

The News - Banner

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2024 BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection \$1.00



Tots in the firehouse

Thursday was the Bluffton Parks Department's Tot Time at the Bluffton Fire Department. Kids had the opportunity to sit in one of the department's fire trucks. Plastic fire helmets and stickers were handed out as well. At top left, Murphy Dobson sits behind the wheel of a truck. Above right, Ezra Hiles reaches to touch a hose while her father Isaiah Hiles watches. Below, pictured from left to right, Frankie, Rachel, Addie and Charlie Flock watch a firefighter put on his gear. (Photos by Jonathan Snyder)



APC takes no action yet on new apartments

By JONATHAN SNYDER

Solid Rock Rentals' plan to build eight apartment buildings off Serenity Trail was given a continuance by the Wells County Area Plan Commission on Thursday.

Three items related to the plan were presented — the first being to vacate a portion of undeveloped public road and lots 18-25 at Forget-Me-Not Acres. The second item was a rezoning request, Residential 1 to Residential 3, and the third was approval of the development plan.

The buildings are meant for multiple families, which the current R-1 zoning does not allow.

Cody Word from MLS Engineering and Drew Gerber from Solid Rock Rentals both presented their plan to rezone 3.34 acres. Eight single-story buildings are planned with two bedrooms each. A private road would loop around the development with garages and parking available for each unit. Stormwater is expected to be collected at the detention

(Continued on Page 2)

Jury deliberations begin in Delphi murder trial

By RICK CALLAHAN, Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — The fate of an Indiana man charged with murder in the 2017 killings of two teenage girls who vanished during an afternoon hike near their small hometown was in the hands of a jury Thursday.

Richard Allen, 52, faces two counts of murder and two additional counts of murder while committing or attempting to commit kidnapping in the killings of Abigail Williams, 13, and Liberty German, 14. He could be sentenced to up to 130 years in prison if convicted of all the charges.

The seven women and five men began deliberations Thursday afternoon after hearing closing arguments in the weekslong murder trial. Deliberations ended after about two hours and will resume Friday morning.

Carroll County Prosecutor Nicholas McLeland told (Continued on Page 2)

Federal Reserve cuts its key interest rate by a quarter-point

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve cut its key interest rate Thursday by a quarter-point in response to the steady decline in the once-high inflation that had angered Americans and helped drive Donald Trump's presidential election victory this week.

The rate cut follows a larger half-point reduction in September, and it reflects the Fed's renewed focus on supporting the job market as well as fighting inflation, which now barely exceeds the central bank's 2% target.

Asked at a news conference how Trump's election might affect the Fed's policymaking, Chair Jerome Powell said that "in the near term, the election will have no effects on our (interest rate) decisions."

But Trump's election, beyond its economic consequences, has raised the specter of meddling by the White House in the Fed's policy decisions. Trump has argued that as president, he should have a voice in the central bank's interest rate decisions. The Fed has long guarded its role as an independent agency able to make difficult decisions about

borrowing rates, free from political interference. Yet in his previous term in the White House, Trump publicly attacked Powell after the Fed raised rates to fight inflation, and he may do so again.

Asked whether he would resign if Trump asked him to, Powell, who will have a year left in his second four-year term as Fed chair when Trump takes office, replied simply, "No."

And Powell said that in his view, Trump could not fire or demote him: It would "not be permitted under the law," he said.

Thursday's Fed rate cut reduced its benchmark rate to about 4.6%, down from a four-decade high of 5.3%. The Fed had kept its rate that high for more than a year to fight the worst inflation streak in four decades. Annual inflation has since fallen from a 9.1% peak in mid-2022 to a 3 1/2-year low of 2.4% in September.

When its latest policy meeting ended Thursday, the Fed issued a statement noting that the "unemployment rate has moved up but remains low," and while inflation has fallen closer to the 2% target level, it "remains somewhat ele-

(Continued on Page 2)



Strings of lights need to be anchored and Audrey Almdale, left, and Kathy Schwartz, attach fastening hooks to rebar stakes for the display. (Photos by Barbara Barbieri)



New additions are two wooden soldiers, who will guard the entrance to the showcase area. Checking out lights and arm motion were Tom Brown, left, and Craig Schwartz. Schwartz is the coordinator of the light and music show at the fire tower each year.

'Wonderland of Lights' workday at Ouabache

By BARBARA BARBIERI

While behind the scenes work is continuing at Ouabache State Park for the coming Wonderland of Lights, the event's organizer Kathy Schwartz is still accepting spirit sponsors for the event.

Strands of lights need replac-

ing each year, as they take a beating from the weather, and are replaced with LED commercial grade lights. Being a spirit sponsor for \$20 helps replace one light strand.

Checks made out to Friends of Ouabache State Park may be

mailed to: Ouabache State Park, 4930 E SR 201, Bluffton, IN 46714.

State the number of strands you are supporting and the donors name to be printed in the Discover Ouabache online magazine.

barb@news-banner.com

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Outside



Early morning fog, then sunshine and blue skies

Today	Saturday	Sunday
High 62	High 59	High 67
Low 35	Low 46	Low 44

More Weather on Page 2

Online

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Vol. 96 No. 7

FRIDAY
 November 8, 2024

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2024 Wells County General Election

Table containing election results for Wells County, categorized by race and district. Columns include candidate names and vote counts for various districts like Bluffton 1-5, Harrison East, etc. Total votes are 11,302.

New apartments

(Continued from Page 1) pond on the north side of the site. Drew added that this development will cost approximately \$2.5 million. Members of the public, however, expressed concerns about stormwater flow and detention, inadequate lighting in the area, property values, and the lack of discussion about a development plan.

The traffic and lighting concerns also present a potential problem for children in the area, according to Derek Furrow. Furrow argued that since multiple school buses pick up kids at the West Lancaster and Memory Lane intersection, the lack of lighting is a safety concern. Additionally, Furrow took issue with the lack of a fence around the detention pond, saying that there is a danger of children falling in the pond.

Hahn said that if the zoning was not approved, the development plan would be a moot point. Hahn hoped that a meeting between the public and developers would give the residents and the council an idea of whether the rezoning is desired or not. Hahn warned, however, that drainage and lighting issues may be impossible to solve in a development plan.

related to outdoor container storage and traffic, however. Brandon said that no filled containers would be on the property and drivers would mainly come from the west and down south, not expecting them to come through town. The APC also gave a 90-day continuance for Roger Watson's junk violation at 7666 South 200 East. The APC relayed that constant communication between them and Ellen Rasawehr, Watson's sister, led to the continuance.

Weather

Friday, November 8, 2024 (24-hour observations at 10:53 p.m. Thursday) High: 57; Low: 43; Precipitation: None Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.16 feet at 10:45 p.m. Thursday

Wells County forecast

Today: Patchy fog before 8 a.m. Otherwise, sunny, with a high near 62. West wind 5 to 10 mph. Tonight: Mostly clear, with a low around 35. Northwest wind around 5 mph becoming east after midnight. Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 59. East wind 5 to 10 mph. Saturday Night: Showers, mainly after 1 a.m.

Jury deliberations

(Continued from Page 1) jurors that Allen is the man seen in a grainy cellphone video recorded by one of the girls, known as Abby and Libby, as they crossed an abandoned railroad bridge just before they vanished on Feb. 13, 2017. "Richard Allen is Bridge Guy," McLeland told jurors. "He kidnapped them and later murdered them."

evidence, the withdrawal of Allen's public defenders and their reinstatement by the Indiana Supreme Court. It has also been the subject of a gag order. The 12 jurors along with alternates were sequestered throughout the trial, which began Oct. 18 in the girls' hometown of Delphi, a small northwest Indiana city where Allen also lived and worked as a pharmacy technician.

behind Williams. McLeland said Allen, armed with a gun, forced the youths off the trail and that he had planned to rape them before a passing van made him change his plans. Gruesome crime scene photos showed how the girls were found with their throats cut the next day, about a quarter-mile from the bridge. The defense questioned the state's timeline with witnesses including a digital forensics expert who said headphones or an auxiliary cable were plugged into Libby's cellphone for nearly five hours after she and Abby disappeared, raising doubts about the investigators' belief that the girls were killed and left in the woods around 2:32 p.m. that day.

Interest rate

(Continued from Page 1) vated." After their rate cut in September the policymakers had projected that they would make further quarter-point cuts in November and December and four more next year. But with the economy now mostly solid and Wall Street anticipating faster growth, larger budget deficits and higher inflation under a Trump presidency, further rate cuts may have become less likely. Rate cuts by the Fed typically lead over time to lower borrowing costs for consumers and businesses.

late to actual policies, you don't want to front-run it." Still, Matthew Luzzetti, an economist at Deutsche Bank, said there were signs that the Fed might end up announcing fewer rate cuts next year than many economists expect. The job market and the economy are looking healthier than they appeared in September, when the Fed announced an outside half-point rate cut. "Nothing in the economic data," Luzzetti said, "suggests that the (Fed) has any need to be in a hurry" to get rates down substantially.

OBITUARIES

Jeanne Meeks, 87

Jeanne Meeks, 87, of Bluffton passed away on Wednesday morning, Nov. 6, 2024, at Lutheran Hospital in Fort Wayne.

Jeanne was born on July 31, 1937 in Liberty Township, Wells County, to Kenneth and Martha (Strohl) Grover. She graduated from Bluffton High School in 1955. She worked at Caylor-Nickel Clinic and JCPenney, along with helping on the farm.

On Sept. 6, 1958, Jeanne and Wayne E. Meeks were married in Bluffton. They shared 66 years of marriage together.

Survivors include her husband, Wayne of Bluffton, and their daughter Melissa A. (Brian T.) Marsh of Muncie. She will be remembered by her sister, Virginia Cully of Bluffton, along with her nieces, Shirley (Tom) Surbaugh of Bluffton, and Gina (Shawn) Cully-Girard of Detroit, MI., four great nieces & nephews and seven great-great nieces and nephews.

She is preceded in death by her parents.

A private family service will take place at the New Castle Community Columbarium at Elm Grove Cemetery in Bluffton.

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

Gloria Ann Siela, 91

Gloria Ann Siela, 91, of Fort Wayne passed away peacefully on Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2024.

Gloria was born in Fort Wayne on Sept. 8, 1933, a daughter of the late Harold and Dorothy Kruse. She graduated from Concordia High School and later graduated from the Lutheran Hospital nursing program. Gloria was a registered nurse for 41 years and a member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Ossian for over 65 years. She was dedicated to her family and friends. Gloria enjoyed her winters in Florida and her grand activities.

She is survived by her sons, Gary (Diana) and Dan Siela; grandchildren, Jessica and Jake (Bailey Newman) Siela; great-grandson, Beckham Siela; sister-in-law, Norma Kruse; goddaughter and niece, Erica (David) Garrison; and other numerous nieces and nephews.

Gloria was also preceded in passing by her husband, Gerald Siela; and brother, Robert Kruse.

A funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. on Monday, Nov. 11, 2024, at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 6514 East 750 North in Ossian, with visitation one hour prior. Visitation will also be held from 4-6 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 10, 2024, at the church. Burial to follow the service at Bethlehem Lutheran Church Cemetery. Contributions in Gloria's memory may be made to Heart to Heart Hospice or Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Condolences may be left online at www.elzey-patterson-rodak.com.



Rose Irwin, 8

On Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2024, our beautiful little girl, Rose Ellen Marie Irwin, 8 years old, crawled into the lap of Jesus.

Funeral services will take place at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 12, 2024, at the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton with the Rev. Dan York officiating. Burial will follow in the Garden of Chimes at Elm Grove Cemetery in Bluffton.

Visitation will take place from 2-8 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 11, 2024, at the funeral home and for one hour prior to the service.

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the care of the Lemler family of Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton. A complete obituary tribute will be published in Saturday's edition of The News-Banner.

Leo Glogas, 89

Leo Glogas, 89 of Bluffton passed away on Wednesday afternoon, Nov. 6, 2024, at River Terrace Estates. Funeral arrangements are pending at this time with the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City:

Wednesday, 4:12 p.m., Top Notch Auto Sales. Citation issued for speeding.

Wednesday, 9:30 p.m., KFC. Citation issued for driving while suspended.

Thursday, 2:04 a.m., 1100 block of West South Street. Report of a runaway juvenile. Juvenile located.

Thursday, 10:24 a.m., Hoosier House. Report of stolen tail light.

FIRES

Wednesday, 8:45 p.m., Wendy's. Report of natural gas smell.

Wednesday, 10:29 p.m., 4585 E U.S. 224. Report of an open burn left unattended.

Thursday, 5:54 a.m., Matalco. Fire alarm. Employee advised of a routine heat issue. Alarm reset and exhaust turned on to dissipate smoke.

Thursday, 1:31 p.m., Christian Care Retirement Center. Fire alarm. Grill smoke triggered alarm.

State gives \$140M through Community Crossings

By WHITNEY DOWNARD, Indiana Capital Chronicle
Cities, towns and counties across Indiana received nearly \$140 million in state funding for road and infrastructure projects under the last round of Community Crossings grants under Gov. Eric Holcomb.

Holcomb is term limited and will be leaving the office in January. Governor-elect Mike Braun will assume the mantle after getting a majority of votes on Election Night.

"Community Crossings has been an annual highlight over the years," Holcomb said in a release. "The fact that nearly 14,000 miles of road and over 200 local bridges have been replaced or rehabilitated through this program since 2017 is simply astonishing, in addition to countless economic and quality of life benefits in hundreds of communities across Indiana."

Community Crossings, part of Holcomb's Next Level Roads program, has sent out more than \$1.8 billion in matching grants since its start in 2016. It is overseen by the Indiana Department of Transportation.

"This program has impacted communities in all 92 Indiana counties, most more than once," said INDOT Commissioner Mike Smith. "I want to recognize all of the local agencies who have participated over time for their hard work and dedication to improving their local transportation networks."

Long-term funding for Community Crossings was enshrined in House Enrolled Act 1002 in 2017. The 223 communities receiving matching funds were approved for amounts ranging from just over \$44,000 to the maximum of \$1.5 million. Prior to this year, the maximum amount communities could receive was \$1 million.

BHS announces honor roll students

Bluffton High School has released the names of its students on the high honor roll and honor roll for the first quarter of the 2024-25 school year.

SENIORS

High Honor Roll — Jackson Affolder, Brady Baldauf, Gordon Bedwell, Noah Bluhm, Chloe Brede-meyer, McKenna Bunch, Sebastian Couch, Lily Crispin, David DeFrain, Marly Drayer, Chloe Engle, Tavin Frees, Lexi Grady, Sierra Graham, Anthony Hartman, Samuel Holloway, Adriana Huffman, Levi Johns, Mykhailo Laishevkin, Tanner McClure, Dontai Miles, Ali Mygrant, Mohamed Nashwan, Taylor Nusbaumer, Sacra Powell, Noemi Real, Grant Reifsteck, Amarah Robles, Maryn Schreiber, Drayvin Shoemaker, Madyson Sonnigsen, Bailey Yates, Lukas Yates, Hadesah Yergler and Logan Zoll.

Honor Roll — Kade Abbott, Gabriel Ball, Jude Baumgartner, Dihan Benade, Hailey Bozarth, Leah Brown, Matthew Clark, Phoenix Cook, Isabela Curless, Austin Geimer, Addison Goodwin, Kaleb Green, Ashlyn Hall, Carissa Hughett, Dakotah Jennings, Lorne Kahn, Wyatt Kephart, Connor Klopfenstein, Nolan Lambert, Tiffany Lanning, Griffin Linderwell, Jedidiah Logan, Benjamin Maggard, Kyler Potter, Tressa Renner, Yamirelis Santos Alvarado, Lillian Schreiber, Yaroslav Serdiuk, Hannah Sexton, Brianna Snyder, Isabella Stout, Cameron Williams, Aubree Williamson, Ethan Wilson and Cohen Worster.

JUNIORS

High Honor Roll — Hayden Alford, Libby Arnett, Konley Ault, Azmjon Bahronov, Eve Corkwell, Olivia Donascimento, Xzvier Driscoll, Anakin Eguia, Emmitt Fiechter, Mason Fox, Emma Frauhiger, Steven Frettinger, Aidan Gavilanez, Marshall Gerber, Baylee Green, Declan Grieser, Miken Habegger, Alyssa Hartman, Kameron Holloway, Savanna Hughett, Aaron Jessup, Kenzie Kershner, Evangilene Larson, Owen Lesh, Madison Mason, Alexander Mechling,

Layna Murray, Manning Nash, Brockton Osborne, Hazel Pfister, Savannah Rasor, Keiner Rinehart, Jackson Rockwell, Jasmine Rupel, Lily Rupel, Riley Schlotter, Ellie Schwartz, Emma Schwartz, Josephina Sessions, Brody Shutt, Kaitlyn Stafford, Aaron Streveler, Jayden Suman, Gabrielle VanCamp, Robert White and Hannah Withers.

Honor Roll — Naransolongo Amgalanbold, Colton Arnold, Sierra Baughman, Elijah Bertsch, Jake Boots, Noah Brooks, Sabastian Burgess, Harper Craighead, Emily Drayer, Kinzie Fiechter, Emma Fink, Gabriella Godwin, Sierra Holmes, Carmen Hurry, Peter Ifer, Isabelle Irelan, Gregory Johnson, Lilly King, Dakota Lee, Braden Lemler, Madyson Lillie, Kyle Masterson, Elijah McCollum, Savanna Michael, Griffin Morgan, Kayla Morgan, Bryce Patrick, Rylynn Penick, Sebastian Schoeff, Owen Sheets and Trevor Smith.

SOPHOMORES

High Honor Roll — Tristan Ault, William Ault, Axton Beste, Elliott Brown, Lillie Brown, Mateo Castro, Sierra Clark, Samuel Cortez, Aleyda Cruz, Lydia Dailey, Rori Drayer, Madison Duncan, Sophie Eisenhut, Adriana Gehring, Jonah Geisel, Audrey Gerber, Cal Grandlienard, Emily Hansen, Reagan Harris, Kylie Hiser, Jordan Jellison, Levi Jennings, Luke Jennings, Heath Johnson, Addison Kauffman, Jacob Kephart, Elijah Kerner, Evan Klopfenstein, Alexandria Koby, Conner Landis, Alexander Maggard, Jackson Meyer, Cassidy Miller, Brian Nusbaumer, Blake Reinhard, Jacob Ribich, Grady Rockwell, Lincoln Rodgers, Maya Saige, Chanley Shaw, Alayna Sheets, Dillon Singleton, Gabriel Spencer, Colt Ternet, Reese Turnbull, Myles Velasquez, Aiden Wilfong and Addison Yates.

Honor Roll — Nadege Abrego, Juan Alvarez, Zane Betz, Easton Blair, Dominic Bowlin, Chase Collins, Briell Coratti, Anasia Eguia, Kenley Falk, Isaac Flood, Madelyn Funk, Addison Gehring, Rhett Gerber, Isla Gibson, Aidan Graves, Aleeah Grover, Brianna

Hart, Cierah Hicks, Chase Houser, Paige Hutchison, Logan Johnson, Rozlynn Johnson, Athan King, Izabell King, Samuel King, Cameron Klinski, Coy Lantz, Riley Lucas, Lucynda Mace, Sophia Mayne, Aidan McClure, Lance McMillan, David Merrill, Piper Morgan, Ashley Morphew, Jared Moser, Lance Moser, Khloe Murray, Eliana Mygrant, Jessica Nusbaumer, Kaylee Nusbaumer, Kierstynn Reed, Riley Roby, John Ryan, Ryan Schlagenhauf, Corbin Snyder, Aubree Speidel, Silas Troyer, Makaila Watson, Maxwell White, Gia Youngren and Anna Zurcher.

FRESHMEN

High Honor Roll — Reid Abbott, Kamryn Ault, Andy Baumgartner, Austin Bennett, Krista Blair, Jimmy Borabohower, Chayson Brown, Isabella Byanski, Summer Columbus, Khloe Dick, Lynne Drayer, Mason Engle, Adalynn Fiechter, Tess Frauhiger, Eden Gerber, Rafe Gerber, Cora Kunkel, Dawson Lee, Macy Lemler, Chloe Lesh, Emily Maggard, Klay Markley, Thomas McCarty, Briana Ortiz, Camora Otero, Marcus Pfister, Abigail Ramseyer, Kyla Reinhard, De'Twan Richardson, Natalie Scher, Breeanna Schmidt, Allison Schoeff, Addison Smith, Kenley Smith, Addison Sonnigsen, Mia Sprunger, Bridget Steffen, Bennett Stoller, Violetta Tarasova, Nevaeh Thomas, Rylee Todd, Ava Trexler and Hunter Zoll.

Honor Roll — Emma Ball, Parker Barnes, Wyatt Beer, Alexandra Billman, Jace Campbell, Layah Corbat, Kiah Craig, Grayson Crowder, Jace Draper, Savannah Duff, Grace Fry, Raianna Gentry, Kylee Gottschalk, Gavin Grieser, Gibson Grieser, Brody Grimes, Charley Hay, Christian Herrada, Jacob Hyde, Khloe Jones, Carter Lehman, Makenna Leitner, Leah Lovell, Jaida Mills, Brant Moser, Cooper Pearson, Elizabeth Premo, Finn Reinhard, Carieliz Rivera Torres, Ava Sexton, Andie Shaneyfelt, Elijah Sonnigsen, Ariana Tello, Braelon Terry, Namine VanHyfte, Nikki Williamson, Rhine Wood and Logan Wright.

2 new Republicans win in state congressional races

By CASEY SMITH

Indiana Capital Chronicle
Eight of Indiana's nine races were called by late Tuesday.

Ballots statewide collectively featured 28 candidates for the U.S. House. Two GOP incumbents retired and another left to pursue a higher office.

1st Congressional District

Incumbent U.S. Rep. Frank Mrvan seemed likely to hold onto his congressional seat, but the Associated Press hadn't called the race five hours after polls closed. At 11 p.m., Mrvan was leading with 54% of the vote.

The Democrat has served the northwest Indiana district since 2020. He faced Republican Randy Niemeyer and Libertarian Dakotah Miskus.

Niemeyer ran a vocal campaign and had more than 44% of the vote by late Tuesday. Miskus was at just shy of 2%.

2nd Congressional District

Republican U.S. Rep. Rudy Yakym sailed to reelection on Election Night, winning out over Democrat Lori Camp and Libertarian William Henry.

The Associated Press called the race around 9:20 p.m., with Yakym leading 67.4% to Camp's 29.6%. Henry had received 3%. Votes were still being counted.

Yakym was first appointed to the 2nd Congressional District following the death of former U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski in a car crash in 2022.

3rd Congressional District

Republican and former U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman will be heading back to Washington, D.C. after winning a campaign for the 3rd Congressional District.

Stutzman, who previously held the same seat between 2010 and 2017, survived a contentious primary in May. The Associated Press called the race with him leading with 64.3% of the vote.

Democrat Kiley Adolph and Libertarian Jarrad Lancaster has 32.8% and 2.9% of the vote, respectively, as of 7:45 p.m.

4th Congressional District

Sitting U.S. Rep. Jim Baird, a Republican, will keep his congressional seat after claiming victory over his competitors, Democrat Derrick Holder and Libertarian Ashley Groff.

The Associated Press called the race shortly before 9 p.m. Tuesday for the incumbent, who was

leading with more than 66% of the vote. Holder, a former marine, earned 30%, and Groff, of Hendricks County, received almost 4%.

Baird has served in the U.S. House of Representatives for the 4th Congressional District — which covers a large portion of the western part of the state — since 2019. Prior to that the Army veteran was in the Indiana House for eight years. He has largely focused on military issues while in Congress and called himself "pro-life, pro-Israel, and (a) supporter of the Second Amendment" during his latest campaign.

5th Congressional District

Republican Rep. Victoria Spartz, the first Ukrainian-born member of Congress, easily won reelection to a seat she almost gave up.

The Associated Press called the race when she had a 55.8% lead in Indiana's 5th Congressional District north of Indianapolis.

Spartz initially said she wouldn't run again but changed her mind days before the filing deadline. She faced off against Democrat Deborah Pickett, a resident of Carmel who served in the U.S. Army Reserve. She focused on fighting for personal rights and liberties, and received 39% of the vote.

6th Congressional District

Republican Jefferson Shreve will take over the 6th Congressional District after defeating Democrat Cynthia

"Cinde" Wirth and Libertarian James Sceniak.

The Associated Press called the race with him leading almost 66% compared to roughly 30% for Columbus school teacher Wirth and 4% for behavioral therapist Sceniak.

This traditionally Republican seat represents central and eastern Indiana, including a strip of southern Indianapolis. It's open for the first time in about six years after incumbent Greg Pence chose not to seek reelection.

Shreve sold off his self-storage company for nearly \$600 million in 2022. Since then, he's plugged some of his personal wealth into politics: more than \$13 million into a failed bid for Indianapolis mayor, and \$6 million — thus far — into his congressional campaign. He emerged victorious from a crowded GOP primary field.

7th Congressional District

Democrat U.S. Rep. André Carson breezily earned himself a return ticket to the U.S. Capitol, defeating Republican John Schmitz and Libertarian Rusty Johnson.

The Associated Press called the race around 9 p.m. with him leading 69.1% to Schmitz' 28.3%. Johnson had earned 2.6%. Votes were still being counted.

Carson has represented the 7th Congressional District since 2008, when he won a special election to replace his grandmother, the

late U.S. Rep Julia Carson.

8th Congressional District

A former state legislator now has a new home in Congress — Republican state Sen. Mark Messmer easily claimed victory over Democrat Erik Hurt and Libertarian K. Richard Fitzlaff on Tuesday in the race to represent the 8th Congressional District.

The Associated Press called the race shortly after 7 p.m. with Messmer leading at roughly 74%.

The deep-red district covers southwestern Indiana. Incumbent U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon's retirement left the seat open.

Messmer, of Jasper, served in the state Senate from 2014 until September. He was the state Senate's majority leader from 2018 to 2022, when Senate President Pro Tempore Rodric Bray replaced him.

9th Congressional District

U.S. Rep. Erin Houchin won her first reelection bid Tuesday, besting Democrat Timothy Peck and Libertarian Russell Brooksbank to represent Indiana's 9th Congressional District.

The Associated Press called the race at 10:17 p.m. with Houchin leading at 64.7%.

Houchin took office in 2023, succeeding former U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth. She previously served eight years in the Indiana Senate, representing Salem.

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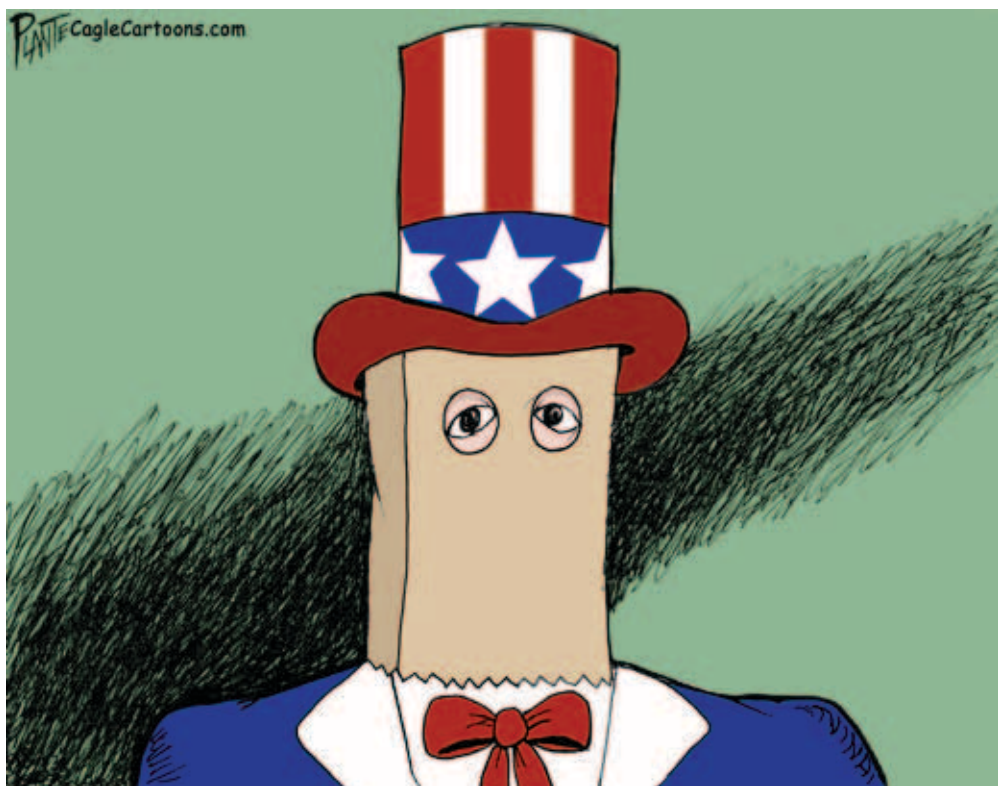
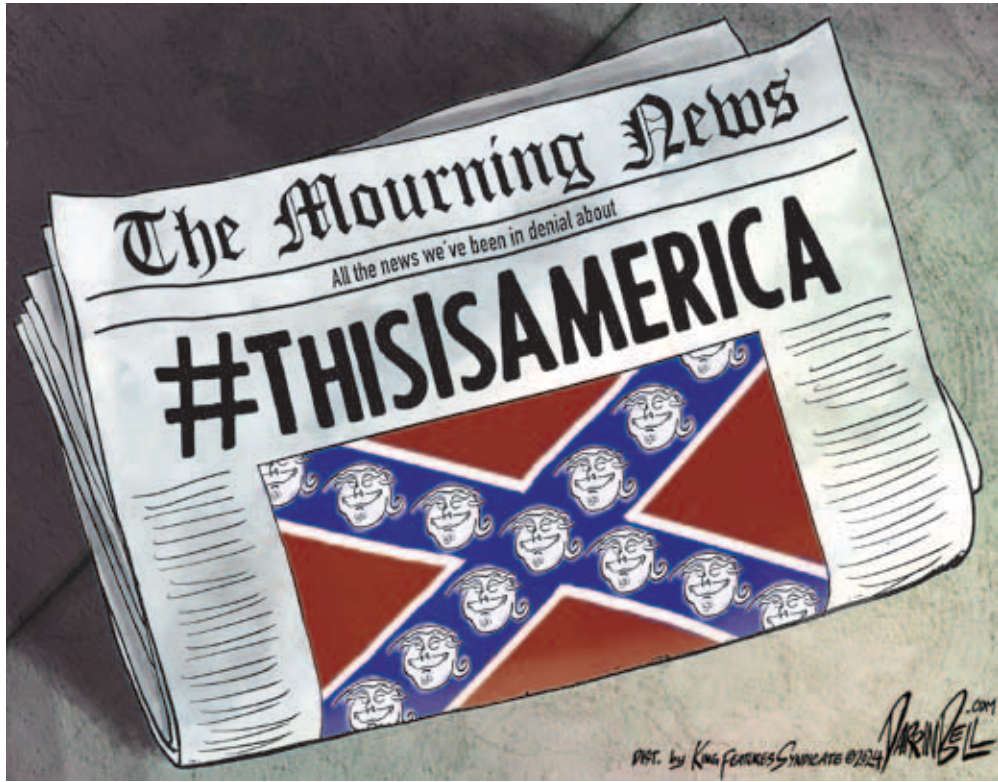
Preston Kaehr - Julie Myers - Connie Vangelakos

The 2024 Election – finally a finale - a look through cartoonists' eyes...

Editor's Note: Since sometime several months ago, we have been devoting many of our Friday cartoon selections to the variety of our cartoonists' depictions of the 2024 Election. There's no question that editorial cartoonists are generally of the far left progressive persuasion. While it would be easy to say that only matches the general mainstream media bias, I don't buy that. Even the most liberal columnists I read are not so — there is no other word —

ridiculous. Certainly, part of cartoonists' work is hyperbole, but I believe several of them routinely go too far. Hence, it was difficult to pick out just four cartoons to illustrate how the progressive side of our political divide is looking at Donald Trump's decisive win, which is generally that it only reflects the rampant misogyny and racism in America today. I cannot disagree more vehemently. In brief, I believe the results only reflect that despite the numerous and oner-

ous flaws of the Republican's elected candidate, swing voters chose that over the policies of the past four years and the personality and policy objectives of the Democrats' anointed candidate to include unfettered access to abortion. So today, here's a look at how the results of the election are being seen by them and, for further insight, liberal commentator Eugene Robinson's reflections and advice. — Mark Miller



How I'm coping with a Trump win, and some advice for you

Ouch. That hurts. The people have spoken, and many of us can't quite process what they said: Donald Trump, despite everything, will be president again. Somehow, we have to find ways to cope with this incomprehensible reality. I don't think moving to Canada, New Zealand or Uruguay is going to be the best option for most people. Emigrating is more complicated and expensive than it looks. And the same far-right nationalism that Trump embodies is afflicting countries around the world. The first step is understanding what just happened. The polls showing an impossibly tight race between Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris in the seven decisive swing states turned out to be right. Trump has been narrowly declared the winner in five of them — Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Michigan and Georgia — and appears on track for slim victories in Arizona and Nevada as well. It was always the case that the slightest nudge could topple all seven states in the same direction. I had thought Harris might sweep them because just enough voters shared her passion about reproductive rights and the threat Trump poses to our democracy. Instead, Trump won the battlegrounds by convincing just enough voters — many of whom chose Joe Biden four years ago



Eugene Robinson

— that he will champion their interests. Despite all the predictions, African Americans did not defect from the Democratic Party in significant numbers; exit polls showed Harris winning 86 percent of the Black vote. But the Latino vote shifted in the GOP's favor. Harris beat Trump by just eight percentage points among Latinos, compared with Biden's 33-point advantage with this group in 2020. And among Latino men specifically, exit polls found, Trump actually beat Harris by 10 points. However, this might be less of a Latino problem for Democrats than a working-class problem. Trump appears on course to win the national popular vote — the first such feat for a Republican since 2004 and only the second since 1988. Biden, you recall, beat Trump by 7 million votes. The reason for the shift is that Trump's vote share increased in states Harris won, and it appears that many of the converts were blue-collar voters. For example, Harris won New Jersey by five percentage points — a sharp drop-off from Biden's 16-point margin in 2020. Passaic County, in the northern part of the state, is normally a working-class Democratic stronghold. This year, Trump narrowly won

it. I realize all these numbers are not particularly soothing. But coping with a situation has to begin with looking it in the face. Despite everything, Trump managed to broaden his support this time around. We might not understand that, but we have to accept it as fact. The second step is to refrain from second-guessing the choices Harris and her campaign made. From Biden's withdrawal to Election Day, she had just 3½ months to barnstorm the country and introduce herself to an electorate that has known Trump for decades. As the sitting vice president, she was inextricably linked to an incumbent whose approval rating, fairly or not, hovers around 40 percent — usually a sign that the opposition party is about to capture the White House. Harris and her party staged a flawless convention. She embarrassed Trump in their only debate. Her rallies were huge and full of joy. She raised more than a billion dollars and had a vast field operation to identify her voters and get them to the polls. I can think of nothing she could have done. If Trump were winning by a thousand votes here and a few hundred there, that would be one thing. But this victory is solid. The final step, and the hardest for me, is to come to terms with the role misogyny and racism played in Harris's defeat. That these ugly forces played some part

in this election is clear to me, but I have no way to quantify their impact. I do know that Trump was exploiting bigotry when he said Harris has a "low IQ" and described her laughter as "cackling." Of course, I remember the crushing disappointment of 2016, when it looked as if Hillary Clinton would break the glass ceiling. And I know that many veterans of that campaign hoped and believed that this time, with Harris, the barrier would finally be shattered. I believed all along that Harris was being held to the highest possible standard while Trump could get away with saying anything that happened to cross his mind, no matter how transgressive or irresponsible. Like Ginger Rogers dancing with Fred Astaire, Harris had to run the campaign backward and in high heels. It is unfair that Americans chose someone like Donald Trump over someone like Kamala Harris, and I fear the nation and the world will regret that decision. I'm going to be angry and frustrated. But I'm not going to spend all my waking hours stewing over the fact that Trump is going to be president. I'm going to follow the news — that's my job — but I won't take his nonsense personally. I'm going to find a better politics-life balance and catch myself when I start obsessing over the latest outrage. Trump is getting back into the White House. Don't let him back into your head.

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Grateful for the help, but uncomfortable with the extras

Dear Annie: I am a nurse who needed to become a full-time caregiver for my mom, who is in her 90s. I have siblings; however, when I ask for their help, there is always an excuse. I haven't had a vacation in several years.

A friend of mine who is also a nurse offered to take care of my mom so I could have a long weekend off. I was so grateful for her generous offer. Mom is very comfortable with this friend, so I made plans to go on a well-deserved vacation. I did check in while I was away, and everything was going well.

When I returned, my mom told me that my friend had deep cleaned several rooms in our home. I'm not a bad housekeeper, but my priority is caring for my mom, so I clean as I'm able. She also brought additional groceries even though I had told her I had shopped prior to her coming. I had not asked her to clean or to bring groceries, and I am embarrassed by what she's done.

Mom told me that when she saw what my friend was doing, she told her I'd be embarrassed. My friend disregarded Mom's advice and continued cleaning.

I did tell my friend that I appreciated her giving me a break but wished she had asked me first before cleaning and bringing additional food for us, which wasn't needed. She said she likes to keep busy and I could see she didn't recognize my discomfort. I'm torn between being grateful that I got a few days off but now find I don't want to have this friend in my home again. Am I being ungrateful? How do I move forward? — Overwhelmed

Dear Overwhelmed: Your friend likely saw the extra chores as simply part of the care she was providing. Rather than interpret it as a reflection on your ability to keep things in order, reframe the experience as a friend wanting to go the extra mile after seeing how hard you were working for your mom.

Compulsive cleaners are frequently driven by a need to control their situation. This is not personal to you.

Whether or not you accept her help in the future is up to you.

Dear Annie: I read your column from the 16-year-old girl, "Love Wins," who asked if it was OK to get secretly engaged to her boyfriend, both of them still in high school.

I agree with your assessment that if something this important has to be a secret, something's wrong.

I wanted to add that the practice of a promise ring is a forgotten tradition from only a few generations back. A boy about her boyfriend's age would give his high school sweetheart an inexpensive ring and then they'd wait a couple of years to actually get engaged.

This act gives the couple a chance to get into the real world together and see what being an adult couple — with jobs, a college education, hobbies and goals that don't always align — is like. It would also be something that's publicly shared. Maybe "Love Wins" should go this route? — Married Young, Two Decades On

Dear Married Young: Thank you for your letter. A handful of other readers wrote in with the same sweet suggestion. I agree the intention behind a promise ring would capture the love these two feel for each other but without having to hide it or rush into a lifelong commitment until they are older and fully ready to do so — the perfect next step.

"How Can I Forgive My Cheating Partner?" is out now! Annie Lane's second anthology — featuring favorite columns on marriage, infidelity, communication and reconciliation — is available as a paperback and e-book. Visit http://www.creatorspublishing.com for more information. Send your questions for Annie Lane to deannie@creators.com. © 2024 CREATORS.COM

My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



Difficult to recognize a false prophet

Question: It seems to me that even the churches have fallen prey to false prophets. It's amazing how so many people cannot discern a Biblical sermon from a "feel good" message. I tell them that messages that make us feel good about ourselves are a key element in deceiving even good churchgoers. Isn't this true? — F.P.

Answer: Sometimes it is extremely difficult for us to recognize a false prophet — someone who claims to speak for God, but in reality does not. The underlying principle of all of Satan's tactics is deception, and no Christian,

however spiritual, is beyond the seductive assaults of this crafty and clever enemy.

The devil began his work of deception in the garden of Eden, and it continues to this day, cleverly deceiving people. He tries to infiltrate the theological seminary and the pulpit, invading the church under the cover of an orthodox vocabulary — but emptying sacred terms of their true Biblical meaning or denying their truth.

The sword of the Spirit — the Bible — is the weapon God has provided for us to use in this battle between truth and deception. Make it a priority to wield that sword skill-

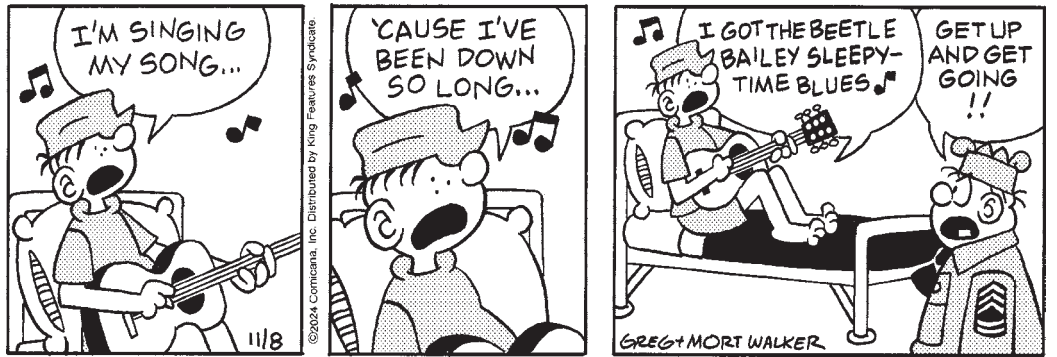
fully, because it is actually God's Love Letter to mankind. God's followers need to know the truth He sets forth in His Word so that we can confidently discern between His truth and love, and Satan's lies.

The enemy's deception is discreet, and his seduction is subtle. Many have fallen prey to his ways. We must be so immersed in God's Word that any false teaching is glaringly obvious.

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

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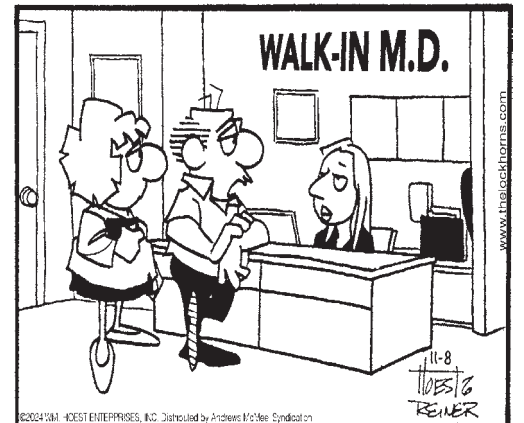
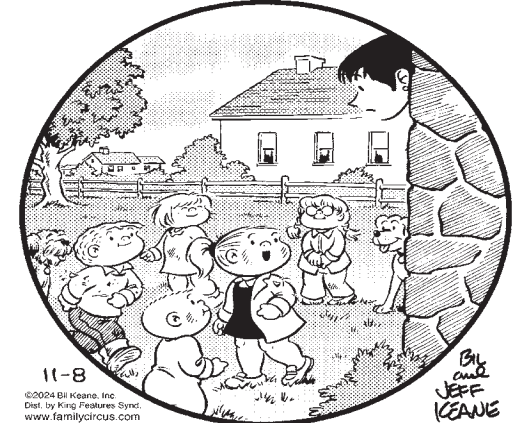
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THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane

The LOCKHORNS



"Nothing's wrong, Mommy. We're playing Hide-and-Shriek."

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and solution time: 25 mins.

Yesterday's answer grid for crossword puzzle

TV schedule table with columns for time slots (11:00-12:30) and various channels (WIMM, CBS, etc.) listing programs and their descriptions.

Raiders crush the Blackawks, Penrod get first girls win



Southern Wells didn't take Cowan lightly in Thursday night girls' basketball action.

The Raiders topped the Blackawks 63-22, getting their first win of the season and first for new head coach Kyle Penrod.

Ashlie Needler led the team with 19 points, Kaylee Davis nine, Kenzie Paxson eight, Callie Ripperger hitting a pair of threes for seven points and Erika Beavans six.

Southern Wells will be at Union City on Saturday, Nov. 9.

High School Calendar

THURSDAY, NOV 7
GIRLS BASKETBALL: Southern Wells at Cowan, 7:30 p.m.
FRIDAY, NOV 8
GIRLS BASKETBALL: Cathedral at Norwell, 7:30 p.m.
SATURDAY, NOV 9
GIRLS BASKETBALL: Warsaw at Norwell, 7:30 p.m.; Canterbury at Bluffton, 7 p.m.; Southern Wells at Union City, 7:30 p.m.

MONDAY, NOV 11
No events scheduled.
TUESDAY, NOV 12
No events scheduled.
WEDNESDAY, NOV 13
GIRLS BASKETBALL: Northfield at Bluffton, 7:30 p.m.; Northrop at Norwell, 7:30 p.m.; Union Modoc at Southern Wells, 7 p.m.
THURSDAY, NOV 14
No events scheduled.

No. 8 Indiana hopes to remain perfect with game vs. Michigan

By MICHAEL MAROT
AP Sports Writer

Carter Smith and C.J. West aren't interested in any history lessons about Indiana football.

Sure, they understand why everyone around Bloomington is so excited as the No. 8 Hoosiers take the field — even with basketball ramping up.

They're 9-0 for the first time in school history and one win away from producing the program's first 10-win season. Yes, at 6-0 in conference play, they share the Big Ten lead with No. 1 Oregon. They're even in position to make the expanded 12-team playoff, a position that seemed unthinkable even as first-year coach Curt Cignetti touted his past successes as an indication of what was possible in 2024.

And now they're preparing to host Michigan, a team that has made life miserable for Indiana for more than a century. Yet Smith and West are unfazed by what's happening around them.

"There's nothing (different), we prepare the same we do every week, every single week," West, a defensive lineman, said after the first set of CFP rankings had Indiana listed No. 8. "This is the biggest game because it's the next game, and that's how it is every week."

But that hasn't always been the case at Indiana, especially when Michigan (5-4, 3-3) is in town.

The Wolverines have won 27 of the last 28 games in this series with their only stumble coming courtesy of a 17-point loss in front of a tiny crowd during the COVID-19 pandemic-shortened season. Since then, the series has reverted to its more customary fashion with the Wolverines winning the last three by a combined score of 112-24, including 52-7 as the Wolverines were rolling toward last season's national championship run.

Now, though, the tables may be turned.

While the Hoosiers are ranked, Michi-

gan is not. Indiana also has the nation's second-highest scoring offense (46.6 points per game) and third-stingiest defense (261.0 yards), while the Wolverines have relied heavily on a strong defense to carry a team that ranks 116th in scoring (21.0 points).

Plus, the Hoosiers will be playing in front of its third straight sellout crowd at home and will again will have a major network, CBS, in town to document college football's most surprising team.

"Keep the standard, it never changes," said Smith, an offensive lineman. "Every single week, we have to get better with each and every practice, stack those days and little by little, it gets a bit easier."

The question now is: Will that philosophy work against the Wolverines?

Cignetti, who has never had a losing season in 14 years as a head coach and spent four years as Nick Saban's recruiting coordinator at Alabama, has no doubt. He believes his track record and that of his late, Hall of Fame coaching father proves it.

"The only thing that really matters is you get the result when you play, and to do that you've got to keep the main thing the main thing and eliminate the noise and the clutter," Cignetti said. "Every week presents its own new set of circumstances and so there's a lot of that going on this week. I'm aware of it. But to get kind of caught up on that and lose your focus would be the kiss of death."

TIP OF THE CAP

Indiana's turnaround certainly has impressed Michigan coach Sherrone Moore.

Cignetti already has six more wins than Indiana had last season — with three to play. He's also matched Indiana's victory total from the previous three seasons combined. In fact, the Hoosiers are just three wins away from tying their victory total since last beating the Wolverines.

"He's done an unbelievable job," Moore said. "They did a really good job of bringing in the right guy."

NASCAR Xfinity championship down to 4 drivers in season finale

By JOHN MARSHALL
AP Sports Writer

AVONDALE, Ariz. (AP) — All four NASCAR Xfinity championship drivers said the right things heading into the season finale.

Everyone will be respectful of each other on the track, I'm just going to run my race, let the best man win — you get the picture.

That will all change once the green flag drops at Phoenix Raceway on Saturday. A season championship on the line, cars will be bouncing all over the track.

"Everyone here is selfish and wants to win a championship for themselves and their teams," Richard Childress Racing's Austin Hill said on Thursday. "Anyone who says they aren't is lying. When it comes down to it, elbows will be up and guys will be muscling each other up the track to win a championship."

Saturday's race will be new territory for Hill in a pack of contenders who have been through it before.

While the 30-year-old Hill is making his first appearance in the Xfinity championship four, Cole Custer is the reigning champion, Justin Allgaier is making his seventh appearance in nine years and AJ Allmendinger made it this far for the second time.

The chance to win a championship will undoubtedly lead to some hard racing. The race just to make the final four already did at Martinsville last weekend.

Custer was in the center of it.

The Stewart-Haas Racing driver tangled with Allmendinger early in the race, ending his day, and raced Chandler Smith hard at the end. Smith, who could have made the championship four win a win, didn't appreciate Custer's on-track bluster and confronted him after the race, landing a slap on the 24-year-old's face that cost him a \$10,000 fine from NASCAR.

Title race or not, Custer may want to look over his shoulder at Phoenix on Saturday.

"At the end of the day I am going to go run my race and see where we end up, and try to maximize the day," Custer said. "You race how you get raced, and you go from there."

Allmendinger missed a chance to con-

tend at Martinsville, but had already clinched a spot in the championship with a win at Las Vegas on Oct. 19 — his only win of the season.

The 42-year-old Kaulig Racing driver made the Xfinity playoffs three times, including a fourth-place finish in 2021. Allmendinger is seeking his first championship in an Xfinity and Cup Series career that started in 2007.

"I don't feel the pressure of the championship like I have in years past," said Allmendinger, who will return to the Cup Series full-time next year. "Being here as many times as I have and it's not worked out, you just get this sense of peace of like, I've been here before and we've not been able to accomplish it, so change the game plan, go into it with a different mindset and we'll see what happens."

Allgaier can empathize.

The 38-year-old JR Motorsports driver has won 25 career Xfinity Series races, including two this year, reached the playoffs every year and has finished second in the championship twice — last year and 2020. Allgaier got the 2024 season off to a slow start, but won twice and took fifth at Martinsville to qualify for the championship four.

"There was a time in the middle of the summer where ... we might just have to do something to make the playoffs, let alone worry about trying to go through each round," Allgaier said. "It's definitely been an up-and-down year, but I want to win a championship."

Hill's season was nearly the opposite to Allgaier's.

Hill won the first two races, at Daytona and Atlanta, but didn't take the checkered flag again until the second Atlanta race in early September. Known to ruffle a few fenders with his aggressive driving, Hill added a win at Homestead in the Round of 8 to earn his first shot at the championship four.

"I came to RCR for one thing, one thing only, and that was to win races," Hill said. "And we've been able to do that."

Now it comes down to one more race — for a championship.

Flacco and Colts try to rebound from sluggish performance when they face the East-leading Bills

By MICHAEL MAROT
AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Indianapolis Colts quarterback Joe Flacco took a long, honest look at last week's game tape and came to one conclusion.

He must play better — and so must the Colts' offense.

Midway through his first season in Indy, the 39-year-old Flacco has taken hold of the starting job and is now trying to figure out how to jump start the sluggish offense, which keeps struggling to stay on the field and sustain drives.

"It's never easy to look in the mirror after losses," Flacco said. "It's just the nature of this business and that's part of building a team, being able to actually face those challenges. We've had that challenge a couple times this year and we've done a good job (responding). We've just got to continue to do that and trust our preparation is going to carry us into the game and allow us to play the way we want to."

It certainly won't be easy Sunday against Buffalo (7-2), a runaway leader in the AFC East, or with an offensive line that could again be starting multiple rookies.

This is certainly not where the Colts (4-5) expected to be — trying to rebound from back-to-back losses after moving back into the playoff picture with four wins in five games. Or naming Flacco the starter over second-year quarterback Anthony Richardson.

But the struggles have continued regardless of who's taking snaps. Richardson sat out last week when the Colts scored on a pick-6, settled for a field goal after another takeaway without getting a first down and driving for one field goal. The Colts finished with just 227 yards in offense.

That's simply not good enough. "I think we had a few third-and-mediums last week we didn't convert, but we've got to get back on track on third down," coach Shane Steichen said. "I think we were pretty efficient there early on in the season. The last two weeks haven't been up to our standards, so we've got to get back on track."

The Bills have their own offensive concerns.

While Josh Allen has been impressive, throwing 17 TD passes and only two interceptions, injuries could leave his receiving corps short-handed Sunday and the result could be giving James Cook a heavier workload on the ground against a Colts defense that has struggled all season to stop



the run. Allen isn't fretting.

"It doesn't have to be pretty, but good teams find ways to win," Allen said. "We have a lot of guys in the locker room who don't care about the end result, don't care about the style points of it. They just want to make sure that we're finding ways to get it done."

The Colts are trying to figure out how to get there, too.

Happy returns
The Bills welcomed back two familiar faces this week in defensive tackles Jordan Phillips and Quinton Jefferson to improve their run defense.

Phillips is in his third stint with Buffalo, while Jefferson was with the Bills in 2020.

Their familiarity with the defense should smooth the midseason transition, but coach Sean McDermott hasn't said whether either will play Sunday. Phillips spent seven weeks on Dallas' injured reserve list with an injured wrist. Jefferson was inactive the last five games with Cleveland.

"It's like riding a bike, really," said Phillips, who wasn't listed on Buffalo's injury report. "They have a couple of new things I haven't went over, but I got them down today. So, it'll be OK."

ON THE RUN

One potential solution for Indy's offensive woes would be getting running back Jonathan Taylor more involved.

Part of the problem has been continuity. While Taylor has battled an ankle injury throughout the season, the Colts also have been down multiple linemen this season, which will likely happen again this week with center Ryan Kelly out. Right guard Will Fries already went down with what could be a season-ending lower leg injury.

BLITZ TIMING

McDermott prefers to have his defense apply pressure with its front-four while picking spots when to blitz.

"To just blitz irresponsibly is in some ways irresponsible at times," McDermott said, before noting his philosophy might go against the teachings of his late mentor Jim Johnson in Philadelphia, who helped revolutionize the blitz.

Buffalo ranks 21st in the NFL in sacks per passing play this year. The Bills have 21 sacks and are led by Greg Rousseau (4 1/2) and Von Miller (three), the NFL's active sacks leader with 126 1/2. Miller returned last week after serving a four-game NFL suspension for violating the league's personal conduct policy.



NASCAR suspends and fines 9 team members for race manipulation

By JENNA FRYER
AP Auto Racing Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Drama continued to encompass NASCAR ahead of its championship-deciding season finale as the sanctioning body issued \$600,000 in fines and suspended nine team members from three different teams on Tuesday for alleged race manipulation at Martinsville Speedway.

The penalties came down after a contentious final battle Sunday at the Virginia track in which Christopher Bell initially qualified for the championship final four, but his move to hit the wall and use it for momentum violated a banned safety rule and was disallowed.

That gave the final spot in this week's winner-take-all finale at Phoenix Raceway to William Byron.

But, NASCAR was clear in disqualifying Bell that it would take a hard look at the actions other drivers played in the sequence of events as Bell and Byron battled for the final spot in the championship four.

Elton Sawyer, NASCAR's senior vice president of competition, seemed to stress that punished drivers Ross Chastain, Austin Dillon and Bubba Wallace were lucky not to be suspended.

"In this case we felt we wanted to focus more on the team leadership, something that we haven't done in the past," Sawyer said. "But I promise you that does not exclude going forward. We have meetings coming up this week with our drivers and we will get that point across to them and be very clear that when you do anything that's going to compromise the integrity of our sport, we're going to react."

Drivers have been on notice since a 2013 scandal that they are mandated to give 100% at all time and not participate in any race manipulation. It stemmed from the final regular-season race of that season when Clint Bowyer deliberately spun to start a sequence of events that gave teammate Martin Truex Jr. the final playoff spot.

Truex was kicked out of the playoffs — the scandal ultimately caused the closure of Michael Waltrip Racing — and Jeff Gordon was added as an unprecedented additional driver because he'd been robbed of the chance to race for the playoff position. It was after a weekend of crisis meetings between NASCAR and the teams at the playoff-opening race that NASCAR made its 100% rule.

But the manipulation rule is openly flouted at Daytona and Talladega, where the cars from the manufacturers all work together in the draft and when the drivers make their pit stops. There has yet to be a penalty for those instances.

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President-elect Trump names Susie Wiles as chief of staff

First woman in the post

By ZEKE MILLER, MICHELLE L. PRICE and JILL COLVIN

Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump has named Susie Wiles, the defacto manager of his victorious campaign, as his White House chief of staff, the first woman to hold the influential role.

Wiles is widely credited within and outside Trump's inner circle for running what was, by far, his most disciplined and well-executed campaign, and was seen as the leading contender for the position. She largely avoided the spotlight, even refusing to take the mic to speak as Trump celebrated his victory early Wednesday morning. She resisted the formal title of campaign manager, avoiding becoming a target, given Trump's history of cycling through people in that role.

Wiles' hire is Trump's first major decision as president-elect and one that could be a defining test of his incoming administration, as he must quickly build the team that will help run the massive federal government. Wiles doesn't bring much federal government experience to the role, but has a close relationship with the president-elect.

On the campaign, Wiles was able to do what few others have been able to: help control Trump's

impulses — not by chiding him or lecturing, but by earning his respect and showing him that he was better off when he followed her advice than flouting it.

Eight years ago, Trump tossed the careful planning of his transition team and instead hired a motley assortment of campaign aides, family members and Republican insiders who spent the better part of his first year in office engaged in infighting that dominated news coverage of the new administration. It was what many experts consider a foundational mistake that hamstrung a president who was new to Washington and government upon his swearing in.

Trump went through four chiefs of staff — including one who served in an acting capacity for a year — during his first administration, part of a record-setting personnel churn. Many top aides were cast out by Trump in his first term, who resented being made to feel managed or condescended to, while others got caught up in ideological spats within the factionalized West Wing.

Trump aides see hope that Wiles' selection marks a sign that the president-elect is aiming to build a more cohesive team, though one that will almost certainly remain less conventional than his Democratic or Republican predecessors.

Trump, who promised in 2016 to hire "only the best people"

has since repeatedly said that he believes the biggest mistake of his first term was hiring the wrong people. He was new to Washington then, he has said, and didn't know any better. But now, Trump said, he knows the "best people" and those to avoid for roles in his administration.

"Susie is tough, smart, innovative, and is universally admired and respected. Susie will continue to work tirelessly to Make America Great Again," Trump said in a statement. "It is a well deserved honor to have Susie as the first-ever female Chief of Staff in United States history. I have no doubt that she will make our country proud."

Successful chiefs of staff serve as the president's confidant, help execute a president's agenda and balance competing political and policy priorities. They also tend to serve as a gatekeeper, helping determine whom the president spends his time with and whom he speaks to — an effort Trump chafed under inside the White House.

The chief of staff is "absolutely critical to an effective White House," said Chris Whipple, whose book "The Gatekeepers" details how the White House chief of staff role shapes and defines a presidency. "At the end of the day the most important thing is telling the president what he doesn't want to hear."

"On the plus side, she's shown that she can manage Trump, that she works with him and can

sometimes tell him hard truths, and that's really important," said Whipple. "On the minus side, she really has no White House experience and hasn't really worked in Washington in 40 years. And that's a real disadvantage."

Wiles is a longtime Florida-based Republican strategist who ran Trump's campaigns in the state in 2016 and 2020, and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis' successful bid for office in 2018. Before that, she ran Rick Scott's 2010 campaign for Florida governor and briefly served as the manager of former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman's 2012 presidential campaign.

Wiles also worked in the offices of former Jacksonville mayors John Delaney and John Peyton.

Chris LaCivita, who along with Wiles served as de-facto campaign manager, described Wiles as someone who is inclusive in conversations, who seeks input from others and is steadfastly loyal.

"Susie is just functionally built differently because she has that rare commodity to be able to work on so many different important issues simultaneously," LaCivita told The Associated Press.

Wiles was the one who was tasked with having the toughest discussions with Trump and on every pivotal conversation. She worked well with his family and developed relationships with Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Elon Musk that put her in position as a key

conduit for Trump's budding alliances with those men.

"She can manage really any ego that comes her way," LaCivita said. "And she doesn't do it by any other way other than just being very straightforward and on top of the details."

He added: "The most important commodity in politics is honesty and loyalty and Susie has both in copious amounts."

Wiles was seen by Trump aides as someone who could guide his moods and impulses without necessarily restraining him. Trump often referenced Wiles on the campaign trail, publicly praising her leadership of what he said he was often told was his "best-run campaign."

"She's incredible. Incredible," he said at a Milwaukee rally earlier this month.

At a rally in Pennsylvania where Trump made one of his last appearances before the election, he launched into a profane and conspiracy-laden speech. Wiles was spotted standing offstage and appearing to glare at him.

Later, at a rally in Pittsburgh, Trump seemed to acknowledge his adviser's efforts to keep him on message.

After complaining that men aren't allowed to call a woman "beautiful" any longer, he asked if he could strike that word from the record. "I'm allowed to do that, aren't I, Susan Wiles?" he mused.

New Mexico governor declares emergency as winter storm hits

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — New Mexico's governor declared an emergency Thursday after a powerful winter storm left tens of thousands of people without power as heavy snow, fierce winds and freezing temperatures marched across the northern two-thirds of the state and into Colorado.

Dozens of crews with Public Service Co. of New Mexico were mobilized to address widespread outages that had been reported overnight and in the early morning hours from Albuquerque to Santa Fe and beyond as the snow brought tree branches crashing down onto power lines.

The utility acknowledged frustrations and urged residents to be patient, saying there were about 19,000 people still affected by the outages Thursday evening. That was down from 50,000 earlier in the day.

"This really is an unprecedented storm in the fact

that it came so earlier and so heavily while leaves were still on the trees. That has caused limbs to be much heavier that they would normally be," PNM spokesman Jeff Buell said, adding that crews were dealing with hundreds of separate repair jobs in Albuquerque alone.

With more snow in the forecast, Buell said there could be additional outages.

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's declaration unlocks state funding for emergency response efforts. Funding also will be funneled to the New Mexico National Guard, which has been helping to clear roads.

Schools in Santa Fe, Los Alamos and elsewhere across northern New Mexico canceled classes, while authorities warned people to stay off the roads. Plows were busy trying to keep major highways clear, but state police announced midday that Interstate 25 just south of the Colorado border was closed in

both directions.

The National Weather Service in Albuquerque issued a blizzard warning for parts of the state and reported that more than 100 vehicles were stranded on highways in the state's northeast corner. Forecasters warned of "very dangerous driving conditions" that were made worse by low visibility because of blowing snow.

Interstate 70 across Colorado's Eastern Plains also was closed, as residents in that state braced for what some said could be the biggest snowstorm to hit the Denver area in November in years. Some people reported Thursday that they already had more than 14 inches of snow on the ground.

The National Weather Service Weather Prediction Center said extensive and widespread disruptions could be expected as the storm moves through New Mexico and Colorado, dropping between 1 and 2 inches

of snow within an hour in some spots.

Tonja Goode Ross said she would be staying home and enjoying a cup of hot

chocolate instead of trying to brave what was the "first real snow" of the season for Corona. This rural part of central New Mexico was

turned into a winter wonderland, its pastures covered by a thick blanket of snow and its tree branches bowing from the weight of fresh powder.

Online Directory

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MR. KOOL Heating and Cooling mrkoolheatingandair.com	DAZEYS SUPPLY dazeys.com/bluffton-in
STEFFEN Financial Group steffinancial.com	Genesis Pest Services genesispestservices.com
Daniel's JEWELERS daniels-jewelers.net	ABOVE & BEYOND Vehicle Reconditioning abovebeyondrecon.com
INDIANA FARM BUREAU INSURANCE infarmbureau.com	JC'S GARAGE DOOR SALES & SERVICE jcsgaragedoor.com
Myers FUNERAL HOMES myersfuneralhomes.com	KELLYS COLLISION CENTER, INC. kellysautocollision.com
WELLS COUNTY 4-H GROWS HERE extension.purdue.edu/wells	3 RIVERS 3riversfcu.org
Bluffton Tire blufftontire.com	MOSER & SON Heating & Air Conditioning moserandsonheatingandair.com
RiverStone DENTAL riverstonedental.net	Edward Jones EdwardJones.com
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La Fontaine Center lafontainecenter.org	HOME COURT HOME CARE homecourthomecare.com
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