

# The News - Banner

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2024 BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection \$1.00



### Fall 5 in 5K series ends

The final Bluffton Parks Department 5 in 5K finished Thursday. At right, Wyatt Neuenschwander, left, stretches out with Shauna Neuenschwander. Below, Kyler Boots picks up speed as he heads down the final stretch. (Photos by Jonathan Snyder)



## Marion man sentenced, garners similar charges in Madison, Howard counties

By SYDNEY KENT

Donell Dixon, Marion, was charged with sexual misconduct with a minor in Wells County in March 2023.

He received the same charge in Howard County in July 2022 and Madison County in April 2023.

According to a probable cause affidavit, three separate victims, all under the age of 16, reported instances of sexual misconduct with Dixon in their respective cities — Bluffton, Kokomo, and Summitville — all having communicated through Snapchat. In each case, Dixon drove to the victim's loca-

tion. In the Wells County case, Dixon was sentenced to five years in prison with two years suspended for one count of sexual misconduct with a minor, a Level 5 felony. The victim's story was corroborated by a friend who was present when the conduct took place. When questioned by the Department of Child Services, accompanied by detectives with the Bluffton Police Department, Dixon initially denied his involvement despite being confronted with potential video evidence of his vehicle in the county.

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## Bids for new Bluffton electric substation set to open in spring of next year

By JONATHAN SNYDER

Bids for construction of the new electric substation on Chery Street are set to be sent out next spring, according to Utility Director Jon Oman.

The substation project comes due to a need for electrical supply at the west and south side of Bluffton. Oman stated that multiple industries have inquired about available electrical capacity in the area, add-

ing that current infrastructure only has about four to six megawatts left that they can add to the grid.

"At the point where we thought there were legitimate possibilities, we understood that it was time to do something about setting up and meeting the needs of future growth," Oman said. "I'm expecting in the next 10 years to maybe have 40 more Mega-

(Continued on Page 2)

## Indiana governor candidates discuss student absenteeism, literacy and teacher pay

BY ALEKSANDRA APPLETON  
Chalkbeat Indiana

Three candidates are running for Indiana governor and a chance to shape education policy in the state — Republican U.S. Sen. Mike Braun, Democrat Jennifer McCormick, and Libertarian Donald Rainwater.

Their views differ significantly, particularly on questions of education funding that are likely to take center stage when the next legislative session starts in January.

To read the full Q&A on education policy with Indiana's gubernatorial candidates, visit Chalkbeat Indiana.

While Braun has indicated support for universal access to private school vouchers, Rainwater, a soft-

ware engineer, supports universal ESAs, which would give families state funding for the classes and activities of their choosing, not just private school tuition.

Meanwhile, McCormick, the former superintendent of public instruction, has pointed out that choice funding has siphoned money from public schools, which enroll 90% of Hoosier students.

We asked the three candidates for Indiana governor to answer seven questions about their plans for education, including how they would tackle absenteeism and improve teacher retention and recruitment.

Rainwater and McCormick answered our questions, while Braun's campaign provided a link to his education platform

in response. Where relevant, Chalkbeat included points from his website that answered our questions.

Early voting is underway and sites can be found here.

Q: Participation in Indiana's three voucher tracks has grown as restrictions have been loosened, but most Indiana students still attend public schools. Meanwhile, some state leaders would like to merge the three tracks into a single universal ESA program. How would you balance these interests in the state budget? What is your vision for the future of the school choice landscape?

Rainwater: I believe that Indiana should maximize the options for each and every child. I also believe

(Continued on Page 2)

## Boeing workers continue labor strike after contract rejection

By DAVID KOENIG and MANUEL VALDES  
Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Boeing factory workers voted against the company's latest contract offer and remain on the picket lines six weeks into a strike that has stopped production of the aerospace giant's bestselling jetliners.

Local union leaders in Seattle said 64% of members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers who cast ballots Wednesday voted against accepting the contract offer.

"After 10 years of sacrifices, we still have ground to make up, and we're hopeful to do so by resuming negotiations promptly," Jon Holden, the head of the IAM District 751 union, said in a statement Wednesday evening. "This is workplace democracy — and also clear evidence that there are consequences when a company mistreats its workers year after year."

A spokesperson for Boeing said officials didn't have a comment on the vote.

The labor standoff comes during an already challeng-

ing year for Boeing, which became the focus of multiple federal investigations after a door panel blew off a 737 Max plane during an Alaska Airlines flight in January.

The strike has deprived the company of much-needed cash that it gets from delivering new planes to airlines. On Wednesday, the company reported a third-quarter loss of more than \$6 billion.

Union machinists assemble the 737 Max, Boeing's best-selling airliner, along

(Continued on Page 2)

## Israeli strike kills at least 17; Blinken says cease-fire talks will resume

By WAFEA SHURAF, FARNOUSH AMIRI and FATMA KHALED  
Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — An Israeli strike on a school where displaced people were sheltering in the central Gaza Strip killed at least 17 people on Thursday, nearly all women and children, Palestinian medical officials said.

The strike came as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said

Israel had accomplished its objective of "effectively dismantling" Hamas, and that negotiations over a cease-fire and the release of dozens of Israeli hostages would resume "in the coming days."

Another 42 people were wounded in the strike in the built-up Nuseirat refugee camp, according to the Awda Hospital, which received the casualties. Among the dead were 13 children under the age of 18 and three women, according to the hospital's records.

The Israeli military said it targeted Hamas militants inside the school, without providing evidence. Israel has carried out strikes on several schools-turned-shelters in recent months, saying it precisely targets militants hiding out among civilians. The strikes often kill women and children.

Blinken, speaking to reporters in Qatar, which has served as a key mediator between Israel and Hamas, said negotiators would return to Doha to renew the talks.

"What we really have to determine is whether Hamas is prepared to engage," Blinken said on his 11th visit to the region since the start of the war.

Hamas's political representatives have not so far signaled a softer stance.

"There is no change in our position," senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan told Al Mayadeen, a Lebanese broadcaster seen as closely aligned with Iran and its allies.

Hamdan said Hamas delegates

heard from mediators in Cairo about the potential to revive cease-fire negotiations but reiterated that the group still insists on an end to Israel's offensive in Gaza, as well as its complete withdrawal from the territory.

The Israeli prime minister's office said the head of the Mossad, the country's spy agency, would travel to Qatar on Sunday to meet with CIA director Bill Burns and the Qatari prime minister.

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**Outside**

Time to shake the dust off your umbrella

Today	Saturday	Sunday
High 67	High 60	High 60
Low 41	Low 30	Low 35

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October 25, 2024

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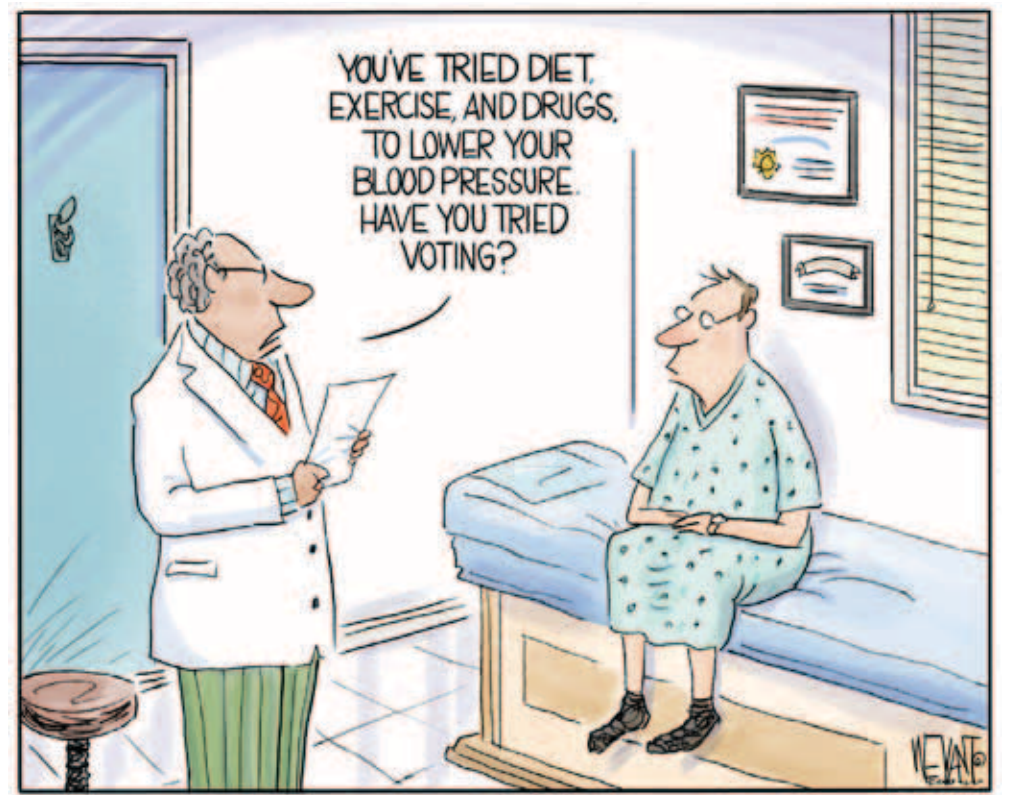
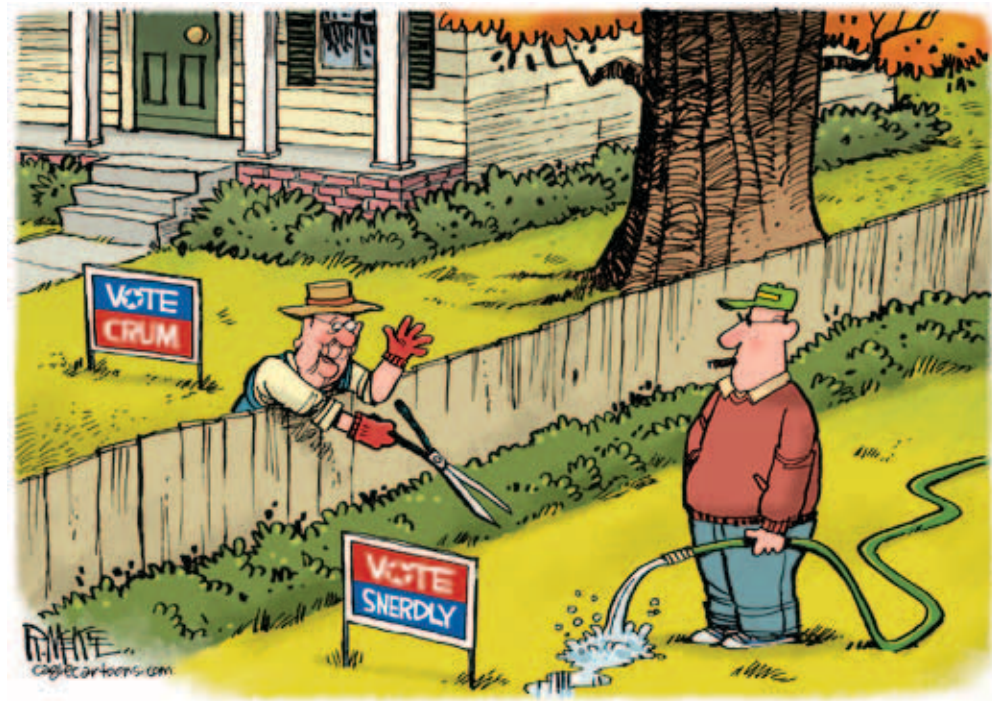
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The 2024 Election, cont. - a look through cartoonists' eyes...



"HOWDY, NEIGHBOR! I JUST WANTED TO SAY I HOPE YOU KNOW WHEN THIS IS ALL OVER—WHATEVER HAPPENS—NOTHING WILL CHANGE THE FACT THAT I'LL STILL THINK OF YOU AS AN IDIOT..."

Other Opinions

How to fix the Secret Service

A report issued (October 17) on the assassination attempt against Donald Trump this summer in Butler, Pa., comes to an alarming conclusion about the Secret Service's shortcomings. In the absence of "fundamental reform," it says, "another Butler can and will happen again." Will that sobering assessment help to prompt real changes, and fast?

The 52-page report was written by a bipartisan panel appointed under the Department of Homeland Security. This inquiry into the Butler shooting included 58 interviews and 7,000 documents. It goes through, in detail, the failures on the ground. The roof from which the gunman fired had been deemed part of the "outer perimeter," traditionally staffed by state and local police, not the Secret Service.

Communication between these agencies was a muddle. About 20 minutes before Mr. Trump took the stage, Secret Service personnel were made aware of a "suspicious person" who had been using a rangefinder, and police were trying to locate him for questioning. "The leadership of the Trump detail — those who were in closest proximity to him and tasked with managing his personal movements — were never informed," the panel says.

The report also makes broader criticisms of the Secret Service's culture, including "a pattern of under-training"; an attitude of "doing more with less," which is "inconsistent" with its no-fail mission; "an over-reliance on assigning personnel based on categories (former, candidate, nominee)" instead of individual risk assessments; and a lack of auditing and "continuous improvement" mechanisms.

The panel says new money would help, "but an influx of funds, without more, will not address the problems." It has recommendations for better communications and planning, while suggesting new leadership recruited from outside the agency. The report also argues that the Secret Service should shed responsibility for investigating financial crimes, so it can be "hyperfocused" on its most vital task.

"There is simply no excuse to need to 'do more with less' concerning protection of national leaders," the panel says. "Unless and until those responsibilities are fulfilled, no resources (funds or time) should be allocated to other missions that are not centrally related to the protective function." After Butler, that's an idea that should be taken seriously.

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

If demography is destiny, bring on immigration. We're going to need it.

Inevitably, presidential campaigns focus on immediate domestic difficulties or foreign dangers. Momentous developments — inexorably gathering storms — are unnoticed, until social upheavals upend governments' assumptions. But Nicholas Eberstadt has noticed.

For the first time since the Black Death in the 1300s, he writes in Foreign Affairs, Earth's population is going to decline. A lot. This will create social hazards that will challenge political ingenuity. Still, it will be, primarily, a protracted reverberation of a relatively recent, and excellent, event in humanity's story: the emancipation of women.

Eberstadt, who is incapable of writing an uninteresting paragraph, is an economist and demography-is-destiny savant at the American Enterprise Institute. He says a large excess of deaths over births will be driven not by a brute calamity like the bubonic plague but by choices: those regarding fertility, family structures and living arrangements, all reflecting "a worldwide reduction in the desire for children."

Today, two-thirds of the world's population lives in countries with below-replacement levels (2.1 births per woman) of fertility. Since the Soviet Union collapsed, Russia has had 17 million more deaths than births. The 27 European Union countries are, collectively, 30 percent below replacement. Last year, France had fewer births than in 1806, when Napoleon won the Battle of Jena. Italy had the fewest since its 1861 unification, Spain the fewest since it started keeping track of this in 1859. America's "demographic exceptionalism" is despite its fertility rate (1.62 last year), thanks to immigration.

Periodically, including recently, alarmists have warned about a "population explosion" producing "overpopulation." Such Cassandra do not notice the correlation between population increases and abundance produced by increased numbers of workers, innovators and entrepreneurs. In the past century, billions have risen from poverty as global population has quadrupled.

But, Eberstadt says, as the world has become richer, healthier, more educated and more urbanized, "the most powerful national fertility predictor" has been something related to these changes: changes in "what women want." Volition shapes birth rates because now people everywhere are "aware of the possibility of very different ways of life from the ones that confined their parents."

The waning of religious belief, which has generally encouraged fecundity, has coincided with increased valuing of "autonomy, self-actualization, and convenience." Soon, when global population passes its apogee, there will



George Will

emerge, other than in Africa, a worldwide wave of "top-heavy population pyramids, in which the old begin to outnumber the young." Eberstadt says. The number of "super-old" (those 80-plus, already the world's fastest-growing age cohort) will almost triple, to 425 million. "Just over two decades ago, fewer than 425 million people on the planet had even reached their 65th birthday," he writes.

It is possible that "the pervasive graying of the population and protracted population decline will hobble economic growth and cripple social welfare systems in rich countries," Eberstadt writes.

Also: "A coming wave of senescence," smaller family units, fewer people getting married, "high levels of voluntary childlessness," "dwindling workforces, reduced savings and investment, unsustainable social outlays, and budget deficits" are the fate of developed nations — unless they make "sweeping changes."

Eberstadt is, however, tentatively cheerful: "Steadily improving living standards and material and technological advances will still be possible." The Earth "is richer and better fed than ever before — and natural resources are more plentiful and less expensive (after adjusting for inflation), than ever before," and the global population is more "extensively schooled" than ever. What is required is "a favorable business climate," which is Eberstadt's

shorthand for allowing market forces to wring maximum efficiency from fewer people: "Prosperity in a depopulating world will also depend on open economies: free trade in goods, services, and finance to counter the constraints that declining populations otherwise engender."

The "demographic tides" are, Eberstadt writes, running against the quartet of nations (China, Russia, Iran, North Korea) that, oblivious of demography, are exaggerating their future powers. China's

next generation "is on track to be only half as large as the preceding one."

Furthermore, "demographic trends are on course to augment American power."

Although the United States is "a sub-replacement society, it has higher fertility levels than any East Asian country and almost all European states," Eberstadt says. Even more important, thanks to immigration, "the United States is on track to account for a growing share of the rich world's labor force, youth, and highly educated talent."

One issue in this year's presidential campaign is germane to the convulsive demographic changes that are coming: immigration. Concerning this, Donald Trump is obtuse, and Kamala Harris has, as about most things, vagueness born of timidity.

georgewill@washpost.com.



Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Oct. 25, the 299th day of 2024. There are 67 days left in the year.

Today's highlight in history: On Oct. 25, 1929, former Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Fall was convicted of accepting bribes in exchange for oil field leases at Teapot Dome in Wyoming and the Elk Hills and Buena Vista oil fields in California. As a result of the "Teapot Dome Scandal," Fall would become the first U.S. cabinet member to be imprisoned for crimes committed while in office.

Also on this date: In 1760, Britain's King George III succeeded his late grandfather, George II.

In 1859, radical abolitionist John Brown went on trial in Charles Town, Virginia, for his failed raid at Harpers Ferry. (He was convicted and later hanged.)

In 1962, during a meeting of the U.N. Security Council, U.S. Ambassador Adlai E. Stevenson II demanded that Soviet Ambassador Valerian Zorin confirm or deny the existence of Soviet-built missile bases in Cuba. Stevenson then presented photographic evidence of the bases to the council.

In 1983, a U.S.-led force invaded Grenada at the order of President Ronald Reagan, who said the action was needed to protect U.S. citizens there.

Supporting a struggling friend

Dear Annie: I have a friend I'll call "Scott." We have known each other for 15 years or so and have been retired for the last few years. He enjoyed working before he retired due to a plant closure.

Now Scott drinks from 8 a.m. until 2 or so in the afternoon. He is in good spirits in the morning but is an absolutely depressed person by 2. He tries to tell you that the world sucks now compared to when we grew up. It's so hard to listen to him go on about this.

I want to tell him that he needs help, but I am afraid to do so. I can't even hang out with him due to his problem. I know where to send him for help but have no idea on how to send him there. — Want My Friend Back

Dear Annie: My husband and I are in our 70s. We have friends who are in their 40s, with two kids (6 and 4). We have gone out to lunches with the four of them, and it's always been a bad experience. The kids tear through the restaurant and scream. It's becoming very embarrassing. The next time they invite us, we don't want to be in

a restaurant again. We don't want to go to their place because the wife is a hoarder and there is only one room we can sit in — and besides, the kids still run and scream in their own home. They can come to our place, but they still tear around.

What do we do or say the next time they invite us for lunch? — Tired of Chaos

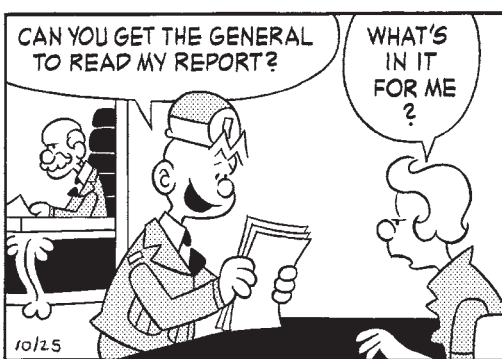
Dear Tired: The energy of young kids is unmatched, so it's understandable that you're frustrated. Next time your friends invite you to lunch, why not suggest a place with ample outdoor space so the kids can run around? Some restaurants offer outdoor areas with lawns and sometimes even a playground. Or perhaps you could organize a picnic in a park, so the children can get all their energy out without disrupting the adults. Another option is to invite them over to your house and, provided the parents are OK with it, put on a movie for the kids, complete with popcorn and blankets.

"How Can I Forgive My Cheating Partner?" features favorite columns on marriage, infidelity, communication and reconciliation. It 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.

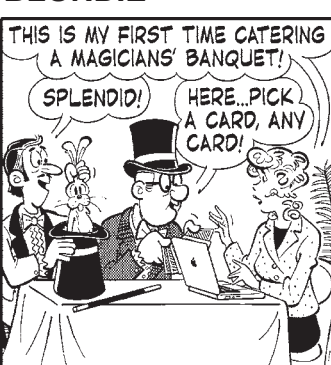
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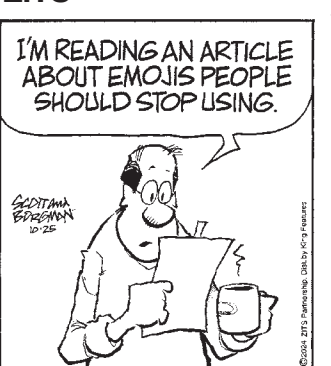
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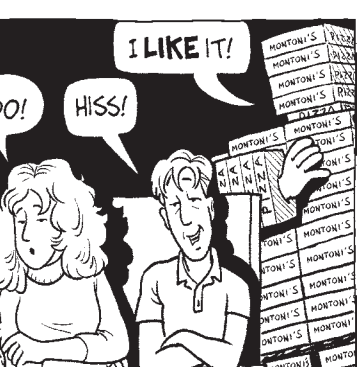
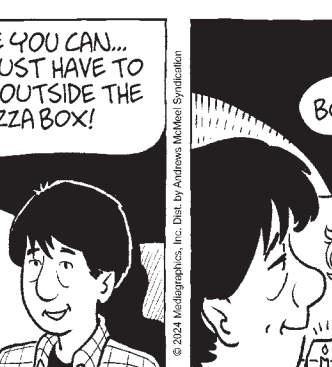
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THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



"It's not my lunch. My dad missed the trashman and I'm to drop this into the school dumpster."

The LOCKHORNS



"IT SAYS, 'DON'T YOU HAVE ANYTHING WORTH STEALING?'"

My Answer



By Dr. Billy Graham

Religions do not reject God — people do

Question: Since we are made in the image of God what's wrong with religion of self or believing fully in the capacity of our individuality? — R.S.

Answer: Religions do not reject God — people do. Religions are simply made up of people. God's love is for individuals. Each person has been created by God. He has put a soul into every man, woman, and child. Hundreds of philosophies and scores of religions have been invented to circumvent the Word of God. Many philosophers and psychologists are still trying to make it appear that there is some other way to happiness — including glo-

rifying self. There is only one way to God and that is through Jesus Christ, His Son. It comes down to one thing: What will each person decide about Jesus Christ? Receiving God's salvation is purely an individual decision.

The one who is in the most danger spiritually is the one who doesn't see any need for God. They may enjoy life; they may be successful and looked up to by others. They may be moral and honest, and even be outwardly religious (although only outwardly, because it hasn't touched their hearts). Only God can break through the barrier of a heart that has no place for Him. That is why the most important thing anyone can do is submit to God and pray

that others will also. God is able to do what we cannot do.

"For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation" (Ephesians 2:14, NKJV). God desires to have a relationship with each person, that He might reconcile us to Him through what He did for us on the cross. We no longer have to be a stranger, but part of the family of God. To those who fear [respect] God, His message of salvation has been sent. Receive it today.

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

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down, and a solution grid.

Television schedule table with columns for time slots (10:25 to 12:30) and various channel listings.

Grid for yesterday's crossword puzzle answer, showing letters in a 11x11 format.







**Books donated to Indiana Room at library**

Nicholas H. Raber (left in photo) compiled and recently donated six history books to the Indiana Room at the Wells County Public Library. The first two, "Relatives of Maria (Luca-baugh) Raber 1856-1948" and "Joseph McClure & Madella Fishbaugh Family History," cover many families from Rockcreek Township. The third book, "Coolman Family History," focuses on the Coolman families of Wells and Huntington Counties and includes many old basketball photos from Liberty Center and Warren High School. The fourth book, "John R. Stinson & Permillia A. Thompson Family History," details the Stinson family of Wells and Huntington Counties and incorporates the Thompson Family History by Dick Thompson, Nellie Sleppy, and others. The fifth book, "Colagrossi Family History," outlines the history of Italian Americans on Harrison Street in Elkhart, Indiana. Finally, the sixth book, "Sven Harry Lindstrand (1909-1987)," explores the life and works of the local artist. All the books can be viewed in the Indiana Room at the library. Accepting the donations on behalf of the library in the photos is Jason Habegger, Adult Services Manager (right in photo). (Photo submitted)

**State Office of Technology to offer free website hosting for local governments**

By WHITNEY DOWNARD  
Indiana Capital Chronicle

More local governments around Indiana will soon have access to free website hosting from the Indiana Office of Technology.

The agency offers other services to municipalities, including cybersecurity assessments and training. For the last four years, the office has supported website hosting for a "low cost," but announced it would be eliminating the attached price tag this week.

"In an era where digital interaction has become a cornerstone of public service, maintaining secure, accessible, and efficient online resources is more important than ever. IOT's latest initiative seeks to ensure that all local governments, regardless of size or budget, can offer their constituents a safe, trustworthy and user-friendly online experience," an agency release said.

IOT has been offering local governments websites, with packages at \$50/month, \$100/month and \$250/month, and more than 100 locals were already taking advantage of that.

With the new no-cost offering, the state recently converted 102 of them to the zero-cost package and the remainder, due to size

and/or choice, stayed in the paid package.

The office offers three design choices, which have previously been recognized by the Center for Digital Government's and received annual Government Experience Awards. Such websites include content management systems and view analytics as well as a calendar and events system.

"This strategic move continues to build trust and aims to significantly improve cybersecurity measures and overall user experience on government platforms," said Tracy Barnes, the state's chief information officer. "We're seeking to empower local governments to better manage their digital front doors, and improve access to all levels of local government, be it a small township or for our larger communities. Hoosiers should expect to have secure, easy to use digital methods to get in touch with their government. By removing financial barriers, we are another step closer to providing an improved, consistent digital experience no matter what level of government a citizen is interacting with."

Local governments interested in learning more about the websites, along with the agency's other services, should visit <https://on.in.gov/localgovernment>.

**Nevada lithium mine wins final approval despite potential harm to endangered wildflower**

By SCOTT SONNER  
Associated Press

RENO, Nev. (AP) — For the first time under President Joe Biden, a federal permit for a new lithium-boron mine has been approved for a Nevada project essential to his clean energy agenda, despite conservationists' vows to sue over the plan they insist will drive an endangered wildflower to extinction.

Ioneer Ltd.'s mine will help expedite production of a key mineral in the manufacture of batteries for electric vehicles at the center of Biden's push to cut greenhouse gas emissions, administration officials said Thursday in Reno.

Acting Deputy Interior Secretary Laura Daniel-Davis said bolstering domestic lithium supplies is "essential to advancing the clean energy transition and powering the economy of the future."

"This project demonstrates how partnership and collaboration can effectively balance mineral production with the protection of vulnerable species and irreplaceable natural resources," added Steve Feldgus, principal deputy assistant U.S. interior secretary for land and minerals management.

In the works for nearly eight years, construction of the Rhyolite Ridge mine

should start next year in the high desert halfway between Reno and Las Vegas, the Australia-based Ioneer said.

Production is scheduled to begin in 2028 at the mine, which should produce enough lithium for 370,000 vehicles annually for more than two decades, officials said.

It's unique because it includes a chemical processing facility that will process the lithium on-site instead of having to ship it to China, then back to the U.S. Worldwide demand for lithium is projected to have grown six times by 2030 compared to 2020. The biggest producer of lithium in the world is China, which processes most lithium currently.

"I can say with absolute confidence there are few deposits in the world as impactful as Rhyolite Ridge," Ioneer Executive Chairman James Calaway said.

The Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management issued the permit after the Fish and Wildlife Service concluded — in consultation with the bureau required under the Endangered Species Act — that the mine would not jeopardize the survival of Tiehm's buckwheat.

The service added the 6-inch-tall wildflower with yellow and cream-colored blooms to the list of U.S.

endangered species on Dec. 14, 2022, citing mining as the biggest threat to its survival.

The bureau initiated the mine's permitting process five days later. The agencies say Ioneer's subsequent changes to the mine's footprint alleviated concerns about potential harm to the flower.

Environmentalists said the mine's final approval was a politically motivated violation of multiple U.S. laws. An hour after the bureau posted its formal record of decision approving the permit, the Center for Biological Diversity sent Interior Secretary Deb Haaland a 60-day notice of the group's intent to sue under the Endangered Species Act.

"We need lithium for the energy transition, but it can't come with a price tag of extinction," said Patrick Donnelly, the center's Great Basin director. He said Biden's administration "is abandoning its duty to protect endangered species like Tiehm's buckwheat and it's making a mockery of the Endangered Species Act."

Fewer than 30,000 of the plants remain in Nevada at the only place they're known to exist in the world across eight sub-populations that combined cover 10 acres — an area equal to the size of about eight football fields.

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**Dan Butcher and his bikes**

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