

The News - Banner

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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2024

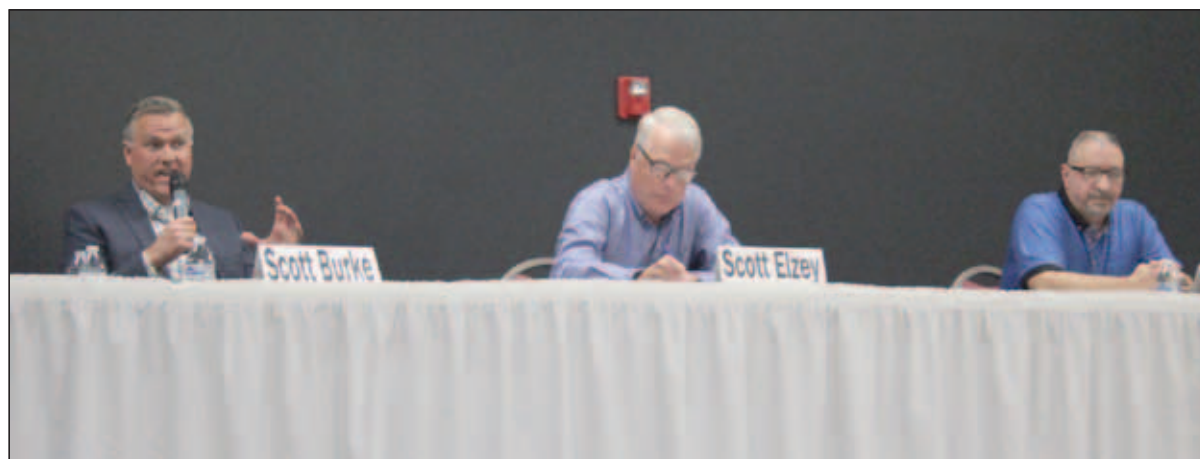
BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection

\$1.00

Forum focuses on economic development, growth

By HOLLY GASKILL
Three of five candidates running for the Wells County Council's three At-Large seats were present for Monday's forum at the Wells County Chamber of Commerce — Scott Burke (I), incumbent Scott Elzey (R) and Brian Hollingsworth (D).
Incumbent Vicki Andrews (R) was on a pre-planned mission trip, and incumbent Seth Whicker could not return to the county as planned due to Hurricane Milton in the southern U.S.
The candidates were asked six questions by moderator Rick Johnloz, as well as one gathered from the audience, and prepared opening and closing statements. Being candidates for the county's financial arm, questions focused on the county's economic future, including EMS and fire services,

industrial-scale solar and perspectives on taxes.
The first question of the evening highlighted excess funds recently reported by the Wells County Council. The candidates were asked how they would spend these funds, assuming they weren't placed in the Rainy Day Fund.
"Jobs, housing and retaining our youth," Elzey said. He continued by focusing on the importance of quality of place, and his desire to support existing attractions and assets in the Wells County Public Library, parks and Wells County Historical Society. Elzey expressed a similar sentiment in his opening statement, commenting on how his children left the area for better work and quality of life.
Hollingsworth echoed this and emphasized the importance of cre-



Three candidates running for Wells County Council answered questions at Monday's forum. From left to right are Scott Burke, Scott Elzey, and Brian Hollingsworth. (Photo by Holly Gaskill)

ating quality jobs. Burke, on the other hand, noted funding issues for EMS and fire departments and said he'd look into incentivizing volunteers for those areas.

Later, they discussed priorities between saving taxpayer money and pursuing additional projects — all candidates recognized it was a balancing act.

"You definitely have to strike a balance," Burke said. "And I would probably lean towards economic development, because if

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Commissioners revise ordinance for Rock Creek road vacation

By HOLLY GASKILL
Wells County Commissioners are near approval of an ordinance that will vacate a portion of County Road 500 West for the expansion of Rock Creek Stone Quarry, 781 N 500 W in Bluffton.
The commissioners reviewed a second draft of the ordinance Monday, which had revisions made by County Engineer Nate Whitacre, Highway Supervisor Shawn Bonar and Surveyor Jared Hahn. In exchange for the vaca-

tion of approximately 1,650 ft., from CR 100 N to just south of the Whitelock Ditch, the quarry will construct an alternate route.
However, at the advice of County Attorney Ted Storer, the commissioners delayed approval on the matter until Monday's edits were written in.
Among several edits about the construction of the new road, Chase Fiechter, representing the quarry, asked about reducing the 75 ft. setback to

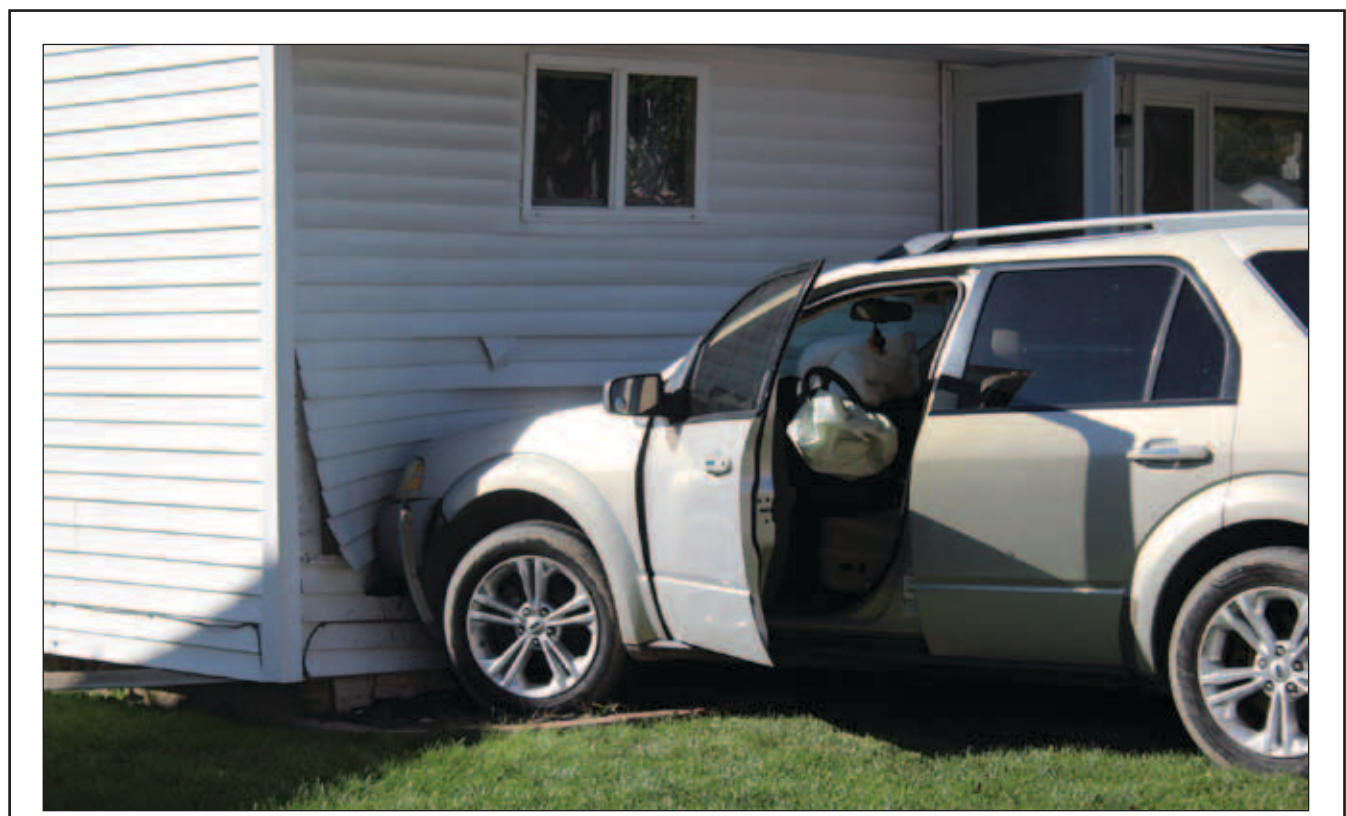
25 ft. The commissioners were receptive but preferred to revise the county's zoning ordinance for consistency with any other similar projects in the future. Area Plan Commission Executive Director Mike Lautzenheiser said the APC could review the zoning ordinance.
The quarry first petitioned the county for the road closure in September 2023.

holly@news-banner.com

Stringer responds to N-B story on death threats

By HOLLY GASKILL
At the close of their regular meeting Monday, Wells County Commissioner Jeff Stringer addressed Saturday's News-Banner story about reported death threats the commissioners have received related to solar issues.
"There's an article that should say, in my eyes, I heard a rumor — that's what I think it should be. It brought up issues that people involved did not bring up, and I think it's reckless," Stringer began. He later stated that he used "rumor" to describe that the reports had not come directly from the commissioners, not that they were false.
"In today's society — with all the issues going on and the conflict between parties, conflict between people — the last thing we need to do is bring up an issue that's not an issue in this county," Stringer said. "We're all one group of people, who might have differing views of how we see things playing out, but we should not give credit to any violence. We should not give names to anybody that perpetrates violence. This is (not) things we should talk about — doesn't mean we hide from them, but I don't think when they're not an issue, it should be brought up."
He continued, "To the paper, I would ask at this

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Car crashes into Bluffton house

First responders were dispatched to the 900 block of South Jersey Street in Bluffton just after 4 p.m. on Monday after a driver crashed into a residence. An official crash report is pending. (Photo by Holly Gaskill)

Hurricane Milton is a Category 5; Florida orders evacuations

By HAVEN DALEY and MIKE SCHNEIDER
Associated Press
BELLEAIR BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Florida's storm-battered Gulf Coast raced against a Category 5 hurricane Monday as workers sprinted to pick up debris left over from Helene two weeks ago and highways were clogged with people fleeing ahead of the storm.
The center of Hurricane Milton could come ashore Wednesday in the Tampa Bay region, which has not endured a direct hit by a major hurricane in more than a century. Scientists expect the system to weaken slightly before landfall, though it could retain hurricane strength as it churns across central Florida toward the Atlantic Ocean. That would largely spare other states ravaged by Helene, which killed at least 230 people on its path from Florida to the Carolinas.
"This is the real deal here with Milton," Tampa Mayor Jane Castor told a news conference. "If you want to take on Mother Nature, she wins 100% of the time."
Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said Monday that it was imperative for debris from Helene to be cleared ahead of Milton's arrival so the pieces cannot become projectiles. More than 300 vehicles gathered debris Sunday.
As evacuation orders were issued, forecasters warned of a possible 8- to 12-foot storm surge in Tampa Bay. That's the highest ever predicted for the region and nearly double

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Don't expect human life expectancy to grow much more, researcher says

By MIKE STOBBE
AP Medical Writer
NEW YORK (AP) — Humanity is hitting the upper limit of life expectancy, according to a new study.
Advances in medical technology and genetic research — not to mention

larger numbers of people making it to age 100 — are not translating into marked jumps in lifespan overall, according to researchers who found shrinking longevity increases in countries with the longest-living populations.
"We have to recognize

there's a limit" and perhaps reassess assumptions about when people should retire and how much money they'll need to live out their lives, said S. Jay Olshansky, a University of Illinois-Chicago researcher who was lead author of the study published Monday by the jour-

nal Nature Aging.
Mark Hayward, a University of Texas researcher not involved in the study, called it "a valuable addition to the mortality literature."
"We are reaching a plateau" in life expectancy, he agreed. It's always possible

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Outside
A beautiful day blows into Wells County
Today Wed. Thursday
High 70 High 73 High 68
Low 42 Low 40 Low 42
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Vol. 95 No. 288
TUESDAY
October 8, 2024

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Candidate forum

(Continued from Page 1)

we increase jobs and the economy and build businesses here, that's going to make it that much more attractive, and the more you can get from the businesses, the more it would probably help the tax side of it."

"Well, you do both, right? The answer is easy," Elzey added. "But Wells County is known statewide for one of the lowest taxes in the state, so we have done an excellent job."

The candidates were also asked how they would handle industrial-scale solar farms, should the state intervene and allow them. Burke said he would work to establish a local board to oversee projects, and Hollingsworth discussed a similar scrutiny.

"I'm a member of the Chester Township Fire Department," Hollingsworth said. "And when they brought the power plant out by Southern Wells, they came in and promised the fire departments down there so much stuff. They were going to buy all this equipment, they were going to do all this stuff — and none of it happened. So if we brought that (solar) in, or were forced to bring that in, the one thing I would stress is (that) whatever they put down and promise upfront, we hold them to it."

Elzey, however, said the question was "strongly hypothetical" and he couldn't see it happening any time soon.

The group returned to the subject with the audience's questions and were asked if they supported solar or property tax abatements for solar companies.

Burke and Elzey answered that they were strongly against solar and property tax abatements for solar.

"I mean, these things are tremendously subsidized to begin with," Burke said. "And protecting property values — in the event that they were approved and they went in, again, you just have to make sure the setbacks and all the restrictions were held to the letter of those."

In his opening statement, Burke said he decided to run for office because of concerns about industrial-scale solar. He sought 181 signatures to appear on the ballot as an independent.

Hollingsworth felt it was "both," saying he understood exploring different technologies, but that the county needed to look at all the information. He added that abatements were unnecessary for solar development.

Regarding future economic development, Elzey and Hollingsworth said they wanted to provide opportunities for good-paying jobs in the county. Elzey added that visitors spent \$5 million in Wells County in 2022, and he sees an opportunity for growth in continued tourism efforts.

Burke proposed the county develop a "junior economic development council" of local students to "let these kids know we're willing to invest in them," he said. He added that the county was one of the "best-positioned counties in the entire state of Indiana for economic development" with the county's factories and railroads.

The future of EMS funding, however, was a bit more complicated. The county's EMS services have been supported through an endowment fund established through the sale of the county hospital; as costs have increased and revenue remains the same, the endowment has continually dwindled.

"That's an excellent question, Rick, and that has stumped the council and commissioners for the last few years," Elzey said. "There's going to have to be some changes, because, by virtue of the question, you know that the funds supporting that organization are shrinking... It's got to be done through funding of some sort, whether it's local, state or federal, or increasing or trying to get more revenue from the runs. There is some possibility of redesigning the configuration."

Burke said the county could fundraise or look into grant opportunities, while Hollingsworth wanted to look at training opportunities to increase EMS staff and ensure runs were being billed properly.

In describing their visions for the next four years, Elzey and Burke focused on engaging young people and the community, supporting economic development and creating jobs.

Burke discussed the future in his

closing statement as well, referencing three Indiana homesteads he had visited. "They've been in the same family for 100 years — and that's what's at stake here," Burke said. "Whether it's fire protection or development of industrial-scale solar and similar projects, we are going to be faced with making decisions that have a generational impact, impacts on our safety, our economy and our way of life."

Meanwhile, Hollingsworth wants to create a space for everyone to get involved, regardless of their political or religious beliefs. As the only Democrat running for council, he also described his desire to give voters another option in his opening statement. "I'm about as middle of the road as you're going to get politically," he said. "I don't stray too far left. I don't stray too far right. I think everything that is done politically should be done with equality in mind so that everyone is represented and treated equally."

Andrews and Whicker submitted brief written statements to the forum, describing their qualifications and plans as council members. Both noted priorities in fiscal responsibility for the county, as well as improvement to county infrastructure.



Scott Burke



Scott Elzey



Brian Hollingsworth

holly@news-banner.com

Weather

Tuesday, October 8, 2024

(24-hour observations at 9:56 p.m. Monday)

High: 69; Low: 44; Precipitation: None

Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.04 feet at 8:45 p.m. Monday

Wells County forecast

Today: Sunny, with a high near 70. Light west wind increasing to 5 to 10 mph in the morning.

Tonight: Clear, with a low around 42. Northwest wind around 5 mph becoming calm in the evening.

Wednesday: Sunny, with a high near 73. Calm wind becoming northwest around 5 mph in the afternoon.

Wednesday Night: Clear, with a low around 40. Northwest wind around 5 mph becoming calm in the evening.

Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 68.

Thursday Night: Clear, with a low around 42.

Friday: Sunny, with a high near 75.

Friday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 53.

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 75.

Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 49.

Sunday: A 20% chance of showers. Mostly sunny, with a high near 70.

Sunday Night: A slight chance of showers. Partly cloudy, with a low around 41.

Life expectancy

(Continued from Page 1)

some breakthrough could push survival to greater heights, "but we don't have that now," Hayward said.

Life expectancy is an estimate of the average number of years a baby born in a given year might expect to live, assuming death rates at that time hold constant. It is one of the world's most important health measures, but it is also imperfect: It is a snapshot estimate that cannot account for deadly pandemics, miracle cures or other unforeseen developments that might kill or save millions of people.

In the new research, Olshansky and his research partners tracked life expectancy estimates for the years 1990 to 2019, drawn from a database administered by the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research. The researchers focused on eight of the places in the world where people live the longest — Australia, France, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Spain and Switzerland.

The U.S. doesn't even rank in the top 40. But is also was included "because we live here" and because of past, bold estimates that life expectancy in the U.S. might surge dramatically in this century, Olshansky said.

Women continue to live longer than men and life expectancy improvements are still occurring — but at a slowing pace, the researchers found. In 1990, the average amount of improvement

was about 2 1/2 years per decade. In the 2010s, it was 1 1/2 years — and almost zero in the U.S.

The U.S. is more problematic because it is harder hit by a range of issues that kill people even before they hit old age, including drug overdoses, shootings, obesity and inequities that make it hard for some people to get sufficient medical care.

But in one calculation, the researchers estimated what would happen in all nine places if all deaths before age 50 were eliminated. The increase at best was still only 1 1/2 years, Olshansky said.

Eileen Crimmins, a University of Southern California gerontology expert, said in an email that she agrees with the study's findings. She added: "For me personally, the most important issue is the dismal and declining relative position of the United States."

The study suggests that there's a limit to how long most people live, and we've about hit it, Olshansky said.

"We're squeezing less and less life out of these life-extending technologies. And the reason is, aging gets in the way," he said.

It may seem common to hear of a person living to 100 — former U.S. President Jimmy Carter hit that milestone last week. In 2019, a little over 2% of Americans made it to 100, compared with about 5% in Japan and 9% in Hong Kong, Olshansky said.

Stringer responds

(Continued from Page 1)

point, is the paper — I'm asking this to George (Witwer), the owner — is the paper something in this county that reflects the news, or is the paper a tabloid, where we're going to take rumors and innuendos and move them forward and we don't have the information? If it's beneficial to the bulk of the good, let's do it. But if it's just to stir con-

flict — which I believe, in my opinion, this is Jeff Stringer's opinion — that's what that is. The people that reported it didn't have the whole story. The people that brought it to the paper didn't have the whole story. It's not a story. If it were a story, it would have been investigated, when someone put a pipe bomb in my mailbox — that's when it should be a story."

Three Wells County residents with land leased to a solar development — Paul Mills, Tony Mills and Don Avey — reported a September conversation in which Stringer had discussed receiving death threats made on solar-related issues. Sheriff Scott Holliday also said he was aware of threats made, and that Stringer's mailbox had been "blown up" about two years prior in an unrelat-

ed, unsolved incident.

Stringer had declined to comment on the reports, and Commissioner Mike Vanover had stated the following: "I have received every kind of communication that you can imagine and they were all handled with the attention they deserved." Commissioner Blake Gerber did not respond for comment.

holly@news-banner.com

Hurricane Milton

(Continued from Page 1)

the levels reached two weeks ago during Helene, said National Hurricane Center spokesperson Maria Torres.

The storm could also bring widespread flooding. Five to 10 inches (of rain was forecast for mainland Florida and the Keys, with as much as 15 inches expected in some places.

The Tampa metro area has a population of more than 3.3 million people.

"It's a huge population. It's very exposed, very inexperienced, and that's a losing proposition," Massachusetts Institute of Technology meteorology professor Kerry Emanuel said. "I always thought Tampa would be the city to worry about most."

Much of Florida's west coast was under hurricane and storm surge warnings. A hurricane warning was also issued for parts of Mexico's Yucatan state, which expected to get sideswiped.

Milton intensified quickly Monday over the eastern Gulf of Mexico. It had maximum sustained winds of 180 mph, the National Hurricane Center said. The storm's center was about 675 miles southwest of Tampa by late afternoon, moving east-southeast at 10 mph.

The Tampa Bay area is still rebounding from Helene and its powerful surge. Twelve people died there, with the worst damage along a string of barrier islands from St. Petersburg to Clearwater.

'It's going to be flying missiles'

Lifeguards in Pinellas County, on the peninsula that forms Tampa Bay, removed beach chairs and other items that could take flight in strong winds. Elsewhere, stoves, chairs, refrigerators and kitchen tables waited in heaps to be picked up.

Sarah Steslicki, who lives in Belleair Beach, said she was frustrated that more debris had not been collected sooner.

"They've screwed around and haven't picked the debris up, and now

they're scrambling to get it picked up," Steslicki said Monday. "If this one does hit, it's going to be flying missiles. Stuff's going to be floating and flying in the air."

Hillsborough County, home to Tampa, ordered evacuations for areas adjacent to Tampa Bay and for all mobile and manufactured homes by Tuesday night.

President Joe Biden approved an emergency declaration for Florida, and U.S. Rep. Kathy Castor said 7,000 federal workers were called on to help in one of the largest mobilizations of federal personnel in history.

Many evacuate, but some are reluctant

Milton's approach stirred memories of 2017's Hurricane Irma, when about 7 million people were urged to evacuate Florida in an exodus that jammed freeways and clogged gas stations. Some people who left vowed never to evacuate again.

By Monday morning, some gas stations in the Fort Myers and Tampa areas had already run out of gas. Fuel continued to arrive in Florida, and the state had amassed hundreds of thousands of gallons of gasoline and diesel fuel, with much more on the way, DeSantis said.

A steady stream of vehicles headed north toward the Florida Panhandle on Interstate 75, the main highway on the west side of the peninsula, as residents heeded evacuation orders. Traffic clogged the southbound lanes of the highway for miles as other residents headed for the relative safety of Fort Lauderdale and Miami on the other side of the state.

Candice Briggs, along with her husband, their three young kids and their dog, planned to head to a hotel north of Jacksonville less than two weeks after Helene sent a foot and a half of water

into her family's home in the in the Tampa Bay community of Seminole. The family had just settled into their temporary lodgings at an extended family member's home when they had to evacuate again before even finishing their post-Helene loads of laundry.

Why did Milton intensify so fast?

Milton's wind speed increased by 92 mph in 24 hours — a pace that trails only those of Hurricane Wilma in 2005 and Hurricane Felix in 2007. One reason Milton strengthened so rapidly is its small "pinhole eye," just like Wilma's, said Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach.

The storm will likely go through what's called an "eye wall replacement cycle," a natural process that forms a new eye and expands the storm in size but weakens its wind speeds, Klotzbach said.

The Gulf of Mexico is unusually warm right now, so "the fuel is just there," and Milton probably went over an extra-warm eddy that helped goose it further, said University of Albany hurricane scientist Kristen Corbosiero.

The last hurricane to be a Category 5 at landfall in the mainland U.S. was Michael in 2018.

Widespread cancellations in Florida and Mexico

With the storm approaching, schools in Pinellas County, home to St. Petersburg, were being converted into shelters. Airports in Tampa, St. Petersburg and Orlando planned to close. Walt Disney World said it was operating normally for the time being.

In Mexico, Yucatan state Gov. Joaquín Díaz ordered the cancellation of all nonessential activities except for grocery stores, hospitals, pharmacies and gas stations starting Monday, and Mexican officials organized buses to evacuate residents from the coastal city of Progreso.

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- Homemade Pie
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Thursday October 10th, and Friday October 11th
from 10:30am to 7:00pm at
Troyer's Market, 891 W 300 S, Berne, IN

All funds will go towards the mission fund of Berne Christian Fellowship. We support a mission outreach in Bolivia as well as various projects in the states.

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OBITUARIES

Marry Emma Holmes, 89

Mary Emma Holmes, 89, of Warren, passed away on Friday, Oct. 4, 2024, at Heritage Pointe of Warren.

Mary Emma was born on Dec. 31, 1934, to Hiram Barnes and Mary Jane (McFarren) Adsit in Warren. She graduated from Warren High School in 1952 and was a member of Solid Rock Church. She married Donald Eugene Holmes on March 13, 1971, in Marion. He preceded her in death on March 8, 1995. Mary Emma retired as the office manager and bookkeeper of Eckman Motors where she worked for more than 30 years.

She always enjoyed serving others and her community. Mary Emma was a member of Beta Delta Chapter Sigma Phi Gamma International Sorority, a member of the Los Amigos Bridge Club, a member of the American Legion Auxiliary, honorary member of On Our Own Handicap Club, an honorary member of WHS class



of 1931, a member of the Salamonie Valley Historical Society where she was also an assistant at the museum, a member of the Bicentennial Committee, a member of Boehmer Wesleyan Service Guild, and Warren United Methodist WSCS. Mary Emma won the Samuel Jones award in the town of Warren in 2009. Mary Emma will always be remembered for her dedication and willingness to help.

Mary Emma was preceded in death by her parents, Hiram and Mary Jane Adsit, husband, Donald Eugene Holmes, and brother, Hiram B. Adsit Jr.

Mary Emma will be laid to rest alongside her husband at Woodlawn Cemetery in Warren.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Glancy-H. Brown & Son Funeral Home in Warren, Indiana.

Online condolences can be made by visiting glancyfuneralhomes.com

Honoring first responders

The Bluffton Masonic Lodge honored first responders at an appreciation banquet held on Oct. 2 at their Cherry Street lodge hall. Seventy-five guests, including Mayor John Whicker, his wife, and members of the Bluffton Fire Department, Bluffton and Fort Wayne police departments attended. The event featured a meal and keynote presentation by Moises Gomez, a New Jersey first responder and Freemason, who shared insights from his 9/11 World Trade Center response. Attendees also received Challenge Coins acknowledging their selfless service. Pictured is Adam Harder and Jeff Woodward presenting Brothe Moises Gomez with an honorary membership to Bluffton Lodge No 145. (Photo provided)



Ossian Rotary to welcome Thailand exchange student home

At its regular weekly meeting on Thursday, Oct. 10, Ossian Rotary will host Leah Brown, Bluffton resident and recently returned foreign exchange student from a year of studying in the southeastern Asian country of Thailand.

Since 1929, Rotary International has conducted a very active program of both sending and receiving exchange students around the world. Currently, about 9,000 students participate annually, sponsored by local Rotary clubs, living with multiple host families and attending school during their exchange year.

Brown grew up in both Cincinnati and Bluffton, and currently lives in Bluffton. She is now continuing her education as a

senior at Bluffton High School.

During Thursday's meeting, Brown will share her experiences in Thailand as a Rotary Youth Exchange Student, and will answer questions from those in attendance.

Anyone is welcome to attend Ossian Rotary this Thursday morning, at 7:30 at First Baptist Church of Ossian, 1001 Dehner Drive for this program. Please note that if Norwell Schools has a weather delay or cancellation due to weather, Ossian Rotary will cancel its meeting for that day.

For more information, please contact Matthew Gullion, Ossian Rotary President, at mwgullion@gmail.com. Next Thursday, Oct. 17, Ossian Rotary will host Lauren Smith, traveling vet tech.

Sergeant Brian Walker to speak at Bluffton Optimist Club

Sergeant Brian Walker who serves as the public information officer at the Fort Wayne Post of the Indiana State Police will be speaking on Wednesday, Oct. 9 at the Bluffton Optimist Club. He will be sharing information about safety when driving near

school buses.

The Optimist Club meets each Wednesday at 11:30 a.m. for lunch at the Hoosier House Restaurant in Bluffton. Visitors and guests are welcome to attend to hear the speaker and learn about the Optimist Club.

Dave Hobson, Ohio congressman who backed D-Day museum, has died at 87

By JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Former U.S. Rep. Dave Hobson of Ohio has died. He was 87. His family said in a statement that Hobson died Sunday night at Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton after a short illness. Hobson was a Republican and was first elected to Congress in 1990.

He spent 18 years on Capitol Hill, where he worked to improve military housing and boost federal funding for defense research at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. In 2004, Hobson helped establish a visitor center and museum at the American Cemetery in Normandy, France, that honors U.S. soldiers killed during World War II.

Obituary Policy

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

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

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

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City: Friday, 2:50 p.m., Bluffton Rentco. Driver cited for speeding 59 in a 40 mph zone.

Friday, 9:05 p.m., East Dustman Road and Sunset Drive. Report of driver slowing down and looking at children walking. Driver was looking for birthday party.

Friday, 10:07 p.m., 300 block of West Cherry Street. Caller reported unwanted subject at residence.

Saturday, 9:59 a.m., North Main Street and East S.R. 124. Report of two people sleeping under bridge.

Saturday, 12:58 p.m., 1300 block of West South Street. Report of subjects burning items.

Saturday, 3:42 p.m., 600 block of Kathryn Circle. Report of a potentially injured dog.

Saturday, 4:43 p.m., 600 block of West Ohio Street. Caller reported dog attack from neighbor's dog.

Saturday, 5:56 p.m., South Main and East Poplar streets. Report of loose golden retriever causing traffic issues.

Saturday, 7:12 p.m., 1200 block of West Washington Street. Report of verbal argument.

Saturday, 8:14 p.m., Save On Liquor South. Report of intoxicated driver.

Saturday, 9:50 p.m., 1200 block of Lancaster Street. Report of domestic issue, two subjects arrested.

Saturday, 9:50 p.m., 900 block of Riverview Drive. Report of juveniles ding-dong-ditching.

Sunday, 12:24 a.m., Anytime Fitness. Caller reported someone vandalized his car with silly string and toilet paper.

Sunday, 4:19 a.m., North Main Street and East 300 North. Intoxicated driver arrested.

Sunday, 9:13 a.m., 1100 West South Street. Report of runaway juvenile.

Sunday, 3:14 p.m., 300 block of Arrowhead Trail. Officer fixed subjects TV.

Sunday, 3:28 p.m., 300 block of West Wabash Street. Report of neighbors throwing trash in yard.

Sunday, 5:13 p.m., Wells County Jail. Report of domestic issue.

Sunday, 9:24 p.m., 1400 block of Hunter Road. Welfare check requested for currently unoccupied house with lights on.

Monday, 11:50 p.m., Bluffton Police Department. Subject requested informa-

tion regarding property.

County: Friday, 1:25 p.m., West 800 S and 300 W, Poneto. Report of a loose horse. Subject advised it was his neighbor's.

Friday, 2:51 p.m., North 100 E and 400 N, Bluffton. Driver cited for speeding 64 in a 45 mph zone.

Friday, 4:35 p.m., North Tracy and East Logan streets, Markle. Report of motorcyclist flashing gun at drivers.

Friday, 5:31 p.m., U.S. 224 and 800 E, Craigville. Travis Lee arrested on warrant.

Friday, 6:13 p.m., Wells County Jail. Travis Lee served additional warrant.

Friday, 6:15 p.m., 7800 North Marzane Road, Markle. Report of domestic issue.

Friday, 7:27 p.m., 14 block of East Washington Street, Poneto. Caller reported domestic issue.

Friday, 9:57 p.m., 1100 S 300 W, Montpelier. Caller reported they were followed home.

Saturday, 1:11 p.m., South 800 E and 300 S, Bluffton. Report of grass clippings in roadway.

Saturday, 5:00 p.m., South 200 W and West 1000 S, Keystone. Report of suspicious vehicle.

Saturday, 9:10 p.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Carrie Garrett.

Saturday, 10:20 p.m., West Hale Street and North Wausau Court, Bluffton. Report of threatening.

Sunday, 8:57 a.m., 7800 North Marzane Road, Markle. Officer stood by for property retrieval.

Sunday, 5:36 p.m., 2600 West 200 North, Bluffton. Caller reported someone maybe stealing chickens.

Sunday, 8:33 p.m., 300 block of East Central Avenue, Bluffton. Sex offender registration violation reported.

Monday, 9:41 a.m., East 900 S and South Meridian Road, Keystone. Report of semi blocking road.

Ossian: Sunday, 5:25 p.m., 600 W 1100 N, Ossian. Stolen camper located.

ACCIDENTS

City: Thursday, 2:03 p.m., Walmart. William F. Gilson, 52, Berne, was entering a parking spot in a 1998 Dodge Dakota and scrapped against the adjacent parked 2014 Chrysler 300. Damage did not exceed \$1,000.

Friday, 3:59 p.m., Bluffton High School. Hayden

Alfeld, 16, Bluffton, was driving a 2011 Buick LaCross behind a construction vehicle, whose driver extended his left hand near the entrance of one of the parking lots. Alfeld thought the driver was signalling to pass, but the vehicle began turning left and they collided. There was no damage to the construction vehicle. Damage exceeded \$2,500.

Saturday, 3:50 p.m., Wayne Street at State Street. Maksym M. Anoka, 19, Remington, Indiana, was backing a 2013 Ford Edge, out of a driveway and struck a 2013 Fiat 500 driven by Amelia Fritz, 16, Bluffton, traveling south on Wayne Street. Damage exceeded \$5,000.

Monday, 1:02 p.m., S.R. 1, 100 ft. north of Dustman Road. Georgia A. Whinery, 63, Bluffton, was stopped driving a 2008 Chevrolet Impala and was struck by a 1991 Chevrolet Corvette driven by Michael E. Braner, 43, Montpelier. Braner said the sun was in his eyes and he couldn't tell if the Impala was braking until it was too late to avoid collision. Damage exceeded \$2,500.

FIRES

Sunday, 4:44 p.m., 600 block of Beth Avenue, Bluffton. Report of grass fire. Appeared to be burn pit.

ARRESTS

Trisha Renea Humphrey, 42, Bluffton; probation violation, a Level 6 felony, and possession of paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$500.

Kenneth Ray Humphrey II, 35, Bluffton; probation violation, a Level 4 felony. No bond set.

Travis Aaron Lee, 40, Decatur; invasion of privacy, possession of paraphernalia, and placement of 911 calls prohibited, all Class A misdemeanors, and false reporting, a Class B misdemeanor. Bond set at \$2,500.

Crystal Michelle Gamble, 38, Fort Wayne; driving while suspended - prior, a Class A misdemeanor. Booked and released.

Carrie Sue Garrett, 50, Dunkirk; probation violation. No bond set.

Matthew R. Banas, 35, Bluffton; domestic battery and false informing, both Class A misdemeanors. Bond set at \$26,500.

Hermes Jose Flores Castillo, 30 Fort Wayne; operating with an ACE of .15 or more and operating while intoxicated - endangerment, both Class A misdemeanors. Bond set at \$1,500.

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America's flirtation with national suicide

I'm one of many who will find himself this election season having to hold his nose as I vote for my presidential choice. I think a fair number of Americans may be in the same camp. I'm also one of those who probably thinks too much. Thinks too much about what is important versus, say, what's urgent or hot or cute. One of the questions I keep asking myself is, how did we ever get here? How did we get to where these two choices are the best we can do?



Jim O'Donnell

Hoosier Opinions

I've spent a good deal of life managing other people's money. I also taught college-level economics for 20 years. Both important endeavors I'm glad to have undertaken. I know that money and economics have real importance in this world, and they should. but they're not ultimately important things.

That may offend or upset some, but I think we live in an unserious country of too many unserious people. We largely want to be free to do whatever we want, especially be entertained, fed, kept comfortable and safe. So, we look for leaders who will avoid the hard stuff; things like \$35 trillion dollar deficits, growing at about \$2 trillion a year. Many of us are pretty determined to ignore our nation's sworn enemies who must marvel at the unseriousness of America's leaders to confront them. Let alone, our unseriousness about what are we to do with our porous borders, growing lawlessness in many cities, a failing educational complex from kindergarten to university, where their own unserious leaders see great issues in stuff like, "Are our children respecting diversity enough? Are they learning the evils of fossil fuels? Are they learning enough about the failures of America? Are they exposed to a vigorous debate over whether each of us is really a male or female? Or does it even matter?" Our universities contextualize important stuff like, "What's wrong with a little socialism, nihilism, anti-Americanism or antisemitism?"

To me, at least, these are all marks of a deeply, unserious people who need unserious leaders to, above all, take our feelings and our pet virtues seriously.

We can't say we haven't been warned about this numerous times by those long, dead patriarchs we sometimes have the gall to call our nation's "Founders," as well as some faithful former religious and political leaders. G.K. Chesterton was right when he said, "When men choose not to believe in God, they do not thereafter believe in nothing. They ... become capable of believing in anything." The increasing secularization of our culture, including its hypersexuality without commitment in marriage and the lack of interest in church attendance, especially by younger people, gives credence to Chesterton's point.

If political leadership today is understanding what the masses want and giving it to them ("good and hard, too," as per H.L. Mencken); if political leadership represents what the masses believe — from entitlement to redistributing other people's money, to limitless abortion, to no bail for criminal behavior, to no restraints on human behavior — that reflects who we are.

We, Americans today, will get what we deserve.

And what we want; what has become paramount for so many of us are the fulfillment of our personal desires and fantasies, not the hard work and delayed gratification of developing character nor the greater good of the nation or its people — even our children.

We want fun. Now!

Some wonder where the adults are — those of drinking age, at least. But really, we need more grown-ups. Far too many adults today are suffering from arrested development or terminal adolescence. It's like doing high school all over again, but this time with money and without a curfew.

A little older but a near contemporary of Chesterton's was C.S. Lewis. A man with a mind and a soul well worth reading. He stated in "The Abolition of Man": "We make men without chests and expect from them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst."

Today, voter surveys tell us that over 60 percent of Americans think we are on "the wrong track." So why do we keep picking leaders who keep us there? Is it their looks? Their money? Do they entertain us with a laugh or a clever remark? Do they have a big-enough social media presence? I think the truth is they represent who we are, at our core. Or aspire to be — rich, famous, attractive, fun.

John Adams, another Founder and one of those dead, white guys lots of us fret about; one of many who, way back when, in the last eight words of the Declaration of Independence, "pledged his life, his fortune and his sacred honor" to underwrite this great nation, remarked that "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people."

What happens when most of us no longer care about orthodox morality or religion? I guess we get the kinds of presidential candidates we do.

Good and hard, too.

May God have mercy on us.

James O'Donnell, M.B.A., is the retired, emeritus, Luke J. Peters Professor of Business and Economics and Executive-in-Resident at Huntington University. He has presented an annual economic review and forecast via the Wells County Chamber of Commerce for several years.

Election Letters Policy

The News-Banner accepts Letters to the Editor concerning local election candidates and issues. All letters must be signed; the writer's address and phone number must be included in case verification is desired. Letters are subject to editing for brevity, clarity and length; letters are limited to 500 words.

• There is a limit to one letter per writer per campaign period. • The editor reserves the right to refuse publication of any letter at all times. • An appearance of a letter-writing campaign will be deemed as such and discontinued. • Letters pertaining to the Nov. 5, 2024 election must be received by Sat., Oct. 26, with the exception of responses by a candidate to any letter published on or after that date.

Submit your Letters to the Editor via: • Our website link (Submit Your Letter) • E-Mail: email@news-banner.com • Mail: PO Box 436, Bluffton IN 46714 • Drop-off: 125 N. Johnson St., Bluffton. (There is a 24-hour drop-slot available.)

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What Oct. 7 didn't change

When Hamas terrorists burst through the Gaza fence at 7:43 a.m. on Oct. 7, 2023, they turned the Middle East upside down. The vaunted Israeli military was unprepared and vulnerable as Hamas stormed through Israeli settlements and military bases, butchering people at will. The Israeli Superman seemed to have lost his cape.

"Where's the IDF?" frightened Israelis asked as they waited for the Israel Defense Forces to arrive. One of Israel's top security officials told me the following month that the nation was so traumatized that it couldn't make good decisions about its security. But Israel had more time to work with, and a stronger national will, than it appeared in those first weeks.

A year later, the shape of the Middle East is indeed different, but not in the way that most observers would have predicted. The military power of Hamas is hobbled, and its remaining fighters hide in an underground lair that increasingly resembles a dungeon. Hezbollah, the most ferocious of Iran's proxies, is reeling after the decapitation of its leadership. Iran has tried to retaliate, but Israeli defenses stop most of its missiles and drones.

This year has reminded us that warfare is about unspeakable violence. Etched in my memory is a video of a Hamas fighter joyously telephoning his mother in Gaza to boast how many Jews he had killed; I recall, too, a senior Israeli officer blandly insisting to me that the IDF was limiting civilian casualties, even as the world saw images of dead Palestinian children in Gaza, day after day. Israel restored deterrence but amid a field of tens of thousands of dead and several million displaced civilians.

The power equation in the Middle East has changed over the past year. That's what the leaders of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have told the White House in recent days. Israel is up, Iran is down, and the moderate Arabs, no matter what they say in public, appear to be content. The Arab states have diplomatic ties to Iran, but during this year of war they have continued to operate a joint air-defense system with Israel. Saudi officials tell the White House that they still hope to pursue normalization with Israel, when the hurricane of war has passed.

The outcome of war can seem inevitable in retrospect. Historians tell us the Confederacy could never have hoped to outlast the industrial might of the Union. Similarly, we know in hindsight that Imperial Japan could not have sustained the momentum of its surprise Pearl Harbor attack and that Soviet communism would collapse of its own corruption and incompetence.

But those outcomes were purchased in blood, day by day. So, too, with Israel's Gaza and Lebanon wars. And over the past year, with Hamas and Hezbollah hidden in dense urban areas, it was Palestinian and Lebanese civilians who paid the most terrible price.

The agony for Palestinian civilians in Gaza has been, for most of us, a collection of horrifying snapshots: Wounded children cradled in their parents' arms, or stretchers being carried through shattered buildings. A personal glimpse of this horror came in

48 installments of a Gaza diary by "Ziad," a 35-year-old Palestinian, published by the Guardian newspaper over the first six months of the war.

Although Ziad's full identity is not disclosed, his chronicle of the war is believable to me because the details are so ordinary: The impossibility of sleep amid the sound of explosions; the difficulty of caring for pets; the degrading lack of personal hygiene; the sense of meaninglessness; the fear of death. During the first two weeks of war, the price of renting a generator increased eightfold, as did the cost of a taxi ride, according to the diary. Gaza was a box, and Ziad and his family were trapped.

The Biden administration this year has been an eager but stunningly unsuccessful peacemaker. That wasn't for lack of effort. CIA Director William J. Burns and National Security Council Middle East Director Brett McGurk made perhaps a dozen mediation trips to the region, aided by Egyptian and Qatari officials.

But the Biden team's efforts mostly proved futile. This wasn't Henry Kissinger's version of shuttle diplomacy. The Hamas decision-maker Yahya Sinwar was in a tunnel under Gaza, having taken the enclave into the horror of war, Sinwar preferred martyrdom to compromise. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed to be interested in a cease-fire and hostage deal, but his lodestar was his own political survival.

Netanyahu's oscillating fortunes have punctuated the war. He was an outcast a year ago, deeply unpopular within his country and scorned by some commentators as the worst prime minister in Israeli history. But Netanyahu held on, like a man dangling from the edge of a skyscraper, and by last week even his critics in Israel were applauding the destruction of Hezbollah.

If there was one consistent theme, other than the resilience of Israel's military and intelligence services, it was the lack of clear Israeli thinking about what would come next. Netanyahu ignored planning for the "day after" in Gaza and is making the same mistake now as the IDF shatters Lebanon.

Perhaps Israel's sword of vengeance has broken the power of Iran and its boldest proxies, as Netanyahu and his supporters seem to hope. But this is the Middle East. A more likely outcome is that, at a cost of so many thousands of dead, this war has restored the old paradigm of a strong Israel that can crush its enemies — until the next round.

Perhaps the saddest legacy of this war will be that it could so easily happen again. We all know the adage about those who don't learn from history. When we see the hardened faces of Israelis, Palestinians and Lebanese, we know that many of them are thinking about the next conflict, even as they fight this one. The displaced Gazans, the stunned Hezbollah fighters, aren't likely to forget. And in the Middle East, memory is an addictive drug, and a poison.

Follow David Ignatius @IgnatiusPost on X.



David Ignatius

Lebanon then and now

The year was 1982. I was in Israel when the IDF crossed the Northern border to root out terrorist sanctuaries in southern Lebanon. The government of Prime Minister Menachem Begin called it "Operation Peace for Galilee." The deputy press secretary invited me to accompany him into Lebanon.

We went through Tyre and Sidon to the outskirts of Beirut. I saw weapons provided by the Eastern European communist bloc stacked in parking garages, schools, hospitals and other civilian locations. Nothing has changed since then as the terrorists, who are called by different names, but with the same goal, want Israel to bomb those targets, hoping civilians will be killed so Israel will be blamed for "targeting civilians."

Forty-two years ago, Lebanese civilians cheered the IDF and offered free coffee and Lebanese flags to the troops, even to me.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is right to ignore the pleadings of President Biden for a cease fire and a "diplomatic solution." He has heard that before and it only allowed Israel's enemies to regroup for a future attack.

As former Israeli diplomat Yoram Ettinger writes in his newsletter: "Israel fights Hezbollah, which is a global epicenter - second only to Iran's Ayatollahs - of anti-US terrorism, drug trafficking and money laundering, extending from the Middle



Cal Thomas

East to the American continent. As a proxy of Iran's Ayatollahs, Hezbollah has proliferated terrorist cells in the U.S. ... and has carried out terror assaults on U.S. installations in the Middle East and beyond. Moreover, since the early 1980s, Hezbollah has collaborated with drug cartels in Mexico, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador and Brazil; has trained Latin American terrorists

(on their way to the U.S.) ... and has systematically attempted to topple all pro-U.S. 'apostate' Sunni Arab regimes..."

It is not just in Israel's interest that Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza be crushed, it is also in the interest of the United States, something too many administrations have ignored. Rather than support Israel's right to victory over its enemies, those administrations, including the current one, continue with the false belief that terrorists can be appeased by giving them what they want. What they want - and openly say they want - is the eradication of the Jewish state after which they are coming after us and as Ettinger notes, are already on the way. Given our effectively open border, some may already be here.

In 2006, the UN passed Resolution 1701. Its purpose was to end that war between Israel and the terrorists in Lebanon who were then and are now in control of that country. As the Associated Press reported: "(under

Resolution 1701) Israeli forces would fully withdraw while the Lebanese army and UNIFIL — Hezbollah excluded — would be the exclusive armed presence south of Lebanon's Litani River. The Lebanese state was to have full sovereignty over its south. Meanwhile, up to 15,000 U.N. peacekeepers would help to maintain calm, return displaced Lebanese and secure the area alongside the Lebanese military. The goal was long-term security, with land borders eventually demarcated to resolve territorial disputes."

As with so much else in the region, the resolution eventually became hollow.

Lebanon was once known as the "Switzerland of the Middle East." Now it has been wracked by war and terrorism, fueled by Islamic fanaticism.

In war, victory should be the only goal, lest the war be prolonged and new ones started. It is worth noting two of the greatest statements about victory by two World War II leaders. In 1943, President Franklin Roosevelt said that war against Germany and Japan would not end until "total victory" was achieved. In his inaugural speech after becoming Britain's war time leader, Winston Churchill said: "Victory at all costs, Victory in spite of all terror, Victory however long and hard the road may be."

That now appears to be the goal of Prime Minister Netanyahu. It is the right one for Israel, the U.S. and the West.

tcaditors@tribpub.com.



The 'Tom Sawyer' cast

Above, members of the cast of Mark Twain's "Tom Sawyer" will be ready to entertain you on Oct. 10, 11, 12, at the Auditorium, 428 South Oak St. in Bluffton. Tickets are \$15. Standing left to right are Ralph Tuttle (Judge Thatcher), Mia Sprunger (Mrs. Thatcher), Mike Downey (Muff Potter), Paul Morgan (Injun JOe), Callie Fischer (Townsperson) and Matt Elwell (Rev. Sprague) while on the bench are Kim Downey (Mrs. Harper), Joyce Fischer (Widow Douglas) and Pat White (Mrs. Walters). Above right, Aidan Wood, at left, will portray Tom Sawyer while Tom Haynie will be Mr. Dobbins. Lower right, Other cast members of "Tom Sawyer" include left to right Cooper Wood (Susan Harper), Emmalee Kelley (Gracie Miller) and Gabriel Fischer (Alfred Temple). (Photos provided)



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Fall crafts at Senior Snippets class

Buttons and pumpkins were glued into place. In the top photo Elaine Miller was arranging buttons to complete her design while at the right are three of the completed versions.

The crafters will meet three more Wednesday afternoons at the remaining sessions in the series jointly sponsored by the Bluffton Parks Department and the library.



Pumpkin path at Botanical Conservatory

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.

A Talk with Tego



Gunner is a five-month-old, domestic short hair, neutered male.



Pixie is a five-month-old, domestic short hair, neutered male.



Griffin is a five-month-old, domestic short hair, neutered male.



Tego

Tego's Tips: Waived adoption fees on all cats/kittens that have already been spayed/neutered. They are all very sweet and friendly with many to choose from.

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

Gloria's spirits are lifted by Saturday rainbows

I rolled over and opened my eyes a wee bit. An orange cloud caught my attention in the west. It was unusual, so I pulled myself over to the open window and blinked in the morning stillness.

It was 6:30 on Saturday morning. I slid the screen up to give me a clearer view of the color display of blue skies with orange-peach-colored clouds. "Hmm, this can't be a coincidence," I told myself. The night before, at bedtime, I once more gave my struggles over to God, thinking maybe there will be a break by morning.

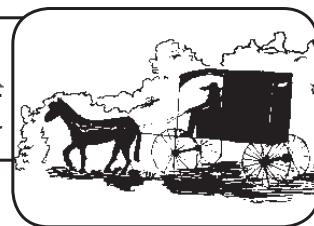
Something began to happen as I sat there watching the clouds slowly shift and shuffle. At first it made me feel a tad eerie. It couldn't be true, still I knew my eyes really weren't playing tricks, it was real. In that morning quiet, the sun shone onto the beautiful clouds, and a rainbow began to form. There was no rain in sight, not even a trace of a sprinkle. I knew beyond any shadow of a doubt that God heard the cry of my heart and came close to show his provision. I still had not the slightest idea of how he would work things out, but I also knew I didn't need to know.

The words from a song, "A Rainbow of Promise", rang in my mind. Though I did not know the song very well, friends had sung it on our voicemail two years ago after my husband's passing. I knew the song must be precious to them, knowing they too, are acquainted with grief.

I sat there, pondering over it all. The rainbow showed its colors right over the area with clouds. It struck me, isn't that a picture of life? Rainbows appear where clouds reside. I watched until it faded completely, then fetched my Bible and randomly flipped it open. My heart beat with adoration to my Maker as I read the first verse, "Look to the earth beneath

The Amish Cook

by Gloria Yoder



and the heavens above..." As my eyes scanned the verses following, it brought to light how the trials of today are all passing by, but my obedience to God in the moment will have effects lasting forever. I breathed deep. It was true, God understands, and because of his love he does not expect me to even feel great or like a noble Christian. He loves me the way I am right now.

Pushing my Bible to the side I took my seat on the edge of the bed once more, as I gazed out the window.

Wonder of wonders, what do you think I saw? Yes, that's right, another rainbow! I looked, then looked again; there was no hint of rain anywhere, just a partial rainbow shining its brilliance on the top part.

Once more, I gazed and I marveled. Yes, it was a Saturday morning, which meant a day at the home of coordinating inside work, such as house cleaning, as well as outside work, including yard and farm work. I loved those days, but on the real note, it can also be intense. What a comfort to have a token from above that God knows and sees. The day wasn't perfect, but it was good.

Last night, before we went to bed, we were surprised to discover "The Rainbow of Promise" song on our voicemail once more. When my friends from Ohio found out that we'd like to learn it, they sang it again for us. My heart was touched, surely God provides through his children all over!

Early this morning, when little Joshua couldn't sleep with a round of poison ivy all over his face, that song

came back in my mind, then again and again. So, dear friends, it is a promise, not only for a select few, but for everyone.

We are promised hope when we lean in on him; like those words reminds us, "A rainbow of courage from the Father above, A rainbow of shelter when the storm clouds arise..."

No one likes thunder in their lives, but do take a moment to consider what life would be like if we all got what we ever wanted. I don't know about you, but I know I would not trade a life of ease with a life that keeps me returning to God.

There are no recipes for rainbows, just as God is also the only one to bring rainbows into our hearts amidst hard times.

I would enjoy passing a recipe on to you that we used for our neighbor girl's wedding. Joshua went with me to make it and was happy to help taste each batch. We scooped it into 375 individual containers for the guests, and if you prefer natural sweeteners, just swap out the powdered sugar for a sweetener of your choice.

STRAWBERRY BUTTER

2 cups butter, softened
1- 8 oz cream cheese, softened
1 cup powdered sugar
1 1/4 cup strawberry jam
1 teas vanilla
Cream butter, cream cheese and powdered sugar together then whip in jam and vanilla.

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Knights sweep Tigers in county rivalry volleyball

By RYAN WALKER

Norwell entered The Tiger Den and came out a victor over county rival Bluffton on Monday night.

The Knights (15-10) made it quick and defeated the Tigers (8-17) in straight sets, wanting no part in the five-set thrillers the two have gone through the past two seasons.

"I think they're a little extra excited," Norwell head coach Kayla Hunter said. "There's always more emotions in this game for whatever reason — probably on both sides. It feels good just to take care of business and you feel like you can exhale a little bit."

With the win over the Tigers and Southern Wells, that will make Norwell the top dog in Wells County for volleyball.

Norwell won by scores of 25-23, 25-18 and 25-20. All sets were close, and in fact, Bluffton held the lead in each of them in the early parts of the period.

But it was Bluffton without the killer instinct it needed to hold on and Norwell's part in not quitting. Both coaches admitted their teams need to be stronger, but in the opposite areas: Norwell wants to start quicker and Bluffton wants to finish games.

Bluffton's coach Caylee Pyle was complimentary of her team's efforts against a strong Norwell team that is starting to hit its stride and get healthy with Macie Saalfrank back from injury. A point of emphasis is getting her team to believe in themselves.

"We're starting to play at the level we can," Pyle said. "We're starting to believe it a little bit more. We're starting to push ourselves a little bit harder, but it's not cohesive throughout the entire set. We have sparks and highlights of great things in certain places, and then we fall short in other places. We're working on that full circle connection."

She also mentioned that she's seeing her

Tigers reap the benefits of working on their defense throughout the season. Players are moving better, covering spots and finding a rhythm in communication.

Hunter also shared an area of growth from her team.

She has been preaching the mental toughness for her team over the past few weeks and believes that the Knights are starting to click.

Saalfrank's return to the team has certainly helped as one of Norwell's anchors and adds a piece to the puzzle that's been missing all season. Saalfrank led the team with 18 assists, 11 kills and eight digs Monday night.

Because of that and the team's ups and downs, they could have something cooking.

"I was proud of the way we fought and they finished well in all three of those (sets)," Hunter said. "I don't know at the beginning of the season they would have finished like that because they've definitely grown mentally that way."

Norwell stat leaders: Saalfrank with 18 assists, 11 kills and eight digs, Izzy Anderson and Emma Vachon three aces and Vanessa Rosswurm four blocks.

Bluffton stat leaders: Maryn Schreiber seven kills, Isla Gibson 14 assists, Marly Drayer two aces and 18 digs and Sophie Eisenhut two blocks.

Norwell won the junior varsity match 2-1 (18-25, 25-17, 15-10).

The Tigers were led by Lucy Mace with seven kills, Kamryn Ault 15 assists and Jaida Mills 18 digs.

Bluffton will host North Side for its final regular season match of the season starting at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 9.

Norwell will return to The Castle and face East Noble at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 8.

ryan@news-banner.com

Norwell completes second half comeback vs. Barons JV football

Norwell's junior varsity football team made a 15-point second half comeback to beat DeKalb on Monday.

The Knights were down 21-6 at the half but scored 15 straight points to come out with a 26-21 victory over the Barons.

On the offense, Lance Meriwether connected with Cooper Bunn for a 13-yard touchdown pass. Meriwether reached Jack Richardson as well on a tipped pass

for a six-yard score. On the ground, Kaydin Inostroza (one yard) and Meriwether (47 yards) scored touchdowns. Connor Fojtik scored on a two-point conversion carry.

On the defense side, Meriwether picked off a pass.

On special teams, the Knights shined with a Brock Zent blocked a PAT and a Carter Costello recovered an onside kick.

High School Calendar

TUESDAY, OCT 8

BOYS TENNIS: (Regional) Peru at Bluffton, 5 p.m.

BOYS SOCCER: (Sectional) Norwell vs. Woodlan at Concordia, 7 p.m.

VOLLEYBALL: East Noble at Norwell, 7 p.m.; Anderson Prep at Southern Wells, 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, OCT 9

VOLLEYBALL: North Side at Bluffton, 7 p.m.; Wes-Del at Southern Wells, 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, OCT 10

GIRLS SOCCER: (Sectional) Canterbury/Heritage at Norwell, 5 p.m.

VOLLEYBALL: Huntington North at Norwell, 7 p.m.; Southern Wells at Adams Cen-

tral, 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCT 11

FOOTBALL: Bluffton at Adams Central, 7 p.m.; Norwell at Huntington North, 7 p.m.; Southern Wells at Heritage, 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, OCT 12

CROSS COUNTRY (co-ed): Bluffton, Southern Wells ACAC meet at South Adams, 11 a.m.; Norwell at Delta Eagle Invitational, 10:30 a.m.

VOLLEYBALL: Norwell at Maconaquah Invitational, 9 a.m.

MONDAY, OCT 14

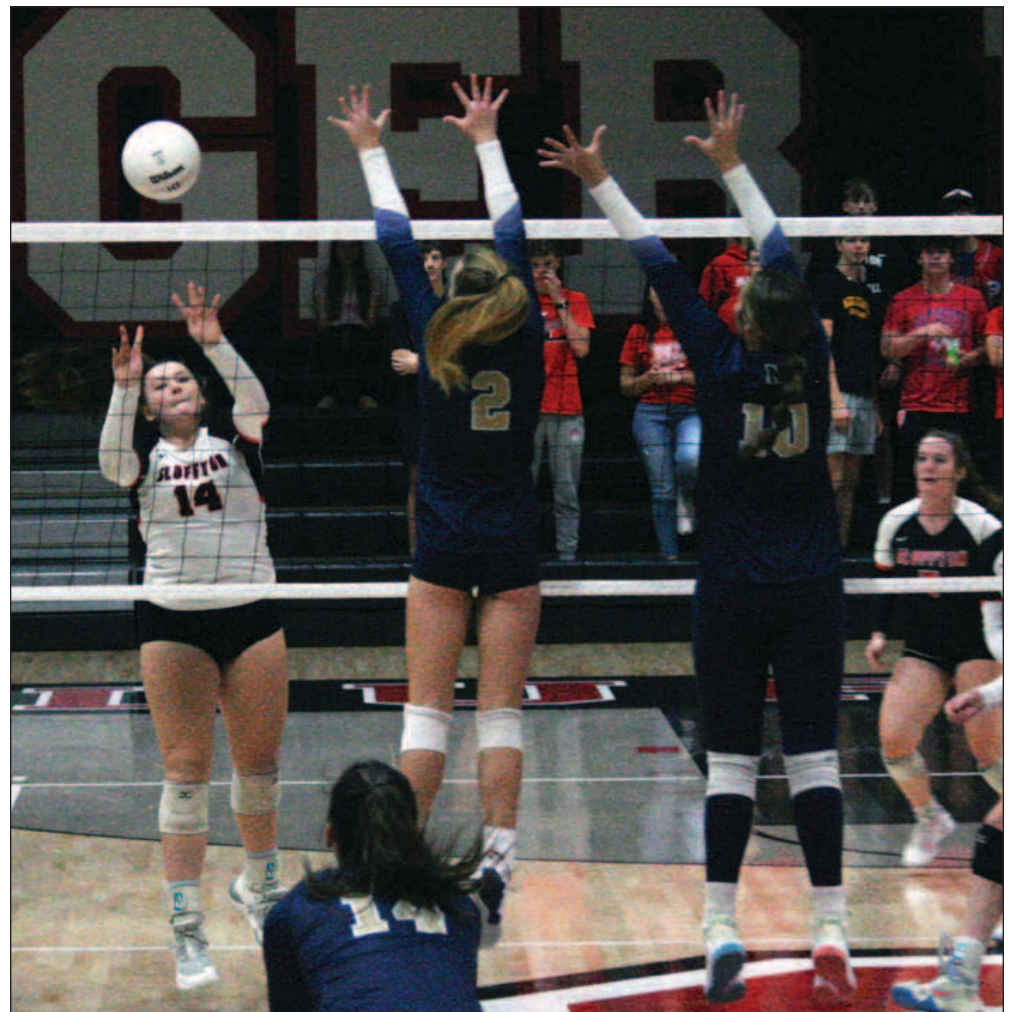
No events scheduled

TUESDAY, OCT 15

No events scheduled



Norwell erupts in celebration after taking a point against Bluffton at The Tiger Den on Monday. The Knights defeated the Tigers in straight sets and beat Southern Wells earlier in the season to take county bragging rights. (Photos by Ryan Walker)



Tigers' Alexandria Koby (left) strategically tips the ball in the opposite direction over Norwell defenders Jaycie Grzych (middle) and Mekynzi Beck.

Carpenter's 3-run homer off Clase sends gritty Tigers to win over Guardians in Game 2 of ALDS

By TOM WITHERS

AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — Kerry Carpenter hit a three-run homer off Cleveland's All-Star closer Emmanuel Clase in the ninth inning, and the Detroit Tigers stunned the Guardians 3-0 in Game 2 on Monday to even their AL Division Series at one game apiece.

Carpenter connected for a 423-foot shot with two outs off Clase, who had not given up a run since Aug. 30 and led the American League with 47 saves.

"To do it off him is special," said Carpenter. "He's one of the best."

Detroit ace Tarik Skubal pitched seven shutout innings, increasing his postseason total to 13, before the Tigers put together a rare big inning against the almost unhittable Clase.

The intimidating right-hander has dominated hitters all season — he hasn't blown a save since May — and was making just his second multi-inning appearance of 2024.

Jake Rogers and Trey Sweeney hit consecutive two-out singles. Carpenter, who entered an inning earlier as a pinch-hitter, turned on Clase's third straight slider, sending the ball into the right-field seats and shocking Cleveland's rowdy home crowd.

"How about those three two-out hits?" Tigers manager A.J. Hinch said.

Guardians manager Stephen Vogt didn't regret using Clase for more than one inning.

"Emmanuel has been locked down all year," Vogt said. "He's been nearly perfect. He's human, too. These things are going to happen, and it's unfortunate the timing of when it did, but at the same time he's going to have the ball in the ninth again."

"This is the best closer in the game for a reason, and they just happened to get him tonight."

The homer drove in the first runs of the series for the Tigers, who have been finding ways to win for months. Detroit went 31-13 after Aug. 11 to qualify for the postseason and then stunned the AL West champion Houston Astros in the Wild Card Series.

Tigers' America at it again and head home to Comerica Park for Games 3 and 4 on Wednesday and Thursday with a chance to advance.

"You come to this environment, on the



road, and it's a five-game series," Tigers manager A.J. Hinch said. "When you get that emotional win and go back home 1-1, you feel like you got one on their home turf."

"We now have two games at our place. We know it's going to be electric. We know Detroit has waited a really long time for a playoff game."

We're going to have a couple of them and a chance to take control of this series."

When Carpenter stepped into the box, the Tigers felt something good would happen.

"Kerry coming up there being Kerry Bonds, that's what you want right there," Rogers said. "He got one low and in the middle of the zone. I had the best view of it and I was screaming from the bottom of my lungs."

After Skubal pitched seven innings and winner Will Vest got through the eighth, Beau Brieske pitched a perfect ninth for the save.

Skubal was getting a postgame workout when Carpenter homered.

"What a swing," he said. "I was on the ground, and I think that's the fastest I've ever stood up in my life. What a swing off a really good pitcher, too, the best closer in the game. That was incredible to watch."

Skubal, who won the AL pitching triple crown by leading the league in wins (18), ERA (2.39) and strikeouts (288), allowed just three hits. The left-hander dominated the Guardians over the first 4 1/3 innings, striking out eight before Josh Naylor doubled with one out in the fifth for Cleveland's first hit. Skubal then hit rookie Jhonkensy Noel on the left hand.

But the 27-year-old Skubal, who has never pitched a complete game, got Andrés Giménez to bounce into an inning-ending double play and celebrated loudly as he left the mound and headed toward Detroit's dugout.

Cleveland also threatened in the sixth.

No. 9 hitter Brayan Rocchio doubled with one out and Kwan singled. Rocchio was held at third, and Skubal again got out of trouble as Detroit's infield turned a nifty 6-4-3 double play, prompting the lefty to raise his hands and ask the crowd for more applause like a conductor pushing his orchestra for volume.



Bluffton invitational champs

Southern Wells swept the middle school races on Saturday, winning both the boys' and the girls' cross country events during Bluffton's first Stan Gilbert Invitational on Saturday. At top, the boys' team poses with their trophy and above, the girls pose with their trophy. (Photos submitted)

Scoreboard

FOOTBALL

| NFL | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|-----|------|---------|
| AMERICAN CONFERENCE | | | | | |
| East | | | | | |
| W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
| Buffalo | 3 | 2 | 0 | 600 | 142 106 |
| Miami | 2 | 3 | 0 | 400 | 60 113 |
| N.Y. Jets | 2 | 3 | 0 | 400 | 93 85 |
| New England | 1 | 4 | 0 | 200 | 62 102 |
| South | | | | | |
| W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
| Houston | 4 | 1 | 0 | 800 | 102 114 |
| Indianapolis | 2 | 3 | 0 | 400 | 119 122 |
| Tennessee | 1 | 3 | 0 | 250 | 79 90 |
| Jacksonville | 1 | 4 | 0 | 200 | 97 143 |
| North | | | | | |
| W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
| Baltimore | 3 | 2 | 0 | 600 | 147 126 |
| Pittsburgh | 3 | 2 | 0 | 600 | 92 73 |
| Cincinnati | 1 | 4 | 0 | 200 | 140 145 |
| Cleveland | 1 | 4 | 0 | 200 | 79 121 |
| West | | | | | |
| W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
| Kansas City | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1000 | 118 85 |
| Denver | 3 | 2 | 0 | 600 | 96 73 |
| L.A. Chargers | 2 | 2 | 0 | 500 | 68 50 |
| Las Vegas | 2 | 3 | 0 | 400 | 96 131 |

| Washington | 4 | 1 | 0 | 800 | 155 115 |
|---------------|---|---|-----|------|---------|
| Dallas | 3 | 2 | 0 | 600 | 117 121 |
| Philadelphia | 2 | 2 | 0 | 500 | 86 96 |
| N.Y. Giants | 2 | 3 | 0 | 400 | 89 104 |
| South | | | | | |
| W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
| Atlanta | 3 | 2 | 0 | 600 | 111 115 |
| Tampa Bay | 3 | 2 | 0 | 600 | 127 114 |
| New Orleans | 2 | 3 | 0 | 400 | 140 96 |
| Carolina | 1 | 4 | 0 | 200 | 83 165 |
| North | | | | | |
| W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
| Minnesota | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1000 | 139 76 |
| Detroit | 3 | 1 | 0 | 750 | 104 82 |
| Chicago | 3 | 2 | 0 | 600 | 113 85 |
| Green Bay | 3 | 2 | 0 | 600 | 128 108 |
| West | | | | | |
| W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
| Seattle | 3 | 2 | 0 | 600 | 122 114 |
| Arizona | 2 | 3 | 0 | 400 | 120 129 |
| San Francisco | 2 | 3 | 0 | 400 | 126 106 |
| L.A. Rams | 1 | 4 | 0 | 200 | 94 139 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Washington 34, Cleveland 13 | Washington 34, Cleveland 13 |
| Arizona 24, San Francisco 23 | Arizona 24, San Francisco 23 |
| Denver 34, Las Vegas 18 | Denver 34, Las Vegas 18 |
| Green Bay 24, L.A. Rams 19 | Green Bay 24, L.A. Rams 19 |
| N.Y. Giants 29, Seattle 20 | N.Y. Giants 29, Seattle 20 |
| Dallas 20, Pittsburgh 17 | Dallas 20, Pittsburgh 17 |
| Open: L.A. Chargers, Tennessee, Detroit, Philadelphia | Open: L.A. Chargers, Tennessee, Detroit, Philadelphia |
| Monday's Games | Monday's Games |
| Kansas City 26, New Orleans 13 | Kansas City 26, New Orleans 13 |

| (Best-of-5) Thursday, Oct. 10: Minnesota/Connecticut winner at New York, 8 p.m. | (Best-of-5) Thursday, Oct. 10: Minnesota/Connecticut winner at New York, 8 p.m. |
|---|---|
| BASEBALL | |
| MLB | |
| DIVISION SERIES | |
| (Best-of-5) | |
| American League | |
| New York 1, Kansas City 1 | New York 1, Kansas City 1 |
| Saturday, Oct. 5: New York 6, Kansas City 5 | Saturday, Oct. 5: New York 6, Kansas City 5 |
| Monday, Oct. 7: Kansas City 4, New York 2 | Monday, Oct. 7: Kansas City 4, New York 2 |
| Wednesday, Oct. 9: New York (Schmidt 5-5) at Kansas City, 7:08 p.m. (TBS, truTV, Max) | Wednesday, Oct. 9: New York (Schmidt 5-5) at Kansas City, 7:08 p.m. (TBS, truTV, Max) |
| Cleveland 1, Detroit 1 | Cleveland 1, Detroit 1 |
| Saturday, Oct. 5: Cleveland 7, Detroit 0 | Saturday, Oct. 5: Cleveland 7, Detroit 0 |
| Monday, Oct. 7: Detroit 3, Cleveland 0 | Monday, Oct. 7: Detroit 3, Cleveland 0 |
| Wednesday, Oct. 9: Cleveland (Cobb 2-1) at Detroit, 3:08 p.m. (TBS, truTV, Max) | Wednesday, Oct. 9: Cleveland (Cobb 2-1) at Detroit, 3:08 p.m. (TBS, truTV, Max) |
| Thursday, Oct. 10: Cleveland at Detroit, 6:08 p.m. (TNT, Max) | Thursday, Oct. 10: Cleveland at Detroit, 6:08 p.m. (TNT, Max) |
| National League/Los Angeles 1, San Diego 1 | National League/Los Angeles 1, San Diego 1 |

BASKETBALL

| WNBA Semifinals | |
|---|---|
| No. 1 New York 3, No. 4 Las Vegas 1 | No. 1 New York 3, No. 4 Las Vegas 1 |
| Friday, Oct. 4: Las Vegas 95, New York 81 | Friday, Oct. 4: Las Vegas 95, New York 81 |
| Sunday, Oct. 6: New York 76, Las Vegas 62 | Sunday, Oct. 6: New York 76, Las Vegas 62 |
| No. 2 Minnesota 2, No. 3 Connecticut 2 | No. 2 Minnesota 2, No. 3 Connecticut 2 |
| Friday, Oct. 4: Minnesota 90, Connecticut 81 | Friday, Oct. 4: Minnesota 90, Connecticut 81 |
| Sunday, Oct. 6: Connecticut 92, Minnesota 82 | Sunday, Oct. 6: Connecticut 92, Minnesota 82 |
| Tuesday, Oct. 8: Connecticut at Minnesota, 8 p.m. | Tuesday, Oct. 8: Connecticut at Minnesota, 8 p.m. |
| WNBA Finals | |

Royals beat Yankees in Game 2 to tie ALDS

NEW YORK (AP) — Salvador Perez homered leading off the fourth inning to spark a four-run rally against Carlos Rodón, and the Kansas City Royals beat the New York Yankees 4-2 on Monday night to even their AL Division Series at one game apiece.

Four relievers held New York in check after an inconsistent Cole Ragans lasted four innings. Tommy Pham, Garrett Hampson and Maikel Garcia singled in runs for the Royals.

Garcia, moved up from ninth to first in Kansas City's batting order, had four hits.

Game 3 in the best-of-five playoff is Wednesday night at Kansas City, the Royals' first postseason home game since the 2015 World Series.

Yankees star Aaron Judge went 1 for 3 with an infield single and is 1 for 7 with four strikeouts in the series. Kansas City's Bobby Witt Jr., expected to finish second to Judge in AL MVP voting, was 0 for 5 with three strike-

outs, dropping to 0 for 10 in the series.

All four Division Series opened 1-1 for the first time since the round started in 1995.

Giancarlo Stanton put the Yankees ahead with an RBI single in the third, but New York went 1 for 6 with runners in scoring position and is 3 for 19 in the two games.

Ragans allowed just the one run and three hits, striking out five and walking four. Winning pitcher Angel Zerpa and John Schreiber each followed with a hitless inning before Kris Bubic threw two scoreless innings. Lucas Erceg worked the ninth for his third save this postseason.

Erceg gave up a leadoff homer to Jazz Chisholm Jr. and a two-out single to Jon Berti but retired Gleyber Torres on a grounder to end it with slugger Juan Soto on deck.

Perez, at 34 the only remaining Royals player from their 2015 World

Series championship, tied the score when he drove a 2-0 slider into the left-field seats. The nine-time All-Star entered 12 for 26 (.462) with three homers off Rodón, an old AL Central rival when he pitched for the Chicago White Sox.

Yuli Gurriel singled, advanced on a wild pitch and scored on Pham's one-out single for a 2-1 lead, prompting cheers from NFL fans at the Kansas City Chiefs' home game against New Orleans at Arrowhead Stadium. Pham stole second and scored on a two-out single by Hampson.

Garcia greeted Ian Hamilton with an RBI single that put the Royals ahead 4-1.

Rodón, lined up to pitch a potential Game 5, gave up four runs and seven hits in 3 2/3 innings with seven strikeouts and no walks. Twenty-four of the 32 home runs he has allowed this season have been solo shots.

Agriculture

Drought relief policies leave some farmers out to dry

By HARSHAWN RATANPAL
AgDaily

DREXEL, Mo. — On a recent fall day, as Wilburn Harris did the rounds on his cattle farm in the Missouri town of Drexel, he was met with brown grass, cracked soil and half-empty ponds.

He was used to it. Last year's drought was so bad, he had to haul water and hay to his farm to keep the animals fed and watered.

Payments totaling nearly \$11,000 from the federal Livestock Forage Disaster Program, or LFP, helped him hold on to his 70 cattle.

"If it hadn't been for [the Livestock Forage Disaster Program], I'd probably got rid of a bunch of them," he said. "I'd have had to."

Things were going better this year, until September, when Cass County, where he's located, was classified as being in severe drought. Around that time, a third of the American Midwest was also in drought.

Since 1999, the U.S. Drought Monitor has quantified drought across the country. By using dozens of different data inputs and the consultation of hundreds of experts and stakeholders, Drought Monitor authors produce an updated map every week that ranks drought conditions county by county on a scale of D0 to D4, with D4 being the worst.

The U.S. Drought Monitor's website states that it doesn't "recommend using it to infer specifics about local conditions." However, many farmers rely on it to tell the government when local conditions require support from federal programs.

One of those is the LFP. Under the LFP, livestock producers are eligible for some relief if a part of their county reaches at least D3, or "extreme" drought, on the monitor for any amount of time or is classified as being in D2, or "severe" drought, for eight consecutive weeks.

Because this bout of severe drought began so late in the year for many Midwest states, it could mean that some people who relied on drought relief programs last year won't be eligible for them this year.

That's why some experts who work directly with farmers say the policy is flawed.

Missouri State Climatologist Zack Leasor is involved in the process of developing the Drought Monitor. While he thinks the Drought Monitor

is a good, scientific tool for depicting drought, he said the policies that determine when emergency relief kicks in may be prone to leaving farmers out to dry.

For one, there's the issue of how long drought must be reflected on the Drought Monitor for eligibility to start.

"You can think of hypothetical situations where this could go wrong," Leasor said. "Seven weeks of no rain is going to completely deplete your pasture. But let's say a tropical system comes in in week eight, dumps a bunch of rainfall, and you're not going to get that D2 drought designation. Does that mean that you still didn't have seven weeks of no grazing and having to purchase hay?"

The second issue is the monitor's resolution. While the makers of the Drought Monitor try to reflect accurate drought conditions, they can't always capture everything at a neighborhood or farm scale.

"And so I'm sure there's been farmers that have had some pastures that have been in horrible shape, and they've missed out, unfortunately," Leasor said.

Harris said conditions on his farm had been bad for about a month before the Drought Monitor reflected D2 conditions, and he's had to supplement his livestock's nutrition more than normal.

The science behind the monitor

The Drought Monitor was created years before the relief programs that use it existed and experts at the Drought Monitor weren't consulted about how it should be applied to policy.

Brian Fuchs, one of about a dozen Drought Monitor authors, thinks that's a good thing "because there's a good separation between policy and science."

Fuchs has worked at the National Drought Mitigation Center since 2005. That means he's worked with the Drought Monitor before and since it was first used as a metric for the LFP, which was formalized and funded through the 2008 Farm Bill. Before that, there was limited relief for livestock farmers.

"It kind of validated the first eight, nine years of the Drought Monitor at that point," he said. "I think it basically was saying, 'Hey, we know that this is a useful tool, we know that there's a lot of good science behind it, there's nothing else like it,

and we're going to start using it in an official capacity.'" Fuchs said some of the gripes with the program come from misconceptions about the Drought Monitor.

For example, the Drought Monitor isn't automated or made from scratch each week.

"Folks fail to realize that it's not a model, that there are humans that are manually moving these lines around, that we don't do a complete redraw every week," he said.

Each author of the Drought Monitor is in charge of the map for four to six weeks each year and for typically two weeks at a time before handing it off to the next author.

When it's his turn, Fuchs said the first step is familiarizing himself with the previous week's map and the conversation around it. Around 500 people are talking about the weekly production in an email list server, which he calls an "instantaneous peer review." Fuchs will also read the three to five pages of notes left behind by the previous week's author and pay attention to any changes they made to the monitor.

Next, Fuchs will look at dozens of data sources and consult experts to make decisions about where the "convergence of evidence" suggests there should be changes to the map.

"You'd be surprised how many people feel that the Drought Monitor is just rain," he said. It's not. The data includes inputs like precipitation, streamflow, and soil moisture.

Fuchs said people also have misconceptions about what the LFP relief money is for.

"It isn't going to be during every single drought," he said. "It isn't going to be when there's even problems related to drought, but the worst of the worst droughts."

Grassroots reporting

If stakeholders think the drought monitor is missing something, they can report what they're seeing on the ground.

Iowa State Climatologist Justin Glisan said he receives calls from farmers weekly that the monitor doesn't reflect conditions on their farms.

"So what I like to do — I'm a one-person-shop, so it's hard to do sometimes — but actually get out, field scout, go to these locations to get a feel for what our produc-

ers are seeing and then try to get an accurate depiction of this on the Drought Monitor map," Glisan said.

A formal way of chronicling on-the-ground observations is the National Drought Mitigation Center's Condition Monitoring Observer Reports, or CMOR system. It allows people to send in photos of real-world conditions that appear in a database and interactive map.

Reagan Bluel, a field specialist in dairy with University of Missouri Extension, works with farmers and urges them to send in observations, even when there isn't drought.

"When they submit the baseline [photo], that allows us to better assess the severity of the drought when they submit the drought one," she said. "And so for the last probably four years, we've been working on marching around the state to make sure everybody knows about that website and how easy it is to submit it from the smartphone, so that we can more rapidly declare the drought levels."

She said the effort has produced a noticeable change in the Drought Monitor's responsiveness for some areas.

Fuchs said the Drought Monitor is always trying to improve. "We don't put blinders up and we don't close our ears," he said.

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Let down by longtime friend

Dear Annie: I've had a friend for over 30 years whom I've always helped out. I provided him with work when he needed money, loaned him money, and supported him through his divorce and various other issues over the years. I was always happy to do so and never expected anything in return.

A couple of years ago, he was selling some furniture that I was interested in buying. I offered to purchase the pieces I wanted, but he insisted on selling everything as a set, which I understood. Recently, I asked him about the furniture again, and to my surprise, he told me he had given it away to his neighbors — people he's only known for a few years. I was shocked but didn't say anything at the time because I didn't want to overreact. What puzzled me even more was that he needed money, and the amount I would have paid him could have helped him out, yet he chose to give it away for nothing.

A mutual friend of ours was also shocked when he heard what happened. When he asked our friend about it, he simply said he gave the furniture away without any explanation. Even when our mutual friend mentioned that I was disappointed about not being able to buy the pieces, our friend offered no response and just changed the subject.

Is it time to move on from this friendship? — Disappointed and Confused in Michigan

Dear Disappointed: I'm not sure this situation warrants completely ending your friendship, but it certainly calls for a conversation. Ask your friend why he chose to give the furniture to his neighbor. There might be more to the story; perhaps the neighbor was going through a tough time and needed the furniture. You'll never know the real reason unless you ask.

Dear Annie: My 27-year-old grandson has stopped speaking to both his mother and me. We used to have a very close relationship, but that changed about a month ago. He and his girlfriend, who is quite controlling, have four children together, all under the age of 4. Unfortunately, his girlfriend has started arguments with us on three separate occasions over the same issue, and each time it results in us being

cut off from seeing the kids.

Recently, I was hospitalized for 10 days, and my daughter informed him that I was in the intensive care unit. I expected him to reach out to see how I was doing, but I never heard from him. I've texted and called him multiple times, trying to understand why he's avoiding me, but he hasn't responded. It's gotten so bad that we didn't even know they were expecting their fourth child until after the baby was born.

I'm heartbroken and confused about the sudden distance between us. I'm looking for answers on how to handle this situation and whether there's any way to mend the relationship. — Missing My Grandson

Dear Missing My Grandson: First of all, I'm glad to hear that you're out of the ICU and on the road to recovery. In terms of your expectations for your grandson to check in on you more often, or give you more attention, the best approach may be to simply reach out to him directly. With four young children (congratulations on being a great-grandma!), he's likely very busy but might actually appreciate hearing from you directly.

That being said, if you've made an effort to be there for him and your great-grandkids, and he continues to push you away, it's possible that your instincts are correct — his wife may indeed be exerting control over him. The fact that she seems to pick fights with his family can sometimes be a red flag for narcissistic behavior.

Keep being kind and supportive to your grandson, but also try to accept that he's probably overwhelmed with the demands of parenting four kids under the age of 4. It's likely not personal, even though it may feel hurtful.

Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com. © 2024 CREATORS.COM

Dear Annie

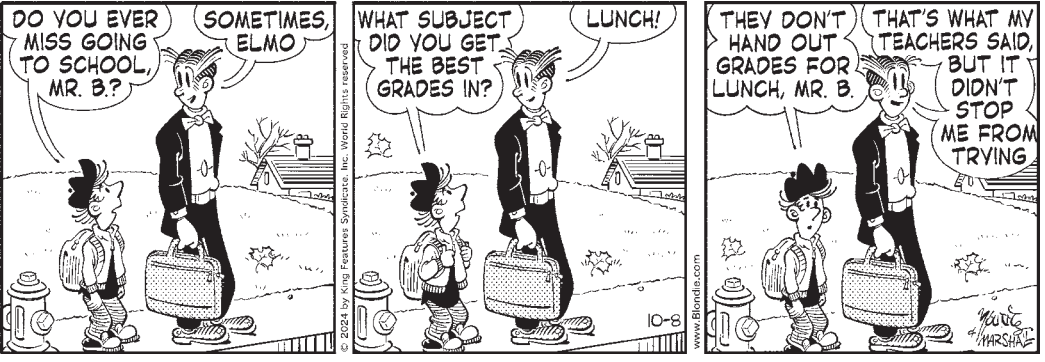
by Annie Lane



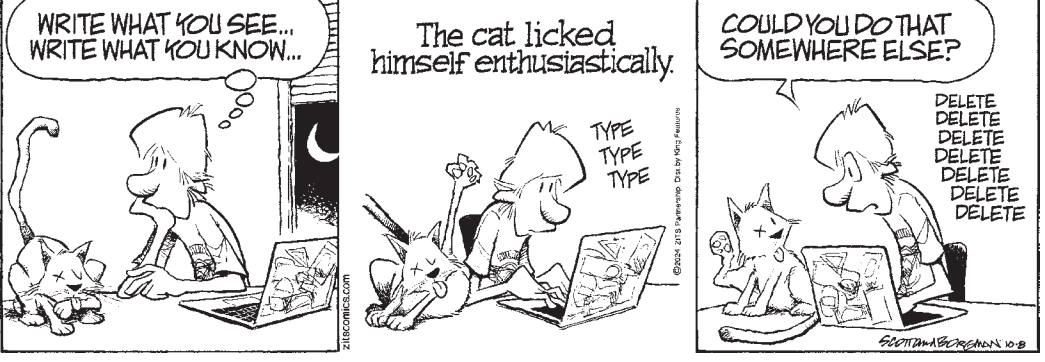
BEETLE BAILEY



BLONDIE



ZITS



CRANKSHAFT



THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane

The LOCKHORNS



My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



We are all just a breath away from eternity

Even the Apostle Paul did not plumb the depths of it or describe the prospect. He said, "Eye has not seen ... the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9, NKJV).

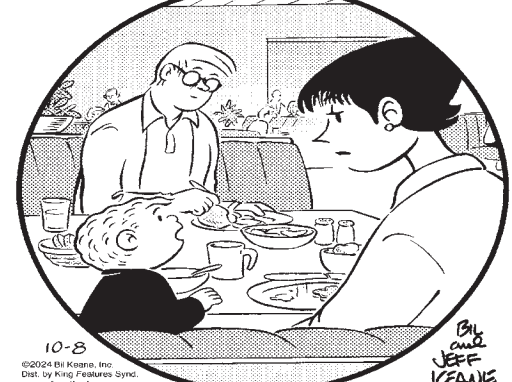
Time-bound as we are and goal-oriented to achievements in our lifetime, we find it strange to anticipate Heaven. It sounds boring to the contemporary mind. What do we do throughout eternity? A person who has worked hard may look forward to retirement, but sometimes relief from responsibility and challenge leads to restlessness.

We live in an age when activity is equated with value and usefulness. People ask us, "How are you?"

We answer, "Busy, busy, busy!" When the merry-go-round slows down, will the music of life fade away? Every day of our lives we are just a breath away from eternity. The believer in Jesus Christ has the promises of Heaven.

The Apostle Paul said, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21, NKJV). While we remain on Earth, we should live life abundantly and glorify God. When God calls our name in death, we will gain much more, for we shall be in His presence forever.

(This column is based on the words and writings of the late Rev. Billy Graham.) ©2024 Billy Graham Literary Trust. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.



"When I get as big as Daddy will I hafta eat oysters and clams and stuff?"

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Yesterday's answer grid for the crossword puzzle.

Table with 10 columns (Time slots: 10:08, 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) and 30 rows of TV channel listings.

Gaza in ruins after Israel's offensive. Rebuilding may take decades

By **JOSEPH KRAUSS**
and **SARAH EL DEEB**
Associated Press

The Gaza Strip is in ruins. There are hills of rubble where apartment blocks stood, and pools of sewage-tainted water spreading disease. City streets have been churned into dirt canyons and, in many places, the air is filled with the stench of unrecovered corpses.

Israel's yearlong offensive against Hamas, one of the deadliest and most destructive in recent history, has killed more than 41,000 people, a little over half of them women and children, according to local health officials. With no end in sight to the war and no plan for the day after, it is impossible to say when — or even if — anything will be rebuilt.

Even after the fighting stops, hundreds of thousands of people could be stuck living in squalid tent camps for years. Experts say reconstruction could take decades.

"This war is destruction and misery. It would make the stones cry out," said Shifaa Hejjo, a 60-year-old housewife living in a tent pitched on land where her home once stood.

Israel blames the destruction on Hamas. Its Oct. 7 attack on Israel — in which some 1,200 people were killed and around 250 taken hostage — ignited the war. Israel says Hamas embedded much of its military infrastructure, including hundreds of miles of tunnels, in densely populated areas where some of the heaviest battles were fought.

The fighting left roughly a quarter of all structures in Gaza destroyed or severely damaged, according to a U.N. assessment in September based on satellite videos. It said around 66% of structures, including more than 227,000 housing units, had sustained at least some damage.

If there's a cease-fire, around half of all families "have nowhere to go back to," said Alison Ely, a Gaza-based coordinator with the Shelter Cluster, an international coalition of aid providers led by the Norwegian Refugee Council.

The devastation in Gaza exceeds front-line towns in Ukraine

Almost as many buildings have been destroyed or damaged in Gaza as in all of Ukraine after its first two years of war with Russia, according to Corey Scher and Jamon Van Den Hoek, U.S.-based researchers who use satellite radar to document the wars' devastation.

To put that into perspective: Gaza is less than half the size of Ukraine's capital, Kyiv.

The amount of destruction in central and southern Gaza alone, Scher said, is roughly equivalent to what was lost in the front-line town of Bakhmut, the scene of one of the deadliest battles in the Ukraine war and where Russian forces destroyed nearly every building in their path to force Ukrainian troops to withdraw. The destruction in northern Gaza is even worse, he said.

Gaza's water and sanitation system has collapsed. More than 80% of its health facilities — and even more of its roads — are damaged or destroyed.

At the end of January, the World Bank estimated \$18.5 billion of damage — nearly the combined economic output of the West Bank and Gaza in 2022. That was before some intensely destructive Israeli ground operations, including in the southern border city of Rafah.

When Israeli ground forces pushed into the southern city of Khan Younis in January, Shifaa Hejjo and her family fled their four-story home with only the clothes they were wearing.

They spent months in various tent camps before she decided to return — and the sight brought her to tears.

Her entire neighborhood had been destroyed, her former home and the roads leading to it lost in a sea of rubble.

Around 90% of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been displaced by the war, often multiple times, according to U.N. estimates. Hundreds of thousands have crowded into sprawling tent camps near the coast with no electricity, running water or toilets. Hunger is widespread.

US spends a record \$17.9 billion on military aid to Israel since last Oct. 7

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States has spent a record of at least \$17.9 billion on military aid to Israel since the war in Gaza began and led to escalating conflict around the Middle East, according to a report for Brown University's Costs of War project, released Monday on the anniversary of Hamas' attacks on Israel.

An additional \$4.86 billion has gone into stepped-up U.S. military operations in the region since the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks, researchers said in findings first provided to The Associated Press. That includes the costs of a Navy-led campaign to quell strikes on commercial shipping by Yemen's Houthis, who are carrying them out in solidarity with the fellow Iranian-backed group Hamas.

The report — completed before Israel opened a second front, this one against Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants in Lebanon, in late September — is one of the first tallies of estimated U.S. costs as the Biden administration backs Israel in its conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon and seeks to contain hostilities by Iran-allied armed groups in the region.

The financial toll is on top of the cost in human lives: Hamas militants killed more than 1,200 people in Israel a year ago and took others hostage. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed nearly 42,000 people in Gaza, according to the territory's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its count.

The financial costs were calculated by Linda J. Bilmes, a professor at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, who has assessed the full costs

of U.S. wars since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, and fellow researchers William D. Hartung and Stephen Semler.

Israel — a protege of the United States since its 1948 founding — is the biggest recipient of U.S. military aid in history, getting \$251.2 billion in inflation-adjusted dollars since 1959, the report says.

Even so, the \$17.9 billion spent since Oct. 7, 2023, in inflation-adjusted dollars, is by far the most military aid sent to Israel in one year. The U.S. committed to providing billions in military assistance to Israel and Egypt each year when they signed their 1979 U.S.-brokered peace treaty, and an agreement since the Obama administration set the annual amount for Israel at \$3.8 billion through 2028.

The U.S. aid since the Gaza war started includes military financing, arms sales, at least \$4.4 billion in drawdowns from U.S. stockpiles and hand-me-downs of used equipment.

Much of the U.S. weapons delivered in the year were munitions, from artillery shells to 2,000-pound bunker-busters and precision-guided bombs.

Expenditures range from \$4 billion to replenish Israel's Iron Dome and David's Sling missile defense systems to cash for rifles and jet fuel, the study says.

Unlike the United States' publicly documented military aid to Ukraine, it was impossible to get the full details of what the U.S. has shipped Israel since last Oct. 7, so the \$17.9 billion for the year is a partial figure, the researchers said.

They cited Biden administration "efforts to hide the full amounts of aid and types of systems through bureaucratic maneuvering."

A spacecraft is on its way to a harmless asteroid slammed by NASA in a previous save-the-Earth test

By **MARCIA DUNN**
AP Aerospace Writer
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — A spacecraft blasted off Monday to investigate the scene of a cosmic crash.

The European Space Agency's Hera spacecraft rocketed away on a two-year journey to the small, harmless asteroid rammed by NASA two years ago in a dress rehearsal for the day a killer space rock threatens Earth. It's the second part of a planetary defense test that could one day help save the planet.

SpaceX's Falcon rocket quickly disappeared with Hera into the late morning clouds. An hour later, applause erupted in the control center in Germany as the spacecraft separated from the rocket's upper stage and then called home. "It's an amazing day," the space agency's director general Josef Aschbacher said afterward.

The 2022 crash by NASA's Dart spacecraft shortened Dimorphos' orbit around its bigger companion, demonstrating that if a dangerous rock was headed our way, there's a chance it could be knocked off course with enough advance notice.

Scientists are eager to examine the impact's aftermath up close to know exactly how effective Dart was and what changes might be needed to safeguard Earth in the future.

"The more detail we can glean the better as it may be important for planning a future deflection mission should one be needed," University of Maryland astronomer Derek Richardson said before launch.

Researchers want to know whether Dart — short for Double Asteroid Redirection Test — left a crater or perhaps reshaped the 500-foot asteroid more dramatically. It looked something like a flying saucer before Dart's blow and may now resemble a kidney bean, said Richardson, who took part in the Dart mission and is help-

ing with Hera. Dart's wallop sent rubble and even boulders flying off Dimorphos, providing an extra kick to the impact's momentum. The debris trail extended thousands of miles into space for months.

Some boulders and other debris could still be hanging around the asteroid, posing a potential threat to Hera, said flight director Ignacio Tanco.

"We don't really know very well the environment in which we are going to operate," said Tanco. "But that's the whole point of the mission is to go there and find out."

European officials describe the \$400 million mission as a "crash scene investigation."

Hera "is going back to the crime site and getting all the scientific and technical information," said project manager Ian Carnelli.

Carrying a dozen science instruments, the small car-sized Hera will need to swing past Mars in 2025 for a gravity boost, before arriving at Dimorphos by the end of 2026. It's a moonlet of Didymos, Greek for twin, a fast-spinning asteroid that's five times bigger. At that time, the asteroids will be 120 million miles from Earth.

Hera will attempt to go into orbit around the rocky pair, with the flyby

distances gradually dropping from 18 miles all the way down to a half-mile. The spacecraft will survey the moonlet for at least six months to ascertain its mass, shape and composition, as well as its orbit around Didymos.

Before the impact, Dimorphos circled its larger companion from three-quarters of a mile out. Scientists believe the orbit is now tighter and oval-shaped, and that the moonlet may even be tumbling.

Two shoebox-sized Cubesats will pop off Hera for even closer drone-like inspections, with one of them using radar to peer beneath the moonlet's boulder-strewn surface. Scientists suspect Dimorphos was formed from material shed from Didymos. The radar observations should help confirm whether Didymos is indeed the little moon's parent.

The Cubesats will attempt to land on the moonlet once their survey is complete. If the moonlet is tumbling, that will complicate the endeavor. Hera may also end its mission with a precarious touchdown, but on the larger Didymos.

Neither asteroid poses any threat to Earth — before or after Dart showed up. That's why NASA picked the pair for humanity's first asteroid-

deflecting demo.

Leftovers from the solar system's formation 4.6 billion years ago, asteroids primarily orbit the sun between Mars and Jupiter in what's known as the main asteroid belt, where millions of them reside. They become near-Earth objects when they're knocked out of the belt and into our neck of the woods.

NASA's near-Earth object count currently tops 36,000, almost all asteroids but also some comets. More than 2,400 of them are considered potentially hazardous to Earth.

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