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BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection

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City budget finalized, waiting for approval

By JONATHAN SNYDER

A finalized 2025 city budget has been completed and the Bluffton Common Council will vote on the proposal in October.

These budget spreadsheets come after four deliberation sessions by the council in late August and early September. The heads of each city department, apart from utilities, presented their budgets to the board in those meetings. The amount requested from the general fund was \$5,755,386.

The council slated \$1,392,586 for the Street Department budget — although they had requested \$1,320,938 — and \$1,039,600 is slated to be approved for the Parks Department — which had requested \$972,729.

Estimated cash reserves at the end of the year for the Street Department total \$1,027,781.57. The Parks Department is expected to have \$752,654.11 in reserve

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Man gets partial suspended sentence in strangulation case

By SYDNEY KENT

A man from Bluffton will spend less than one year in prison after he was convicted of strangulation and intimidation.

Mathew Cassenta, 40, was sentenced to three years in the Indiana Department of Correction with two years suspended for strangulation, a Level 5 felony, and two years with one year suspended for intimidation, a Level 6 felony. The sentences are ordered to be served concurrently.

Cassenta received 121 days of jail credit towards his time in prison. One count of domestic battery, a Level 5 felony, was dismissed.

According to a probable cause affidavit, the charges were filed in May after the victim reported multiple episodes of abuse that occurred in a two-month span. The victim reported that Cassenta strangled her and threatened to “finish the job” this time. Specific dates in which the abuse occurred were not listed in the affidavit or cited during court.

Cassenta’s public defender Patrick Miller attempted to use this as a reason to dismiss the charges. Judge Ken-

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State officials keep application pressure after FAFSA delays

Although the FAFSA won't open until later this year, multiple Indiana-focused initiatives seek to increase college applications

By CASEY SMITH, Indiana Capital Chronicle

With Hoosier students set to face another year of financial aid application delays, Indiana higher education officials are ramping up efforts to highlight — and encourage — post-secondary options for high school graduates.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid for the 2025-26 academic year won't be fully available, in large part, until Dec. 1 — two months later than the form's usual debut, the U.S. Department of Education announced last month.

Agency officials said they've postponed this year's release to avoid potential technical issues. It's the second year in a row that FAFSA has been delayed.

Thousands of Hoosier students qualify for aid each year, but historically, fewer than half end up submitting their FAFSA. That leaves tens of millions of unclaimed federal aid dollars.

State lawmakers, in tandem with the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, have spearheaded multiple efforts in recent years to reverse that trend, including a FAFSA completion mandate for high schoolers, as well as coordinated mailing of “pre-admission” thousands of letters to Hoosier students from Indiana's higher education intuitions.

This week, 30 Hoosier colleges are additionally participating in Indiana's “College Application Week,” during which students can apply to all participating schools for free. State officials said the annual effort provides students

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Heavyweight horse pull

The annual Street Fair horse pull was Saturday at the 4-H fairgrounds. Above, the Mahoney Family's horses out of Kentucky pull the weight down the dirt track. At left, the Mahoney Family and competition officials stand as winners of the heavy weight horse pull. Below, Braydon Oakleaf, second from right, stands with his family and event officials as winners of the pony pull competition. (Photos by Jonathan Snyder)



U.S. to seek attempted assassination charge against man accused of staking out Trump

By ERIC TUCKER, ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and STEPHANY MATAT Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — The man accused in the assassination attempt of Donald Trump at a golf course in Florida left behind a note detailing his plans to kill the former president and kept in his car a handwritten list of dates and venues where Trump was to appear, the Justice Department said Monday.

Trump complained that the current holding charges against the man were too light, but prosecutors indicated much more serious attempted assassination charges were coming.

The new allegations about the note were included in a detention memo filed ahead of a hearing Monday at which

federal prosecutors argued that Ryan Wesley Routh should remain locked up as a flight risk and a threat to public safety. U.S. Magistrate Ryon McCabe agreed, saying the “weight of the evidence against the defendant is strong” and ordered him to stay behind bars.

The latest details were meant to bolster the Justice Department's contention that the 58-year-old suspect had engaged in a premeditated plan to kill Trump, a plot officials say was thwarted by a Secret Service agent who spotted a rifle poking out of shrubbery on the West Palm Beach golf course where Trump was playing and then opened fire in Routh's direction.

The note describing Routh's plans was placed in a box that he dropped off months earlier at the home of an unidentified person who did not open

it until after last Sunday's arrest, prosecutors said.

The box also contained ammunition, a metal pipe, building materials, tools, phones and various letters. The person who received the box and contacted law enforcement was not identified in the Justice Department's detention memo and was described only as a “civilian witness.”

One note Routh left, addressed “Dear World,” appears to have been premised on the idea that the assassination attempt would be unsuccessful.

“This was an assassination attempt on Donald Trump but I failed you. I tried my best and gave it all the gumption I could muster. It is up to you now to finish the job; and I will offer \$150,000 to whomever can complete

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Outside



Showers and storms likely today and tonight

Today	Wed.	Thursday
High 74	High 75	High 78
Low 60	Low 57	Low 60

More Weather on Page 2

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TUESDAY
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Agri Business

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in today's News-Banner

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City budget finalized

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members then put dots on what they feel were important issues to fund. Once the informal vote was tallied, the council overwhelmingly supported funding for the Wells County Swimming Pool.

Other initiatives the city wanted to see funded involved Community Crossings grants, a new sidewalk initiative, and a discussion about remodeling the police and fire building, which would see the Police Department move to its own building.

The budget approvals coming in higher than the requests is due to the funding requests of council — \$80,871 was put into a Non-reverting Pool Transfer line item on the Parks Department budget, compared to a \$14,000 ask. Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative grant funds will also be used to help fund the new pool, offering a 20% match for 80% of local funds. Additionally, funds from a potential bond on the Adams Street TIF district, cash reserves from the general fund and a public fundraising goal of \$1 million are expected to help meet the \$6.5 million ask for the new pool.

An additional \$70,000 was attributed in a separate sidewalk line item for the Street Department budget to help kickstart the sidewalk initiative. While a current program allows homeowners to get funding from the city, should they choose to repair the ones in front of their property, this program will see the city fund sidewalk repairs completely on their own.

The council is expected to vote on the first reading of the budget in their Oct. 1 meeting, with the second reading happening on Oct. 15.

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Suspended sentence

(Continued from Page 1)

ton Kiracofe denied the request, citing multiple previous cases where a time range was allotted.

In August, Detective Cliff Thomas with the Bluffton Police Department testified that the victim had reported a series of ongoing abuse that was difficult to pinpoint from one incident to the next.

During his hearing in September, Cassenta asked the court if he could directly address the victim, who was present in the courtroom. Kiracofe explained that a no-contact order remained in effect, however, the victim nodded her head.

"Forgive me," Cassenta said as he turned to face her. "I'm sorry, I should've done better."

"I read in the book of Matthew," Cassenta continued during his allocation statement, "it says that before you're handed over to the court you should settle your arguments. I believe we are both guilty of not settling our arguments. As a married man still to this day, I love my wife and I love my daughter. I just want the best for them. Even if that means that we have to be separate, I just want the best for everyone involved. I am truly apologetic, I wish we could have resolved this outside of court."

Cassenta was previously convicted of strangulation and domestic battery in the presence of a child in 2020 against the same victim. He was sentenced to 730 days in jail with 610 days suspended.

In 2021, Cassenta was convicted of battery against a public safety official, a Level 6 felony, and resisting law enforcement, a Class A misdemeanor. He was sentenced to one year in Community Corrections for the charge.

Upon release from incarceration, Cassenta will also be required to serve time on probation.

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Application pressure

(Continued from Page 1)

a greater chance of receiving institutionally-awarded financial aid, on top of whatever they might qualify for federally.

Ongoing FAFSA delays

The latest FAFSA delay comes after last year's fraught financial aid cycle; for the 2024-25 academic year, applications were not available until late December due to multiple rounds of technical glitches with the website and electronic FAFSA form.

Federal education officials didn't start sending applicant data to colleges until March — significantly reducing the time colleges had to compile aid packages. That data is usually available shortly after the FAFSA opens on Oct. 1.

Students also couldn't submit corrections to their FAFSA forms until April, and wait times for helpline assistance reportedly stretched for hours.

A 2020 law directed the Education Department to simplify the FAFSA form, which had been criticized for being time-consuming and difficult to complete, especially for families without college experience. With that work to update FAFSA still ongoing, agency officials maintain the second delayed FAFSA rollout will help to avoid future problems in the next aid cycle.

"Following a challenging 2024-25 FAFSA cycle, the Department listened carefully to the input of students, families, and higher education institutions, made substantial changes to leadership and operations at

Federal Student Aid, and is taking a new approach this year that will significantly improve the FAFSA experience," U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona said in a statement.

Nationwide, the number of 2024 high school seniors who completed the FAFSA dropped more than 7% compared to the year prior, according to the National College Attainment Network.

Roughly 38% of Indiana's graduated 2024 high school seniors submitted the FAFSA by the state's mid-April priority deadline, NCAN data shows. By mid-summer, the application rate ticked up to 47%. Students can still file after April 15, but state financial aid will be distributed on a first come, first serve basis.

That fell below CHE's goal of having 60% of high school seniors submit their FAFSA by the priority deadline. Even so, Indiana fared slightly better than the rest of the country. The state saw the smallest change year-over-year in its completion rate compared to the rest of the country — possibly thanks to Indiana's new universal FAFSA completion policy.

The new law, passed in 2023, made Indiana the eighth state to have some type of FAFSA filing mandate for high schoolers. There are no penalties if a student fails to submit the application, however.

It's still unclear how much the FAFSA complications will impact the number of students attending college. Higher education officials have cautioned that aid

delays force some students to pick a school with limited information about their financial picture.

State enrollment data

The latest enrollment data from Indiana's colleges and universities, at least, appears mostly positive.

Enrollment is up at Indiana University campuses across the state this fall, the school announced earlier this month. IU Bloomington, specifically, set a record this fall with 48,424 students enrolled. Applications for the Bloomington campus were also up 25% from last year, which the university said has led to the campus's second largest beginning class ever at 9,600.

Purdue University additionally boasted record enrollment numbers for the Fall 2024 semester. Applicant numbers set a record at 78,526 students, while the school's admission rate dropped to a record low at 49.8%.

The University of Southern Indiana, Vincennes University, Rose-Hulman, Trine University, Hanover College and Notre Dame all reported record-high — or near-high — fall enrollment, too.

Similar to many institutions, Ball State pushed back the traditional student commitment deadline for the 2024 freshman class from May 1 to June 1 because of the FAFSA issues. The school has not yet released detailed enrollment information for the current academic year.

At Indiana State University, however, fall enrollment dropped to 7,895 students — a 4.9% decline from last year, and 36%

drop compared to 2018, according to figures released by the school.

Indiana continues push for more college enrollment

Indiana's Commission for Higher Education has created and built out multiple new programs to appeal directly to younger students.

The state recently expanded its 21st Century Scholars Program, which provides need-based financial aid to Indiana students attending state and some private colleges. The scholarship covers up to 100% of tuition costs for students who typically earn free and reduced lunch.

In the 2027 cohort, 19,000 students self-enrolled before the new law took effect, according to CHE. After switching to automatic enrollment, that number grew to nearly 46,000. Currently, the 2028 cohort has over 50,000 enrolled.

Also continuing this fall is Indiana's Pre-Admissions program that matches students to colleges based on standardized test performance and GPA.

Through a partnership with 39 of Indiana's higher education institutions — 16 public and 23 private campuses — the commission will ensure students gain "pre-admission" letters from at least three schools.

As for FAFSA, federal education officials said a test of the new form will go live Oct. 1 for a limited number of students and institutions. The phased approach is aimed at ensuring complete functionality when the form fully launches, officials said in a news release.

Attempted assassination charge

(Continued from Page 1)

major political candidate" — charges that would warrant life in prison in the event of a conviction.

It is common for prosecutors to file more easily provable charges as an immediate placeholder before adding more significant allegations as the case proceeds.

Trump also claimed that the Justice Department has a conflict of interest in prosecuting this case since, under the supervision of a special counsel, it is simultaneously pursuing cases charging him with plotting to overturn the 2020 election and with hoarding classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate. He signaled support for a separate state-level criminal investigation announced last week by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis.

Kristy Militello, an assistant federal public defender representing Routh, asked during Monday's hearing for Routh to be permitted to live with his sister in Greensboro, N.C., as the case

moves forward. She argued that prosecutors had failed to show that he was a threat to the community and noted his track record of habitually showing up for court appearances throughout decades of legal troubles.

Besides the note, prosecutors also cited cellphone records indicating that Routh traveled to West Palm Beach from Greensboro in mid-August, and that he was near Trump's golf club and the former president's Mar-a-Lago residence "on multiple days and times" between Aug. 18 and the day of the

apparent attempted assassination.

He was arrested Sept. 15 after a Secret Service agent who was scoping the Trump International Golf Club for potential security threats saw a partially obscured man's face, and the barrel of a semiautomatic rifle, aimed directly at him.

The agent fired at Routh, who sped away before being stopped by officials in a neighboring county, leaving behind a loaded rifle, digital camera, a backpack and a reusable shopping bag that was hanging from a fence.

Weather

Tuesday, September 24, 2024
(24-hour observations at 9:25 p.m. Monday)
High: 73; Low: 61; Precipitation: Trace of rain
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.10 feet at 8:45 p.m. Monday

Wells County forecast

Today: Showers and possibly a thunderstorm. High near 74. Southeast wind 5 to 10 mph becoming south in the afternoon. Chance of precipitation is 90%. New rainfall amounts between a half and three quarters of an inch possible.

Tonight: Showers and thunderstorms likely before 11 p.m., then a slight chance of showers between 11 p.m. and 2 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 60. West wind around 5 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

Wednesday: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 75. Calm wind becoming west around 5 mph.

Wednesday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 57. Calm wind.

Thursday: Partly sunny, with a high near 78.

Thursday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 60.

Friday: A 20% chance of showers. Partly sunny, with a high near 78.

Friday Night: A 40% chance of showers, mainly before 2 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 61.

Saturday: A 30% chance of showers, mainly after 2 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 77.

Saturday Night: A 40% chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 61.

Sunday: A 50% chance of showers. Partly sunny, with a high near 77.

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

Monday: A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny, with a high near 75.

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OBITUARIES

John Harry "Homer" Smeltzer, 68

John Harry "Homer" Smeltzer, 68, of Fort Wayne, passed away on Friday, Sept. 20, 2024.

He was born to the late Edwin R. and Isabelle (Franklin) Smeltzer Jr. in Bluffton on March 1, 1956. John graduated from Norwell High School in 1976. He proudly served in the Army National Guard. John was the former Post Commander, Honor Guard Commander and Junior Shooting Director of American Legion Post 241. He was formerly in the clown unit of the Mizpah Shrine.

John is survived by his siblings, Judy Kendrick, James (Kathy) Smeltzer, and Jeffrey Smeltzer; daughter, Holly (Adam) Bailey; grandchildren, Emily and Seth; great-granddaughter, Kinsley Grace; and a host of relatives and friends. Along with his parents, he was preceded in death by siblings, Gloria Ann Smeltzer, Steve Franklin, Eddie Smeltzer III and Mary Shaw.

A funeral service will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 26, 2024, with visitation beginning at 4 p.m. until the time of service at Fairhaven Funeral Home and Cremation Services, 6557 N Clinton St. in Fort Wayne. A graveside service will be held at 11 a.m. Marion National Cemetery, 1700 E 38th St. in Marion, on Friday, Sept. 27, 2024.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to American Legion Post 241 Honor Guard or the Northeast Honor Flight.



Carolyn Ann Stinson, 85

Carolyn Ann Stinson, 85, of Bluffton, passed away early Monday morning, Sept. 23, 2024, at River Terrace Estates in Bluffton.

Carolyn was born on Nov. 25, 1938, in Sweetwater, Tennessee, to Boyd Reece and Pauleta "Polly" (Torbett) Cardin. She moved with her family to Wells County in 1945 and graduated from Liberty Center High School. She attended Ball State University for one year. She worked for Southern Wells Community Schools for 32 years, first as a teaching assistant and then as a high school secretary. She was a longtime member of the Liberty Center Baptist Church.

On Aug. 3, 1957, Carolyn and Richard L. Stinson were married at Liberty Center Baptist Church.

Survivors include her husband of 66 years, Richard of Bluffton; her children, Keith A. (Ashley) Stinson and Kimberly A. (Luke) Leas, both of Bluffton. She was a loving grandma to eight grandchildren, Alexa Colwell, Zach Stinson, Brittany Harner, Madison Stinson, Rusty Stinson, Spencer Copeland, Hunter Copeland and Walker Leas; along with 7 great-grandchildren. She is also survived by her sister, Sonja Buckler of Hendersonville, North Carolina, and brother Brent (Jackie) Cardin of Tip-ton.

Carolyn is preceded in death by a son, Rodney L. Stinson and her parents.

Visitation will take place from 3:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 25, 2024, at the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton. A funeral service will follow visitation at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday at the funeral home with Pastor Aaron Westfall officiating. A private family graveside will take place on Thursday morning at Elm Grove Cemetery in Bluffton.

Memorials may be made the Alzheimer's Association for Alzheimer's Research.

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



Free flu shots available at Meridian's Flu-Lapalooza

Meridian Health Services invites the community to Flu-Lapalooza, a FREE one-day flu shot clinic, on Thursday, Oct. 3 from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., or until supplies last, at Meridian's primary medical care and MeridianMD locations throughout the state of Indiana. Each location will be drawing for a chance to win a \$50 grocery gift card (eligible to participants only).

Flu-Lapalooza ensures convenient access to health care by providing free flu shots to those six months and older. No insurance is necessary and no out-of-pocket fees apply. You need not be a

current Meridian patient to obtain a flu shot at one of the participating locations.

Participating Meridian locations include:

- MeridianMD & Meridian Health Pediatrics: 303 S. Main St., Bluffton
- Meridian Health Services: 2622 Lake Ave., Fort Wayne
- Meridian Health Services: 911 N. Western Ave., Marion
- MeridianMD & Meridian Health Pediatrics: 205 N. Tillotson Ave., Muncie
- Meridian School Clinic — Southside Middle School: 1601 E. 26th St., Muncie

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City:
 Friday, 3:12 p.m., Walmart. Report of issues from terminated employee.
 Friday, 3:18 p.m., Pak A Sak. Report of a parking problem.
 Friday, 5:45 p.m., 200 block of West Cherry Street. Report of a parking problem.
 Friday, 6:26 p.m., Unique Blue Bar and Grill. Report of a parking problem.
 Friday, 7:40 p.m., South Johnson and West Washington streets. Report of man touching himself inappropriately in front of kids.
 Friday, 7:47 p.m., Bluffton Police Department. Report of harassment.
 Friday, 11:03 p.m., Bluffton Post Office. Report of juveniles in altercation.
 Saturday, 12:39 a.m., Unique Blue Bar and Grill. Caller reported several intoxicated men fighting.
 Saturday, 1:51 a.m., East Market and North Scott streets. Driver cited for no insurance and left of center.
 Saturday, 2:29 a.m., 800 block of Creek Drive. Caller reported harassment.

Saturday, 3:20 a.m., 800 block of Creek Drive. Report of subject knocking on door, threatening caller.
 Saturday, 9:44 a.m., East Riley and South Scott streets. Report of a parking problem.
 Saturday, 1:38 p.m., 700 block of West Silver Street. Report of a domestic issue.
 Saturday, 2:38 p.m., Bluffton Police Department. Report of a lost child.
 Saturday, 4:10 p.m., North Main and East Market streets. Lost child located.
 Saturday, 4:25 p.m., West Washington and South Johnson streets. Two juveniles lost their parents, older brother helped.
 Saturday, 7:03 p.m., Hardees. Driver did not pay for parking.
 Saturday, 8:23 p.m., Hardees. Two vehicles blocked caller's vehicle into lot.
 Saturday, 9:49 p.m., South Main and East Washington streets. Report of fighting. Extra patrol given at end of fair.
 Saturday, 10:17 p.m., North Main and East Market streets. Report of drugs, one

taken into custody.
 Saturday, 11:14 a.m., 200 block of East South Street. Report of unattended dog in vehicle.
 Sunday, 3:53 a.m., South Johnson Street and West Central Avenue. Intoxicated driver arrested.
 Sunday, 6:22 a.m., 400 block of East South Street. Report of noise complaint.
 Sunday, 9:23 a.m., Bumies. Report of window open.
 Sunday, 5:50 p.m., Walmart. Report of theft.
 Sunday, 7:12 p.m., 700 block of South Marion Street. Travis Lee arrested on warrant.
 Sunday, 11:59 p.m., Bluffton Regional Medical Center. Report of rape.
 Monday, 2:43 a.m., All American. Report of harassment.
 Monday, 1:41 p.m., Walmart. Welfare check requested for child alone in car.
County:
 Friday, 3:39 p.m., Wells County Jail. Report of fraudulent email.
 Friday, 4:19 p.m., Family Centered Services. Wanted

subject Brittany Burkholder arrested on warrant.
 Friday, 5:01 p.m., East 200S and South 200E. Bluffton. Report of truck broken down in road.
 Friday, 8:02 p.m., 2800 South Main Street. Liberty center. Report of harassment.
 Friday, 8:17 p.m., 1700E 200S, Bluffton. Report of subject firing gun in air. Subject advised he was in a verbal altercation and fired a shot because he was in fear for his life. Subject was under the influence and had a minor child and her friend in the vehicle. Derek Fox arrested for intimidation with a deadly weapon, criminal recklessness with a deadly weapon, and OWI — minor in vehicle.
 Saturday, 1:59 a.m., North 100E and South Adams Street, Bluffton. Officer conducted traffic stop on vehicle traveling 67 in a 55 mph zone. Driver Jeffrey Priester arrested for OWI — prior and speeding.
 Saturday, 8:40 a.m., 2700 Southeast Mulberry Street, Bluffton. Caller reported someone hit her vehicle in her driveway.

BHMSD board member attends ISBA assembly

Michael Murray, school board member for Bluffton-Harrison Metropolitan School District, served as the school corporation's voting delegate at the 2024 Delegate Assembly of the Indiana School Boards Association.

The ISBA Delegate Assembly convened at 8 a.m. on Sept. 23 in the Indiana Convention Center to conduct the annual business of the Association. Delegates approved the 2025 Association budget and the recommendations of the ISBA Nominating Committee naming a slate of officers and directors for the ISBA Board of Directors.

In addition, the Delegate Assembly voted to ratify the 2025 Legislative Priorities and Foundational State-

ments as presented by the ISBA Legislative Committee.

ISBA's school funding priorities as approved by the Delegate Assembly for the 2025 budget session include:

- Tuition support increases at rates above inflation
- \$10 million annual increase in the Indiana Secured Schools Safety Grant
- \$10 million annual increase in Summer School funding
- \$5 million annual increase in English Language Learner funding
- Grant funding for school corporations to spend on student support services, including career coaching, school counselor programs, social workers, mental and

behavioral health services, and school nurses

Each school board in Indiana with membership in the Indiana School Boards Association is entitled to send one school board member to the Delegate Assembly to consider and vote on the business matters of the Association. Currently, all 290 school corporations in the State of Indiana

are members of ISBA.

"The school board members who served as delegates this year are to be commended for their dedication and service," said ISBA Executive Director Terry Spradlin. "Their decisions will benefit school board members across the state and will help ensure that their membership association continues to thrive."

Arnold named president of Strategence Capital

Strategence Capital, with offices in Bluffton and Fort Wayne, Indiana; Van Wert, Ohio; and Morris, Minnesota has chosen Jordan Arnold as its president. Arnold joins a leadership team that includes co-founders Tim Stoller, AAMS, CRPS, AIF, and Graig Stettner, CFA, CMT, as well as Tamera Sperr, CFP.

Arnold joined Strategence Capital in 2019 and led the financial advisory firm's opening of its Bluffton office in 2022. A graduate of Indiana Wesleyan University, he has worked in the financial industry since 2013, including prior positions with iAB Financial Bank and First Bank of Berne.

Arnold and his wife Emily live in Bluffton, where they both were born and raised. They are the parents of two daughters, Selah and Katie. He enjoys being with friends and family, playing basketball, and rooting for his favorite teams, the Indiana Hoosiers and the Indianapolis Colts. He is actively involved in the community as a Board Member of Hope Missionary Church, Wells County Leadership Academy, LifeWise Northern Wells, and Rotary Club of Bluffton. He served as President of the Bluffton Rotary Club for the 2023-2024 term.

Strategence founder Tim Stoller says that Arnold has demonstrated exceptional leadership and dedication throughout his time with the firm.

Jordan's appointment as President marks a significant milestone for Strategence Capital," Stoller notes. "His knowledge as a financial advisor, community involvement, and leadership capabilities make him exceptionally well-suited for this role. We are confident that Strategence Capital will continue to thrive and deliver outstanding results for our clients with Jordan as President."

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The alarming growth of Medicaid costs in Indiana

It's clear that state lawmakers will address exploding Medicaid costs in the upcoming legislative session. It could mean making it harder for elderly Hoosiers to protect their assets, reexamining expansion coverage for working adults or cutting benefits.

But I wanted to make sure we remember there are human beings behind those numbers.

Some have a misperception that those on Medicaid — a state-federal health insurance program for low-income people — are fleecing the state for benefits they don't deserve.

The fact is many are just people who have medical needs beyond their means. That's certainly the case for Jim Densmore. He was a hard-working, full-time data policy analyst in his early 60s when he suffered a catastrophic stroke.

Several years later he is still partially paralyzed, learning to walk again and struggling to cover his medical needs with social security. He is on a waitlist for Medicaid help.

Lawmakers have a herculean task: reduce Medicaid growth while still helping Hoosiers

Many Hoosiers like Densmore need help. But I also acknowledge that fiscal concerns about Medicaid are legitimate and can't be ignored.

As of last month, 1.96 million Hoosiers are on Medicaid, which has dropped since the pandemic.

The total tab for the 2024-2025 fiscal year is about \$26 billion, including both federal and state dollars. The state portion alone is \$8.2 billion.

Elderly and disabled Medicaid beneficiaries make up roughly 33% of the overall population but account for 94% of expenditures — making their health care more expensive than the average user.

K-12 spending in Indiana for years has been 50% of the state budget. But in the current biennial spending plan, that dropped to 47% as the Medicaid portion grew.

Growth has led the Family and Social Services to make changes to coverage and move to a managed care system for long-term care that state officials hope will save money.

So, how do lawmakers curb the growth trend? Some of it relates to national health care policy and growth in costs overall. And a recent lawsuit suggests fraud is also a problem.

House Ways and Means Chairman Jeff Thompson said everything is on the table. When crafting the budget in 2023, he told people behind the scenes that, by 2030, Medicaid would eat up all the state's new revenue.

"And I was wrong ... because it's going to be sooner than that," Thompson said this week at a budget panel.

One possible move is to limit the sheltering of assets by elderly Hoosiers.

Sen. Ryan Mishler, who heads the Senate Appropriations Committee, has been beating the drum about Medicaid growth for several years. He said that, in the last budget, the program grew by \$2.3 billion. A mistaken forecast meant another \$900 million.

But he said legislative action doesn't necessarily mean cutting benefits.

"I think we have to look at eligibility for nursing homes. I mean, I know it sounds bizarre, but there's millionaires going on Medicaid into nursing homes, and that's got to stop," Mishler said.

He noted the look-back period was extended from three to five years to try to ease that issue but said lawmakers might have to go further.

"I think there's a lot of things we have to look at, and some changes have already been made, but I think we'll have to do some changes legislatively as well.

The last thing we really want to do is cut benefits."

Sen. Travis Holdman, R-Markle, also has concerns about older citizens sheltering their assets in trusts and using other legal maneuvers. He spoke to a small group of Hoosiers in a video posted to YouTube, in which he said "Medicaid is going to eat us alive, folks, if we're not careful."

Holdman said the biggest piece is long-term care for the aged. He noted if you put everything in a trust and get past five years before needing long-term care, then you don't have to use those assets to pay for your own care. Instead, Medicaid steps in to pay for at-home and nursing home care.

He acknowledged it might not be popular to address the loophole but that it might be addressed next session.

"There's nothing political, nothing in our DNA, nothing that says when you die you get to leave everything to your children. I think the bootstrap way of good Hoosier government, good Hoosier standards are: you pay your own way," he said.

This is just one part of what promises to be a complex, even painful discussion as lawmakers try to balance state fiscal concerns with providing health care to poor Hoosiers who have no other choices.

Niki Kelly is the editor of the Indiana Capital Chronicle, a non-profit newsroom. nkelly@indianacapitalchronicle.com



Niki Kelly

Hoosier Opinions

George Will
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I CAN DO THIS ALL THE WAY TO THE ELECTION!

Kamala Harris owes us some answers

It's been more than two months since Vice President Kamala Harris was deeded the Democratic presidential nomination. During that time, she has not held a news conference or sat with many mainstream journalists to answer serious questions about how she would lead the country and who she would choose as her advisers. On Saturday, riding high on her first debate win against Trump, Harris accepted CNN's offer of a second presidential debate on Oct. 23. Trump declined the offer to appear on the Harris-friendly and anti-Trump CNN saying, "it's too late."

Harris has promised to bring down the cost of everything, though costs still remain high partly because of the spending policies of her and President Biden's administration. Will those policies continue and if not, what policies will replace them? She has said she wants to impose price controls, but they have never worked. Wouldn't it be better to address and change the policies that have caused prices and inflation to rise?

How would she handle the war in Ukraine? Should China invade Taiwan on her watch, would she commit U.S. troops and resources to defend the democratic nation? Would she support laws already on the books to keep migrants who are not U.S. citizens from voting in federal elections? How would she do this?

Does she still intend to tax unrealized capital gains, meaning people would pay on assets, like their homes, 401K's and other retirement savings that have increased in value but whose owners have not benefited from them?

The Republican presidential nominee, Donald Trump, has promised to bring in outside auditors to reduce the size, cost and reach of the federal government. Is this something she endorses? If not, what would she do to reduce the debt which is a record \$35 trillion. According to the Peter G. Peterson Foundation: "In 2023, the federal government spent \$658 billion on net interest costs on the national debt. That total grew by 38 percent from \$476 billion in 2022."

All of this — and more — could be discussed if Harris would stop engaging in a stealth strategy that

keeps her from having to answer hard questions the public has a right to know.

Real journalists, not the kind who used to work for politicians and activist organizations ("Mr. President, what is your favorite ice cream flavor?") should be demanding she start holding long news conferences.

Every other president for the last century has done so before and after elections. John F. Kennedy held his in the State Department auditorium. Lyndon Johnson had a different approach, answering reporters' questions as he walked around the White House driveway, sometimes pulling the ears of his dogs. Barack Obama was a master of the news conference. Ronald Reagan, too, projected strength and good humor.

Are Harris and her campaign staff afraid she will revert to her incoherent word salads? Americans have a right to know what kind of president they are voting for and how she will lead. This shouldn't be an "arranged marriage" in which neither side knows much about the other.

This is the 100th anniversary year of Calvin Coolidge's ascension to the presidency following the death of Warren Harding, Coolidge's oldest son, John, once told me his father invented the modern news conference. John showed me transcripts of those meetings with reporters, which were off the record, but which gave reporters information they could use without attributing it to Coolidge.

Even while traveling, Coolidge made sure the press had information of at least some value. The favor was returned in mostly positive coverage and not the cynicism and one-sided "reporting" that characterizes so much of what's left of real journalism today. Reporters sought facts and did not cheerlead for one candidate or another.

Come on Kamala and hold a news conference. If you are incapable of doing them, the public has a right and a need to know now.



Cal Thomas

tcaditors@tribpub.com

Those beloved progressive initials, DEI and ESG, have lost their gleam

Progressives' alphabet soup ingredients are DEI hiring and ESG investing. Both often are illegal, and the latter is medieval.

"Diversity, equity and inclusion" became fashionable in corporate America, and enforced in academia. There, refusing to take DEI loyalty oaths provokes exclusion as punishment for deviations from this orthodoxy: Equity is group entitlements — inevitably, a racial spoils system. As Kamala Harris joyfully explains, "Equitable treatment means we all end up in the same place."

Courts have dampened enthusiasm for DEI by reminding colleges of laws against racial discrimination, and by affirming that corporate officials and even directors can be held personally liable for illegalities. Recently, some star-spangled American companies — responsible for Jack Daniel's whiskey, Harley-Davidson motorcycles, John Deere tractors and Ford F-150 trucks — have curbed their DEI enthusiasms.

Regarding ESG, last year, \$13 billion was withdrawn from asset managers making investment decisions based on "environmental, social and governance" considerations. Unpacked, those categories mean the woke agenda: decarbonizing the economy, social engineering based on identity politics, gender equality, union power and more. Even the solemnly woke Securities and Exchange Commission has deleted ESG from its list (why does it have one?) of investing priorities.

ESG's defects begin with illegality. The 1940 Investment Advisers Act required advisers to have one overriding concern: their clients' financial interests. This fiduciary principle was reaffirmed in the 1974 Employee Retirement Income Security Act, which stipulates that those entrusted with investors' money have the duty



George Will

to deploy it "solely in the interest of" and "for the exclusive purpose of providing benefits to" the investors.

ESG attempts to vitiate this duty, and disguise ESG's illegality, by asserting that a corporation's shareholders are just one set of "stakeholders." And shareholders are inferior to stakeholders whose supposed superiority derives from having no financial stake in the corporation's

performance. Stakeholders include employees, suppliers, customers and (per the Oxford Reference Dictionary) "members of the wider community." So, a stakeholder is anyone who claims to be affected, at whatever remove, by any corporate activity.

Investors are supposedly enabled by ESG to do good while doing well. Leave aside the Everest of unsurprising evidence that ESG investments do substantially less well than investments made for the purpose of maximizing returns for investors. Now, about doing good:

The greatest good, in terms of alleviating suffering, in all of humanity's history has been done in recent decades by market-oriented, profit-seeking capitalists: by private wealth serving private interests. In 1975, half the human race lived in what the World Bank calls extreme poverty (\$2.15 a day, adjusted for inflation). Today, fewer than 1 in 10 persons are so afflicted.

Former senator Phil Gramm and his colleagues in refuting ESG note: Between 1990 and 2020, the globalized market dynamism ignited in the previous decade by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher pulled up from abject poverty an average of 128,000 people every day.

In "Ending ESG and Restoring Economic Enlightenment," Gramm and co-editor Terrence Keeley, the CEO of IPointSix, a financial advisory firm, discern a paradox concerning

progressives who advocate ESG. For them, progress consists of returning to the Middle Ages.

Then, life for most people was (as Thomas Hobbes depicted life in the state of nature) "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." Hitherto in human history, there was stagnation — negligible economic growth — because workers, and the very few who had a surplus beyond subsistence to save, were surrounded by grasping "stakeholders": kings, nobles, communities, tribes, guilds, churches and others who enforced nonconsensual communal sharing, leeching away much of what little that workers received for their dawn-to-dusk toils.

Mass flourishing has been enabled by economic growth. It began with the Enlightenment principle that individuals own what their labor and investments produce.

ESG is the stealthy socialization of wealth, the surreptitious semi-confiscation of others' wealth. But progressives' ESG aspiration is worse than a strange nostalgia for the 1300s. It also is a repellent yearning for the 1930s.

In 1933, Italy's government formed the Institute for Industrial Reconstruction that, using the nationalized banking system, controlled about 75 percent of the nation's economy. Benito Mussolini said: "All within the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state." In 1937, a German law implementing "Gleichschaltung" meant government's total regimentation of economy and society. The Third Reich's animating principle was "public welfare before individual gain."

ESG aspires to achieve comprehensive social control by making the private sector no longer private. With semantic sleight of hand, ESG advocates created their obfuscating category "stakeholders." This camouflages awkward echoes of the statism of 20th-century totalitarians. Still, the echoes are undeniable.

georgewill@washpost.com

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- E-Mail: email@news-banner.com
- Mail: PO Box 436, Bluffton IN 46714
- Drop-off: 125 N. Johnson St., Bluffton

All letters must be signed and must include a phone number or address in case verification is desired. Letters are edited for brevity and clarity. Letters must be no more than 500 words. Please mark your correspondence as a "Letter to the Editor," or if you wish to express an opinion to us but do not want it published, please mark as "Not for Publication."

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Gloria enjoys an evening of supper and singing

Supper and singing nights are always a highlight for me.

I can't say it's always been like that. When I had a handful of real young children, it just seemed like evening services were something they had marked. My training to teach them how to sit still seemed to fall flat on those evenings when I was supposed to be singing with church family.

Today, they have matured enough to know how to sit (at least most times), and most of them are old enough to help sing or even choose a song.

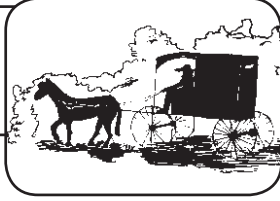
Last Sunday my cousin Judith and her husband hosted the services and invited everyone back for supper and singing. Since we have a number of folks who don't have a basement or shop suited for hosting everyone in church we end up having it at the schoolhouse most of the time. Gathering in a home adds a personal touch we enjoy.

The children are aching to have church at our house again like we did before Daddy went to heaven. We'll see, maybe it'll fall into place next summer when we'll be taking a turn to host at school or at home.

To be really honest, what I enjoyed most about hosting church at our house was listening to Daniel as he welcomed everyone and made announcements. I felt like I could just sit there and listen to him for hours. Having church without him feels like a bell with no ring; on the flip side I am quickly reminded that to every

The Amish Cook

by Gloria Yoder



empty spot God keeps bringing something better than what I had given back to him. At any rate we'll wait and see what works out when the time comes. Know what? Perhaps you all should just come and be with us that Sunday!

For now, join us as we attend supper and singing at Jeremy and Judith's house. It was 5:10 when the children and I walked out the lane together.

In ten minutes, we had stepped into Judith's cozy kitchen, where she was putting last-minute touches on supper. With a bunch of ladies it didn't take long to carry her meatball sub sandwich fixings, corn chip salad, pumpkin bars, and ice cream to the shop.

Jeremy got everyone gathered together and asked one of the brothers to pray the blessing on the food. A table with food stood to one side for the men and another for the ladies, both food stages next to the benches where they would be seated for supper then the singing.

The older ladies filled their plates first, then the mom's with little children came next. The supper combination looked scrumptious. The co-jack cheese melted on the barbecued meatballs. Eating the sandwiches required some extra napkins, but that's okay, that's the way I like mine. If it's

moist enough to be messy it's bound to be good.

Taking a bite from my dessert I eyeballed it again. What was in there? It was chewy but soft, and bursting with flavor, much like a cheesecake. Still, it was a pumpkin bar. After supper I quizzed Judith about it and asked for the recipe. Hang on, and I'll get it for you once we are done chatting here.

After supper, us ladies washed up the dishes in totes of hot water, which Jeremy had brought from the house. With two ladies washing, one on either side of the table and a half a dozen wiping, it didn't take long to have the clean dishes staked back in the proper totes where they would be stored until next Sunday.

While Judith finished putting leftovers away, the rest of us started singing in the shop. The first half hour is usually filled with German songs, followed by the man of the house sharing a devotional then English singing for another 45 minutes.

This time we sang from the Mountain Laurel songbooks which a friend of ours compiled.

As we sang of heaven my heart swelled with joy, knowing that I too, will one day be called to go



home to heaven, the tears came. Yes, it was like a deep river of joy mingled with that sadness of missing my beloved. Mrs. Pertler, who is also a widow, put it into perfect words when she wrote, "It's possible to cry both happy and sad tears all at the same time. It is possible to find true joy even when you are hurting." That's it.

By 8:00 a parting song was sung with the words, "With my eyes fixed on Jesus I can face another day..." True, it really does not matter what happens in life, it'll really all be okay, because there is one greater than us to lead the way though it all.

The children ran out to play a game of tag in the semi-darkness. Soon it was time to head on home and tuck everyone to bed, ready for another week of school, another week of clasping the hand of the One who knows it all.

PUMPKIN CHEESECAKE BARS

Crust:
2 cups flour
10 tablespoons butter, softened
2/3 cup brown sugar
Mix altogether and reserve 1 3/4 cup for topping. Put the rest in a 9 by 13 inch cake pan and bake at 350 for 15 minutes or until golden.

Filling:
2- 8 ounces cream cheese
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 cup pumpkin
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 teaspoon allspice or pumpkin pie spice

Spread filling on top of crust then sprinkle reserved crust ingredients and sprinkle on top. Bake at 350 for an additional 30 minutes. Cool and enjoy. Delicious with ice cream!

Norwell ICE Spotlight award

Cody Cox

Senior Cody Cox has been selected to receive the Norwell Internship Spotlight award. He has been doing his experience at Roembke MFG and Design in Ossian with mentor Dan Rupright. Cody is the son of Chris and Jill Cox of Ossian.

Cody has learned the programming and operation of the lathe machine to make parts for the manufacturing, medical, and automotive industries. In the future, he plans to learn how to run the mill and hard turner machines.

Upon graduation,



Cody Cox

Cody plans to continue working at Roembke. He will also pursue a machining apprenticeship to further his education in this career field.

Fall history series at museum

The Wells County Historical Museum will host a "Local History Series" this fall as a part of the Bluffton Parks Department's Senior Snippets Program which is held at various locations and on a variety of topics. Space is limited with some sessions, so make plans and call 824-6069 or e-mail events@blufftonindiana.gov to register. The sessions will held be on Wednesdays, 10:00am at the museum

located at 420 W. Market St, Bluffton.

Topics will include: September 25, History of the 4-H Park Log Cabin, by Roger Sherer; October 2, The First Female Sheriff of Wells County by Jim Sturgeon; October 9, How to Take Better Photographs with Your Phone, by Ben Jones; and October 16, The Story of E.B. Williamson, Iris and Dragonflies, by Alan Daugherty.

Pumpkin display at Botanical Conservatory in Fort Wayne

Throughout the month of October the Fort Wayne Botanical Conservatory will open their outdoor display of pumpkins during regular hours.

The site offers a variety of pumpkin displays as well as photo opportunities.

A garden Trick or Treat event will be held on Saturday, Oct. 10, from noon to 3 p.m. Regular admission applies.

Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for those 3-17 and free to those 2 and under. Regular hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday.

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Norwell ICE Spotlight award

Connor Reed

Senior Connor Reed was selected last week to receive the Norwell Internship Spotlight award. He has been doing his experience at the Bluffton Animal Clinic with mentors Steve Bales and Brandy Ramseyer. Connor is the son of Foster and Amber Reed of Ossian.

Connor has gotten the opportunity to assist with surgery prep and then observe the surgeries. Such operations include spays, neuters, and c-sections. In addition to the general care of the animals, he has also assisted with special treatments by helping to wrap casts, doing bloodwork, and IV fluids.

Upon graduation, Connor desires to attend Purdue University to study veterinarian medicine.



Connor Reed

Interpretive programs at Ouabache State Park

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

Interpretive Naturalist: Lydia Ade

Friday, Sept. 27
4:30 p.m.: Phenology Friday: meeting at the Park Office to study the seasons and how things change while looking for birds, mammals, plants and more. Bring binoculars and hiking boots if desired.

Saturday, Sept. 28
FREE fishing day (bag and size limits still apply)
10 a.m.: Bison Feeding, meeting at the Bison Enclosure to learn about our national mammal and watch them being fed.

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

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

Sunday, Sept. 29
FREE admission day!

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

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

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High School Calendar

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.

Sports Roundup

Knights sweep Archers in volleyball

Norwell swept South Side in volleyball at home on Monday.

The Knights won all three sets 25-7 and improved to 11-8 on the season.

Stat leaders: Vanessa Rosswurm and Macie Saalfrank with six kills, Emma Vachon with seven aces and 22 assists, Jaycie Grzych one block and Autumn Lee 10 digs.

Norwell also swept both the junior varsity match (25-2, 25-7) and the freshman match (25-8, 25-4).

Norwell will be at Columbia City for conference play at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 24.

Knights fall to Barons in boys' NE8 soccer

Norwell lost 3-1 at DeKalb in NE8 boys' soccer Monday night.

Kyler Morris scored the lone goal for the Knights, increasing his total to 11 on the season.

Norwell fell 2-0 in the junior varsity match.

Its next game will be at home to face Heritage at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 26.

Knights drop to Panthers in boys' tennis

Norwell fell 4-1 at Snider in boys' tennis on Monday. The Knights drop to 6-7 on the season with the loss.

Individual results:

- Cam Davis (S) defeated Gavin Reynolds 6-1, 6-3 at No. 1 singles.
- David Crothers (S) defeated Brayln Troutt 6-4, 6-1 at No. 2 singles.
- Landon Diver (N) defeated Sam Cormany 6-7, 2-7, 6-4, 10-5 at No. 3 singles.
- Jace Eastom and Travis Rowe (S) defeated Eddie Archbold and Ayden Quintanilla 7-6, 7-4, 4-6, 10-2 at No. 1 doubles.
- Jack Mohegan and Ethan Wlech (S) defeated Rylan Heyerly and Dylan Randol at No. 2 doubles 6-2, 6-1. Norwell won the junior varsity match 6-1.

Results for JV:

- Levi White (N) defeated Bobby Cameron 8-6.
- Brady Watkins (N) defeated James Hess 8-2.
- Carter DeWeese (N) defeated Balin Briston 6-4.
- Levi White (N) defeated Charlie King 6-0.
- Jaden Garcia and Brody Hirsch (S) defeated Ethan Williamson and Ryan Ewing 8-6.
- Jasper Kreigh and Greyson Chavis (N) defeated Dylan Miguel and Zach Cormany 8-0.
- Jensen Miller and Braden Hoag (N) defeated Oliver Welch and Grant Hirsch 4-3. Norwell will be at Huntington North at 4:15 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 24.

DeKalb defeats Norwell in girls' soccer

Norwell lost 5-1 at home against DeKalb in girls' soccer on Monday.

The Knights fell to 8-5 on the season and 2-3 in the Northeast 8.

Shae Brooks scored the lone goal for Norwell, assisted by Grace Mann. That put the Knights up 1-0, but the Barons scored the final five to secure the win.

Norwell also fell in the junior varsity match 1-0. Maggie Neuschwander and Emma Garner were in goal. Norwell will be at Heritage at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25.

Bluffton ranks No. 8 in IFCA poll

Bluffton's football team enters week six at No. 8 in 2A from the IFCA Poll.

The Tigers wrapped up a 34-25 victory at home over Jay County last Friday, bumping them into the top 10 this week. They have 23 points in the poll.

Lafayette CC is the top in 2A, while Adams Central ranks fourth.

Other area teams: Carroll Fort Wayne No. 10, Snider and Homestead receiving votes in 6A; Leo No. 9 in 4A; Bishop Luers No. 4, Heritage and Garrett receiving votes in 3A; Madison-Grant No. 7 in 1A.

Krauskopf returns to Fever as President of Basketball and Business Operations

**By DOUG FEINBERG
AP Basketball Writer**

Kelly Krauskopf will return to the Indiana Fever as President of both basketball and business operations after the season is over, the team announced Monday.

She led the franchise from 2000-18 before she left to become the Pacers' assistant general manager. The Fever won the WNBA championship in 2012 by defeating Minnesota and reached the finals in 2009 and 2015 under her leadership.



Three-Peat

The Bluffton Tigers have won the ACAC championship for the third straight season in boys' tennis. The team swept Adams Central 5-0 to complete their perfect 3-0 conference record. At top, the team poses with the trophy. From left to right, are assistant coaches Hunter Cunningham and Spencer Schwartz, Ben Maggard, Anthony Hartman, Dane Schlagenhauf, Nolan Lambert, Coy Lantz, Kade Abbett, Jacob Ribich, and head coach Robert Vanderkolk. Above left, senior Nolan Lambert stretches out to return a point in his No. 1 singles match. Above right, assistant coach Hunter Cunningham and head coach Robert Vanderkolk unravel the plastic on their brand-new piece of hardware. (Photos by Ryan Walker)

Tigers clean sweep Jets to capture third straight conference tennis title

By RYAN WALKER

MONROE — Winning a championship can be difficult for teams to do, but the Bluffton Tigers have taken it a step further.

The Tigers (11-4) won their third ACAC title in a row in boys' tennis on Monday, sweeping the Adams Central Flying Jets 5-0 to take care of a perfect 3-0 conference record. All five matches were two-set sweeps.

The ACAC was just the first of their two goals. The second is a sectional championship, which hasn't happened in Bluffton since 2015. Its next opportunity will begin on Oct. 1.

"The guys have worked their tails off, but this isn't the tip of the iceberg for us either," head coach Robert Vanderkolk said. "We've got another one we plan on winning next week, and that's the one we're really worried about."

The Tigers' road to three ACAC titles since 2022 hasn't been easy. The 2023 squad was brand-new, replacing the previous year with mostly new faces. That team snuck by the conference with a tiebreaker, finishing 2-1 overall and was aided by a Jay County win over South Adams to claim it.

All seven starters from last year's team returned and have been on a mission. Since winning the ACAC as a new unit last season, the Tigers started to believe. But a 3-2 sectional loss to Norwell might have woken a sleeping giant.

Senior Nolan Lambert and No. 1 singles player said that the offseason was all about tennis. They played in the winter, spring and tournaments in the summer.

The group has emphasized that they don't want to have the same feeling

leaving the sectional as last year. So far, it's paying off.

"This group has accomplished a lot, and it's real fun to play with these guys," Lambert said. "We're talking to each other on the courts every time we're out here. We're encouraging each other and it's just fun to win with this kind of team. I feel like I'm playing as a team even though I'm on the court by myself."

It's made life easy for Vanderkolk, as he watches his team compete at a high level and with self-motivation. He and his assistant coaches Spencer Schwartz and Hunter Cunningham will spend some time coaching during matches, but it isn't all the time.

From Monday's match to the sectional next week, the Tigers will have two more games to prepare for the four-team sectional that they will host. They've already defeated all of the teams they would potentially see in it as well.

With every passing day, Vanderkolk is confident that his boys will be itching to compete and bring home another title.

"That's the beauty of this," Vanderkolk said. "I really don't have to remind them or dangle a carrot or anything. They know what they're capable of. But they also know that we have a bullseye on our back ... Those teams aren't going to let us walk all over them. This isn't a knock on our competition, but if we play our best tennis, there's no way we lose the sectional net week."

"Just compete like we have to finish this season," Lambert said. "We've had some good teams that we've beat in the last couple of weeks. Everybody we've seen in the

sectionals, we've seen already. We just have to play like we did the first time we played them."

Bluffton's next match will be at home against Huntington North at 5 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25.

ryan@news-banner.com

Individual results:

- Nolan Lambert defeated Logan Heiman 7-6 (7-0), 6-2 at No. 1 singles.
- Anthony Hartman defeated Krew Clark 6-1, 6-1 at No. 2 singles.
- Jacob Ribich defeated Zach Frank 6-0, 6-2 at No. 3 singles.
- Ben Maggard and Coy Lantz defeated Brody Isch and Mason Fruechte 6-3, 6-0 at No. 1 doubles.
- Kade Abbett and Dane Schlagenhauf defeated Chris Espinosa and Jaiden Patterson 6-1, 6-2 at No. 2 doubles.
- Bluffton fell in the junior varsity match 6-4.

Results for JV:

- Michael Summers (AC) defeated Lance Moser 6-4.
- Reid Abbett (B) defeated Michael Summers 6-2.
- Jackson Meyer (B) defeated Eli Wellman 6-3.
- Alex Maggard (B) defeated Eli Wellman 6-0.
- Lincoln Rodgers (B) defeated Braden Dalrymple 6-4.
- Braden Dalrymple (AC) defeated Jared Moser 7-5.
- Kaden Hurst (AC) defeated Graham Linderwell 6-4.
- Kaden Hurst (AC) defeated Jace Draper 7-5.
- Daymon Frock and Sam Johnson (AC) defeated Grant Reifsteck and Braden Lemler 7-5 Daymon Frock and Sam Johnson (AC) defeated Chase Houser and Kenny Mercer 6-0.

Reds will begin search for new manager immediately to replace fired David Bell

By MITCH STACY
AP Sports Writer

CINCINNATI (AP) — The search for a new manager for the Cincinnati Reds will begin immediately following the firing of David Bell after six seasons, president of baseball operations Nick Krall said Monday.

The team announced the move on Sunday night hours after a 2-0 loss to the Pittsburgh Pirates. Bench coach Freddie Benavides was named interim manager for the final five games of the season. Most of the other coaches will be retained until a new manager is hired.

Krall cited inconsistency, philosophical differences, players not playing to their potential, and some young players who were added to the roster last season not developing as fast as the organization had hoped.

"When you look across the board, I thought we should have been better," he said.

The 52-year-old Bell — whose grandfather Gus and father Buddy both spent part of their careers playing in Cincinnati — was hired by the Reds in October 2018. He had a 409-456 record over six seasons.

His contract had been extended in July 2023.

"We made the decision to extend David last season because I thought we were moving in the right direction as we promoted a younger core of players to develop in the big leagues," Krall said. "But after reflecting on everything this season, I decided we needed to move in another direction with the leadership in the major league clubhouse. That's why we made the change."

With a week left in the season, the Reds are 76-81 and in fourth place in the NL Central, 13 1/2 games behind division champion Milwaukee. Cincinnati closes out the season with five road games. The Reds have a two-game series in Cleveland on Tuesday and Wednesday before closing out the campaign with three games in Chicago against the Cubs.

"If we make the decision now it allows us to meet with everybody (in the organization) on the last road trip, it allows us to start this process and it gives us a week head start instead of waiting when you know what the decision is going to be," Krall said.

Under Bell in 2020, the Reds earned a postseason berth in his second season, which was shortened by COVID-19 to 60 games.



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News-Banner Scoreboard

FOOTBALL

NFL

All Times EDT

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Buffalo	3	0	0	1.000	112	48
N.Y. Jets	2	1	0	.667	67	52
Miami	1	2	0	.333	33	72
New England	1	2	0	.333	39	57

South

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Houston	2	1	0	.667	55	74
Indianapolis	1	2	0	.333	58	61
Jacksonville	0	3	0	.000	40	85
Tennessee	0	3	0	.000	48	78

North

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Pittsburgh	3	0	0	1.000	51	26
Baltimore	1	2	0	.333	71	78
Cleveland	1	2	0	.333	50	67
Cincinnati	0	3	0	.000	68	80

West

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Kansas City	3	0	0	1.000	75	62
L.A. Chargers	2	1	0	.667	58	33
Denver	1	2	0	.333	52	46
Las Vegas	1	2	0	.333	58	81

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Philadelphia	2	1	0	.667	70	63
Washington	2	1	0	.667	79	88
Dallas	1	2	0	.333	77	89
N.Y. Giants	1	2	0	.333	45	64

South

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
New Orleans	2	1	0	.667	103	44
Tampa Bay	2	1	0	.667	64	62
Atlanta	1	2	0	.333	49	61
Carolina	1	2	0	.333	49	95

North

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Minnesota	3	0	0	1.000	85	30
Detroit	2	1	0	.667	62	53
Green Bay	2	1	0	.667	75	58
Chicago	1	2	0	.333	53	57

West

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Seattle	3	0	0	1.000	73	43
Arizona	1	2	0	.333	82	64
L.A. Rams	1	2	0	.333	57	91
San Francisco	2	0	0	.333	73	69

Thursday's Games

N.Y. Jets 24, New England 3

Sunday's Games

Denver 26, Tampa Bay 7
 Green Bay 30, Tennessee 14
 Indianapolis 21, Chicago 16
 Minnesota 34, Houston 7
 N.Y. Giants 21, Cleveland 15
 Philadelphia 15, New Orleans 12
 Pittsburgh 20, L.A. Chargers 10
 Carolina 36, Las Vegas 22
 Seattle 24, Miami 3
 Baltimore 28, Dallas 25

Detroit 20, Arizona 13
 L.A. Rams 27, San Francisco 24
 Kansas City 22, Atlanta 17

Monday's Games

Buffalo 47, Jacksonville 10
 Washington 38, Cincinnati 33

BASKETBALL

WNBA

WNBA Playoff Glance
(x-if necessary)

First Round

(Best-of-3)
 No. 1 New York 1, No. 8 Atlanta 0
 Sunday, Sept. 22: New York 83, Atlanta 69
 Tuesday, Sept. 24: Atlanta at New York, 7:30 p.m.
 x-Thursdays, Sept. 26: New York at Atlanta, TBD
 No. 2 Minnesota 1, No. 7 Phoenix 0
 Sunday, Sept. 22: Minnesota 102, Phoenix 95
 Wednesday, Sept. 25: Phoenix at Minnesota, 9:30 p.m.
 x-Friday, Sept. 27: Minnesota at Phoenix, TBD
 No. 3 Connecticut 1, No. 6 Indiana 0
 Sunday, Sept. 22: Connecticut 93, Indiana 69
 Wednesday, Sept. 25 Indiana at Connecticut, 7:30 p.m.
 x-Friday, Sept. 27: Connecticut at Indiana, TBD
 No. 4 Las Vegas 1, No. 5 Seattle 0
 Sunday, Sept. 22: Las Vegas 78, Seattle 67
 Tuesday, Sept. 24: Seattle at Las Vegas, 9:30 p.m.
 x-Thursdays, Sept. 26: Las Vegas at Seattle, TBD
 (Best-of-5)

Oakland 67 89 429 17½
 Los Angeles 63 93 404 21½
 x-clinched division
 z-clinched playoff berth

Sunday's Games

Boston 8, Minnesota 1, 1st game
 Detroit 4, Baltimore 3
 San Francisco 2, Kansas City 0
 Tampa Bay 4, Toronto 3
 St. Louis 2, Cleveland 1
 Texas 6, Seattle 5
 L.A. Angels 9, Houston 8
 San Diego 4, Chicago White Sox 2
 N.Y. Yankees 7, Oakland 4
 Boston 9, Minnesota 3, 2nd game

Monday's Games

Boston 4, Toronto 1
 Seattle 6, Houston 1

Tuesday's Games

Tampa Bay (Peipot 8-6) at Detroit (Skubal 17-4), 1:10 p.m.
 Cincinnati (Junis 4-0) at Cleveland (Bibee 11-8), 6:40 p.m.
 Kansas City (Ragans 11-9) at Washington (Parker 7-10), 6:45 p.m.
 Baltimore (Kremer 7-10) at N.Y. Yankees (Schmidt 5-4), 7:05 p.m.
 Boston (Bello 14-8) at Toronto (Francis 8-5), 7:07 p.m.
 L.A. Angels (Kochanowicz 2-5) at Chicago White Sox (Cannon 4-10), 7:40 p.m.
 Miami (Weathers 3-6) at Minnesota (Ober 12-7), 7:40 p.m.
 Seattle (Gilbert 8-11) at Houston (Valdez 14-7), 8:10 p.m.
 Texas (Eovaldi 11-8) at Oakland (Spence 6-9), 9:40 p.m.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

W	L	Pct	GB
x-Philadelphia	93	64	.592
New York	87	69	.558
Atlanta	85	71	.545
Washington	69	87	.442
Miami	57	99	.365

Central Division

W	L	Pct	GB
x-Milwaukee	89	67	.571
Chicago	80	77	.510
St. Louis	79	77	.506
Cincinnati	76	81	.484
Pittsburgh	73	83	.468

West Division

W	L	Pct	GB
z-Los Angeles	93	63	.596
San Diego	90	66	.577
Arizona	87	69	.558
San Francisco	77	79	.494
Colorado	60	96	.385

BASEBALL

MLB

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

z-New York	W	L	Pct	GB
Baltimore	92	64	.590	—
Baltimore	86	70	.551	6
Boston	79	78	.503	13½
Tampa Bay	78	78	.500	14
Toronto	73	84	.465	19½

Central Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
x-Cleveland	90	67	.573	—
Detroit	82	74	.526	7½
Kansas City	82	74	.526	7½
Minnesota	81	75	.519	8½
Chicago	36	120	.231	53½

West Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
Houston	85	72	.541	—
Seattle	81	76	.516	4
Texas	74	82	.474	10½

Sunday's Games

Pittsburgh 2, Cincinnati 0
 San Francisco 2, Kansas City 0
 Atlanta 5, Miami 4
 St. Louis 2, Cleveland 1
 Chicago Cubs 5, Washington 0



Southern Wells' middle school cross country team holds their first place trophy after winning the South Adams Invitational on Saturday. (Photo submitted)

Raiders' middle school win South Adams Invitational

Southern Wells competed in the South Adams Invitational in middle school cross country over the weekend and came away with some accolades.

The Raider boys finished in first at the event with a score of 53. The girls finished third with 63 points.

Medalists for the boys were Logan Leas, Chase Kirkwood, Rylan Leas, Colten Fiechter and Logan Rogers. For the girls, it was Aubree Neuenschwander, Grace Rogers and Tenley Fiechter.

Logan Leas finished in fourth with a

time of 10:45.0, Kirkwood eighth place, Rylan Leas ninth, Fiechter 11th, Rogers 23rd, Liam Leas 55th, Randy Frauhiger 74th, Parker Carroll 86th, Carter Leas 123rd, Josiah Bricker 127th and Zane Gates 143rd.

Neuenschwander placed fourth at the end with a time of 12:03.0. Rogers placed 17th, Fiechter 21st, Parker Bryant 27th, Anna McFarren 31st, Ellie Nichols 55th, Raven Mounsey 75th, Avy Kirkwood 86th, McKenzie Striker 89th and Annie Herr 93rd.

Milwaukee 10, Arizona 9	San Francisco at Arizona, late	Milwaukee (Myers 8-6) at Pittsburgh (Falter 8-8), 6:40 p.m.
San Diego 4, Chicago White Sox 2	Tuesday's Games	Kansas City (Ragans 11-9) at Washington (Parker 7-10), 6:45 p.m.
L.A. Dodgers 6, Colorado 5	Chicago Cubs (Steele 5-5) at Philadelphia (TBD), 6:40 p.m.	St. Louis (McGreedy 2-0) at Colorado (Feltner 3-10), 8:40 p.m.
N.Y. Mets 2, Philadelphia 1	Cincinnati (Junis 4-0) at Cleveland (Bibee 11-8), 6:40 p.m.	
Monday's Games	Philadelphia 6, Chicago Cubs 2	

Agriculture

2025 Old Farmer's Almanac teases a winter far unlike the last

By AGDAILY

The 2025 Old Farmer's Almanac is projecting this coming winter to be far different than the previous year's expectations: Things are looking gentler across most of the United States.

"This winter, temperatures will be up and snowfall down throughout most of the United States," reports Carol Connare, the almanac's editor-in-chief. "While there will still be plenty of chilly temperatures and snow for most slopes, the high heating costs associated with the season shouldn't hit so hard. We're predicting a temperate, uneventful winter — potentially a welcome reprieve from the extremes of recent years."

There will be exceptions, of course. Winter rainstorms are likely to leave Florida, the Deep South, and southern California soaked, the 2025 Old Farmer's Almanac says. Meanwhile, heavy snowfall is expected in central and southern Appalachia, the western Ohio Valley, and the Rockies — calling all skiers and sledgers.

The Old Farmer's Almanac — considered to be North America's most popular reference guide on agriculture and weather and one that is different from the similarly titled Farmer's Almanac — dates to the late 18th century. The original formula that this publication uses to calculate the weather is kept tucked away in a black tin box in Dublin, New Hampshire, at the

almanac's offices.

Unfortunately, most people don't have the credentials to get a sneak peak at the secret formulas the Old Farmer's Almanac uses.

The Old Farmer's Almanac claims that its forecasts are "traditionally 80 percent accurate," and it includes a health dose of wit and wisdom in its pages, including puzzles, recipes, and a "trends" section.

Regional summaries for the U.S.

The Old Farmer's Almanac breaks the nation down into 18 distinct regions, with the intent that you'll be able to zero in on the unique climate in your neck of the woods.

For example, the almanac says of these key farming regions:

Region 4: Southeast: Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina: Winter will be cooler than normal in the east and warmer than normal in the west. The coldest periods are expected in late November, late January, and late February. Precipitation and snowfall will be above normal. The best chance for snow is in late January and early and late February.

Superbowl 2025 is set in New Orleans in early February; this may affect travel, though the Superdome is completely covered.

Region 8: Deep South: Wet and wild? Or, is that wet and mild? Across the Deep South, which covers Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, and

nearby states, there will be plenty of moisture and an extra dose of warmth this winter. Winter temperatures will be consistently warmer than average (about 2°F monthly). The coldest periods will occur in early and late November, from late January into early February, and in late February.

Region 9: Upper Midwest: If you're a roofer in Minnesota, you know winter! This northern-tier region comprises Minneapolis and other cities, including International Falls to the north and Marquette and Green Bay to the east. It's cold in the Upper Midwest, but winter 2024-2025 will not be as cold as usual. The coldest shots will occur in early November, early and late January, late February, and early March. Precipitation and snowfall will be below average for the Upper Midwest, with the snowiest periods in late November, late December, mid- and late January, early February, and mid-March.

Region 10: Heartland: The heartland of America mainly covers Iowa, Missouri, and eastern Kansas, as well as Nebraska. Cities include Des Moines, St. Louis, Kansas City, Omaha, and Topeka. Winter will be warmer than normal throughout this agricultural area. The coldest periods in the heartland will occur in late January and early and late February. Precipitation and snowfall will be below normal as well. The most

snow will fall when temperatures are coldest in late January as well as early and late February.

Region 12: High Plains: This region, located just to the east of the Rocky Mountains, covers America's broad expanses of flatland. It extends from Amarillo north through Denver to Billings and east to Bismarck. Winter temperatures will be warmer than normal in the northern parts of this region — and colder than normal in the southern areas. Expect the coldest periods in early and mid-January and early to late February. Precipitation will be near normal, so don't expect extremes. Snowfall will be near to above normal, with the snowiest periods in mid-November, mid- and late January, and late February.

Where can you get a copy of the 2025 Old Farmer's Almanac?

The 2025 Old Farmer's Almanac, with its yellow and green cover, is now available in bookstores and retail stores and on Amazon and Almanac.com. Not just for farmers, the Old Farmer's Almanac reaches a broader audience with husbandry tips, days to cut your hair or mow your lawn (that you won't see for a while), and how to quit bad habits, brew beer, and grow basil.

Farm group files lawsuit against Department of Labor over H-2A rule

By AGDAILY

The labor group known as the National Council of Agricultural Employers said it has joined others in filing a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky to challenge the U.S. Department of Labor's final rule titled, Improving Protections for Workers in Temporary Agricultural Employment in the United States. The rule is intended to target vulnerability and abuses experienced by workers under the H-2A program that undermine fair labor standards for all farmworkers in the U.S.

The NCAE, which said other associations and individual farmers have signed onto the suit, argues that the rule is unlawful and unconstitutional and poses significant challenges to farm and ranch families nationwide. However, the organization did not specify which groups or individuals are included in the lawsuit, and no public statements could be found about others who may potentially be involved.

The NCAE is based just outside of Washington, D.C., and describes itself as a national trade association focusing exclusively on agricultural labor issues from the agricultural employer's viewpoint.

The rule, which was originally introduced in October 2022, is part of the Labor Department's effort to modernize the H-2A temporary agricultural worker program. The department claims that the rule would enhance protections for farm workers, particularly those in the H-2A program, by promoting worker self-advocacy, preventing retaliation, and increasing transparency in foreign labor recruitment.

Acting Labor Secretary Julie Su stated that the rule would protect vulnerable farm workers from abuses that could depress wages and lower labor standards across the agricultural industry. She emphasized the administration's commitment to ensuring fair treatment for all workers, particularly those who are at risk of exploitation.

Agricultural Services Guide

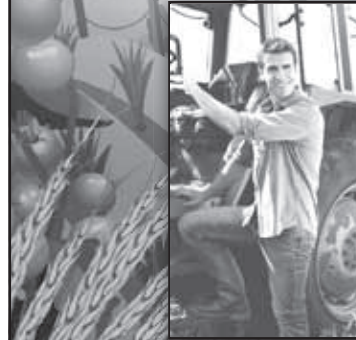
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The 'other' grandmother

Dear Annie: I am the mother of two wonderful sons, both married to equally wonderful women. While I am grateful for the love and partnership they have found, I can wholeheartedly relate to the sentiments shared in "One Grieving Grandmother to Another."

Both of my daughters-in-law are incredibly close to their own mothers. It's a beautiful bond they share, but as someone who raised her sons to be independent and self-sufficient, I often find myself in the background, feeling like the least important grandmother. It's hard, and I won't deny the pang of hurt that comes when I feel like I'm on the periphery of their lives. Still, I do my best to smile, show grace, and be grateful for any invitations or moments of connection that come my way.

It seems that in today's world, with families often having fewer children, the role of "Grandma No. 2" feels even more pronounced. My own grandmothers, on both sides, were surrounded by large families. My paternal grandmother had four children, and my maternal grandmother had five, which meant they each had over a dozen grandchildren. Back then, we all had to take turns with Grandma, and it sometimes felt like a competition just to get a bit of her time. That dynamic made everyone want to spend more time with her.

These days, though, things feel different. With smaller families and different cultural shifts, grandmothers who aren't the primary figure — often the maternal grandmothers — are left feeling the sting of distance. There's less competition for attention, and yet, in some ways, it feels like there's less opportunity to share those precious moments.

It also saddens me to see how common it's become for daughters-in-law to justify limiting or cutting off relationships with their mothers-in-law, often citing claims of toxicity. While I'm sure there are cases where this might be true, it's hard to believe that the majority of mothers-in-law could be so harmful. So many of us are just trying to navigate these new roles with love and patience, hoping to be a part of our grandchildren's lives.

Thank you for sharing the "Grieving Grandmother's" letter. It resonated deeply

with me, as I know it has with so many other mothers of sons who are living this reality. It's a tender and painful experience that often goes unnoticed, but hearing the voices of others helps us feel less alone. — I Can Relate

Dear I Can Relate: Thank you for sharing your heartfelt letter. I am printing it in the hopes that it will resonate with other grandparents who may be feeling the same way — reminding them that they are not alone in these tender, often painful emotions.

It's important to acknowledge that many mothers-in-law, like you, are navigating their roles with grace, patience and love, even when they feel like they're on the outskirts of their own children's and grandchildren's lives. Your words shine a light on an experience that often goes unspoken yet is felt by so many. In today's world, where family dynamics have shifted, and connections can sometimes feel distant or strained, this sense of loss can weigh heavily on grandmothers who long to be more involved but find themselves quietly watching from the sidelines.

I also hope that your letter opens the eyes and hearts of some daughters-in-law, encouraging them to be more mindful and inclusive toward their mothers-in-law. It's easy to become wrapped up in our own routines and family traditions, but sometimes a small act of kindness — an extra invitation, a few more minutes on the phone or a shared moment of connection — can make a world of difference to someone who is longing to be part of their grandchild's life.

"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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My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



Our job as Christians is to tell others about Jesus Christ

Question: I'm a high school student trying to live so my friends will ask me why I believe in Jesus, but many of them don't even believe that there's a Heaven, much less a God that loves them. How can I convince them? — B.J.

Answer: The Apostle Paul appeared before King Agrippa and presented the truth of Jesus Christ, but the king said, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian" (Acts 26:28, NKJV), but not even Paul could convince him. Our job as Christians is to tell others about Jesus Christ and the hope we have because of His death on the cross for

our sins. God sent His Son who gave everything — His very life's blood, His last breath, and His lasting promise — to purchase the souls of men, women, and children for the kingdom of Heaven. Jesus rose from the grave by the power of God to confirm Heaven's reality. Believing in Christ settles the question about Heaven.

Many young people are convinced that life after death is just a myth and because of it they live in darkness and despair, without hope. While young people may not give life after death serious thought because they are young, healthy, and energetic, it doesn't mean that life after

death is not a reality. They fool themselves, because it is something everyone will face someday.

The greatest discovery we will ever make is to know the love of God, which was fully demonstrated by His Son's sacrifice on the cross for us. Jesus did not die on the cross for people's sin so that we would believe in Heaven — but that we would believe in Him. Heaven does not save souls ... it collects them.

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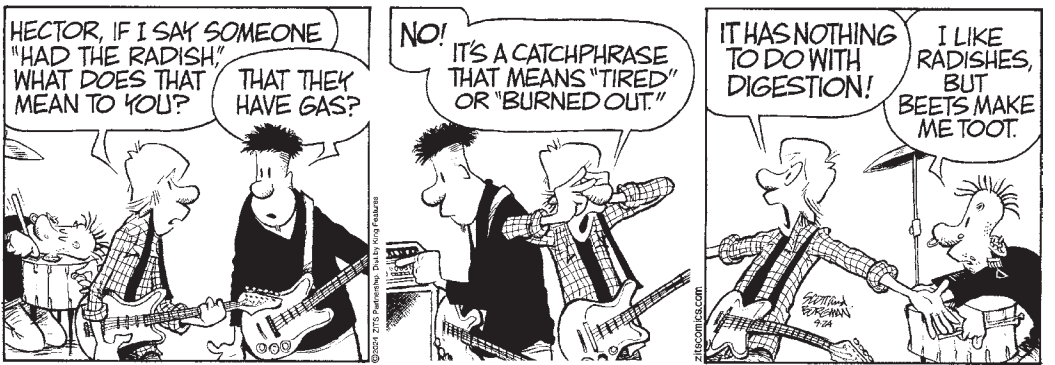
BEETLE BAILEY



BLONDIE



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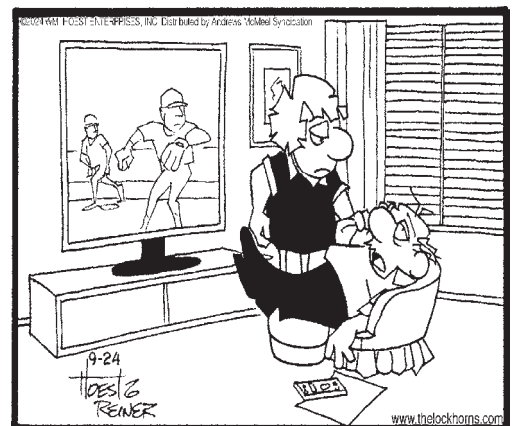
CRANKSHAFT



THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane

The LOCKHORNS



09/24	M	A	D1	D2	5 PM	5:30	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30	12 AM	12:30	
WINM (12)	11	26	63		Washington Watch With Tony Perkins	News-watch	Creflo Dollar	Joseph Prince	Turning Point	TCT Today	Joyce Meyer	Vindication	Life Today with	Robert Jeffress	Jewish Jesus	Andrew Womack	Ask the Pastor	Mysteries			
CBS WANE (15)	2	15	15		News (N)	Inside Edition (N)	News at 6 (N)	CBS News (N)	Wheel of Fortune (N)	Jeopardy!	FBI	FBI: International	FBI: Most Wanted	Nightcast	(35) After Midnight	(35) Late Show-Colbert	(35) Mid. (N)				
Antenna WANE-2 (152)	106	20			Chicago Fire "Protect a Child"	Chicago Fire "I'll Cover You"	Chicago Fire "Light Things Up"	Chicago Fire "51's Original Bell"	Chicago Fire "Rattle Second City"	Chicago Fire "That Kind of Heat"	Chicago Fire "Smash Therapy"	Chicago Fire "Funny What Things Remind Us"									
ABC WPTA (21)	4	3	21		ABC21 News at 5 (N)	ABC21 (N)	ABC World News (N)	ABC21 (N)	Ent. Tonight (N)	Dancing Professional dancers pair with celebrities to train and compete in ballroom dancing. (N)	High Pote "Dancers in the Dark" (N)	ABC21 (N)	(35) Jimmy Kimmel	(35) Nightline							
NBC WPTA-2 (212)	7	8	14		Family Feud	25 Words or Less	News (N)	NBC News (N)	Family Feud (N)	Family Feud (N)	America's Got Talent	Got Talent Host Terry Crews reveals who America has chosen as the Season 19 winner, special guests perform.	News (N)	(35) Tonight Show (N)	(35) Seth Meyers (N)						
MNT WPTA-3 (213)	10	9	56	34	Bob Hearts Abishola	Bob Hearts Abishola	Modern Family	News (N)	Last Man Standing	Last Man Standing	Suits	Suits	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	The Conners	The Conners	The Goldbergs	The Goldbergs			
CW WISE (33)	8	4	33	33	The Steve Wilkos Show	TMZ Live (N)			TMZ (N)	True Crime News (N)	The Conners	Conners "Triggered"	The Conners	The Conners	Friends	Friends	TMZ (N)	Dish Nation (N)	The Goldbergs	Chicago P.D.	
PBS WFWA (38)	13	5	39	39	Weekend in Havana	PBS News Hour (N)	BBC News America	Healthline (N)	Finding Your Roots "Mexican Roots"	Frontline The lives & characters of Kamala Harris & Donald Trump ahead of the 2024 presidential election.	Amanpour and Company (N)	Company (N)	Finding Your Roots "Mexican Roots"	Amanpour and Company (N)	Company (N)	Finding Your Roots "Mexican Roots"	Company (N)	Neighbor	Neighbor		
PBS WFPB (48)	3				Weekend in Havana	Context	The Day	PBS News Hour (N)	Finding Your Roots "Mexican Roots"	Frontline The lives & characters of Kamala Harris & Donald Trump ahead of the 2024 presidential election.	Young Sheldon	Young Sheldon	Neighbor	Neighbor							
FOX WFTF (55)	6	5	55	55	WFFT Fox News at 5 (N)	WFFT Fox News at 6 (N)	Big Bang	Big Bang	Murder in a Small Town (P) (N)	2024 FOX Fall (N)											
CABLE CHANNELS																					
LIFE	23	113	108	252	Rizzoli & Isles "Tears of a Clown"	Raisings Caputo: Raising Spirits (N)	Raisings Caputo: Raising Spirits (N)	Raisings Caputo: Raising Spirits (N)	Raisings Caputo: Raising Spirits (N)	Raisings Caputo: Raising Spirits (N)	Raisings Caputo: Raising Spirits (N)	Raisings Caputo: Raising Spirits (N)	(05) Theresa Caputo: Raising Spirits (N)	(05) Theresa Caputo: Raising Spirits (N)	(05) Theresa Caputo: Raising Spirits (N)	(05) Theresa Caputo: Raising Spirits (N)	(05) Theresa Caputo: Raising Spirits (N)	(05) Theresa Caputo: Raising Spirits (N)	(05) Theresa Caputo: Raising Spirits (N)	(05) Theresa Caputo: Raising Spirits (N)	
FX	24	132	136	148	*** Iron Man 3 (13) Robert Downey Jr., Andy Griffith	*** Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness	*** The Notebook (2004, Romance) Rachel McAdams, James Garner, Ryan Gosling	*** Top Gun: Maverick (2022, Action) Miles Teller, Jennifer Connelly, Tom Cruise. (P)	*** Armageddon (1998, Sci-Fi) Billy Bob Thornton, Liv Ullmann, Bruce Willis.	*** Armageddon (1998, Sci-Fi) Billy Bob Thornton, Liv Ullmann, Bruce Willis.	*** Armageddon (1998, Sci-Fi) Billy Bob Thornton, Liv Ullmann, Bruce Willis.	*** Armageddon (1998, Sci-Fi) Billy Bob Thornton, Liv Ullmann, Bruce Willis.	*** Armageddon (1998, Sci-Fi) Billy Bob Thornton, Liv Ullmann, Bruce Willis.	*** Armageddon (1998, Sci-Fi) Billy Bob Thornton, Liv Ullmann, Bruce Willis.	*** Armageddon (1998, Sci-Fi) Billy Bob Thornton, Liv Ullmann, Bruce Willis.	*** Armageddon (1998, Sci-Fi) Billy Bob Thornton, Liv Ullmann, Bruce Willis.	*** Armageddon (1998, Sci-Fi) Billy Bob Thornton, Liv Ullmann, Bruce Willis.	*** Armageddon (1998, Sci-Fi) Billy Bob Thornton, Liv Ullmann, Bruce Willis.	*** Armageddon (1998, Sci-Fi) Billy Bob Thornton, Liv Ullmann, Bruce Willis.	*** Armageddon (1998, Sci-Fi) Billy Bob Thornton, Liv Ullmann, Bruce Willis.	

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

- Innocent one
- Pvt.'s superior
- Throat clearer
- Corp. bigwig
- Knee protector
- Modern money
- Some hair sprays
- Baseball stats
- Last (Abbr.)
- ISP giant
- Schnoz-zes
- "Bow-wow!"
- Owns
- Greek sorcer-ess
- "Holy cow!"
- Always
- Pallid
- Oaxaca water
- Time between flights
- "Ivanhoe" novelist

DOWN

- Skater's leap
- Ernie's pal
- Green prefix
- Parody amt.
- Chutzpah order
- California city
- Balloon pilot
- Oodles
- Desk wood
- Without purpose
- Cleanse
- Metric distances (Abbr.)
- Snitch
- Boyfriend
- Solution time: 22 mins.

IRA ACT KEEL
MUSK ARA AMOI
PITTA HAH TUNE
SNITS BOCA
IAN EUROPA
CAKEMIX EIDER
OREL TET NINE
LAIRDUP JAW
EPIC NICHE
GUAC XOO TOOT
AMOK ASK TIES
DALY RTS FRY

Yesterday's answer 9-24

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12					13			14		
15			16					17		
18			19			20				
		21				22				
23	24	25			26			27	28	29
30			31					32		
33				34				35		
		36				37				
38	39	40			41			42	43	44
45					46			47		
48					49			50		
51					52			53		

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Lottery Numbers

Monday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY

Cash 5 — 04-11-20-27-33
Cash4Life — 14-15-26-29-56, Cash Ball: 04
Quick Draw Midday — 01-05-13-14-16-17-34-38-39-43-44-45-47-58-62-65-66-77-78-79, BE: 44
Daily Three-Midday — 08-07-08, SB: 07
Daily Three-Evening — 07-02-09, SB: 04
Daily Four-Midday — 08-06-07-07, SB: 07
Daily Four-Evening — 01-06-04-06, SB: 04
Quick Draw Evening — 02-12-13-15-21-31-32-35-37-45-49-50-51-52-57-59-62-70-74-77, BE: 74
Hoosier Lotto — Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$22.3 million

MEGA MILLIONS

Estimated jackpot (for Tuesday): \$62 million
POWERBALL
15-21-25-37-45 Powerball: 19; Power Play: 3X

SUDOKU

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

King Classic Sudoku

7	8	2				5	9	6
	6	4				3	7	2
9	3	2		7			1	
	7	9		5	6			
1								9
2	4				1		8	5
3				6			5	
				8	4	9		
	9	7				8	6	

Difficulty: ★★

9/24

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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.

Public Sale Calendar

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. Sale managers Brandon Steffen, 260-710-5684, Pat Carter, 260-273-8294, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006.

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." Sale managers Brandon Steffen, 260-710-5684, Pat Carter, 260-273-8294, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, 260-824-3006, www.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 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, art, antiques, collectibles, home goods & decor, electronics, tools, furniture, lawn & garden, sports goods, household, & more! Open house Oct. 5 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., 69 W 1st St., Poneto, IN. Sale manager, Isaac Stoller, 260-413-3515, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006.

BIDDING ENDS SEPTEMBER 30 - (Online Only) - Various consignors, seller. Firearms consisting of Springfield, Hopkins & Allen, Colt, Browning, Stevens, Glock, Winchester, ammunition, arrowheads, duck decoys, & more. Open House Sept. 28 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., 215 E Market St, Bluffton, IN. Sale manager, Isaac Stoller, 260-413-3515, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, 260-824-3006, www.steffengrp.com.

BIDDING ENDS OCTOBER 1 - (Online Only) - Grover, seller. Ford tractor, mower, Craftsman tools, various woodworking & shop tools, furniture, antiques, primitives, lumber, and much more! Open House Sept. 28 from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m., 8726 S 600 W-90, Warren, IN. Sale manager, Isaac Stoller, 260-413-3515, *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. Auction manager Jared Sipe, 260-750-1553, *Schrader Real Estate and Auction of Fort Wayne, SchraderFortWayne.com*, 866-340-0445.

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

OCTOBER 5-OCTOBER 12 - Private Family Collection, sellers. Fine art work 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.

OCTOBER 6-OCTOBER 13 (Online Only) - Boots Estate, Seller. 366 W 300 N., Bluffton. 1993 Ford F150; Boat; Mini Bike; Wagons; Pyrex; Corningware; Glassware; Advertising; Furniture; Household; Board Games; Open Houses: Thursday, October 3 and Thursday, October 10 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Bobby Perry, Sale Manager, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006.

OCTOBER 12 - 9 a.m.-6 p.m. - (Online Only) - The Estate of Robert McNabb, seller. Spectacular 7,700 SF lake front home on 1.23 acres w/200' of lake frontage on Hamilton Lake. Luxury home features 6 bedrooms, 7 baths, expansive entertaining space, 4-car attached garage. Selling absolute at or above 1.4 million dollars. Seller's have over 4.7 million invested in this one of kind lake property. Open houses 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, Inc.*, www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006.

OCTOBER 24 - (Online Only) - The Estate of Larry N. Curry, seller. Excellent 1,400 SF, three bed, 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.

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1	9	8	7	2	5	3	6	4
2	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	9
7	9	2	6	9	1	2	8	5
9	8	1	1	6	5	9	7	2
6	7	9	2	8	5	9	1	
5	2	1	9	9	7	6	2	8
8	1	7	9	2	9	2	5	6
2	5	5	8	1	6	7	9	9
9	6	9	5	7	2	8	1	2

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Gunman who killed 10 at Colorado supermarket given life sentence

By COLLEEN SLEVIN
Associated Press

BOULDER, Colo. (AP) — A mentally ill man who killed 10 people at a Colorado supermarket in 2021 was sentenced Monday to life in prison for murder after a jury rejected his attempt to avoid prison time by pleading not guilty by reason of insanity.

Victims' relatives recounted in pained testimony the lives gunman Ahmad Alissa destroyed in the 2021 attack in the college town of Boulder.

"To the person that's done this, we hope that you suffer for the rest of your life. You are a coward," said Nikolena Stanicis, whose only sibling, Neven, was killed. "I hope this haunts the defendant until the end of time. The defendant deserves the absolute worst."

Stanicis recalled going out to ice cream with her brother the night before he was shot and how he would sometimes help her with bills. Their household — once filled with talk and laughter — is now mostly silent, she told the court.

Defense attorneys did not dispute that Alissa, who has schizophrenia, fatally shot 10 people including a police officer. But they argued he was insane at the time of the attack and couldn't tell right from wrong.

In addition to first-degree murder, the jury found Alissa guilty on 38 charges of attempted murder, one count of assault, and six counts of possessing illegal, large-capacity magazines.

Judge Ingrid Bakke sentenced him to 10 consecutive life prison sentences without the possibility of parole for the murders and an additional 1,334 years for the other offenses.

"This was not about mental illness. This was about brutal, intentional violence," District Attorney Michael Dougherty said.

Alissa, now 25 years old, declined through his attorneys to make a statement during his sentencing.

The courtroom was packed largely with victims' families and police, including officers shot at by Alissa. Several members of Alissa's family sat behind him.

Alissa started shooting immediately after getting out of his car in a King Soopers store parking lot in March 2021. He killed most of the victims in just over a minute and surrendered after an officer shot him in the leg.

The daughter of killed Officer Eric Talley lamented the life milestones they would not be able to share. But Madeline Talley said she would not hold onto bitterness and forgave Alissa.

"He taught me to believe that God brings good out of evil," Madeline Talley said of her father.

Others weren't ready to forgive. Robert Olds — whose niece,

Rikki, was killed — said Alissa's family should have been held criminally responsible because their "ignorance, inattentiveness and inaction" led directly to the attack.

Alissa did not visibly react as the verdict was read. During sentencing, he looked at times toward the victims' relatives as they spoke. For much of the time he sat hunched over, talking to his attorney or writing.

Defense attorneys later declined comment.

Prosecutors had to prove Alissa was sane. They argued he didn't fire randomly and showed an ability to make decisions by pursuing people who were running and trying to hide from him. He twice passed by a 91-year-old man who continued to shop, unaware of the shooting.

He came armed with steel-piercing bullets and illegal magazines that can hold 30 rounds of ammunition, which prosecutors said showed he wanted to make the attack as deadly as possible.

Jurors asked during deliberations to review videos of Alissa killing the victims, complying with commands as he was arrested and later being interviewed by psychologists.

Several members of Alissa's family, who immigrated to the United States from Syria, testified that he became withdrawn and spoke less a few years before the

shooting. He began acting paranoid and showed signs of hearing voices, they said, and the condition worsened after he got COVID-19 in late 2020.

Alissa was diagnosed with schizophrenia after the attack, and experts said the behaviors described by relatives were consistent with onset of the disease.

Psychologists who evaluated Alissa concluded he was sane during the shooting. The defense did not have to provide any evidence and did not present any experts to say that Alissa was insane.

Despite the fact that he heard voices, the state psychologists said Alissa did not experience delusions. They said his fear he could be jailed or killed by police revealed Alissa knew his actions were wrong.

Alissa repeatedly told the psychologists that he heard voices, including "killing voices" right before the shooting. But Alissa failed during about six hours of interviews to provide more details about the voices or whether they said anything specific, forensic psychologist B. Thomas Gray testified.

Mental illness is not the same as insanity. Colorado law defines insanity as having a mental disease so severe that it's impossible for a person to tell right from wrong.

Relatives of the victims attended the two-week trial and watched graphic surveillance and police

body camera video. Survivors testified about how they fled and in some cases helped others to safety.

Prosecutors did not offer any motive for the shooting. Alissa initially searched online for public places to attack in Boulder, including bars and restaurants, then a day before the shooting focused his research on large stores.

On the day of the attack, he drove from his home in the Denver suburb of Arvada and pulled into the first supermarket in Boulder that he encountered. He shot three victims in the parking lot before entering the store.

An emergency room doctor said she crawled onto a shelf and hid among bags of potato chips. A pharmacist who took cover testified that she heard Alissa say, "This is fun" at least three times as he went through the store firing his semi-automatic pistol that resembled an AR-15 rifle.

Alissa's mother told the court that she thought her son was "sick." His father testified that he thought Alissa was possessed by a djin, or evil spirit, but did not seek any treatment for his son because it would have been shameful for the family.

Gov. Jared Polis said in a statement justice had been served. "Loved ones, friends, and neighbors were taken from us far too soon by an act of pure evil," he said.

Israeli strikes kill 492 in Lebanon's deadliest day of conflict since 2006

MARJAYOUN, Lebanon (AP) — Israeli strikes Monday on Lebanon killed more than 490 people, including more than 90 women and children, Lebanese authorities said, in the deadliest barrage since the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war. The Israeli military warned residents in southern and eastern Lebanon to evacuate ahead of its widening air campaign against Hezbollah.

Thousands of Lebanese fled the south, and the main highway out of the southern port city of Sidon was jammed with cars heading toward Beirut in the biggest exodus since 2006.

Lebanon's health ministry said the strikes killed 492 people, including 35 children and 58 women, and wounded 1,645 people — a staggering one-day toll for a country still reeling from a deadly attack on communication devices last week.

In a recorded message, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urged Lebanese civilians to heed Israeli calls to evacuate, saying "take this warning seriously."

"Please get out of harm's way now," Netanyahu said. "Once our operation is finished, you can come back safely to your homes."

Israel's military spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said the army will do "whatever is necessary" to push Hezbollah from Lebanon's border with Israel.

Hagari claimed Monday's widespread airstrikes had inflicted heavy damage on Hezbollah. But he would not give a timeline for the ongoing operation and said Israel was prepared to launch a ground invasion of Lebanon if needed.

"We are not looking for wars. We are looking to take down the threats," he said. "We will do whatever is necessary to do to achieve this mission."

Hagari said Hezbollah has launched some 9,000 rockets and drones into Israel since last October, including 250 on Monday alone.

The military said Israeli warplanes struck 1,600 Hezbollah targets Monday, destroying cruise missiles, long- and short-range rockets and attack drones. The spokesman said many were hidden in residential areas, showing photos of what he said were weapons concealed in private homes.

"Hezbollah has turned southern Lebanon into a war zone," he told a news conference.

Israel estimates Hezbollah has some 150,000 rockets and missiles, including guided missiles and long-range projectiles capable of striking anywhere in Israel.

Earlier Monday evening, the Israeli military said it had carried out a targeted strike in Beirut. It did not give details. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported three missiles hit southern Beirut's Beir al-Abed neighborhood. Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV said six people were wounded.

Lebanese Health Minister Firass Abiad said the earlier strikes hit hospitals, medical centers and ambulances. The government ordered schools and universities to close across most of the country and began preparing shelters for the displaced.

Some strikes hit residential areas in the south and the eastern Bekaa Valley. One hit a wooded area as far away as Byblos, more than 80 miles from the border north of Beirut.

Israel said it was expanding the airstrikes to include areas of the valley along Lebanon's eastern border with Syria. Hezbollah has long had an established presence in the valley, where the group was founded in 1982 with the help of Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

Israel's military chief, Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi, said Israel was preparing its "next phases" of operations against Hezbollah, and that its airstrikes were "proactive," targeting Hezbollah infrastructure built over the past 20 years.

Halevi said the goal was to allow displaced Israelis to return to their homes in northern Israel.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah said it fired dozens of rockets toward Israel, including at military bases. It also targeted for a second day the facilities of the Rafael defense firm, headquartered in Haifa.

The evacuation warnings were the first of their kind in nearly a year of steadily escalating conflict and came after a particularly heavy exchange of fire Sunday. Hezbollah launched around 150 rockets, missiles and drones into northern Israel in retaliation for strikes that killed a top commander and dozens of fighters.

The increasing strikes and counterstrikes have raised fears of all-out war, even as Israel battles Hamas in Gaza and tries to negotiate the release of scores of hostages taken in Hamas' Oct. 7 attack. Hezbollah has vowed to continue its strikes in solidarity with Hamas, a fellow Iran-backed militant group.

A spokeswoman for President Joe Biden said the administration was concerned about what's happening between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon and insisted that getting a cease-fire deal between Israel and Gaza was key to easing tensions in the region.

"It's in everyone's interest to resolve it quickly and diplomatically," White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters traveling with Biden to New York, where he is to deliver his final address to the U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday.

A State Department official, who spoke to reporters on condition of anonymity to discuss the private diplomatic efforts, said the U.S. and numerous other countries were keen to present an "off-ramp" for both Israel and Hezbollah to reduce tensions and prevent an all-out war.

Iran's president accuses Israel of seeking wider Mideast war and laying 'traps' to lead Iran into it

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Iran's new president accused Israel on Monday of seeking a wider war in the Middle East and laying "traps" to lead his country into a broader conflict.

Masoud Pezeshkian told about two dozen media representatives that Iran doesn't want to see the current war in Gaza and airstrikes across the Israeli-Lebanon border expanded.

"We don't want to fight," he said. "It's Israel that wants to drag everyone into war and destabilize the region. ... They are dragging us to a point where we do not wish to go."

Pezeshkian, a heart surgeon and reformer, defeated a hardliner in Iran's July presidential runoff, after the death of the former president in a helicopter crash. He is making his debut on the international stage at this week's annual gathering of world leaders at the U.N. General Assembly, just as Israel steps up attacks on Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants in Lebanon.

The Iranian leader, who will turn 70 on Sunday, said that while Israel insists it doesn't want a wider war, its actions show otherwise. Pezeshkian pointed to the deadly explosions of pagers, walkie-talkies and other electronic devices in Lebanon last week, which he blamed on Israel, and the assassination of Hamas' political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on July 31.

Pezeshkian said the Iranian drone and missile attacks on Israel in April, in response to attack on an Iranian consular building in Syria's capital that Tehran blamed on Israel, proved its defensive capabilities.

He said Iran is not seeking to destabilize the Middle East. "We are willing to put all our weapons aside so long as Israel is willing to do the same," he said.

On Russia and Ukraine

Two weeks ago, the United States and Britain formally accused Iran of supplying short-range ballistic missiles to Russia to use against Ukraine and announced new sanctions on Moscow and Tehran before a joint visit to Kyiv by their top diplomats.

Pezeshkian insisted that Iran has not

and will not supply Russia with ballistic missiles to attack Ukraine. "We have never approved of Russia's aggression against Ukrainian territory," he said, adding that the two countries should establish a dialogue.

On Iran's nuclear program

The president was asked about Iran's nuclear program following the Trump administration's withdrawal from its 2015 nuclear deal with the U.S., Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany. It has seen Tehran expand its uranium enrichment from 3.67% purity under the deal to 60% purity, making many countries in the West nervous that it is seeking to make a nuclear weapon.

Would Iran go back to low-enriched uranium and give up its stockpile of high enriched uranium if the nuclear deal is restored?

Pezeshkian said weapons of mass destruction have no place in Iran and its military structures.

"We are still ready to live up to the same framework" that was agreed on in 2015, he said, but the Europeans tried to get Iran to sign a different accord.

He said Iran is willing to sit down with Europeans and Americans to negotiate.

On Israel and Gaza

Pezeshkian was asked if Iran had advance knowledge of the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks on Israel that killed about 1,200 people, most of them civilians.

"The Americans know, and Israel is very well aware that Iran was not aware," he replied.

Israel says it only targets militants and accuses Hamas and other armed groups of endangering civilians by operating in residential areas.

Pezeshkian also accused Israel of committing "genocide" in Gaza by attacking schools, hospitals and homes. He defended Iran's support for the Palestinians and Lebanon's Hezbollah militants, saying his country "will not stand by to oppression and injustice."

Israel's nearly year-long retaliation has killed more than 41,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry which doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants.

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