail and then six and a half years on probation for rape, sod-

omy, perjury and tampering with a prisoner monitoring device. The Mountain Eagle reported. Three charges related to a second woman were dismissed because she is now dead.

Stines fired Fields, who succeeded him as Mullins' bailiff, for "conduct unbecoming" after the lawsuit was filed in 2022. The Courier Journal reported at the time.

Those who know both the sheriff and the judge had nothing but praise for them, recalling how Mullins helped people with substance abuse disorder get treatment and how Stines led efforts to combat the opioid crisis. They worked together for years and were friends.

Those who knew Stines also were struggling to understand how someone they described as a family man could kill someone.

Jessica Slone, a distant

relative of Stines' and a lifelong resident of Letcher County, said she was shocked when she heard the news. She was at the dollar store with her nephew when he told her Mullins had been shot.

"I was like seriously? Is he okay? And he said 'No, he's dead,'" she said. "But

at the time, I didn't know that Mickey had done it. When I found out I was grocery shopping and I got really emotional and started praying."

She said Stines was close with his children and worked hard to get fentanyl and methamphetamine off the streets of the commu-

nity and help people dealing with substance use disorder get into recovery.

Patty Wood, the widow of District Judge Jim Wood, Mullins' predecessor, said she has been close friends with Stines and his family for years. She said she was shocked by the shooting and the arrest of Stines.

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