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Critical needs for infrastructure at heart of county pool project

By JONATHAN SNYDER

Multiple infrastructure issues with the Wells Community Pool have the Bluffton Parks Department looking to build something new.

This replacement comes after a master plan survey was conducted in 2022, with swimming voted as the top recreational activity in the area. A liner was installed years ago after there were leaks in the foundation and walls, but Parks Department Superintendent Brandy Fiechter stated that the liner is beyond its life cycle.

New lining would cost the department approximately \$200,000 by itself. Fiechter said the patch work needed would become financial unsustainable — there are issues with exposed joints around the pool deck, difficulty in getting replacement parts for the slides, rust and metal flakes in the pumping system, cracked masonry in the pool house, and problems with the baby pool's filter system.

"These aren't little fixes," Fiechter said. "We have to consider how many times we are dumping money into a facility that is going to fail at some point. I've gone around touring other communities, and it (failure) will just come as a surprise. A lot of it's under the ground, so you don't know. You can have massive leaks, and you won't know until you get your water bill."

In response to the need, Fiechter has

toured different pools in the area, including New Haven, Portland and Columbia City. This tour included getting advice from different pools about additional amenities and build materials.

While nothing on the design of the pool is official, discussions with local swim teams have led to a desire for a 25-meter pool with eight lanes, instead of the current 50-meter size with six lanes. Fiechter said that the other 25 meters will be used for unique shapes and extra amenities. Fiechter noted that she wanted something unique that is not found in pools near the area.

"If it all works out ... we're looking at an eight lane, 25-meter pool," Fiechter said. "Currently we have six lanes, so we're hoping to add eight so we can host some bigger conferences. (Currently) we can only host the local meets. There's conferences that we could go into if we were 25-meter instead of 50."

With the pool approaching its 53rd birthday, ideas for procuring funds are still being worked out. Fiechter has submitted a request for READI 2.0 grant funding, which will match 20% of any committed funds from the city. Fundraising efforts are dependent on if the grant is awarded, but Fiechter mentioned she's submitted for other local grants and will plan on a fundraising drive once READI funding is secured.

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Biden authorizes Ukraine to use U.S.-supplied long-range missiles for deeper strikes inside Russia

By AAMER MADHANI, COLLEEN LONG, ZEKE MILLER, MATTHEW LEE and ELLEN KNICKMEYER
Associated Press

MANAUS, Brazil (AP) — President Joe Biden has authorized Ukraine to use U.S.-supplied long-range missiles to strike deeper inside Russia, easing limitations on the weapons as Russia deploys thousands of North Korean troops to reinforce its war, according to a U.S. official and three other people familiar with the matter.

The decision allowing Kyiv to use the Army Tactical Missile System, or ATACMs, for attacks farther inside Russia comes as President Vladimir Putin positions North Korean troops along Ukraine's northern

border to try to reclaim hundreds of miles of territory seized by Ukrainian forces.

Biden's move also follows the presidential election victory of Donald Trump, who has said he would bring about a swift end to the war and raised uncertainty about whether his administration would continue the United States' vital military support for Ukraine.

The official and the others knowledgeable about the matter were not authorized to discuss the U.S. decision publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's reaction Sunday was notably restrained.

"Strikes are not made with words," he said during his nightly video

address. "Such things are not announced. The missiles will speak for themselves."

Zelenskyy and many of his Western supporters have been pressing Biden for months to allow Ukraine to strike military targets deeper inside Russia with Western-supplied missiles, saying the U.S. ban had made it impossible for Ukraine to try to stop Russian attacks on its cities and electrical grids.

Zelenskyy's statement came shortly after he posted a message of condolence on Telegram following a Russian attack on a nine-story building that killed at least eight people in the northern city of Sumy, 24 miles from the border with Russia.

Russia also launched a massive drone and missile attack, described by offi-

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Saturday morning along the greenway

Hikers and drivers along Bluffton's Rivergreenway Saturday morning were able to catch a tree trimming crew in action as they attended to a tree beside the Wabash River. (Photo by Barbara Barbieri)

Wildfire threat continues in much of the U.S. Northeast as dry conditions persist

By SUSAN HAIGH and PATRICK WHITTLE
Associated Press

Firefighters in New York said Sunday that a voluntary evacuation overnight helped them protect more than 160 homes from a stubborn wildfire near the New Jersey border as officials in much of the Northeast coped with hundreds of brush fires in tinder-dry and windy conditions.

Communities in New England dealt with a similar surge in late fall fires, and many parts of the Northeast remained under red flag alerts this weekend. Across the country, California made good progress against a 32-square-mile fire in Ventura County that has destroyed more than 245 structures, most of them houses. The Mountain fire was 95% contained.

Windy conditions renewed a wildfire Saturday that escaped a containment line and prompted emergency officials to enact the voluntary evacuation plan affecting about 165 houses in Warwick, New York, near the New Jersey border. No structures were in danger as of Sunday afternoon as firefighters worked to tame the Jennings Creek blaze, New York Parks Department spokesman Jeff Wernick said. The voluntary evacuation will remain in place at least until Monday, Wernick said.

The wildfire had burned 7 1/2 square miles across the two states as of Friday and was burning primarily in New York's Sterling Forest State Park, where the visitor center, the lakefront area at Greenwood Lake and a historic furnace area remained open. Woodland activities including hunting were halted, Wernick said.

It was 90% contained on the Passaic County, New Jersey, side of the border, and about 88% contained in Orange County, New York, where a state of emergency was extended on Sunday, officials said. New York Army National Guard and state police helicopters dropped water on the blaze to support ground crews' efforts.

"Residents in the voluntary evacuation area are asked to continue sheltering so that crews can effectively suppress the fire," according to a statement posted on Facebook by village officials in Greenwood Lake, New York, where schools will be closed on Monday. "There is currently no threat to structures but crews are actively working to ensure structure protection."

The blaze claimed the life of an 18-year-old New York parks employee who died when a tree fell on him as he helped fight the fire in Sterling Forest on Nov. 9. The fire's cause remains under investigation.

New York City's Fire Department is creating its first-ever brush fire task force to respond to what officials say is a historic increase in brush fires throughout the city's five boroughs. Commissioner Robert S. Tucker announced Sunday. From Nov. 1 to Nov. 14, the FDNY responded to 271 brush fires, marking the highest two-week period in New York's history.

The task force will be made up of fire marshals, fire inspectors and tactical drone units in an effort to ensure rapid responses to brush fires and to help with investigations to determine their cause.

"Due to a significant lack of rainfall, the threat of fast-spreading brush fires fueled by

(Continued on Page 2)

Israeli strike in Beirut kills Hezbollah's spokesman, Gaza strike kills 30

By FADI TAWIL, BASSEM MROUE and WAFAA SHURAFI
Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — A rare Israeli strike in central Beirut killed the Hezbollah militant group's chief spokesman on Sunday, while an Israeli strike in northern Gaza 's Beit Lahiya killed at least 30 people, a hospital director there told The Associated Press.

Mohammed Afif al-Naboulsi was killed in a strike on the Arab

socialist Baath party's office in Beirut, Hezbollah confirmed in a statement. He had been especially visible after all-out war erupted between Israel and Hezbollah in September.

Israel's military in a statement said he "wielded significant influence over Hezbollah's military operations" and "glorified and incited" attacks on Israel.

It was the latest targeted killing of a senior Hezbollah official. On Sunday night, another strike in

central Beirut hit a computer shop, killing two people and wounding 22, Lebanon's Health Ministry said. There was no immediate comment from Israel's military.

The strikes happened as Lebanese officials considered a United States-led cease-fire proposal. "This confirms the crimes of the Israeli enemy, and that it wants to negotiate under fire and is expanding and targeting safe and safer areas," said a Lebanese member of parliament, Faisal Al Sayegh.

Israel also bombed several buildings in Beirut's southern suburbs, where Hezbollah has long been headquartered, after warning people to evacuate.

Screams in central Beirut There was no Israeli evacuation warning before the strike near a busy intersection that killed Afif. Four people were killed and 14 wounded including two children, the Health Ministry said.

"I was asleep and awoke from the sound of the strike, and people

screaming, and cars and gunfire," said witness Suheil Halabi.

After the second strike in central Beirut, firefighters struggled to control the blaze in the busy residential neighborhood of Mar Elias. Bystanders said they heard a second explosion and a car nearby appeared to be hit.

Hezbollah began firing rockets, missiles and drones into Israel the day after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023 attack ignited the war in Gaza.

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Outside

Chance of showers and storms move in

Today	Tuesday	Wed.
High 62	High 68	High 50
Low 55	Low 43	Low 32

More Weather on Page 2

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What's happening at the Wells County Public Library

The Wells County Public Library takes its mission to "provide the community with access, knowledge and growth" very seriously and offers a variety of events each week for kids, teens, and adults. Registration is preferred at most events. To signup, go to www.wellscollibrary.org, click on the Library Event Calendar, navigate to the date of the event, and view more to get to the registration screen. Alternatively, call 260-824-1612 (Bluffton) or 260-622-4691 (Ossian) to register.

Vera Cruz History: Author Talk
At the Main Library (Bluffton): Tuesday, Nov. 19 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Adults. Charles Joray will be speaking about the history of Vera Cruz, Indiana, and his recently released book "The Early History of Vera Cruz Indiana: 1838-1910." He will have his books for sale at the end of the program. Registration is appreciated, but not required. About the Book:

"Drawing on his extensive research and interviews of residents and descendants, author and historian Charles Joray explores the challenges and triumphs of the families who settled Vera Cruz and whose intertwined stories make up much of its history during the last half of 19th century. There's also no shortage of colorful characters, tragic accidents, and even unsolved murders. Whether you're a history enthusiast,

a native Hoosier, or simply curious about small-town America, this book offers a captivating journey through the past of Vera Cruz, Indiana" – book jacket.

Kids' Club
At the Main Library (Bluffton): Tuesday, Nov. 19 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Grades K-3. Join us for book-related crafts, stories, games, and a chance to make new friends at the library. Registration appreciated.

Club 456
At the Main Library (Bluffton): Thursday, Nov. 21 from 6 to 7 p.m.

Grades 4-6. Join us as we travel the world! Explore different countries! Learn about different cultures! Taste traditional foods! And learn to dance or celebrate in different ways! This month...Australia! Registration appreciated.

Amazing Race Around the World
At the Main Library (Bluffton): Thursday, Nov. 21 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

Grades 6-12. In two-person teams, race across the continents while completing challenges! Maybe you'll need to make a quick craft, maybe you'll need to learn a new language, who knows what your roadblock will be. Registration required. You can register with a partner or be assigned one at the program.

Board Game Night
At the Ossian Branch Library: Thursday, Nov. 21 from 6 to 8 p.m.

Adults (18+). Join us for a night of tabletop games at the Ossian Branch. Registration appreciated.

Try It Night: Coffee Filter Trees
At the Main Library (Bluffton): Monday, Nov. 25 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Adults. Create or try out a new craft each month. This month you will use coffee filters and a variety of supplies to make a cute holiday decoration. All supplies provided. Registration required.

Golden Gamers
At the Main Library (Bluffton): Tuesday, Nov. 26 from 3 to 5 p.m.

Adults. Adults. Are you bored? Do you need some social interaction? Come and enjoy two hours of socializing, games, and snacks. Registration appreciated.

LEGO Drop-in At Ossian
At the Ossian Branch Library: Tuesday, Nov. 26 from 4 to 7 p.m.

Grade K-6. Create LEGO masterpieces using the library's blocks during this drop-in event. No registration needed.

Library Closing for Thanksgiving
The Main Library and the Ossian Branch will close at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 27 and be closed on Thursday, Nov. 28 and



Friday, Nov. 29 for Thanksgiving..

Library Hours
At the main library in Bluffton — Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
At the Ossian branch library — Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturday, 9 a.m. to noon.
Access the library online at www.wellscollibrary.org for digital books, magazines, online databases, event info, and more.

by Melba Edwards

Holiday Craft & Vendor Show in Bluffton

A Holiday Craft and Vendor Show will be held at the National Guard Armory in Bluffton on Saturday, Nov. 23, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Over 30 direct sales and hand craft vendors will be on hand. There will be vendor donated raffle items. All money raised from the raffles will be donated to Honor Flight of Northeast Indiana. Admission is free.

For more information, contact Deb Carson at 260-273-7950 or doodlebug_63@yahoo.com

The National Guard Armory is located at 500 E. Spring St. in Bluffton.

Zanesville News

Thanks to my readers who reported to me that East Union Center graduate, in the Class of 1946, Peggy Bushee McKeeman passed away on May 23 just a few days after the alumni meeting. She was the wife of John McKeeman. Now Annette Wall Best is the last remaining of that class!

The Neighbor Coffee Cafe continues at the Zanesville Church of God on the corner of Marzane and South County Line

Road. It is open week days from 7:30 to 10 a.m. and all are welcome to come in.

You are welcome to attend the Town of Zanesville's monthly board meeting that will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 19, at 6:30 p.m. These meetings take place at the Municipal Building on Wayne Street.

Mark your calendars for Sunday evening, Nov. 24, as the area churches combine for a pre Thanksgiving service that will be held at the Tower Life Center Church on Wayne Street. The time is 7 p.m. This service is our looking forward to celebrating Thanksgiving on Thursday, Nov. 28.

1,000 BOOKS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN



Several children recently completed the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten Program at the Wells County Public Library by reading and listening to 1,000 books with the help of family members.

At left, Andrew Anderson (holding his prize book "Color Zoo") is pictured with his mom, Amanda.



At right, Zayden Lakey (holding his prize book "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?") is pictured with his mother, Kayla.



At left, Crew Kauffman (holding his prize book "Animals Depending on Other Animals") is pictured with his dad, Brandon, and his sister, Saylor.

The 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program is sponsored by the United Way of Wells County, the Wells County Foundation, and the Friends of the Library. The program not only helps prepare children for school, but instills the value of reading and life-long learning. For more information visit the Wells County Public Library's website at www.wellscollibrary.org and click on the "Children" section.

A Talk with Tego



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



Raven is a five-month-old, domestic short hair, spayed female.



Sassy is a four-month-old, domestic short hair, spayed female.



Tego

Tego's Tips: Through the end of the year, any cat/kitten already fixed has their adoption fee waived!

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.

Al-Anon support group meetings in Bluffton

Support for friends and family who have a problem drinker in their lives. The support group meets every Monday from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Caylor-Nickel Foundation Family YMCA, located at 550 W. Dustman Rd in Bluffton.

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Fort Wayne's Cinema Center and YWCA team up

On Friday, Nov. 22, Fort Wayne's Cinema Center and the YWCA will combine forces to host a "Holiday Slipper & Clothing Drive, during the screening of WICKED at 4 and 7:30 p.m.

Those attending the screening are asked to bring either new-with-tag slippers (bonus if they're ruby) or other article of clothing in exchange for pop corn. For more information check out cinemacenter.org.

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Am I setting the wrong boundaries?

Dear Annie: I have complex feelings about my family, which may come across as harsh, but I feel it's important to explain. They exhibit behaviors that I find troubling, such as a tendency to rely on the more successful members of the family for support without taking accountability for their own circumstances.

My mother and I have worked diligently to achieve our successes, often without support from the family. Despite our requests for help during challenging times, we were met with excuses. Now it seems that my achievements are viewed as a burden, as if I should forgo my success simply because other family members are struggling with self-inflicted challenges.

The expectation that "family takes care of family" can sometimes be taken too far. For example, my brother has asked me to cover the cost of his engagement ring, and my grandmother has insisted that I purchase alcohol for her when she cannot afford it.

I have attempted to maintain a relationship with my family that does not revolve around financial support, but this has led to feelings of being an outcast for my success and my refusal to conform to their expectations.

Ultimately, I have come to the realization that our relationship is strained. I feel that we do not genuinely like each other. Some days, I accept this reality, while other days, I grapple with feelings of guilt for

making my own well-being my top priority. Despite my efforts to distance myself — such as avoiding social media and blocking phone numbers — they still find ways to reach out, often reinforcing their disappointment through veiled comments and negative attitudes.

This ongoing conflict leaves me questioning my decision to step back. Am I in the wrong for prioritizing my own needs? — Conflicted Black Sheep

Dear Conflicted Black Sheep: They probably miss you, which is why they're trying to get in touch. That doesn't mean you made the wrong decision, though. You have to make choices that are best for where you are in life right now.

"How Can I Forgive My Cheating Partner?" is out now! Annie Lane's second anthology — featuring favorite columns on marriage, infidelity, communication and reconciliation — is available as a paperback and e-book.

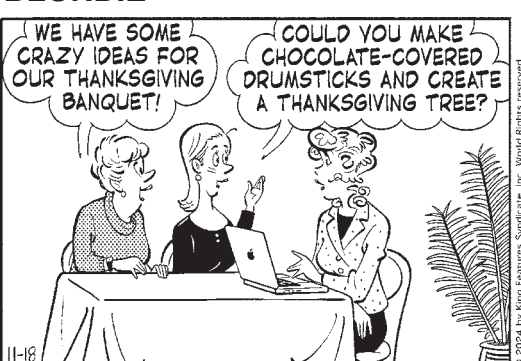
Dear Annie by Annie Lane



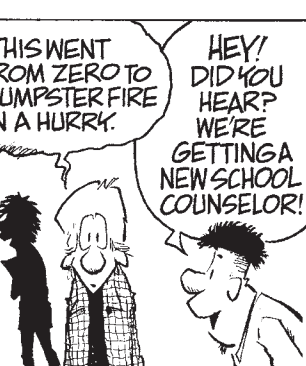
BEETLE BAILEY



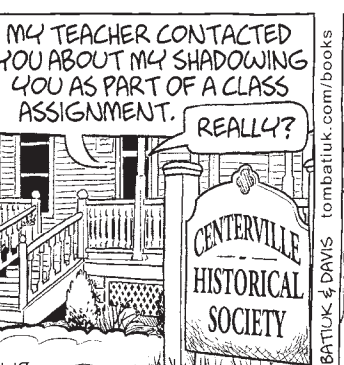
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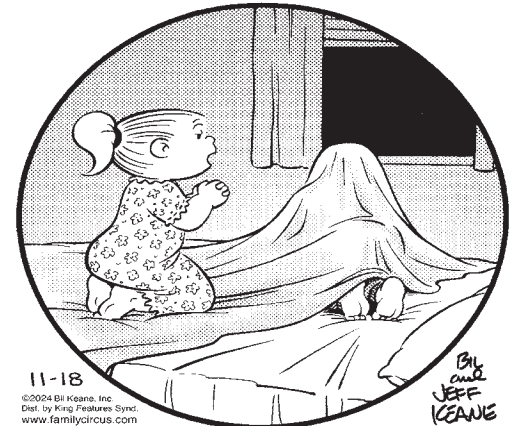
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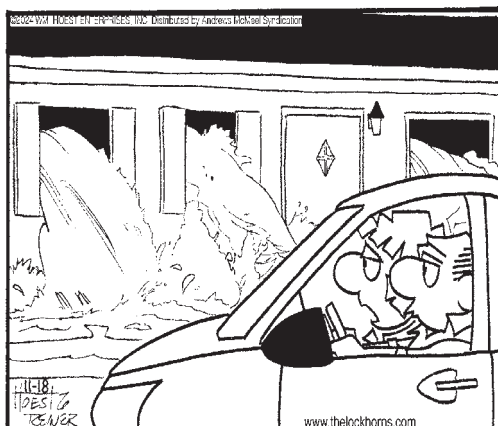
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My Answer



God is a personal God

By Dr. Billy Graham

Question: When I tell my friends I wish I could know God the way they do, they tell me that I should listen for the voice of the Lord. This seems impossible that God would call out to me — it seems more like a fairy-tale, yet I don't believe my friends would lie to me. How is this really possible? — G.C.

Answer: God is a personal God. He is not lofty nor hard to find. His Word tells us that He calls out to sinners — that is, anyone ever born.

God makes three calls. He calls us to the Person of Jesus Christ. "Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord,

'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow' (Isaiah 1:18, NKJV). They can be made as white as snow because of the cross where Jesus died to cleanse us and save us for eternity.

God also calls us to consecration. This word scares a lot of people; it isn't a word used much anymore. It means "set apart." The Bible says, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (Romans 12:1, NKJV). It means we no longer belong to the crowd, but to God!

God also calls us to serve Him. Many people have the wrong idea of what this means. Put simply, it means to acknowledge Him and obey Him according to His Word.

Whatever we do in life, we should get to know the Word of God and apply it daily to every phase of life. We must not wait for a wind to come along and blow us in any direction. We must make it our purpose to do the will of God, which is revealed in Scripture. It will change us in remarkable ways that cannot be imagined.

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

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Solution time: 21 mins.

Saturday's answer crossword grid with filled-in words.

Large crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-61.

Table with 24 columns (time slots 11:18-12:30) and 40 rows (channels LIFE, FX, TVLAND, etc.) listing program titles and descriptions.

