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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2024

BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection

\$1.00

Township budget disagreements continue

By HOLLY GASKILL

Though no action was taken on the budget or fire protection Tuesday, township officials continue to disagree on how to handle financial matters.

The advisory board reconvened Tuesday evening as a continuation of their Nov. 11 meeting where the board could not approve their minutes and several financial con-

siderations. At that meeting, board member Tim Baker also accused Trustee Larry Heckber of illegal activity in submitting an earlier approved version of the 2025 budget.

Baker revisited the discussion on Tuesday, saying that Heckber had turned in what he wanted, not what was approved. Baker also stated he met with township

attorney Tony Crowell but did not specify what Crowell had said about the matter.

Heckber refuted claims he had done anything wrong, saying he had submitted the budget as had been approved by the board with an agreement for fire protection with the town of Ossian. Both versions included the same totals but varied between line items.

Because the township will pay a biannual lump sum, Heckber maintained that the individual line items were unimportant.

Board member David Haiflich used this as a further argument that it would not have mattered that the township's budget differed from the fire agreement. "So you could have used ours but refused to?" he questioned.

"Because your items do not line up with the town of Ossian," Heckber responded, again referring to the budget approved in the fire agreement.

The board also took no action on a request from the Ossian Volunteer Fire Department to encumber \$10,920.38 from this year's budget to pay for turnout

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The Southern Wells School Board celebrated outgoing member Chad Roush during their board meeting Tuesday evening. He served on the board for nearly 11 years. Pictured, from left, are board members Todd Fiechter, Roush, Delora Schneider and Andrew Pursifull. (Photos by Chet Baumgartner)

Southern Wells celebrates Roush's service on board

By CHET BAUMGARTNER

When Chad Roush first joined the Southern Wells School Board, two of his children attended the district.

This year, his grandson began kindergarten — and Roush completed his nearly 11-year tenure as a member.

Starting in January, he will only attend meetings as a grandparent.

"I'm going to miss it, but I don't think I'll be running again," said Roush.

As a farewell, Board President Todd Fiechter asked him to make the motion to adjourn the board's regular meeting Tuesday.

"He has not held back in his passion to make Southern Wells succeed," Fiechter said as he recognized the most veteran member of the board, who was last elected in 2020. "We both care deeply for Southern Wells. I know he's put in a lot of hours and taken a lot of grief. He's served this school well."

Fellow board members Andrew Pursifull and Delora Schneider likewise lauded Roush. Pursifull, for instance, said he and Roush didn't always agree, but they always ended every conversation on good terms.

Schneider thanked Roush for always encouraging her to speak her mind, even when she thought differently than other board members.

After the meeting — as staff and members enjoyed Roush's favorite dessert, cherry delight — the 51-year-old farmer reflected on more than a decade



Southern Wells Corporate Treasurer Lora Warner chats with board member Chad Roush Tuesday after his last school board meeting. Roush, who chose not to run for re-election, has served on the board for almost 11 years, and the district held a reception after the meeting to recognize his tenure.

of votes and discussions, including his proudest accomplishment: maintaining and repairing the district's buildings primarily through the school's budget and not through heavy borrowing.

Roush also lauded the school's staff, recognizing that people attend Southern Wells because of them.

He described his time on the board as "great," though not always "good."

"I've learned a lot," he said.

Roush chose not to run again earlier this year. Gregory Vanover will fill the Jackson Township seat starting in January.

"I hope Greg cares as much for Southern Wells as Chad does," Fiechter said.

In other business, board members:

- Approved pay raises for the district's classified staff. Most will receive a 4% increase, Superintendent Trent Lehman said, while several will receive an 8% raise to ensure they earn a salary comparable to those who work the same positions at schools in surrounding counties.

- Honored the high school band members and their parents after the band received the Larry Reed Memorial Spirit Award in October. The band earned the trophy while participating in Decatur's annual Calithumpian parade and "exemplifying discipline and enthusiasm," band instructor and music teacher Mike Haigh said. Haigh said he knew Reed, and he "broke down" into tears

(Continued on Page 2)

City approves incremental electric rate increase

By JONATHAN SNYDER

Increases to electricity rates over the next five years were approved by the Common Council Tuesday.

In reaction to recent federal regulations the city's electric provider, Wolverine Power Cooperative, announced that their rates will increase in 2030.

The approved increases by the city intend to help give slow growth, rather than having rates jump by the estimated 6-7% in 2030. Additionally, the funds raised intend to help further stall rate increases by collecting revenues in a slush fund.

The rates will start at \$3.90 per meter per month and \$0.097 per kilowatt hour for the first 500 kilowatt hours for residential services in 2025, which will increase to \$4.50 per meter per month and \$0.109 for the first 500 KWH hours in 2029. Commercial services rates will start at \$7.75 per meter per month and \$0.117 per KWH for the first 500 KWH in 2025, increasing to \$8.80 per meter per month and \$0.132 per KWH for the first 500 KWH in 2029.

"I think it's good that we are trying to plan ahead so the rate payer doesn't get crushed," Council member Josh Hunt said. "We have a large change in wholesale electric buying ... I don't know what's really going to happen but it's better to plan ahead than to react."

The council also signed an ordinance that allows the city to enter into build, operate and transfer (BOT) agreements. These agreements allow a private entity to build and operate a larger scale project, in hopes to recoup their investment or turn a profit, then give the facility over to the city after a set amount of years. Council member Scott Mentzer clarified that no BOT transfer proposals have come before the council. The council does not intend to replace the traditional request for the proposal process they currently use for projects

"It basically moves the responsibility for completion of all the tasks underneath the developer," Mentzer said.

(Continued on Page 2)

Roush Park, alley paving bids reviewed by board

By JONATHAN SNYDER

Bids for two projects were heard by the Board of Public Works and Safety Tuesday.

The Board of Works heard bids for improvements to Roush Park and alley paving. Brooks Construction had the low bid for Roush Park improvements at \$411,392. Other bids from DC Construction, E&B Paving and Wayne Asphalt ranged from about

\$50,000 to \$100,000 over Brooks' bid. Parks Department Superintendent Brandy Fiechter will review each bid and recommend one at the board's Dec. 19 special meeting.

Brooks also had the low bid for alley paving responsibilities, with their bid totaling \$243,334. DC's bid was over \$100,000 more, and Wayne bid \$373,900 total. Street Department Commissioner Tim Simp-

son will review the three bids and will recommend one on Dec. 19.

The board also approved expanding Lexipol's services for the Fire Department and other civil government employees. Lexipol currently looks into Police Department policies and ensures they are up to code with Indiana standards.

Lexipol will now offer policy services for fire and

(Continued on Page 3)



Christmas with the Carolers

The Wells County Chamber of Commerce's quarterly luncheon featured the musical styles of, left to right, Ryan Bertsch, Chet Baumgartner, Darren Drayer and Matt Drayer. The group sang a variety of carols and worship songs at Lighted Gardens Tuesday. (Photo by Holly Gaskill)

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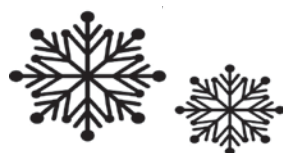
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Outside



Chance of rain and snow, breezy cold night

Today	Thursday	Friday
High 39	High 36	High 35
Low 26	Low 29	Low 21

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Online

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Township budget

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gear at the beginning of 2025. While not an additional appropriation for the department, Baker argued it was inappropriate for the department to expend those funds outside of the calendar year.

Even so, Heckber notified the board that he did not require their permission to encumber the funds and would do so if the equipment did not arrive before the end of the year.

Ossian Town Council member Jeff Kemper clarified that Fire Chief Ben Fenstermaker often makes this purchase at the end of the year for the best price and use of the budget. "And because Ben is responsible with your money and pushes it (the purchase) so it's cheaper to buy, and it passes the calendar date, you're not going to honor your word?"

Baker said the township had honored its financial commitment, but Ossian Town Council member Dennis Ealing interjected that Jefferson Township would fall short of its financial commitment by roughly \$11,000. Board

member AJ Springer confirmed this.

"That's right," Baker then said. "And they needed to spend it by the end of the year."

In response, Ealing questioned why the township had encumbered funds in prior years if Baker felt this way now. "Because it was a different deal — you wanted to change the agreement," Baker replied.

Though Heckber intends to encumber the funds if needed, he read a statement describing the situation and his feelings following the discussion.

"I find it absolutely deplorable that Tim and David would try and deny the volunteer fire department \$10,920 of the \$79,000 2024 budget approved," Heckber read. "I hope in 2025 you find a way around the hatred you have for me, Ben Fenstermaker, the town of Ossian and the volunteer fire department, and do the job you were elected to do — represent all of Jefferson Township."

"There's no hatred," Baker responded.

Heckber appealed to the

small audience to support his statement, and resident Troy Eschenbacher replied, "Are you insinuating that the hatred is one-sided, though? Because there has been hatred from all sides and it seems very childish to sit here and say it's just the two of them. Anybody who has participated in this all year knows that that's not true."

Heckber pulled back on his claim, saying "hatred" was possibly too strong a word.

"Well I'm sorry you feel like it's animosity toward you guys," Baker later stated. "I mean, we're here to conduct township business, and if we feel like this is what the township needs, that's what we vote on."

Heckber later added, "I hope next year that we've worked through some of this. We've done a lot of good things this year ... There've been big changes this year, but I'm still proud of you guys as a board because you are very knowledgeable. You're probably one of the most knowledgeable boards because you review this stuff ... So I do appreci-

ate you. I thank you for the job that you've done this year."

The board 3-0 approved two items continued from their Dec. 11 meeting — their Oct. 17 meeting minutes and end-of-year transfers to balance the budget. Baker hesitated to approve the transfers, saying Heckber may have a shortfall for salaries at the end of the year. However, he concluded, "It's going to be up to him (Heckber) to figure out how to pay it."

Eschenbacher also asked about a previously discussed budget issue with cemetery maintenance, and Baker explained that \$12,000 had been spent for the \$8,000 line item. Baker said it wasn't an issue, but he had requested clarification on how that money was spent.

Heckber also notified the board that \$6,687 had been taken out in an audit.

The board will meet for their first meeting of the year at 5:30 p.m. on Jan. 5 at the central office for Norwell Community Schools.

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Weather

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

(24-hour observations at 10:33 p.m. Tuesday)

High: 43; Low: 33; Precipitation: None
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 1.91 feet at 9:45 p.m. Tuesday

Wells County forecast

Today: A chance of rain and snow before 10 a.m., then a chance of snow between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Cloudy, with a high near 39. Light and variable wind becoming northwest 5 to 10 mph in the morning. Chance of precipitation is 50%.

Tonight: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 26. Northwest wind 5 to 10 mph becoming light west after midnight.

Thursday: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 36. Calm wind becoming south around 5 mph in the afternoon.

Thursday Night: A 50% chance of snow, mainly after 1 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 29. South wind around 5 mph.

Friday: A 50% chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 35.

Friday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 21.

Saturday: Partly sunny, with a high near 30.

Saturday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 15.

Sunday: Sunny, with a high near 28.

Sunday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 16.

Southern Wells

(Continued from Page 1)

when he learned that his band had earned this honor, the equivalent of first place in the competition. The band has not participated for more than a decade, but Haigh said he participated this year in honor of Michael McBride, another friend who died.

- Honored the high school and elementary secretaries as part of the board's "Spotlight on Raider Success" portion of the meeting.

- Approved a fundraising request for a basketball mini cheer camp.

- Accepted donations from Champion Homes and Calvary Lutheran Church.

- Approved an annual \$100 stipend for staff members who use cell phones for school-related business.

- Approved a natural gas cooperative agreement with Maverick Energy and the East Central Education Services Center Cooperative. The agreement will save the school an estimated \$2,000 to \$4,000 through decreased natural gas costs, Lehman

said. He also said that he spoke with officials at area schools and that he sees no down side to switching.

- Accepted Walker-Hughes' bid to provide liability insurance for the district. Lehman said the company provided the lowest bid of the three submitted.

- Approved accepting Jason Mitten to complete his student teaching under art teacher Sara Scott during second semester of the school year.

- Approved splitting junior high head-coaching stipends so the district can hire two assistant coaches to replace one of the two head coaches for the track team.

- Congratulated corporation treasurer Lisa Warner, who completed 100 hours of training to earn her certification as a chief business officer from the Indiana Association of School Business Officers.

Board members will meet again at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 14, in the high school's library and media center.

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Electric rate increase

(Continued from Page 1)

"And eliminates a lot of the potential change order activity that we see today in projects. The developer would see a RFP (request for proposal), they would make a bid against the RFP and then they would be responsible for fulfilling the entire RFP regardless of change orders. They own the project, and then after they complete the project they transfer it."

Mentzer cited the potential of a new community pool as a project they could enter into a BOT agreement for and that BOT agreements could lead to more flexibility with contractor selection. City Attorney

Tony Crowell stated that BOT agreements also allow the city to make requests for information.

Additionally, a proposal for additional compensation during holiday hours was submitted by 911 Director Mike Miller. Because of the dispatch center's 24-hour operation and shortstaffing, Miller proposed that employees be given a lump sum of extra pay for holiday hours at the end of the year, in addition to an extra holiday for the department.

While the council seemed agreeable to extra compensation for holiday employees, they acknowledged that every public

safety department should be included in any proposals. They were also hesitant about the extra holiday.

Council member Rick Elwell additionally advised that a review of paid time off for the public safety sector is slated for January, and wanted to see those discussions looped into the review process. The matter was continued until January.

Fund transfers for the Fire Department and Parks Department were also approved by the Council.

Fire Chief Don Craig requested a \$2,500 transfer from his overtime line item to the repair and

maintenance line items to cover invoices from LabTech software, which has increased their scope to offer timesheet services for the department.

Fiechter requested a transfer of \$16,700 from a combination of the department's travel, utilities, repair and maintenance and equipment line item to their capital improvement Fund to help with paying for improvements to Roush Park.

Furthermore, the council and Mayor John Whicker approved Mentzer, Hunt, Elwell, Sarah Reed and Chandler Gerber for the Redevelopment Commission in 2025.

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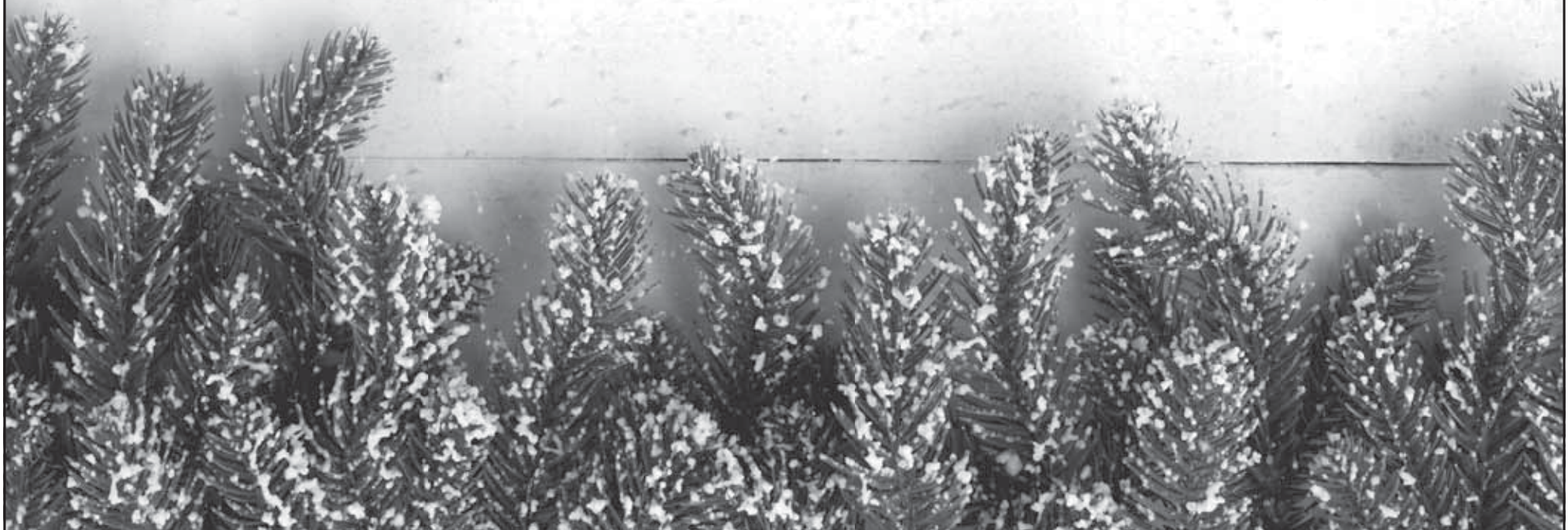


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OBITUARIES

Jerold "Jerry" Dillon, 80

Jerold "Jerry" Louis Dillon, 80, of Bluffton, passed away Friday morning, Dec. 13, 2024, at his residence.

Jerry was born in Fort Wayne on Feb. 29, 1944, to Earl G. and Esther M. (Meyer) Dillon. He married Cynthia "Cindy" J. Cole in Columbus, OH, on July 12, 1964; she survives.

A 1963 graduate of Bluffton High School, Jerry went on to graduate from International Barber College in 1964. Jerry started out his career as a barber in Bluffton but later took an outdoor job with NIPSCO, which he did for 30 years until taking early retirement due to an injury.

Jerry was an Eagle Scout and loved the outdoors, especially hiking, canoeing and fishing. He served the community through being a member of the Bluffton Optimist Club and Jaycees. He was a long-time member of the First Church of Christ in Bluffton, where he enjoyed teaching the youth and serving as an elder.

In addition to his wife, Jerry is survived by two daughters, Dianna (Jay) Foley of Springdale, Arizona, and Kimberly (Jeff) Higginbottom of Bluffton; a sister, Joann Payne of rural Ossian; 12 grandchildren, Gloria (Devon) Pike, Robin Higginbottom, Veronica Eikenberry, Esther (Matthew) Wilcox, Dillon Higginbottom, Samuel Higginbottom, Beatrice Higginbottom, Tobias Higginbottom, Sarah Goldfain, Heather Foley, Cayley Foley and Jessica Fletcher; seven great-grandchildren, Ella Goldfain, Brendan Goldfain, Madailen Goldfain, Ember Eikenberry, Luna Eikenberry, Alister Fletcher and Fenris Fletcher; along with a foster great-grandson.

Aside from his parents, Jerry was preceded in death by a brother, Thomas Dillon; a brother-in-law, Ron Payne; two sisters-in-law, Bonnie Wolfer and Liz Cole; and mother-in-law, Frances M. Barber.

Visitation will be from noon until 3 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 21, 2024, at Goodwin - Cale & Harnish Memorial Chapel in Bluffton, followed immediately by a funeral service at 3 p.m. Pastor Jay Foley will officiate.

Memorial contributions may be made to the First Church of Christ of Bluffton "Generations Fund".

Online condolences may be shared at www.goodwincaleharnish.com.



Roush Park, alley paving

(Continued from Page 1)

government, as well as use their grant services program to get help in finding and writing grants. A wellness app is also available for current and retired government employees along with their families.

The services will have a one time charge of \$18,259 and a \$21,432 annual fee, with a portion paid by the fire territory.

The board also approved a water leak adjustment for Katie Brindle in the 400 block of West Washington Street. Brindle reported that a leak underneath the home and away from sewer infrastructure was thought to be repaired in October, but further leaks were apparent in bills. The leak has been fixed and the board compensated Brindle for half of the excess charge over her average bills for August, September and October, and fully credited her on the sewer portion of the bill.

A discussion on coverage

for yard repair in the 200 block of East Central Avenue was heard by the board, but no action was taken. Tim Garrett had a sewage line blockage that forced repairs, in addition to a water line replacement due to lead in the pipes. Garrett asked the board where the responsibilities lie between city and homeowner for these types of repairs.

Board member Scott Mentzer said that traditionally, the homeowner is responsible for any work done from the meter set to the home. Unfortunately for Garrett, his sewer main was located across the street from his home, leading to multiple cuts in the street to repair the lines.

While the board was sympathetic, they also noted that any coverage for Garrett would set an uncomfortable precedent in future cases. Additionally, Simpson reported that asphalt plants have shut down for the winter season, and the road

would need coal patching before any asphalt replacement. Simpson will head to Garrett's residence for estimates on any additional costs for road work.

Additionally, Fiechter reported that materials for work on phase two of the interurban trail project were \$6,427.15 less than expected. A transfer of funds for Fiechter was also approved by the board, with \$350 going to their Medical Insurance line item to cover rate increases and \$2,700 going to their Garage, Motor and Operating Supplies line item to cover the purchase of chemical supplies for the pool. The funds were moved from Salaries, Other Supplies and Repair and Maintenance line items.

The board also approved the sale of a 2001 Ford Explorer, currently used as a command vehicle for the Fire Department. Liberty Center's Fire Department offered \$1,500 for the vehicle, which has approximately 110,000 miles on it.

Fire Chief Don Craig said that the vehicle has had several problems and repairs done to it and were trying to replace this vehicle over the past few years.

"I had Liberty Center Fire Department come to me," Craig said. "Their current command vehicle is in even worse shape than mine. I said, 'You don't want it (the vehicle).' They said, 'Yes we do.'"

Dispatchers Kimberly Noble and Savannah Brown along with animal control officers Kyle Morpew and Tina Morris were given raises by the board. Craig also requested that Landon Eads become the Fire Department's new training officer at the start of 2025 on recommendation from the command staff, which was approved.

The board also paid a \$112,519 SRF payment request to Inliner Solutions for their sewer lining and repair work.

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Lowell H. Hartman, 88

Lowell H. Hartman, 88, of Berne, passed away at his daughter's residence on Sunday, Dec. 8, 2024.

Lowell was born in Jay County to Ralph and Violet (Zigler) Hartman on July 30, 1936. Lowell married Janet (Piquette) Hartman on May 19, 1956, in Jay County.

Survivors include his wife of 68 years, Janet Hartman of Berne; children, Robert (Joy) Hartman of Winston Salem, North Carolina, Thomas (Kim) Hartman of Berne, Susan Heyerly of Bluffton, and Laura Michael of Bluffton; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; siblings, Eva Coleman, Thurl Hartman; and sister-in-law, Donna Hartman.

Lowell was preceded in death by his parents, Ralph and Violet Hartman; brothers, DeWayne, Charles, Raymond, Marvin, John and Allen Dean Hartman; sister, Karen Matney; and a great-grandchild.

Friends and family may gather to share and remember on Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2024, at Downing & Glancy Funeral Home located at 100 N Washington St. Geneva IN 46740, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. A funeral service will begin at 1 p.m. with Pastor David Cox officiating. A burial will follow at Gravel Hill Cemetery in Bryant, Indiana.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Downing & Glancy Funeral Home in Geneva, Indiana.

Daniel Craig Devine, 65

Daniel Craig Devine, 65, of Greenwood was called home to spend eternity with his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on Monday, Dec. 16, 2024.

Funeral arrangements are pending at this time with the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton.

INCIDENTS

City:

Monday, 8:02 p.m., Pak A Sak North. Child reportedly stole something, out of control.

Tuesday, 12:45 p.m., Walmart. Parking problem, vehicle in lot for several days.

Tuesday, 1:08 p.m., Walmart. Report of harassment.

County:

Monday, 12:18 p.m., 2700 W Market Street, Liberty Center. Report a business Facebook hack, caller

Police Notebook

concerned about sensitive information linked to the account.

Tuesday, 6:34 a.m., C.R. 200 N and S.R. 116, Bluffton. Car vs. deer.

Tuesday, 7:59 a.m., Jeff Road and S.R. 3, Warren. Car vs. deer. Deer euthanized by officer, permit issued.

ACCIDENTS

City:

Monday, 4:03 p.m., S.R. 1 at Monroe Street. Aidan Brewster, 19, Geneva, was stopped at the intersection light, driving a 2006 Volvo

S60, and proceeded when the light turned green. The vehicle in front of the Volvo, a 2021 Kia K5 driven by Cheyenne S. Harris, 30, Bluffton, then stopped and the Volvo rear-ended the Kia. Harris said the vehicle in front of her had also stopped. Damage exceeded \$1,000.

Tuesday, 1:26 p.m., Dustman Road at S.R. 1. A witness reported a crash from a 2016 Ford F150 that reportedly hit a curb and then a stopped 2003 Ford Focus driven by

Juliann Gamble, 65, Fort Wayne. Linda L. Ogle, 79, Poneto, was found driving the F150 with corresponding damage, but denied hitting the Ford Focus. Damage did not exceed \$1,000.

County:

Tuesday, 1:30 a.m., S.R. 116 near C.R. 100 N, Bluffton. Sawyer V. Reynolds, 38, Bluffton, was driving a 2014 Chrysler Town and Country southeast on S.R. 116 and struck a deer. Damage exceeded \$2,500.

Ossian Rotary will hear from John Beeks, owner of Par and Below Golf Simulator

At its regular weekly meeting on Thursday, Dec. 19, Ossian Rotary will host John Beeks to speak about the new Par and Below Golf Simulator.

John and Laura Beeks live in Wells County. With a background in skilled trades/engineering/project management, John manages the facilities at a local manufacturing plant called AAM.

The couple recently started a golf simulator business called Par and Below in Bluffton with business

partners Craig and Kylie Cantwell. It is located at 927 N Main St. in Bluffton across from Wendy's restaurant.

Their main reason for opening this business is to offer the community something fun to do in the winter. Par and Below offers five bays of golfing with state-of-the-art technology that allows golfers to immerse themselves in real life golfing situations. The simulator allows a golfer to actually feel like he or she is standing on one of thousands of

different golf courses hitting real shots.

Staffed from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week from October to April, this business is considered to be seasonal, but depending on the interest, may possibly be open some in the summer months, or Friday and Saturday evenings if interest is there. Availability for special occasions like birthday, corporate and wedding parties is also available.

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.

Also, Ossian Rotary will not meet Dec. 26 or Jan. 2, due to holidays.

For more information, please contact Matthew Gullion, Ossian Rotary President, at mwgullion@gmail.com.

Adams County Sheriff's Office arrests one in connection to stolen vehicles

On Monday, Dec. 16, 2024, the Adams County Sheriff's Office received a tip regarding the possible location of a stolen vehicle in northern rural Adams County.



Timothy G. Walden

Deputies responded to the location, where GPS tracking indicated

County was arrested at the

stolen vehicle might be found.

Upon conducting a knock-and-talk at the address, deputies discovered a total of 10 stolen vehicles.

Timothy G. Walden, 47, of rural Adams County was arrested at the

scene and is currently being held at the Adams County Jail.

The investigation remains ongoing, and additional updates will be provided as new information becomes available.

If you have any information related to this case or other suspected stolen property, please contact the Adams County Sheriff's Office at 260.724.5345.

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.

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Lessons from music lessons and recitals

Monday night the nephews, George and Whit, had a recital for the piano lessons they've been taking. Both have been too embarrassed to let me hear them practice at home, so I was looking forward to hearing them play. Naturally, I think they're musical geniuses.



Carrie Penrod

Whit did not want to be there. I was afraid to make too much eye contact with him, lest he flee. He gets embarrassed easily and in his defense, there were a lot of people there to watch their kids perform. Last week George had his tonsils and adenoids removed and isn't feeling the greatest. But both of them played fantastically and I could not be more proud of them — but let's be honest, I would be proud of them no matter what.

Watching them play reminded me of when I first started taking orchestra. Like Whit, I didn't want anyone to hear me practice or watch me play. That never really went away. Like a majority of the kids at the recital, I made some mistakes — couldn't keep time, lost my place, hit wrong notes, skipped notes and sometimes forgot to breathe. But I noticed something watching my nephews; that I didn't care what mistakes they made, I didn't even notice them. The pride and love I felt for them overshadowed everything else. I made sure to tell them both how incredibly proud I was of them and how wonderfully they played.

I started playing in the sixth grade, at 11-years-old. I wanted to play violin or cello, but ended up playing viola instead. We had too many violin players and I did not want to lug a cello on and off the bus. My first ISSMA Solo and Ensemble event I played a variation of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star." I was a nervous wreck, but I played and despite whatever mistakes I made, I was given a first. And I repeated the torture for the next five years. And every year, no matter how unhappy I was with my performance (which is ridiculous, looking back now, because I only ever got second place one time), my mother, grandparents and Aunt Treva told me how proud they were of me every time. I'm pretty sure I could have butchered every note and they still would have been proud of me — which is exactly how I feel about the boys.

Yes, I definitely remember how scared I was to play in front of people. As well as how much I hated making mistakes (still do). That said, there are plenty of other lessons I retained while learning how to play an instrument.

If you make a mistake, keep going. Sure, if it was a big one, someone probably noticed, but you'll only make it more obvious if you get caught up in it. Keep playing no matter what and eventually, you won't make that mistake again. Hyper focus on it and it will ruin the better parts of your performance, or distract you so much you'll make another mistake.

It doesn't matter if you're playing louder than everyone else if you're playing wrong. No one likes to be loud and wrong. It's important that you know when to lead and when to follow. Practice does indeed make perfect, but it's okay to take breaks. A stressed-out mind and body are no good to anyone and will open the door for mistakes. Stress will also suck the fun out of everything and eventually you'll stop doing what you love.

Sometimes you'll lose your place on the page. There are a lot of notes you need to hit at the right moment. Maybe you got hung up on a mistake and forgot where you were. Keep playing until you find your place. No one will notice unless you stop playing. Speaking of losing your place, don't look too far ahead or you'll lose where you're at now. A little glance at a few future notes is crucial, but if you let yourself look too far ahead you'll get lost.

And remember, the people that love you are proud of you no matter what.

newsroom@news-banner.com

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 18, the 353rd day of 2024. There are 13 days left in the year.

Today in history: On Dec. 18, 2019, the U.S. House impeached President Donald Trump on two charges, sending his case to the Senate for trial; the articles of impeachment accused him of abusing the power of the presidency to investigate rival Joe Biden ahead of the 2020 election and then obstructing Congress' investigation. (It was the first of two Trump impeachment trials that would end in acquittal by the Senate.)

Also on this date:

In 1865, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery, was declared in effect by Secretary of State William H. Seward.

In 1892, Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's ballet "The Nutcracker" publicly premiered in St. Petersburg, Russia; although now considered a classic, it received a generally negative reception from critics.

In 1957, the Shippingport Atomic Power Station in Pennsylvania, the first nuclear facility to generate electricity in the United States, went on line. (It was taken out of service in 1982.)

In 2011, the last convoy of heavily armored U.S. troops left Iraq, crossing into Kuwait in darkness in the final moments of a nearly nine-year war.

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(USPS 059-200)

Evening News est. 1892 • Evening Banner est. 1899 • Consolidated 1929

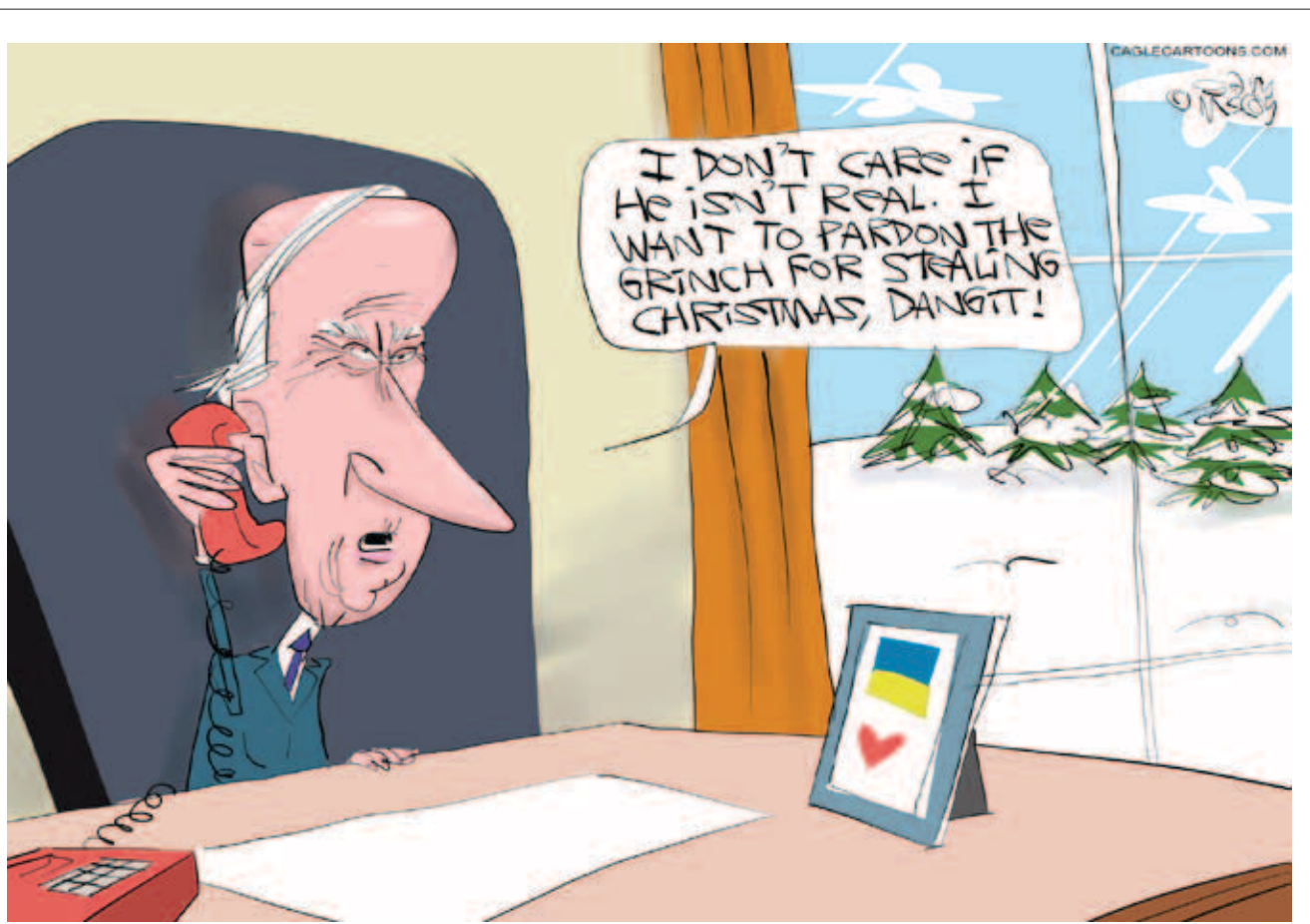
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Periodicals Postage Paid at Bluffton, IN 46714. Published every day except Sundays and principal holidays at 125 N. Johnson St., Bluffton IN 46714, Post Office Box 436

Holly Gaskill, Editor
Mark Miller, Opinion Page Editor

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



The unpardonable transition

The soon-to-expire Biden administration is behaving as if an invading foreign power is about to take over and the house must be burned down to keep the "invaders" from succeeding.

In the past few weeks, the cynicism meter has ticked up several notches because of the decisions made by the outgoing president and others in his administration. First came the pardons of Hunter Biden, and then roughly 1,500 others, including a former Pennsylvania judge who used his private jail system to incarcerate juveniles, pocketing the profits. Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro (D) ripped the pardon, saying Biden got it "absolutely wrong" in what has been called a "kids for cash" scandal.

Among the other questionable pardons and clemencies was one Biden issued for Rita Crundwell, the former comptroller of Dixon, Illinois. Crundwell was convicted in 2013 and sentenced to nearly 20 years in prison for stealing over two decades almost \$54 million from the town of 15,000 people. It is said to have been the largest municipal fraud in U.S. history. Crundwell, now 71, admitted to embezzling from the city, and using the stolen funds to support a lavish lifestyle. According to WTTW, "Officials recovered only \$40 million of the stolen city money from court settlements, the work of auditors and proceeds from the liquidation of Crundwell's assets."

Biden has been engaging in a fire sale of steel barriers ordered during the previous Trump administration to build a wall and secure the southern border. These were materials paid for with taxpayer money. It is part of what appears to be a cynical plan to frustrate the incoming Trump team and make their border-control job more difficult. I don't recall a transition like this in our history.

Then came the drones. The administration claims they are not from U.S. adversaries and pose no threat to public safety. They have also claimed to know nothing about them. If they know nothing, how can they assert they are not from foreign entities and will not harm people?

The drones have been seen for weeks over New Jersey and New York and have lately been spotted over



Cal Thomas

California and Nevada. A woman called into a D.C. talk show and said she and her daughter had seen 30 drones flying over Southern Maryland. Ex-Maryland Republican Governor Larry Hogan has posted pictures of what he says are drones flying over his home in the D.C. suburbs. With no credible information coming from the Biden administration, conspiracy theorists are in full swing, along with accusations of a cover-up.

While New York City Mayor Eric Adams (D) says he will cooperate with the incoming Trump administration in removing migrants in the country illegally, even from his "sanctuary city," other Democrat mayors

and governors are promising to resist deporting even those who have committed crimes and to "Trump-proof" their cities and states. Incoming "border czar" Tom Homan has promised to send teams of agents into resisting cities and states controlled by Democrat politicians and remove migrants. An October Fox News poll indicates they have the support of an overwhelming majority of Americans.

According to the poll of registered voters, support for deportation has increased dramatically since 2015. "Among nonwhite voters, 57 percent now support mass deportations, while only 33 percent said they did in 2015. Additionally, 91 percent of Republicans now say they support deportations — a 21-point increase since 2015. Rural voters' support has risen by 20 points, urban voters by 19 points, and men's support increased by 16." Even Democrat support for deportations has increased to 42 percent from 34 percent in 2015.

It doesn't appear to matter to the Biden administration, which has five weeks to go. They are behaving as if Vice President Kamala Harris, not Trump, won the election and voters can be ignored.

The second Trump administration will have a lot of cleaning up to do. If their promised policies are shown to work, look for public approval to remain high as they and a GOP congressional majority seek to reverse the damage caused by the Biden administration.

tcaditors@tribpub.com

Fan club for suspected shooter is a symptom of burn-it-all-down populism

Robin Hood. Folk Hero. Hot-tie.

Glorification of Luigi Mangione, the man accused of gunning down UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson this month, has been chilling. Sympathy for Mangione's reported aims has come not only from anonymous online hordes, but also supposedly serious public figures, including at least two federal lawmakers.

This is an escalation of an existing political trend: public bloodlust for destruction and retribution. Americans are rejecting leaders who propose solutions for their problems in favor of antiheroes who want to burn everything down — figuratively or literally.

Americans are furious at not only the health-care system but also all of corporate America. Much of their resentment is understandable. U.S. health care has long been expensive, even for those with insurance, and health outcomes are mediocre relative to our costs. Meanwhile, other major expenses, such as housing, have grown oppressively high.

Politicians used to promise to address these kinds of problems with policies. They often disagreed on the exact mechanism, but the goal was always amending laws and regulations to fix things.

But in recent years, legislative gridlock and rage-baiting political rhetoric have made voters more impatient with this approach. The system is rigged against you, populists preach, so forget trying to fix that system. Instead, let's blow it all up and punish whoever rigged it in the first place.

Take, for example, Donald Trump, whose incoming administration is preparing mass purges of the "deep state" and prosecutions of the president-elect's political enemies. His picks to run the FBI and IRS, among others, have pledged to destroy the institutions they would lead. Trump's transition team is reportedly investigating ways to demolish even basic government functions, such as bank-deposit insurance.



Catherine Rampell

But this is not solely a right-wing tactic. Populists on the left have also shifted away from pedantic, white-paper-based policymaking toward more "rigged system" rhetoric, though their scapegoats are usually C-suite boogymen.

High housing prices, they allege, are driven by a few evil "corporate" investors, not insufficient housing supply and zoning restrictions, complex problems that require complex solutions. High gas prices are likewise the fault of "profiteering" oil corporations, not supply disruptions or producers' wariness from a recent market crash. Expensive health care is the fault of a few covetous insurance villains rather than a system that encourages administrative waste and enables providers to charge the highest prices in the world.

Do all these corporate actors always behave well? Obviously not. But they're mostly responding to incentives that markets have set for them. Instead of realigning those incentives, the populist approach emphasizes retribution against perceived villainy — punishing companies for making "excessive" profits, for instance.

Bean-counting, green-visored policymaking is boring and tedious. It's faster — and definitely more cathartic — to submit to that primal urge for vengeance.

Which brings me to the chilling exaltation of Mangione. The suspected shooter's appeal is not unlike that of politicians who pledge to rain fire on the system on behalf of the people. Until now, that rhetoric had been mostly metaphorical. I fear we're turning a corner after which voters might come to expect, and celebrate, literal violence against people they believe are conspiring against them.

For instance, Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Massachusetts), the erstwhile "I have a plan for that" technocrat, expressed sympathy for Mangione's brutal answer to the health system's failures. "The visceral response from peo-

ple across this country who feel cheated, ripped off and threatened by the vile practices of their insurance companies should be a warning to everyone in the health-care system," she said. "Violence is never the answer, but people can be pushed only so far." (Warren later walked back her remarks.)

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-New York) also came awfully close to condoning vigilantism: "This is not to say that an act of violence is justified, but I think for anyone who is confused or shocked or appalled, they need to understand that people interpret and feel and experience denied claims as an act of violence against them." Tim Wu, a former adviser to the Biden administration, posted (and deleted) similar comments on social media.

Here's the thing about indulging this annihilative reflex to infuriating social problems: Besides the obvious moral odiousness, it doesn't fix the problems.

Murdering health-care executives won't help more Americans get care. Purging the FBI won't reduce crime. Jailing political enemies won't lower egg prices.

It's easier to break something than to build it. But to solve a problem, something eventually needs to be built. That part is boring, hard and, lately, not well-appreciated by the public.

If you need health-care heroes to valorize, look to those who help, fight and build: Legal-aid attorneys who represent sick people denied health coverage; nurses and doctors at community health centers; clinicians who blow whistles on environmental threats to their patients; social workers who connect low-income families with services.

And yes, politicians who've worked to help Americans access care — by expanding public health insurance, protecting those with preexisting conditions, reducing premiums and out-of-pocket costs, and requiring insurers to pay out claims. These achievements are not glamorous or telegraphic. But they help people, and that's the work voters should reward.

Catherine Rampell is a columnist for The Washington Post. Follow her on X: @crampell

Ah! The Christmas letter (from twenty years ago)

I began to write post-Christmas letters sometime in the mid-nineties and continued for about ten years. I ran across some recently and thought this might be an appropriate season to print one I wrote twenty years ago this Christmas.



Ken Ballinger

December 30, 2004
So, I'm stumbling through copious amounts of wrapping paper storm residue from the Christmas morning ritual on my crutches (knee replacement surgery 12/05/04... Yeah, thanks for asking. I'm doin' OK, but just OK. You know, with the terrible pain and all...) mining the sea of bright colors and ribbon for endangered gifts, you know, the envelopes of cash, checks, and gift cards that quite accidentally find their way to the landfill, when my left crutch finds the top side of a slickened gift tag lovingly written, that said, "To My Lov-

ing Husband. May Your Recovery Be Swift." Signed, "All My Love, Donna." In an uncontrollable split second, my crutch slid straight out atop this providential love note with my full body weight following at warp speed. I clutched desperately at air on my way down. So sudden was my fall that the expletives all came after impact. It happened that quickly. I had struck my new knee and old head on the hardwood floor with an unbroken fall. Clutching both knee and head, I uttered a protracted and deafening guttural moan appropriate for such occasions. Donna was quickly on her knees at my side. She tenderly held my head in both hands, our faces inches apart, mixing breaths of fear and pain, and she said, "You think that hurts, you should try having a baby." It really did. It happened just that way.

The striking irony of my near demise over such a loving note has set me to wondering which recovery Donna was referencing. Was it the one in progress, or the one to

Here's the Thing



come? The non-specific nature of her wording calls me to be ever vigilant. She cares for me I'm sure, but I do recall a threatening undertone to her comments on my lack of progress on the "job list" I was to accomplish before Christmas. Speaking of irony, is it not just too rich that Donna's worst experiences with pain have produced our most sublime sources of pleasure. Of course, I speak of the children. Although each is incredibly accomplished, I will attempt, for the sake of the reader, and to reduce attendant nausea in the face of a boastful parent, to understate both the station and accomplishments of each:

(The extended part about the kids I am leaving out, as I'm sure you, the reader, do not have that kind of time. Anyway, although they were hilariously written, my words were often acknowledged with only eyerolls from the precious subjects they are. I am pretty sure they did not want others to know I was their father. I will limit

identifying them with this simple listing name and where they were in 2004.)

- Adam, 25, Wollongong Australia
- Natalie 23, Chicago, Illinois
- David 21, Indiana University, Bloomington
- Audrey, 18, Saint Marys College, South Bend
- Kevin, 16, Bluffton High School

Now, if I could speak privately for just a moment with those fathers/men who have made it thus far in this mind-numbing document. Please, mothers/women I would ask that on your honor, you read no further in this paragraph. Guys, you know how we are always called upon to be pillars of strength and how we dare not complain due to the fact we cannot birth a child, a task we would have gladly taken on, God willing, I want you to know that my knee hurts like the devil. I wake many a night in the throes of a nightmare where I am unable to walk 18 holes of golf. I wake in a cold sweat with visions of being confined to riding in a golf cart with Donna as the driver, and yes, she is giving me swing advice. Worse

yet, she has clubs and is playing too. I would appreciate any words of encouragement or support you might muster, as I have no one here with whom I might share these unpleasant visions. Pass the pain medication. Please!

Although I have taken license with the truth in parts of this letter, what follows is undeniable. We are fortunate as a family in more ways than can be counted, if for no other reason than the grace of God. We are especially blessed to count you among family and friends who mean a great deal to us. Your unconditional love and support are the underpinnings of our family. Here's hoping we see you soon.

Peace,
The Ballingers
Here's The Thing: Merry Christmas!

ken.ballinger@yahoo.com

Editor's Note: This is one of a series of articles and opinions written by a group of retired and current teachers — Ken Ballinger, Billy Kreigh, Kathy Schwartz, and Anna Spalding. Their intent is to spur discussions at the dinner table and elsewhere. You may also voice your thoughts and reactions via The News-Banner's letters to editor.

Parlor City Christmas at the Wells County Public Library



The Musiclectics sang a selection of Christmas music including their popular "Come See What's Happening in the Barn." Left to right are Tank Lowe, Curt Alspaugh, Ralph Tuttle, Chelsea Smith and Stephanaie Rinkenberger. (Photos by Barbara Barbieri)



After playing piano selections and singing holiday tunes at the library Saturday morning Jeanette Lundeen's students became a chorus for "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" and included Jonah Bultemeier, Amelia Abbott, Makayla Berkey, Bennett Karns, Elias Nussbaum and Halleigh Valenti.



Frosty the Snowman greeted visitors in the Wells County Public Library during Parlor City Christmas as he wandered through the library.



Members of the Optimist Club provided candy treats and coloring books for young visitors during the Goodie Walk at the Wells County Public Library.



Susie Wood, center of Suzie Cues Studio posed with two of her students, Aubrianna Kisor, at left, and Pearson Klophenstein.

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Thursday, December 19th 6:20pm
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Laura Roberts
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Kathy Peeper
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Blake Poindexter
Wells Co. Community Corrections Dept.

Dr. Brandon Huggins, Sahara, Lynn, Kathy, Erin, Ryan
Wells Co. Health Dept.

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

Difficulty: ★★★

12/18

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Public Sale Calendar

BIDDING ENDS DECEMBER 21 - Bidding starts closing at 1 p.m. - Private collection, seller. 20 Marolf Ct., Fremont. Collection of exotic taxidermy mounts (over 150), zebra & bear skins, 100's of antlers, fully restored antique boat motors, bow & arrows, gun cases, hunting & camping equipment, vintage fishing lures, high-end art work, antiques & collectibles, watches & fine jewelry, power & hand tools, storage cabinets, household, vintage nautical items, more. Preview Dec. 18, 4-6 p.m. Sale managers Pat Carter, 260-273-8294, Brandon Steffen, 260-710-5684, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006.

DECEMBER 22-DECEMBER 31 - Bidding starts closing at 2 p.m. - Estate of Richard Gerken and others, sellers. "Outstanding year end auction." Very high quality art deco, Liadro collection art, mid century modern and Art Nouveau home furnishings, International Harvester collection, 2011 Platinum Ford F150 in pristine condition, high quality antiques, 3,500 record albums, vintage Schwinn bicycles, lawn mower, tools, advertising memorabilia, Coca Cola collection, antique gas pump, country primitives, military patches & pins, and more. Open house Dec. 26 and Dec. 30 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 102 S. Jefferson St., Ossian, IN. Sale manager Rod Fetters, 260-557-8451, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006.

DECEMBER 29-JANUARY 5 - Bidding starts closing at 2 p.m. - Estate of Eldrid Tinkel, seller. Large antique and collectible auction. Country primitives, early metal toys including vintage tractors, farm implements, trucks, boats, more, antique furniture, cast iron collection, antique brass cash register, antique stoves, large and rare collection of vintage

graniteware, Fenton, Marion advertising memorabilia, vintage beer signs, crocks, long guns, coins, more. Open house Dec. 29, 2-4 p.m., Jan. 4, 10 a.m.-noon, 1910 N Meridian St., Marion. Sale manager Brandon Steffen, 260-710-5684, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, www.steffengrp.com, 260-824-3006.

BIDDING OPEN AND STARTS CLOSING JANUARY 2 at 10 a.m. - (Online Only) - MD Landscaping LLC, owner. Over 170+ Lots. John Deere 5525 W/ Belly Blade, Bobcat Dozer 96" Blade, 2016 International 4300 Box Truck, 2003 Wells Cargo Enclosed/Office Trailer, 84" 3-Point Cultivator, 2008 Ford F-350 W/ Boss Snow Plow, 2007 Jeep Wrangler w/J Truck Bed, Volvo ECR88 Excavator Kawasaki 65TMVB Wheel Loader, Kubota SCL 1000 Mini Skid Steer, Skid Loader Attachments, Hardscape Stone, Walnut Slabs, Assorted Lawn Tools, Power Tools and much more. 3883 US HWY 33 Decatur IN, 46733. *Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC*, 260-724-7402, kjauction.com.

BIDDING ENDS JANUARY 7 at 10 a.m. - (Online Only) - Wayne Metals LLC Machining Division, owner. Offering over 200+ Lots. Roskelley 1440 Lathe, 2007 Haas SL-40T CNC Turning Lathe, Hardinge CHNCI Precision CNC Machine, Delta Floor Drill Press, Omni Turn GT-75 CNC Lathe, Targa Surface Grinder, Acer Milling Machine W/ Phase-2 3 Jaw Chuck, Abex Denison Stamp Machine, OUYA RE-1225H Drilling & Tapping Radial Arm Drill, Cincinnati Milacron Hawk 150 A2100 CNC Lathe, Welders, Tooling Cabinets, Large Selection of pallet racking, Power & Hand Tools and much more. 9312 Avionics Drive, Fort Wayne IN 46809. *Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC*, kjauction.com, 260-724-7402.

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

Tuesday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY
Cash 5 — 03-08-09-17-29

Cash4Life — 04-06-17-43-47, Cash Ball: 04

Quick Draw Midday — 02-06-10-14-21-23-29-30-31-32-41-50-52-54-55-60-62-65-78, BE: 12

Daily Three-Midday — 04-03-05, SB: 09

Daily Three-Evening — 03-08-03, SB: 06

Daily Four-Midday — 09-04-02-07, SB: 09

Daily Four-Evening — 08-02-02-09, SB: 06

Quick Draw Evening — 01-05-09-14-17-23-26-31-32-44-47-50-55-57-61-64-65-71-78-79, BE: 26

Hoosier Lotto — Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$32.3 million

MEGA MILLIONS — 56-66-67-68-69; Mega Ball: 18; Megaplier: 4X.

POWERBALL — Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$69 million

Public Notice

NOTICE OF UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION
IN THE WELLS CIRCUIT COURT OF WELLS COUNTY, INDIANA
DOCKET NO. 90C01-2411-EU-000047
Notice is hereby given that BOBBIE J. KERSHNER was on the 2nd day of December, 2024, appointed personal representative of the estate of LEE E. KERSHNER, deceased, who died on the 15th day of September, 2024, and was authorized to administer his estate without Court supervision.

All persons who have claims against this estate, whether or not now due, must file those claims in the office of the Clerk of the Wells Circuit Court within three (3) months after the date of the first publication of this notice, or within nine (9) months after the decedent's death, whichever is earlier, or those claims will be forever barred.
Dated at Bluffton, Indiana, this 2nd day of December, 2024.
Beth Davis
Clerk, Wells Circuit Court
Matthew P. Hayes
Attorney for Personal Representative
Attorney No. 32002-02
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Knights get fast start, hang on to defeat Woodlan girls

By RICK SPRUNGER
WOODBURN — It's a good thing that Norwell scored the first 11 points of the game Tuesday night. Those 11 points represented the Knights' margin of victory in a sluggish 62-51 win at Woodlan.

"I'm happy for the win," said Norwell coach Eric Thornton, choosing his words carefully after it was over, "but I'm disappointed with our inability to do what we wanted and to play with physicality against (Alyssa) Anderson."

Anderson is a 5'-11" junior forward who scored 33 points on 15-for-18 shooting from the field, grabbed 12 rebounds, and pretty much personally brought Woodlan back from the dead.

She missed the first shot she took but then hit 15 in a row, all of them from right around the basket.

"We can't be letting her get that stuff at the rim," continued Thornton. "We needed to front her; we needed to have a body on her at all times; we needed to defend her before she got the ball, not after. And we just didn't."

Norwell was never actually in any danger of losing

the game, thanks to its early breakout.

But things got mighty uncomfortable down the stretch after Woodlan chopped what had been an 18-point deficit all the way down to six and got the ball back.

Norwell ran up that early 11-0 advantage that turned out to be money in the bank.

Vanessa Rosswurm scored 15 of her team-high 27 points in the first quarter, including seven of her team's first 11.

She hit the first six shots she took, three of them three-pointers, as Norwell surged to a 22-9 lead at the first stop.

The lead peaked at 33-15 on Rosswurm's five-footer in the lane with just over five minutes remaining in the first half, and it swelled to 17 again at 42-25 on Ashley Waldman's drive through the lane and Rosswurm's pull-up 10-footer wrapped around a Woodlan turnover in the first 50 seconds of the third quarter.

But after that, Woodlan started chipping away.

"You could sense it starting to get away from us in the second quarter already," observed Thornton. "We were stuck on 38 for what

seemed like forever."

The last 3:09 of the first half, to be exact, during which time Norwell missed its last six shots of the second quarter.

Right in the middle of the Woodlan rally was Anderson, who scored 12 points in the second quarter and 10 more in the third as the Warriors cut their deficit down to 10 at 51-41 at the third quarter break and then down to 51-44 when Reagan Wiedenhofer opened the fourth period with a three-pointer.

When Anderson converted a three-point play underneath with 3:38 to play, the Norwell lead was down to a skinny 55-49.

And Woodlan got the ball right back when a wild Norwell pass sailed out of bounds behind an intended receiver who had broken in the opposite direction.

But Rosswurm stepped in front of a Warrior pass, and Macie Saalfrank delivered the kill shot with a three-pointer from the right wing that made it 58-49 with 2:53 remaining.

"That was a huge shot," praised her coach. "She shot that ball with a lot of confidence."

The shot also gave her a career-high 20 points on

8-for-16 shooting and a couple of free throws.

After hitting 15 of its first 24 shots, Norwell managed to connect on just nine of its last 30 and finished 24-for-54 for a .444 shooting percentage compared to Woodlan's 21-for-52 for .404.

The Knights also forced 21 Woodlan turnovers while committing just 10 themselves.

Norwell won the junior varsity contest, 64-28.

Mia Kurtz scored 21 points and Eden Nash 14 to lead the Knights.

sports@news-banner.com

NORWELL 62, WOODLAN 51
NORWELL (8-4): Addie Norris 1-6 0-0 2, Ashley Waldman 2-6 0-0 5, Alivia Green 1-1 0-0 2, Macie Saalfrank 8-16 2-2 20, Vanessa Rosswurm 10-17 4-6 27, Jada Dale 2-6 0-0 5, Isabella Swineford 0-1 1-2 1, Ryland Graft 0-1 0-0 0, Mekynzi Beck 0-0 0-0 0, Haley Williamson 0-0 0-0 0. **TOTAL:** 24-54 7-10 62.
WOODLAN (5-5): Reagan Wiedenhofer 0-7 2-3 2, Alyssa Anderson 15-18 3-3 33, Brooke Kneubuhler 5-16 0-0 13, Emma McDaniel 0-1 0-0 0, McKenna Goble 1-8 0-0 3, Makenna Smith 0-1 0-0 0, Layla Hodson 0-1 0-0 0. **TOTAL:** 21-52 5-6 51.
Norwell 22 16 13 11 -62
Woodlan 9 16 16 10 -51
 Three-point shooting: Norwell 7-19 (Norris 0-1, Waldman 1-4, Saalfrank 2-7, Rosswurm 3-5, Dale 1-2), Woodlan 4-25 (Wiedenhofer 0-4, Kneubuhler 3-11, McDaniel 0-1, Goble 1-7, Smith 0-1, Hodson 0-1). Rebounds: Norwell 29 (Rosswurm 5), Woodlan 33 (Anderson 12, Smith 6). Turnovers: Norwell 10, Woodlan 21. Personal fouls: Norwell 12, Woodlan 15. Fouled Out: Smith. Technical fouls: None. Junior Varsity: Norwell 64, Woodlan 28.

Pool dominators

Knights take out two Fort Wayne teams; Tigers crush Elwood, Frankton

Norwell High School's swim teams dominated two Fort Wayne teams in a three-way dual meet Tuesday night. The men's team defeated Fort Wayne Wayne by a 116-31 score and Fort Wayne Snider 104-73. Meanwhile, the ladies defeated the Wayne team 116-41 and Snider by a 110-62 tally.

The squads were led by their relay teams, which swept those six races.

In the girls 200-yard freestyle relay, the team of Molly Threewits, Ryleigh Huffman, Kerrigan Melcher and Cassie Coyne took first place with a 1:57.62 time. The Knights also won the boys' 200-yard freestyle relay with a 1:46.65 mark. This foursome included Evan Swallow, Parker McCartney, Braden Hoag and Ethan Williamson.

The Knights also dominated in the 400-yard freestyle relays, with the boys squad of Williamson, Gage Reinhard, Kale Meredith and Ryan Heyerly posting a winning time of 3:49.94. Melcher, Cyne, Annalise Cornett and Marles Meredith won the girls race in 4:12.49.

Rilynn Ervin, Cornett, Emerson Meredith and Marlee Meredith won the 200-yard medley relay with a 2:05.03 time. Braden Hoag, Colten Strunk, Kale Meredith and Heyerly won the boys version in 1:52.43.

In individual races: Annalise Cornett won the girls 100-yard butterfly, 1:08.40; Colten Strunk won the boys 100-yard butterfly, 1:00.50; Ryan Heyerly won the boys 100-yard freestyle, 52.60; Cassie Coyne won the girls 500-yard freestyle, 6:03.10 and the girls 50-yard freestyle, 27.75; Karrison Melcher won the girls 200-yard freestyle, 2:21.88; Evan Swallow won the boys 200-yard freestyle, 2:07.35; Marlee Meredith won the girls 200-yard IM, 2:32.44; Gage Reinhard won the boys 50-yard freestyle, 25.56; Rilynn Ervin won the girls 100-yard backstroke, 1:11.72; and Braden Hoag won the boys 100-yard backstroke, 1:09.87.

The Bluffton boys swimming and diving team got a pair of dominating wins over Elwood and Frankton high schools Tuesday night. The Tigers defeated Elwood 145-27 and Frankton, 145-6.

Every boy in the meet scored points for the second time this season. Top finishers included: Diving, Blake Reinhard; Medley relay, Clay Brubaker, Anthony Hartman, Grant Reifsteck, and Jackson Meyer; 200 yard freestyle, Griffin Linderwell; 200 yard IM, Isaac Wheeler; 50 yard freestyle, Lincoln Rodgers; 100 yard butterfly, Braden Lemler; 100 yard freestyle, Rhett Gerber; 400 yard freestyle, Jackson Meyer; 200 yard freestyle relay, Wes Frettinger, Athan King, Lincoln Rodgers, and Isaac Wheeler; 100 yard backstroke, Rhett Gerber; 400 yard freestyle relay, Rhett Gerber, Griffin Linderwell, Blake Reinhard, and Isaac Wheeler.

Balanced scoring helps Lady Tigers get 10th straight win

By ANDREW FEEBACK
WABASH — The Bluffton Lady Tigers picked up their 12th win in 13 tries Tuesday night with a 69-33 road win over the Southwood Lady Knights.

They used a strong first quarter to jump out to an early double-digit lead, then followed it with a dominant second quarter to take control.

Bluffton forced Southwood into 21 turnovers, with 11 of those coming in the second frame where they outscored the Knights 22-3.

Coach Doug Curtis credited the defense his team played, named "Tiger," for generating the opposing miscues.

"In Tiger, we got a lot of turnovers and run-outs," he said. "They were averaging 22 turnovers coming into this game, so we were obviously trying to get out on the break and create some of those turnovers."

Bluffton had balanced scoring overall, with Isabella Stout and Khloe Dick both scoring 16 points. Konley Ault added 13, Tressa Renner had 10 and Maryn Schriber tallied eight.

Early three-pointers from Stout and Ault helped the Tigers jump out to a 13-2 lead. Bluffton led 24-10 when the first quarter ended, and the route was on after they scored 13 straight to begin the second.

That run featured four straight buckets from Stout, who scored all 16 of her points in the first half to help the Tigers take a 46-13 halftime lead.

While the game's outcome was never really in doubt, Curtis was a little unhappy with one stretch early in the second half, when Southwood put together a mini-run that "cut" Bluffton's 46-13 halftime lead to 53-21 midway through the third.

Southwood was getting a bit too comfortable in its offense and finding more open looks after Bluffton had held the Knights to just five made field goals in the

first half.

"I don't like giving up open shots," Curtis said. "I want to make them work for shots. They had 10 points at the beginning of the game and we were giving up open shots, so we called timeout and did a better job in the second quarter about making them work for shots."

"Then we came out in a different defense in the second half, and again, wide open shots," he continued. "You can't do that against good teams. We could do it tonight and get away with it, but that's mental discipline about being ready to go in the second half with the score what it is. It's not about the game, it's about doing what you're supposed to do, and I thought we weren't ready to go."

The Tigers responded, using a 15-4 run to push the lead over 40 points, and allowing a handful of junior varsity players to get into the game.

Bluffton controlled the boards, out-rebounding Southwood 44-13. Schriber topped the Tigers with 11 rebounds, while Sophie Eisenhut had nine and Madysen Sonnigsen had eight.

Adi Deaton led Southwood (3-7) with 13 points.

Bluffton will head to Adams Central Saturday afternoon with the varsity game beginning around 1:30 p.m.

The Tigers took the junior varsity game 44-16. Kamryn Ault scored 14 points, Grace Fry added 10 and Isla Gibson had eight.



Isabella Stout launches a shot in the lane in the second quarter Tuesday at Southwood. (Photo by Glen Werling)

Three-point Goals: Bluffton 6-17 (Renner 2-4, Stout 2-4, Ault 1-2, Dick 1-5, Funk 0-1, Gibson 0-1), Southwood 6-18 (Deaton 3-5, Ashba 1-3, Collins 1-2, Winer 1-1, Lambert 0-3, Chambers 0-1, Pershing 0-3). Rebounds: Bluffton 44 (Schriber 11, Eisenhut 9, Sonnigsen 8, Stout 6, Renner 4, Konley Ault 2, Kamryn Ault 2, Dick 1, Drayer 1), Southwood 13 (Pershing 3, Winer 3, Collins 2, Ashba 2, Farr 1, Deaton 1, Lambert 1). Turnovers: Bluffton 13, Southwood 21. Fouls: Bluffton 7, Southwood 9. Fouled out: None. Technicals: None. JV: Bluffton 44, Southwood 16.

8th grade Raiders top Woodlan

Southern Wells' eighth grade girls basketball team defeated Woodlan Monday, 25-13. The squad is now 8-2 overall and 4-0 in conference play.

Analyse Roe led the Raiders with 13 points; Amelie Penrod added 6. Lucy Palmer, Kyan Johnson and Leighann Carpenter each tallied two points in the win.

Curt Cignetti named AP Coach of the Year

By MICHAEL MAROT, AP Sports Writer
INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — When Curt Cignetti took the Indiana job last fall, he promised immediate success. It wasn't boastful bluster.

After during the doubters to Google his winning pedigree, the son of a Hall of Fame football coach delivered on his word by leading the Hoosiers to a school-record 11 wins, a top 10 ranking and an improbable first playoff berth that set up a Friday night game at No. 3 Notre Dame.

Cignetti was named The Associated Press Coach of the Year on Tuesday, collecting 30 of 45 votes from AP Top 25 voters. Arizona State coach Kenny Dillingham finished second with eight votes, Oregon coach Dan Lanning received five and SMU coach Rhett Lashlee got two.

"Thank you to The Associated Press for this tremendous team honor," Cignetti said. "Our program has had a great season and we look forward to opening the College Football Playoff against Notre Dame on Friday."

Few thought such a season was possible at Indiana, much less in his first season. Cignetti authored an eight-win turnaround that captivated the nation at a school with the most losses in Football Bowl Subdivision history.

Then again, all the 60-year-old Cignetti does is win.

He's never had a losing record in 14 seasons as a head coach and has a reputation for making quick turnarounds everywhere he goes — Alabama, where he served as Nick Saban's first recruiting coordinator and won a national title, following his father to Indiana University of Pennsylvania or at FCS school Elon and James Madison, where he presided over the most successful transition from the FCS to FBS in NCAA history.

Cignetti won conference coach of the year awards at IUP, Elon, James Madison and now in the Big Ten with Indiana. Cignetti brought most of his coaching staff and 13 players from the Dukes to Indiana and the results were as surprising as they were at any of his previous stops.

Even Notre Dame coach Marcus Freeman took note.

"I didn't know much about him, so I took a minute and Googled him and looked at some of the things he's done in the past at his other places," Freeman said Sunday, a week after the playoff pairings were announced. "He's won everywhere he's been. He's done a great job."

The winner of seventh-seeded Notre Dame (11-1) and 10th-seeded Indiana advances to the quarterfinal round against second-seeded Georgia (11-2, No. 2 AP).

High School Calendar

WEDNESDAY, DEC 18
WRESTLING: Bluffton at Churubusco, 6:30 p.m.
THURSDAY, DEC 19
GIRLS BASKETBALL: Woodlan at Southern Wells, 7:30 p.m.
SWIMMING & DIVING (co-ed): South Side at Bluffton, 5:30 p.m.; South Adams at Norwell, 5:30 p.m.; Woodlan at Southern Wells, 7:30 p.m.
WRESTLING: Southern Wells at Mississinewa, 6 p.m.
FRIDAY, DEC 20
BOYS BASKETBALL: Southern Wells at Bluffton, 7:30 p.m.; Norwell at DeKalb, 7:30 p.m.

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