

# The News - Banner

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## Bridging cultures through language in Wells County

Garcia offers English and Spanish classes at First Presbyterian

**By JONATHAN SNYDER**  
A local Spanish and English class aims to help adults learn about language and culture. The class is taught by Sandy Garcia, an assistant pastor at First Presbyterian Church. Garcia, who

has been teaching language classes for over 20 years, has roots in Argentina and grew up in a Hispanic household. Garcia also taught in a dual-language school, focusing on teaching children both Spanish and English at a young age.

Garcia studying for her master's of divinity from the Christian Theological Seminary and interning at First Presbyterian as part of her course. The idea for the class came from some of the congregation's interest in learning about the

culture. "I just kind of threw it out there one day to the congregation," Garcia said. "(I was) thinking, 'I'm going to get maybe one or two people interested,' but I got like 20 people, even coming from the Lutheran church and just people coming off the street who are

wanting to learn Spanish." In addition to teaching Spanish, Garcia teaches English to Spanish speakers. While the groups are still in the initial stages of learning language, the English group has made trips to the Mexican market downtown Bluffton to give more practical (Continued on Page 2)



Lancaster sings

Lancaster Elementary School students sang Christmas songs Friday afternoon in celebration of the upcoming break. At right, Addie Kelley, left, dances and sings with Kylie Heckber, right. (Photos by Jonathan Snyder)



## Pre-design funds approved for proposed Indiana judicial building

The building has been a topic of discussion for more than 50 years – but plans have never matured

**By CASEY SMITH**  
**Indiana Capital Chronicle**  
Could the yearslong discussion surrounding a new Indiana judicial center finally be coming to fruition?

Proposals to construct a new building to house the state's courts have been tossed around for decades – and was even a topic of controversy in the 1980s – but project plans have never developed enough to gain traction.

Now, state officials want to restart the conversation.

To get the ball rolling, Indiana budget regulators this week approved a \$5 million request for pre-design funds.

Matt Kent, chief financial officer for the Indiana Department of Administration, said those state dollars will be used to reevaluate the size and layout possibilities of a new building. State officials said they do not expect to spend the full appropriation on the study, however.

Whether any final structure plans will be approved is yet to be decided.

"These funds will go towards the programming phase of the building and site pre-design. In this phase, we'll work with a consulting firm to explore the needs and requirements of the entities that would eventually inhabit the building. That work covers a large scope, and includes interviewing and understanding the needs of the stakeholders and future tenants," explained Kent, who spoke before the State Budget Committee on Tuesday.

"It will also include a space utilization plan to determine the needed square footage for each entity and the building as a whole," he continued. "While some of the larger scope answers regarding the size and number of stories of the building will be answered, we'll also begin to answer questions about how the interior of the building will function on a daily basis. How do people move throughout the building? How do they work? What are their IT needs, security needs, etc.?" Once this programming work is

done, we can then start getting a rough estimate on the cost of the building and the scope of how long the project would take."

Years of discussion

Legislation from 1971 first authorized the State Office Building Commission to construct a new judicial building. At the time, lawmakers intended for the building to house the Indiana Supreme Court, Appellate Court, "and other related agencies."

Enthusiasm for the project soon cooled, however, in light of other, more pressing state-funded endeavors.

The proposed judicial building regained traction in the late 1980s, and architectural plans were drawn up for a \$50 million new building. Plans called for an elaborate, five-story limestone and granite structure located just north of the statehouse. Groundbreaking was originally anticipated to take place in 1989.

That space is a surface parking lot used by hundreds of state employees (Continued on Page 3)

## Community College classes for high school students explode in Idaho, Indiana

Popularity of earning early college credits grows in some states as students save money, jump ahead; other states lag

**By PATRICK O'DONNELL**  
**The 74**

Hector Torres wishes he had not waited so long to start college classes

That's not the weighty middle-aged regret of lost dreams. It's the lament of an Indianapolis high school senior who waited until late into his sophomore year – Gasp! – to take advantage of the college classes Indiana offers high schoolers for free or little cost.

Indiana is one of the few states where starting college as a high school sophomore makes you a late bloomer. The state ranks just behind Idaho in leading an early college credit movement, as states increasingly encourage high school students to take college classes, most often at community colleges.

In Idaho and Indiana, high school students make up more than half the students in community college classes, according to a report issued this summer by the Community College Research Center at Columbia University. Iowa and Montana follow, with high schoolers representing more than 40% of community college enrollment, and eight other states comprising more than 30% of enrollment.

On the other end, states such as Rhode Island and Connecticut haven't joined the push, with high schoolers making up just 6% and 10% of community college students, respectively.

Columbia University researched mapped the rates of community college enrollment made up of high school students this August.

Idaho and Indiana leap out with over half of community students still in high school. Map by Community College Research Center at Columbia University.

High school students have long been able to get a head start on college credits, traditionally by taking accelerated Advanced Placement classes and accompanying national Advanced Placement tests that started in the 1950s. Colleges then decide which credits to award based on the test scores. The College Board still offers 39 AP course guidelines and tests each year.

But earning early college credit has become more urgent the last few decades, as college costs have exploded and employers increasingly require study beyond high school. So states have seen dramatic increases in "early college," "dual enrollment" or "dual credit" where high school students take classes on college campuses or high school teachers offer college classes.

Those approaches have allowed the number of high school students earning college credit to more than double since 2011 to 1.5 million a year, according to the Community College Research Center at Columbia University. About 75% are enrolled in community colleges and the rest in four-year schools. Columbia researchers also estimate that more than a third of high schoolers take at least one college class before graduating.

"The pitch to communities and families and students is...get your first year of college out of the way in high school, or get it done in high school," said researcher John (Continued on Page 2)

## Senate passes Social Security benefits boost for many public service retirees

**By STEPHEN GROVES**  
**Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate passed legislation early Saturday to boost Social Security payments for millions of people, pushing a longtime priority for former public employees through Congress in one of its last acts for the year.

The bipartisan bill, which next heads to President Joe Biden, will eliminate longtime reductions to Social Security benefits for nearly 3 million people who receive pensions from work in federal, state and local government, or public service jobs like teachers, firefighters and police officers. Advocates say the Social Security Fairness Act rights a decades-old disparity, though it will also put further strain on Social Security Trust Funds.

The legislation has been decades in the making but the push to pass it came together in the final weeks — and was completed in the final minutes — that lawmakers were in Washington before Congress resets next year. All Senate Democrats, as well as 27

Republicans, voted for the bill, giving it a final tally of 76-20.

"Millions of retired teachers and firefighters and letter carriers and state and local workers have waited decades for this moment. No longer will public retirees see their hard-earned Social Security benefits robbed from them," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

The bill repeals two provisions — the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset — that limit Social Security benefits for certain recipients if they receive retirement payments from other sources such as the public retirement program for a state or local government.

"Social Security is a bedrock of our middle class. It's retirement security that Americans pay into and earn over a lifetime," said Sen. Sherrod Brown, an Ohio Democrat who has pushed for the proposal for years and will leave Congress after losing reelection.

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**Outside**

Chance of rain today and tonight with wind gusts

Today	Tuesday	Wed.
High 39	High 40	High 43
Low 32	Low 34	Low 38

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# Bridging cultures

(Continued from Page 1)  
 tical examples of language while learning about spanish cuisine.  
 “The goal is to get the Spanish speaking people with the English speaking people,” Garcia said. “Getting them together so that they can exchange and practice each other’s new language and learn about each other’s culture.”  
 Garcia’s classes are focused on practical lessons and encouragement. Debbie Elkins, who is learning Spanish, said that Garcia’s class encourages her to try and speak without fear of using an incorrect word or accent. Elkins said that Latino people have been attend-

ing her church and these classes give her the opportunity to reach out and build friendships.  
 “Sandy is just a delightful teacher,” Elkins said. “She’s just a wonderful personality and she’s fun to have as a teacher. It is not frightening ... all the people that come in seem to enjoy each other.”  
 Garcia’s dream is to bridge the two cultures, so that the love of Christ can be easier spread and understood by both sides. Garcia believes that learning about each other’s culture allows people to develop deeper friendships and teach other critical thinking skills.  
 “I want them (her students) to know that they

have been gaining tools to help them make that connection so everybody gets a sense of belonging,” Garcia said. “Our country is global, we get all kinds of products and business from the world ... so we might as well embrace learning a culture and learning a language.”  
 For Garcia, helping people learn English is a point of pride. Garcia said that English is often a necessity for Latino people in the U.S., and she wants to help people grasp the cultural differences so they can take part in churches or other gatherings. Garcia also hopes to teach Latinos about various American situations and interactions.

“Cognitively, if I’m learning something because I’m scared and I need to survive, it’s a little harder for me to learn than somebody who’s just ... taking Spanish because it’s fun,” Garcia said. “Churches are shrinking and they (Latinos) are out there and they want to come, they want to come and be comfortable.”  
 Currently, Spanish classes are available on Wednesdays at 11 a.m., with English classes on Saturday at 10 a.m. Garcia hopes to add an evening class in the future, to give everybody more opportunity to work in the morning and learn in the evening.  
 jonathan@news-banner.com

# Community College classes

(Continued from Page 1)  
 Fink. “That’s a very compelling affordability pitch to students and families and obviously that’s an important issue on everybody’s mind.”  
 In a state as aggressive as Indiana, it’s normal for students like Torres, a student at I Believe Circle City High School, to be taking quantitative reasoning at Ivy Tech Community College this fall after taking psychology and introduction to criminology as a junior.  
 “I was kind of just in trouble all the time,” Torres said of himself as a freshman. “I didn’t really care about school stuff. It wasn’t until last year where I started actually doing my work and decided to take dual enrollment seriously.”  
 “Now I’m kind of trying to rush things,” said Torres, who wants to earn a degree before starting a career as a police officer. “I kind of wish I started early when they had given me the opportunity.”  
 Fink and other Columbia researchers reported in October that students taking college classes early are more likely to enroll in college right after high school and are more likely to earn technical certificates, associates and bachelors degrees.  
 This story first appeared at The 74, a nonprofit news site covering education. Sign up for free newsletters from The 74 to get more like this in your inbox.  
 Taking classes directly through a college allows students to receive credits automatically, which is often more attractive to students than AP classes that rely on test scores to turn into credits, said Julie Edmunds, director of the Early College Resource Center at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro.  
 “When all the college credit relies on passing a single exam on a single day, there are students who aren’t going to be successful in that kind of environment, and the proportion of AP takers that actually receive credit is much lower,” Edmunds said.  
 Other factors make taking college classes attractive to some students, including letting students intimidated by college test it out or colleges offering classes like advanced physics or foreign



Layla Kpotufe, a senior at I Believe Circle City High School in Indianapolis, shows off a science classroom at Ivy Tech Community College where she has taken classes pursuing her interest in medicine. Kpotufe already has an associates degree from Ivy Tech, a school filled with high school students starting college early. (Photo by Patrick O’Donnell)

languages that their high schools can’t provide.  
 Still, though almost all states allow high schoolers to take college classes, there’s no consensus on how much to encourage and how to pay for it. A 2022 report by the Education Commission of the States found a wide variation in the training teachers need to teach college classes, which students can take them and who pays for them.  
 Twenty-six states required high school students to meet a college’s entrance requirements first, the study found, while others do not. Nineteen states required students to have a recommendation from a school official, while others require students to pass tests or just let students decide on their own.  
 States also differ on which community college classes automatically count toward four-year degrees.  
 And states are divided on who pays for early credits, the study found, with states like Alabama and South Carolina requiring high school students to pay full tuition rates and states like Minnesota, Mississippi, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio and Washington, D.C. covering the entire cost of the classes.  
 The Idaho State Board of Education attributes its high rate of community college enrollment on the state’s Advanced Opportunities program, which gives students up to \$4,625 to pay for college classes.  
 And there are big differences too between students who just enroll in some college classes and those in so-called “early college high schools,” where college credit is prioritized and

schools offer more specialized counseling and specific courses to help students succeed.  
 “If you’re expanding access to college, you can’t just throw everybody in college courses without giving them some level of support,” Edmunds said.  
 In Indiana, where officials boast of being a national leader in early credits, having one single community college, Ivy Tech, with 45 campuses around the state under one umbrella, makes coordinating between schools easier.  
 The state also made course credits more valuable starting in 2013 by creating the Indiana College Core, a collection of 30 college credits – some math, some English, some science, some social studies – guaranteed to transfer to any public institution in the state. That lets students know classes they take in high school will count at any public, and some private, school they choose.  
 The state also encourages high schools to offer classes in that core to students, so that some will complete it by graduation.  
 Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education Chris Lowery said high schools slowly started making these classes available, with 84 of about 500 offering it three years ago. He said he and state education superintendent Katie Jenner, have pressed other schools to add it, growing that number to 275.  
 That often means having teachers like Brooklyn Raines, an English teacher at Crispus Attucks High School in Indianapolis, teach Ivy Tech classes at the school. Though an employ-

ee of Indianapolis Public Schools, Raines had to apply to Ivy Tech as an instructor, attend early college training over the summer and have her curriculum for Introduction to Creative Writing approved by the community college’s English department.  
 She now teaches that class at Crispus Attucks three days a week on behalf of Ivy Tech. Though there can be worries that college level work is too much for high school students who are younger and haven’t learned as much as older students, Raines said her students are capable.  
 “Despite the stigma that they aren’t traditional college students, so they can’t retain the information, or they can’t keep up with the information, they prove time and time and again that they can,” Raines said.  
 Other times, students take Ivy Tech classes online. That’s how Layla Kpotufe, a fellow senior at the same high school as Torres, took a world politics class last year that has her debating whether to continue on a political science path or follow a previous interest in neuroscience.  
 Kpotufe, who has already earned an associates degree in general studies, said the Ivy Tech classes could cut her costs for her bachelors degree nearly in half.  
 “It would definitely take a lot of money off,” she said. “That’s why I think Ivy Tech is a really good opportunity for people, especially if you want to stay in state.”

# Weather

Monday, December 23, 2024  
 (24-hour observations at 11:36 p.m. Sunday at the Fort Wayne International Airport)  
**High:** 16; **Low:** 30; **Precipitation:** None  
**Wabash River Level** (at the Main Street bridge): 1.33 feet at 9:45 p.m. Sunday

## Wells County forecast

**Today:** A 50% chance of rain after 1 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 39. South wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.  
**Tonight:** A 40% chance of rain before 1 a.m. Cloudy, with a low around 32. Southwest wind 5 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.  
**Tuesday:** Mostly cloudy, with a high near 40. Calm wind.  
**Tuesday Night:** A 40% chance of rain, mainly after 1 a.m. Cloudy, with a low around 34. Calm wind.  
**Christmas Day:** A 40% chance of rain. Cloudy, with a high near 43.  
**Wednesday Night:** A 30% chance of rain before 1 a.m. Cloudy, with a low around 38.  
**Thursday:** Mostly cloudy, with a high near 49.  
**Thursday Night:** A 20% chance of rain after 1 a.m. Cloudy, with a low around 42.  
**Friday:** A 40% chance of rain. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 54.  
**Friday Night:** A 40% chance of rain. Cloudy, with a low around 46.  
**Saturday:** A 40% chance of rain. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 55.  
**Saturday Night:** A chance of rain. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 45.  
**Sunday:** A chance of rain. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 53.

# Social Security

(Continued from Page 1)  
 He added that the current restrictions make “no sense. These workers serve the public. They protect our communities. They teach our kids. They pay into Social Security just like everyone else.”  
 People who currently have reductions in their Social Security benefits under the exceptions would soon see a boost in their monthly payments. But those increased payments would also add an estimated \$195 billion to federal deficits over 10 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office.  
 Social Security Trust Funds were already estimated to be unable to pay out full benefits beginning in 2035, and the change will hasten the program’s insolvency date by about half a year. A typical dual-income couple retiring in 2033 would see an additional \$25,000 lifetime reduction in their benefits, according to the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.  
 Many of the bill’s opponents acknowledged that the current reductions are not fair to public service retirees, but said they could not support the bill when the entire program faces challenges.  
 “We caved to the pressure of the moment instead of doing this on a sustainable basis,” said Sen. Thom Tillis, a North Carolina Republican who opposed the bill.  
 The policy changes will also heap more work on the Social Security Administration when the agency is already at its lowest staffing level in 50 years. The agency currently has a staff of about 56,400 — the lowest level since 1972, according to an agency spokesperson — even as it serves more people than ever. The stopgap government funding bill that also passed early Saturday did not include increased funding for the agency, which is currently in a hiring freeze.  
 Still, Republican supporters of the bill said there was a rare opportunity to address what they described as an unfair section of federal law that hurts public service retirees.  
 “They have earned these benefits. This is an unfair, inequitable penalty,” said Sen. Susan Collins, a Maine Republican.  
 GOP supporters of the bill also said they would return to work on larger fixes to Social Security. President-elect Donald Trump, however, has said he will not touch the benefits, even as his administration looks to make deep budget cuts elsewhere.

<p><i>The</i>  <b>HIDEAWAY</b>                  BEER &amp; BOURBON</p> <p>THURSDAY -                  Dollar Off Drinks                  (Excludes Pop)</p> <p>WEDNESDAY - KARAOKE                  FRI. &amp; SAT. - Live Music</p> <p>Follow us on  for our Events.                  123 S JOHNSON ST. • 824-0455</p>	<p>Friday &amp; Saturday Bands  <b>Saturday Night Dec. 28th</b>                  Starts 8 pm - Lee Lewis Experience</p>
	<p>Weekly Drink Specials and Events!  <b>Sundays Biscuits &amp; Gravy</b>                  9am - until GONE!</p>

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 5:30 PM CHRISTMAS CAROLS  
 6:00 PM VIGIL MASS

**CHRISTMAS DAY**  
 DECEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup>  
 12:00 AM MIDNIGHT MASS  
 9:00 AM MASS

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**Merry Christmas to All!**

From the County Officials and Employees of the  
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Recorder
- Beth Davis**  
Clerk
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- Jarrold Hahn**  
Surveyor
- Laura Roberts**  
Assessor
- Kathy Peeper**  
Treasurer
- Blake Poindexter**  
Wells Co. Community Corrections Dept.
- Dr. Brandon Huggins, Sahara, Lynn, Kathy, Erin, Ryan**  
Wells Co. Health Dept.

OBITUARIES

Barbara J. Bowman, 86

Barbara J. Bowman, 86, of Bluffton, passed away on Sunday evening, Dec. 22, 2024, at her daughter's home in Decatur. Funeral arrangements are pending with the Lemler family of Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton.

# Package store bidding dominates alcohol permit auction

By WHITNEY DOWNARD  
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Forty-two hopefuls turned out for the Indiana Alcohol and Tobacco Commission's auction, out-bidding one another in an attempt to secure one of dozens of alcoholic beverage permits. The most competitive bidding occurred during the package store portion, which included nine permits in seven counties. The most expensive bid came in at \$330,000 for a Kosciusko County beer, wine and liquor permit in Winona Lake.

Some had only one interested party and were awarded based on a pre-bidding process. The five restaurant permits available in Madison, Marion and Monroe counties, on the other hand, had less competition. A beer and wine permit in Pendleton, located in Madison County, went for the minimum bid amount of \$750.

"If you just keep your hand up, you'll buy it," joked Kyle Hupfer, co-owner of the Indiana Liquor Group LLC. The company won four out of the nine available package store permits, also commonly known as liquor stores.

Hupfer, the former chair of the Indiana Republican Party, shared that the groundwork ahead of the bidding was more intensive than the auction itself.

"You have to look at the localities and whether the markets — or population — can support another store," Hupfer said.

Indiana Liquor Group CEO Chris Lamb said the entity had about 60 stores across the state, mostly in the northern half. In its six years of operation, Lamb said most of the company's holdings had been purchased from existing package stores, rather than through the state's auction process.

According to a 2023 Inside Indiana Business story, Indiana Liquor Group is the second-largest liquor store owner in the state, behind Big Red Liquors Inc. Stores under the Indiana Liquor Group have many names but include Papa Joe's Liquors in Richmond, Noblesville Wine & Spirits and Muncie Liquors.

Another group, JBMEnterprise LLC, also dominated the package store liquor licenses, acquiring four of the remaining five licenses. The last license went to someone who registered to bid as Mandeep Singh.

Limited number of permits

Pre-bid applications are due two weeks before the auction and require a security deposit. The amount depends on the type of permit sought — beer or wine only permits go for a minimum of \$500 while combining the two costs at least \$750. Getting a license for beer, wine and liquor costs at least \$1,000.

As a self-funded agency with no general fund appropriations, the Indiana Alcohol and Tobacco Commission uses the auction funds to operate.

Each winning bid comes with a back-up. Unsuccessful bidders will get their deposits returned.

The state has a limited number of permits available and dozens of types of permits, which are calculated based on an area's population. Following a census, when populations are recounted, more licenses become available in growing areas and bring more competitive bidding.

# Indiana judicial building

(Continued from Page 1)

every day.

But as projected construction costs ballooned, the building became a controversial topic during the 1988 governor's race. Once elected, Democratic Gov. Evan Bayh ditched the plans.

The legislature last entertained the project in 1999, approving a \$4 million feasibility study for a new judicial building. It's not clear what happened to that study, though.

In the past some of the issues that have stalled the project include location and parking; cost and downtown office buildings losing a large tenant. One other topic has always been whether the five Indiana Supreme Court justices and their courtroom would move as some prefer having representation from all three branches of government in the Statehouse.

Currently, the Indiana Supreme Court has roughly 210 employees at its Capital Center location in downtown Indianapolis, and another 30 people within the statehouse, said court spokesperson Kathryn Dolan.

Rent at the Capital Center location is about \$1.5 million a year. The current lease — which runs through July 2034 — is abated for six months and includes a provision "that addresses cancellation should the State of Indiana build a Justice Center," Dolan said.

She emphasized that, based on her understanding from recent proposal discussions, such a center would include the state's entire judicial branch, including the supreme court, court of appeals, tax court, the state public defender, and others.

Even so, Chief Justice Loretta Rush said "the Indiana Supreme Court is not requesting a new judicial building."

"However, we support the legislature's interest in assessing the state's space needs and welcome contributing to that review process," she said in a statement to the Indiana Capital Chronicle.

Other entities that



State budget regulators approved pre-design funds for a proposed new Indiana judicial building, which would house offices for the state supreme court and others. (Photo by Whitney Downard)

would be included are the Court of Appeals and Tax Court and the State Public Defender. The state's transparency portal shows those entities employ about 165 people.

What next?

Before the budget committee gave its stamp of approval, Democratic Rep. Greg Porter, of Indianapolis, was critical of the price tag.

"Do we need to spend that much money on surveys? ... I mean, \$5 million is a lot," asked Porter, who sits on the committee. "We need to be more specific in regards to the proposal or request for information. These conversations started back in the 80s. ... I'm just really perplexed that we need to have this \$5 million to do that. I mean, in these tight times, all of a sudden, we want to do other things."

Kent maintained "there's a lot of work that would need done to ... basically, bring together several entities, and determine what each of their needs are."

"How is the building going to work? And then the size of the building. And then if there's any of

that money left over, that would probably roll into the design of the building, as well as the design phase," he added.

Joe Habig, acting budget director of the Indiana State Budget Agency, clarified that only 10% of the appropriated funds are expected to be used for the study itself.

"You're right — \$5 million is a lot. But we don't anticipate the actual study to utilize the entire \$5 million," Habig said, noting, too, the requested funds were already appropriated to the budget agency by the General Assembly. "We anticipate that most of this — at least several hundred thousand — will go towards just updating a study that was done in 2000 or 2001. And so I think with the results of that, we'll reassess the cost of a full (architecture and engineering) design."

No request for proposals related to the judicial building study have been published yet, according to state procurement records. State officials did not provide a timeline for proposals, study completion or desired date

to begin construction on a possible building.

## Financial Focus

### PSA: Are your protection plans in place?

Between your family, your finances, your independence and your legacy, you've got a lot to protect — so it's important to have protection plans in place. Start with your life insurance. Would it be adequate to help ensure your family could maintain their lifestyle if you weren't around? You might also need disability insurance to replace income lost because of illness or injury. Your employer may offer life and disability insurance as employee benefits, but you might need to supplement this coverage with private policies. And to protect your goals, such as educating your children and retiring in comfort, you may want to contribute to an education savings plan and an IRA and 401(k) or other retirement plan. You also need to protect your financial independence from the significant and rising costs of long-term care. A financial professional can offer solutions. Finally, you'll want to protect your legacy by working with your legal and tax professionals to develop a comprehensive estate plan. Protection can take many forms. Try to follow the protection strategies you need to enjoy the life you've envisioned for yourself and your family.

This content was provided by Edward Jones for use by Jeremy Todd, your Edward Jones financial advisor at 260-824-0686.

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## A Talk with Tego



Chase is a six-month-old, orange/white, domestic short hair, neutered male. He is very playful and friendly!



Oliver is a six-month-old, orange/white, domestic short hair, neutered male. He is very affectionate!



Bear is a 1½-year-old, mini Australian Shepherd mix, neutered male. He is a super sweet guy!



Tego

**Tego's Tips:** All adoption fees are waived until the end of the year on any cat/kitten that is already spayed/neutered.

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

## 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.

## VISITATION & SERVICES

**Debra K. Mills**  
Calling: 4 - 6 p.m.  
Monday, December 23  
at the funeral home.  
**Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home**  
308 W. Washington St.  
824-3850  
www.thomarich.com

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## From start to finish, how I covered the Corcoran case

I still remember getting the call that hot July day in 1997. A quadruple murder means editors need all hands on deck. That was the first time I heard Joseph Corcoran's name.

I was a cub reporter with only a few years under my belt, trying to find family, friends and neighbors to talk about Corcoran and his four victims. I had no idea that one way or another I would cover the case through its entirety — over 27 years.

My roommates and I talked about how young he looked — and how, if we'd seen the 20-something at a Fort Wayne bar, we would have thought nothing of chatting with him.

But beneath the surface, Corcoran was clearly not all there. Now, I'm not a lawyer or a psychiatrist but something was wrong inside him.

When Corcoran's case went to trial, I was the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette's court reporter. I remember how frustrated his attorneys were that he wouldn't plead guilty — not unless his vocal chords could be severed.

During jury selection they admitted their client's guilt immediately. After all, Corcoran called the police and turned himself in after he shot the four men, one of whom was his brother and another who was his sister's fiancé.

That meant the guilt phase of the trial was actually pretty anticlimactic. But the sentencing phase was full of emotional testimony and mental health evaluations.

I still recall how the room gasped a little when the judge read a question that the astute jury sent out: why didn't Corcoran's parents testify on his behalf? Of course, she couldn't answer it. But the reason was because they were dead. And though acquitted, reports since then show he likely killed them.

I interviewed the jury foreman at the conclusion of the trial and he said the judge shared that detail with the jury privately after.

James Cullen told me then, "A tremendous amount of relief was shared by all. Not only did we do the right thing, but we did the right thing in spades."

The next few years I would cover various appeals in Corcoran's case.

He announced moments after he was sentenced he didn't want to appeal. And honestly he was mostly consistent on that over the next two decades.

While Corcoran's guilt has never been in question, I do wonder whether a short delay for a competency exam would have been worth it. Two members of the Indiana Supreme Court also wanted that, but their colleagues denied the stay.

It doesn't matter now. Corcoran took his last breath early Wednesday morning after a lethal dose of pentobarbital was administered.

I covered the case from start to finish in various capacities — a rarity in journalism. And I am glad, in the end, that Corcoran allowed Capital Chronicle Senior Reporter Casey Smith to be a witness as the death warrant was carried out.

Impartial witnesses are key to public confidence in the system. We still have lots of questions and there will be time to evaluate the process in the coming days. Meanwhile, Attorney General Todd Rokita has already sought a date to execute another killer: Benjamin Ritchie.

And it appears at least one bill will be filed to repeal the death penalty, so a discussion in the legislature is a possibility.

The only regret I have is not being able to speak with more family of the four men who lost their lives in this final chapter. Their grief and pain are unimaginable, and I understand their choice to remain quiet. But I would have loved to share more about their lives and personalities as the execution drew close.

Pamela Reams, mother of victim Timothy G. Bricker, delivered a speech rife with sorrow and despair during his sentencing in 1999. She recalled that she was tent-camping in Michigan when two state troopers called her name in the darkness to tell her something was "very, very wrong."

Reams begged Corcoran to explain it all and recounted how she prayed countless times for him to walk in the room and plead guilty. Then she handed Corcoran a book — a shiny black Bible with his name inscribed in gold lettering. She said that the answer was within the binding, and that if she doesn't see him in heaven, "I will know you didn't take the time to read it."

I don't know if Corcoran did read that book, but he died with his reverend by his side.

*Niki Kelly is the editor of the Indiana Capital Chronicle, a non-profit newsroom. nkelly@indianacapitalchronicle.com*

## Today in History

**By The Associated Press**  
Today is Monday, Dec. 23, the 358th day of 2024. There are eight days left in the year.

Today in history: In 1823, the poem "Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas" was published anonymously in the Troy Sentinel of New York; the verse, more popularly known as "The Night Before Christmas," was later attributed to Clement C. Moore.

Also on this date:  
In 1913, the Federal Reserve System was created as President Woodrow Wilson signed the Federal Reserve Act.

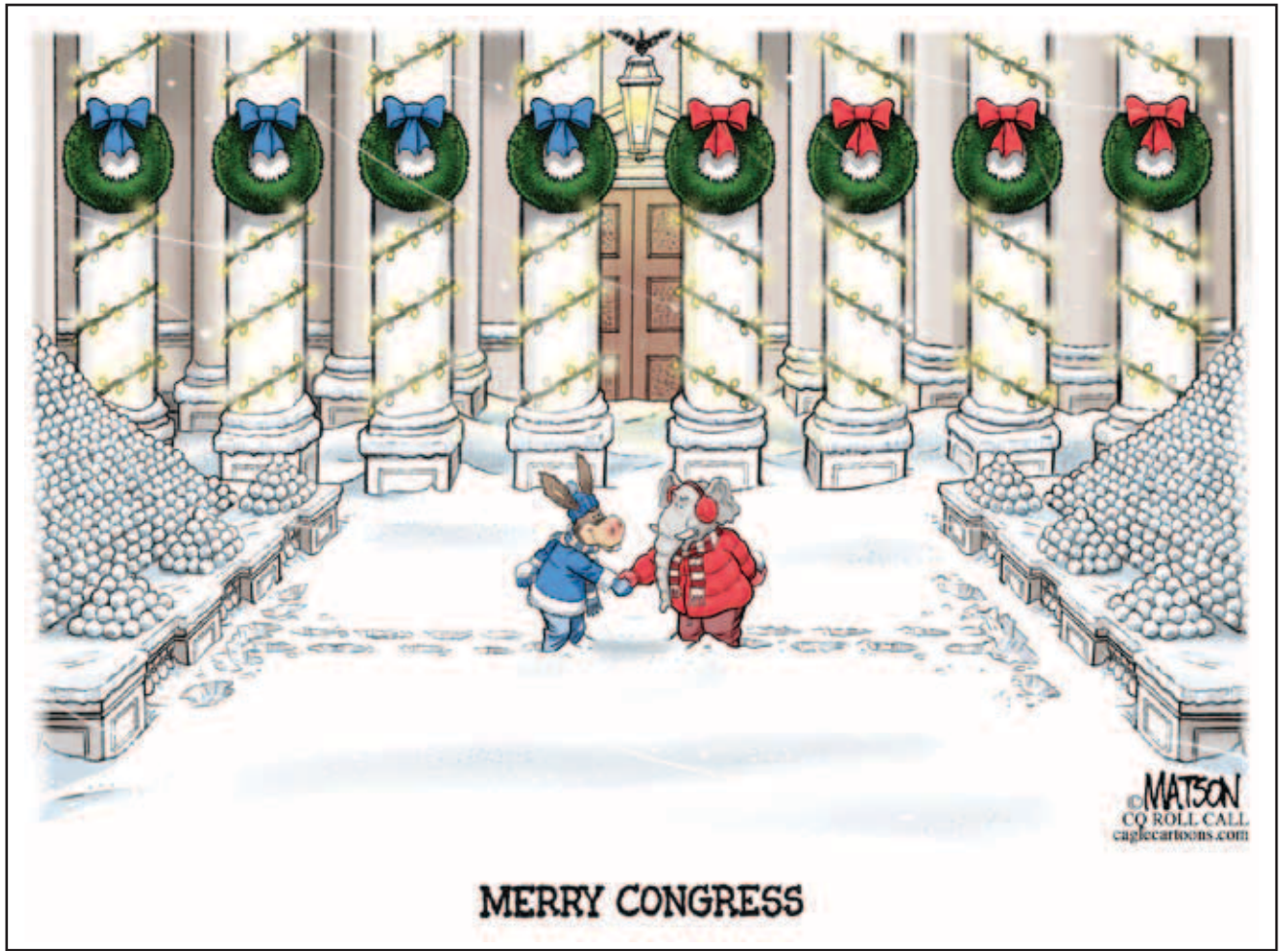
In 1941, during World War II, American forces on Wake Island surrendered to Japanese forces.

In 1968, 82 crew members of the U.S. intelligence ship Pueblo were released by North Korea, 11 months after they had been captured.



Niki Kelly

## Hoosier Opinions



## Gov. Holcomb's exit interview from his 'new Indiana'

He is the "Builder Governor." The lasting impression of Eric Holcomb's eight-year tenure as governor could be measured on what he built, and how he did so and with the steady assets he had at his command. He calls it the "new Indiana" emerging under his watch.

He finished I-69 to Evansville, including the hard part through suburban Johnson and Marion counties, with the new Ohio River bridge into Kentucky sited. He completed the \$600 million double-tracking of the century old South Shore Line from Chicago to South Bend at the West Lake spur line. There's the new \$1.2 billion prison at Westville the state is paying cash for. There is the new combined \$655 million Indiana Deaf and Blind School campus, the new Fall Creek Pavilion at the State Fairgrounds, the new State Archives Building, as well as the first new state park lodge being built in 85 years.

There is the combined \$300 million Gov. Holcomb is funneling into the 92 county health departments. There's the amicable IUPUI divorce with twin campuses rising up just blocks from the state capital.

As the governor drove from Culver to Potato Creek State Park earlier this month to monitor the first new lodge since 1939 after the initial groundbreaking 14 months prior, Holcomb told Howey Politics, "I want to be graded and measured on the results, not the rhetoric. We don't just want to build trails, we want to be the trail leader. We want to finish I-69."

"We want to stay state-focused on always trying to do big things," Holcomb continued.

It will take a decade or so to fully know the impacts of Holcomb's eight years in office. He spent a decade as an apprentice to Gov. Mitch Daniels, serving as deputy chief of staff. While running a campaign for U.S. Senate, Gov. Mike Pence plucked him from relative obscurity to replace Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann in March 2016. Four months later after Pence joined the Donald Trump presidential ticket, he won a second-ballot Republican Central Committee nomination, launching a 106-day come-from-behind victory over Democrat John Gregg.

Holcomb had unusual assets. He's the only Hoosier governor to serve with Indiana General Assembly supermajorities for both entire terms. Earl Goode, his only chief of staff, is finishing an unprecedented 14 years at that job. He signed the most far-reaching abortion restrictions in state history.

Holcomb's Indiana received a stunning \$6.7 billion from the Biden administration's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, including \$868 million for rural broadband expansion and \$100 million for electric vehicle charging stations.

He never had to deal with a recession. The state's jobless rate was always below 5%. The Holcomb administration has, so far, been scandal free.

The result is what Holcomb calls an emerging "New Indiana."

"For us, when you look at the progress we've made

across the economic development front, the workforce development front and the community development front, Indiana is a new Indiana," he said. "We have a New Albany, a New Haven, New Castle, New Carlisle and there truly is almost a new Indiana when you think about our health innovation industry, LEAP, manufacturing of isotopes and planned genetics and where we're taking life sciences and the future of mobility being determined here. We're working on small modular nuclear reactors. Being in a

center of the country gives us an advantage of being in the core."

And there were galactic challenges. He faced two pandemics, the first was the opioid crisis and a triple digit increase in overdoses. Then came the COVID-19 pandemic found President Donald J. Trump and Gov. Holcomb shutting down much of society in late March 2020 for several months, infecting 2 million Hoosiers and killing 26,115, the most lethal public health episode in state history.

There was no written pandemic plan on the shelf other than for the flu. "We were transparent and very accessible," Holcomb said of the weekly web-streamed press conferences that he held with state health officials like Commissioner Dr. Kristina Box and Dr. Lindsay Weaver.

"It was like Indiana went to Oz and when the curtain was pulled back and they got to see their government, which was just like them," Holcomb said.

Despite the criticism from Republicans like Secretary of State Diego Morales, who said he had overstepped his authority during the pandemic, Holcomb won reelection with 1.7 million votes (56.5%). "I had all kinds of people tell me politically this is going to be the end of me and lo and behold we got more votes than anyone who has ever run for governor in the history of this state, still do this day by the way," he said.

What was the most surprising or gratifying thing he witnessed or learned?

"To learn of the innovation and ingenuity that comes off the family farm or the family factory floor or the small business that has been taken to scale by someone needing to solve a problem on a bigger scale," he said.

His biggest disappointment? "I would have liked to see pregnancy accommodations done for the state, not just state government," Holcomb said.

What wisdom would he impart to a future governor?

"Approach with the attitude that every day you're gonna learn if you stay connected to the ground," he said, adding that in "remaining humble" he was "courageous and forward-looking, understanding you are not going to please everybody all the time."

*Howey is a senior writer for Howey Politics Indiana and State Affairs. Find Howey on X at @hwypol.*



Brian Howey

## Politicking

## The ultimate gift

In past years I have suggested going beyond Christmas and other holiday gifts that will soon be forgotten, returned or worn out, in favor of one that will last for generations to come.

Last year I wrote about the Children's Scholarship Fund, which provides private school tuition for poor and middle-class children in failing public schools. Not only do the private schools offer them a better education (most go on to college), but they also provide a moral foundation essential to living a successful life.

This year I'm recommending the ultimate gift — the gift of life to an unborn child, with accompanying assistance to the mother to help her prevail over what can be difficult circumstances in an unplanned pregnancy.

Heartbeat International was founded in 1971, two years before the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court case which struck down all state abortion restrictions. According to its year-end report, "(Heartbeat) is now the most expansive network in the world, assisting more than 3,500 affiliated pregnancy help locations ... with medical clinics (ultrasounds),



Cal Thomas

maternity homes and adoption agencies in more than 90 countries to provide alternatives to abortion."

In its annual report for 2023, Heartbeat says it received more than 1.8 million in-person client visits. Their promotion of a pill that reverses abortions for women who have changed their minds after initiating the procedure has "rescued" 5,000 babies. It is something Planned Parenthood vigorously opposes.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta sued Heartbeat to force the organization to provide women at their help centers with abortion information. The Supreme Court rejected California's efforts, but thanks in part to subsidies from the federal government (Elon and Vivek take note as you seek to reduce spending), they are likely to pursue other efforts to stymie the work of Heartbeat and pro-life organizations.

The experience of holding a baby in your arms and embracing a woman who sought life-affirming help, rather than an abortion — realizing you have contributed to that moment — is a unique experience. It is one I have enjoyed on many occasions.

Think of the positive impact. Each child rescued from an abortion will likely have children, and they will

have children and so on for generations to come. A woman will be free of the guilt and sometimes depression and self-destructive behavior that too often comes after the procedure. An abortion removes a branch from the family tree.

News stories report sharp declines in birth rates in the U.S., Canada and Europe. There are several reasons, but abortion, along with a desire to avoid the "expense" of children, appear to be the main ones. Failing to have enough children to at least replace adults who die will have serious economic, social, political and other consequences for especially free nations.

While there have been more abortions since Roe was overturned in the Dobbs decision, Heartbeat and other pro-life groups continue to spread information often denied women by abortion clinics. On Heartbeat International's website there are testimonies from women who at first sought an abortion, in some cases taking the abortion pill, and then changed their minds. Their comments also include the words "support" and "resources," something lacking at abortion clinics. Their stories counter the lie told over the years that pro-life people don't care about the woman or the baby after birth.

Saving lives — babies and mothers — is a two-way blessing. Make a donation and see what I mean.

*tcaditors@tribpub.com.*

## The News-Banner

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

# Events at the Creative Arts Council of Wells County

428 S. Oak Street in Bluffton  
260-824-5222  
www.wellscocreativearts.com  
creativeartscouncil@gmail.com  
Facebook: www.facebook.com/wellscocreativearts

Instagram: @creativeartscouncil  
Creative Arts office hours:  
Holiday schedule: Office open by appointment only from Thursday, Dec. 19 – Friday, Jan. 3, 2025

Regular hours resume on Jan. 6, 2025 - Monday – Thursday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Friday (by appointment only)

**Creative Arts Dance Academy**  
**NEW Dance classes this Jan./Feb. 2025**

- Adult Continuing Tap – 6 weeks beginning Jan. 11 – Saturdays from 1:00 to 1:45 p.m.- \$40
- Adult Beginning Tap (ages 18+) – 6 weeks beginning Jan. 11 – Saturdays from 1:45 to 2:30 p.m.- \$40

- Pre-Teen Lyrical Dance (ages 8-11) – 4 weeks beginning Jan. 9 – Thursdays from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m.- \$30
- Lyrical Dance (ages 12-18) – 4 weeks beginning Jan. 9 – Thursdays from 7:15 to 8:00 p.m.- \$30

- Pre-Teen Beginning Jazz (ages 8-11) – 4 weeks beginning Feb. 6 – Thursdays from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m.- \$30

- Teen Beginning Jazz (ages 12-18) - 4 weeks beginning Feb 6 – Thursdays from 7:15 to 8:00 p.m.- \$30

Registration: <https://www.wellscocreativearts.com/why-choose-us>

**Creative Arts Theater**  
Creative Arts 24/25 Theater season has been announced:

- “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” – March 6-8, 2025
- Disney Newsies JR – June 13-14, 2025
- Disney Artistocats Kids – June 27-28, 2025

Admission: \$15.00 per person sold through ArtsTix – (260) 422-4226

Auditorium: 428 S Oak Street, Bluffton, IN 46714

**NEW Adult Acting class this Jan./Feb. 2025**  
**Acting 101/102**

- Mondays from 6 to 9 p.m. a 6-week session from Jan. 6-Feb. 10

- Creative Arts Council of Wells County, 428 S Oak St, Bluffton / Enter Door 10
- Age 16+
- Cost: \$100 per student
- Instructor: Meagan VandeLaar
- Whether you are completely new to the acting world, have done



some plays but want to dive deeper and grow your craft, or you are an experienced actor that could use a refresher course, Acting 101/102 will give you the basic (and not so basic) tools you need to take the next step in your acting journey in an engaging and empowering atmosphere. Participants will be introduced to several acting and movement techniques, learn the basics of scene study and characterization, and learn to follow their impulses and work collaboratively with their scene partners.

Registration: <https://form.jotform.com/243045826666160>

**“Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” presented by Creative Arts Theater**  
One of the most enduring shows of all time, Joseph and the

Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat is a reimagining of the Biblical story of Joseph, his father Jacob, eleven brothers and the coat of many colors. Told entirely through song with the help of a main character Narrator, the musical follows preferred son Joseph. After being sold into slavery by his brothers, he ingratiates himself with Egyptian noble Potiphar, but ends up in jail after refusing the amorous advances of Potiphar’s wife. While imprisoned, Joseph discovers his ability to interpret dreams, and he soon finds himself in front of the mighty but troubled, Elvis-inspired, Pharaoh. Joseph’s solution to Egypt’s famine elevates him to Pharaoh’s right-hand man and reunites him with his family. Run Time: 2 hours and 15 minutes. Appropriate for all audiences.

Performances: March 6-8, 2025

Tickets (\$15) on sale through Artstix at <https://tickets.artstix.org/TheatreManager/1/tmEvent/tmEvent4229.html> or by calling (260) 422-4226, Monday – Friday; 12 to 6 p.m. or Saturday; 12 to 4 p.m.

Auditorium, 428 S Oak St, Bluffton

**Creative Arts School of Music**  
Voice Lessons with Lynne

Niermeyer, Tuesday afternoon/evenings, \$30/half hour lesson

Guitar Lessons with Mike Needler, Tuesday afternoon/evenings, \$35/half hour lessons

For more information regarding the music lessons above, please call the office at (260) 824-5222 for lesson times/availability.

**Ongoing Activities**

**Creative Crew:** Tuesdays from 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.: All forms of creativity welcome: painting, drawing, needlework and more... spend the morning working on your craft and socialize with other artists. Enter Door 1 or Door 10 at Life Community Church, the creative crew meets in the cafe

**Readers’ Brown Bag Luncheon:** Meeting the last Tuesday of the month at noon at Life Community Church, enter door 10. All readers are welcome. Feel free to call the office for more information.

**\*\*\*Important Scheduling Note:** Changes can occur after the Creative Happenings column has been published. Please confirm dates and times before planning to participate in programs and activities\*\*\*

Creative Arts Council activities are supported by memberships, sponsors and grants from funders including Arts United, a regional agency; the Indiana Arts Commission, a state agency; and the National Endowment for the Arts, a national agency.

## Area Christmas Services

**Asbury Chapel United Methodist Church**

Asbury Chapel United Methodist Church invites the public to their Christmas Eve service at 6 p.m. on Dec. 24, located at 8013 W 1100 S-90 in Montpelier.

**First Baptist Church**

First Baptist Church, 202 W. Cherry St. in Bluffton, will have a Christmas Eve candlelight service at 7 p.m.

**First Church of Christ**

First Church of Christ, 909 W. Spring St. in Bluffton, will hold a Carols and Candlelight Service at 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. on Christmas Eve.

**First Presbyterian Church**

First Presbyterian Church, located at 123 S Jefferson St. in Ossian, will host a Christmas Eve service at 7 p.m. Services are also available via

livestream on Youtube.

**First United Methodist, Bluffton**

First United Methodist Church, 325 W. Washington St. in Bluffton, will hold a Christmas Eve candlelight service at 4:30 p.m.

**Hope Missionary Church**

Hope Missionary Church, 429 E. Dustman Road in Bluffton, will hold Christmas Eve services at 1 p.m., 3 p.m., 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. at its main campus.

Christmas Eve services will be held at 3 p.m., 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the church’s Ossian campus at 1705 Hillcrest Dr.

**ITOWN Church**

ITOWN Church, 2711 N Main St. in Bluffton, will host Christmas Eve services at 3 p.m. and 5 p.m.

**Sonlight Wesleyan Church**

Sonlight Wesleyan Church, 2350 S S.R. 1 in Bluffton, will host Christmas Eve services at 4 p.m. and 11 p.m.

**St. Joseph Catholic Church**

St. Joseph Catholic Church, 1300 N. Main St. in Bluffton, will have two Christmas Eve two services — a Vigil Mass at 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. The choir will lead the congregation in singing Christmas carols at 5:30 p.m.

There will be two services on Christmas - 12 a.m. Midnight Mass and a 9 a.m. Mass.

**Bethlehem Lutheran**

Bethlehem Lutheran Church LCMS, 6514E-750N in Ossian, will have a Christmas Eve service at 7 p.m. Sunday. A Christmas Day service will follow at 9 a.m.

*Julie Myers  
of  
Jerry Flack  
& Associates*



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## Zanesville News

by Melba Edwards

Merry Christmas!  
It seems the older I get the busier I get. As this year is winding down I have to wonder what is in store for us in the year 2025. I had to laugh when I opened a book and saw this: “George Burns attributed his long life to avoiding stress. He said he takes scissors and cuts

all the bad news out of the newspaper before he reads it.” I think that is a good idea!  
I remind you to come over to Zanesville and view the Living Lights at the Tower Life Center.  
I know many of our Zanesville area citizens go to Bluffton to enjoy the

community pool there. I was glad to see that the Wells County Foundation awarded them a \$100K grant for building a new pool. My grandkids will enjoy that!  
It was announced that a pre-K program will be available in 2025 to four year olds in 2025-26 school year for Lafayette Township.



**Vote for your favorite**

Stop by the Wells County Public Library and vote for your favorite Gingerbread creation, all created by members of the library staff. The display is located near the entrance to the main library. (Photo by Barbara Barbieri)

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# When to hold on and when to let go

**Dear Annie:** Seven years ago, I met a guy on a dating site. I'm 13 years older than him, but I look much younger than my age. After we matched, he asked me on a date, and we kissed. From there, we kept texting, flirting and engaging in a lot of suggestive conversations — but he never asked me out again.

Over the years, we've remained close friends. He goes through periods where he stops texting me for weeks but always comes back. Despite this inconsistency, he's helped me out several times — like giving me a ride from the airport, spending a day helping me clean my garage and assembling a bike for me. Each time, we end up kissing. The last time, when things started heating up, he pulled away, said he was sweaty and left.

We're like best friends. He continues to flirt with me and often says, "Maybe one day we'll be intimate." From what he tells me, I don't think he's dating anyone. But after all these years, I'm starting to wonder if this is going anywhere or if I'm wasting my time.

Should I hold on to the hope that something romantic will develop, or is it time to give up and move on? — In Limbo

**Dear Limbo:** It sounds like you've been in emotional limbo with this man for years. While he values you enough to stay in your life and help out, his inconsistency and hesitation suggest he's not ready or willing to commit to something deeper.

**Ask yourself:** Is this relationship giving you what you want? If not, it's time to have an honest conversation with him. Tell him how you feel and ask what he truly wants. Be clear about your own needs — whether it's a relationship or closure.

You deserve someone who's certain about you and ready to commit. Don't settle for "maybe one day" when you

*could have something real with someone else.*

**Dear Annie:** I recently read your column about a 47-year-old woman who had been with her boyfriend for six years and was eager for him to propose. Why do you think the advice to give him an ultimatum is the best approach?

In an era of equality, open communication and mutual respect, why should proposals be seen as something only men do? Why not encourage women to propose to the partners they love instead?

Doesn't giving an ultimatum seem controlling or potentially codependent — an attempt to force someone's hand? Wouldn't it be more empowering, loving and honest to suggest that women take the initiative themselves? And doesn't it seem a bit outdated, or even sexist, to imply proposals are solely a man's responsibility?

As a 40-year-old divorced man, I hope to find love again someday. If the woman I love is ready before I am, wouldn't it make sense for her to propose to me? Why should we limit who can take that step? — A Different Perspective

**Dear Different:** Thank you for your letter filled with thought-provoking questions. You are absolutely right. Women can propose if they want to.

"How Can I Forgive My Cheating Partner?" features favorite columns on marriage, infidelity, communication and reconciliation. It is available as a paperback and e-book. Visit <http://www.creatorspublishing.com> for more information. Send your questions for Annie Lane to [dearannie@creators.com](mailto:dearannie@creators.com).

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## Dear Annie

by Annie Lane



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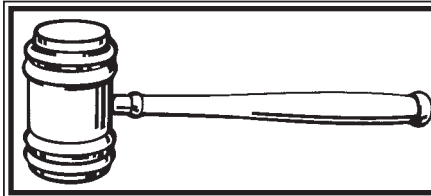
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	9	4			1	3		
			4	5			9	7
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12/23

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## Public Sale Calendar

**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, [TheSteffenGroupInc.com](http://TheSteffenGroupInc.com), [Steffengrp.com](http://Steffengrp.com), 260-824-3006.

**BIDDING ENDS 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, Lladro 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, [TheSteffenGroupInc.com](http://TheSteffenGroupInc.com), [Steffengrp.com](http://Steffengrp.com), 260-824-3006.

**BIDDING OPEN AND STARTS CLOSING**

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**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, Acer Denison Stamp Machine, Ooya 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. [KrueckebergAuction.com](http://KrueckebergAuction.com) & [RealtyLLC.com](http://RealtyLLC.com), 260-724-7402, [kjauction.com](http://kjauction.com).

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Cash 5 — 08-22-23-25-41

Cash4Life — 12-16-21-35-43, Cash Ball: 02

Lotto Plus — 03-18-20-35-40-41

Quick Draw Midday — 05-12-13-16-19-20-28-29-32-36-46-47-49-53-57-60-66-68-74-77, BE: 47

Daily Three-Midday — 01-01-08, SB: 01

Daily Three-Evening — 07-07-04, SB: 02

Daily Four-Midday — 02-09-00-04, SB: 01

Daily Four-Evening — 04-01-04-02, SB: 02

Quick Draw Evening — 04-08-18-25-30-31-36-37-39-42-44-46-49-52-56-58-59-63-67, BE: 46

Hoosier Lotto — 04-13-19-39-41-46

### POWERBALL

01-12-17-21-58; Powerball: 01; Power Play: 3X

### Sunday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY

Cash 5 — 16-22-37-44-45

Cash4Life — 10-12-30-41-49, Cash Ball: 02

Quick Draw Midday — 04-09-10-20-21-26-28-31-32-34-36-40-52-57-59-68-70-76-79-80, BE: 40

Daily Three-Midday — 04-09-04, SB: 00

Daily Three-Evening — 06-04-02, SB: 09

Daily Four-Midday — 01-00-04-07, SB: 00

Daily Four-Evening — 05-08-02-05, SB: 09

Quick Draw Evening — 03-04-05-11-14-17-21-25-26-29-43-46-50-53-54-55-60-62-65-67, BE: 29

Hoosier Lotto — Estimated jackpot (for Wednesday): \$33.6 million

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# Tigers inch closer to ACAC dream, take down Jets

By RYAN WALKER

**MONROE** — Bluffton's dominant 70-33 win over Adams Central puts the Tigers one step further in the driver's seat in the ACAC Conference.

The No. 11 Tigers (13-1, 4-0 ACAC) muscled their way through the struggling 2-10 Jets (1-4 ACAC) to remain as the only undefeated team left in the conference.

This contest was expected to be a no contest, and that was proven within the first few minutes. The Tigers jumped out to a 7-0 lead when the Jets needed a timeout with barely two minutes gone by. Then, the lead grew to a 24-0 edge before the first Jets' point from a free throw at the 52-second mark. The advantage went 25-1 by the end of the first with five different Bluffton players scoring.

Head coach Doug Curtis planned on mixing up player rotations defensively at some point but stuck with his starting five because of how well they were playing. In

the second quarter, he checked in some of his bench, including an attempt to bring up a junior varsity member, but ended up changing the game drastically.

The Jets chucked up triples one after another, nailing five of them in the second quarter. Ava Stafford hit the first one with 5:04 left, which was also the Jets' first basket made. Then, Tenley Hendricks and Kate Fisher hit a total of four more. The end result was Adams Central winning the period 15-10, but still down by 19 points at half-time.

"I thought maybe we had a little bit of a letdown in the second," Curtis said. "Not that they weren't hustling or playing hard, but it's just you're playing with different people. And that's one reason I've tried to start a bunch of different lineups this year, is I want everybody to be playing with different people so we can get that down. But obviously, that's still a work in progress."

The halftime adjustment went

much smoother, and the Tigers continued its regularly scheduled style of basketball.

Bluffton outscored Adams Central 25-17 for the rest of the game, never having a real threat of losing. It's 37-point win was the eighth time the team has won by 30 or more points this season, not including other 20-point victories.

Isabella Stout led the charge for Bluffton with 24 points, her eighth 20-point game this season. Konley Ault put up 15 points, while Maryn Schreiber netted a double-double with 12 points and 10 rebounds.

The team's 72.4 points per game average is still second-best in the state regardless of class. Although there have been several scorers on Bluffton's court, none have been more impressive than Stout.

Last season, Stout averaged 13.2 points per game. Through an off-season and summer's worth of hard work, she's over 20 per cent this year and soaring as an all-

around scorer.

Curtis said that ever since the end of the last season, she's been on a mission to become more versatile.

Over the summer, Curtis had her playing AAU basketball with a coach he knew and worked on her offensive game. After her fall golf season, Stout got to work on her weaknesses and it's starting to pay off.

Curtis shared that he watched her practice on the first day of open gym to observe her priorities. Stout continued to build up what her and Curtis talked about at the end of last season. It includes more of an outside shooting game, which she has taken to the next level. More specifically, her three-point shooting game has gone up from 19% to 34%.

"She's in there the very first open gym, working her tail off at every level and you're seeing that in the game," Curtis said. "She can get to the line, she can get to the rim, she can shoot three."

Bluffton will take a break heading into the new year and will next play at Belmont on Jan. 4.

Bluffton won the junior varsity contest 59-21. Kamryn Ault led the Tigers with 14 points, Isla Gibson 13.

**BLUFFTON 70, ADAMS CENTRAL 33**  
**At Adams Central**  
**BLUFFTON (13-1, 4-0 ACAC):** Isabella Stout 8-15 6-7 24, Konley Ault 5-9 5-7 15, Maryn Schreiber 5-9 2-2 12, Tressa Renner 3-4 0-0 7, Khloe Dick 2-4 1-2 6, Kamryn Ault 1-2 0-0 2, Sophie Eisenhut 1-2 0-0 2, Madyson Sonnigsen 1-4 0-0 2, Grace Fry 0-1 0-0 0, Isla Gibson 0-0 0-0 0, Madelyn Funk 0-0 0-0 0, Marly Drayer 0-1 0-0 0. **TOTALS:** 26-51 14-18 70.

**ADAMS CENTRAL (2-10, 1-4 ACAC):** Kate Fisher 15 points, Ava Stafford 8, Tenley Hendricks 6, Ellie Ogg 2, Lila Ringger 2, Izzy Isch 0, Demi Landis 0, Myla Ellenberger. **TOTAL 33.**

**Bluffton 25 10 23 12 — 70**  
**A. Central 1 15 10 7 — 33**  
 Three-point Shooting: Bluffton 4-16 (Stout 2-6, Renner 1-2, Dick 1-3, Ka. Ault 0-1, Sonnigsen 0-3, Fry 0-1), Adams Central 8 made (Fisher 5, Hendricks 2, Stafford). Rebounds: Bluffton 40 (Schreiber 10, Renner 9, Eisenhut 4, Sonnigsen 4, Ka. Ault 3, Ko. Ault 3, Stout 3, Drayer 2, Dick 2), Adams Central 12 (Fisher 3, Stafford 3, Ringger 2, Ellenberger 1, Isch 1, Hendricks 1, Ogg 1). Turnovers: Bluffton 12, Adams Central 20. Fouls: Bluffton 5, Adams Central 14. Fouled Out: None. Technicals: None.  
 JV: 59-21 Bluffton.

## Knights' defense leads charge in win over Barons

By RICK SPRUNGER

If someone would have told Norwell coach Eric Thornton that his team would score just 40 points on shockingly sickly .224 shooting (15-67) against a good 8-3 DeKalb team Saturday night, "I would have counted it as a loss," Thornton admitted frankly.

Fortunately for Norwell, the defense was up to the occasion and played well enough to allow the Knights to escape with a win by 18 points.

Playing with perhaps the most vicious defensive intensity they have shown all season, Norwell forced 25 turnovers, smashed the startled Barons on the boards, 48-32, limited them to .250 (9-36) shooting themselves, and coasted to a surprisingly easy 40-22 victory.

Norwell improved to 9-4 on the season and to 2-1 in the Northeast 8 Conference.

"We were coming off the Woodlan game Tuesday night and what I thought was a very uninspiring defensive performance," explained Thornton of his team's intensity on the other end. "Let's just say they wore their track shoes to practice on Wednesday, and we focused on defense," he said with a twinkle in his eye.

They got the message. "We talked about energy," he continued. "Tuesday night, we didn't have it; tonight, we had it."

Seemingly every time an increasingly wide-eyed DeKalb player caught a pass, she was immediately hit with a double-team and a tangled thicket of arms and legs.

Every pass was contested; every shot was hurried and harassed.

So strong was Norwell's defensive performance that DeKalb actually had more turnovers (25) than points (22).

The night was typified by what Thornton called "the defensive play of the game" with 3:02 left in the contest and Norwell already leading by 16 points. DeKalb, inbounded into the backcourt from the side, threw the ball into the corner. Vanessa Rosswurm leaped high in the air to tip the ball away from its intended receiver out of bounds.

But before it could land, and falling out of bounds herself with no one to get it to, Rosswurm had the presence of mind to tip it right back off the leg of the DeKalb player out of bounds.

Norwell ball.

"You remember, he (DeKalb coach Noah Stuckey) called an immediate timeout," said Thornton. "That is just so deflating, you can't let something like that go without trying to get them settled down."

Not that it mattered. DeKalb, which only scored two points in the game's last 10:34, never scored again.

But Norwell was a Jekyll-and-Hyde team Saturday night.

As good as it was on defense, on offense it couldn't throw the ball into the ocean from a boat.

The Knights hit on just one of their first 11 shots and two of their first 15. Jada Dale got both field goals, one on a rebound pickup of her own missed three, the other on



Norwell's Jada Dale, right, reaches for a loose ball after battling for possession with DeKalb's Kyla Kjendalen during the first half of Saturday night's NE8 Conference game at Norwell. The Knights picked up a 40-22 win over the Barons. (Photo by Chad Kline)

a steal and runout layup.

They missed their first nine shots in the second quarter — and their first 10 in the fourth.

The final numbers were 15-67 for a woeful .224 shooting percentage and an extremely uncharacteristic 3-33 (.091) from behind the arc.

"But we took 31 more shots than they did," pointed out Thornton. "That was because of all the second and third (and fourth) shots we were getting."

On one sequence in the fourth quarter, Norwell got five shots and two free throws in the same possession — and came away with no points.

"I think maybe we were a little out of sorts, playing without Ashley (Waldman, who missed the game with an injury)," said

Thornton. "But I was proud of our toughness. It's really easy to drop your head when you're not hitting your shots. But I think tonight we proved that there's more than one way to win a game. And I'm hoping that this will give us the confidence down the road to know that even if we aren't shooting well, we can still get after it on defense."

Macie Saalfrank led Norwell in scoring with 15 points.

Rosswurm added 11 points and 15 rebounds and Dale 10 points and 12 rebounds.

Norwell also won the junior varsity contest, 72-21. Joycelynn Hogsett-Turner scored 24 points for the Knights, and Chloe Comer and Carlee Strunk joined her in double figures with 13 and 10 points, respectively.

Daisy Swineford added eight

points, Haley Williamson (7), Eden Nash five, Brielle Foss (3), and Elizabeth Dillion (2).

sports@news-banner.com

**NORWELL 40, DEKALB 22**  
**At Norwell**  
**DEKALB (8-4, 1-2 NE8):** Bree Fordyce 1-3 1-2 3, Reese Schmidt 2-7 0-0 5, Ashley Cox 3-11 0-0 6, Abbie Harris 2-7 0-0 5, Grace Pfister 1-8 0-0 3, Kyla Kjendalen 0-0 0-0 0, Ellington Sparkman 0-0 0-0 0. **TOTAL:** 9-36 1-2 22.  
**NORWELL (9-4, 2-1 NE8):** Addie Norris 0-7 0-0 0, Alivia Green 0-4 0-2 0, Macie Saalfrank 6-21 2-2 15, Vanessa Rosswurm 3-11 5-7 11, Jada Dale 4-15 0-0 10, Ryland Graft 1-3 0-0 2, Isabella Swineford 1-2 0-0 2, Haley Williamson 0-3 0-0 0, Larkin Smith 0-1 0-0 0. **TOTAL:** 15-67 7-11 40.  
**DeKalb 10 3 7 2 — 22**  
**Norwell 9 9 13 9 — 40**  
 Three-point shooting: DeKalb 3-19 (Schmidt 1-2, Cox 0-4, Harris 1-6, Pfister 1-7), Norwell 3-33 (Norris 0-6, Saalfrank 1-13, Rosswurm 0-3, Dale 2-8, Graft 0-2, Williamson 0-1). Rebounds: DeKalb 32 (Fordyce 9, Pfister 6, Cox 5), Norwell 48 (Rosswurm 15, Dale 12, Green 6). Turnovers: DeKalb 25, Norwell 12. Personal fouls: DeKalb 10, Norwell 11. Fouled Out: None. Technical fouls: None.  
 Junior Varsity: Norwell 72, DeKalb 21.

## Tiger boys fall at home in tight contest vs. Railroaders

By ANDREW FEEBACK

Saturday night's basketball game between the Bluffton Tigers and Garrett Railroaders came down to three things: free throws, rebounds and turnovers.

The Tigers came up on the short end in all three categories, and dropped a tough one to the visiting Railroaders, 51-47.

Garrett ran its record to 7-1, while Bluffton dropped to 4-2.

Neither team ever had much breathing room in this one; there were six ties and 13 lead changes. Garrett never led by more than six points, while Bluffton's largest lead was five.

Bluffton having twice as many turnovers and struggling on the boards all night proved costly given how tight the game was.

"Physically, they just whipped us," coach Craig Teagle said. "Unofficially, we had them for 14 offensive boards, and that's where a lot of our fouls were. We didn't execute nearly as well as we needed to."

After the Railroaders took an early six-point lead, Bluffton surged ahead with a 17-6 run.

Garrett countered with a 12-2 burst for a 30-25 spread before Bluffton scored the last four points of the half.

The Tigers reeled off seven straight early in the

second half, all from Kaleb Green, for a 36-32 lead. That was followed by five more lead changes before the quarter ended with Garrett still up one, 41-40.

Nolan Lambert's three-pointer at the 5:08 mark had Bluffton up 45-43. Garrett's Isaiah King made two free throws, and Parker Reed's bucket in the paint put the visitors back in front 47-45.

Marshall Gerber tied the game at 47 with 3:49 to play.

That ended the scoring for Bluffton, and even with the score tied, it felt like the Tigers were swimming upstream the rest of the way.

Garrett took the clock down to 2:26 before King was fouled and made one shot. Gerber was fouled on Bluffton's next possession, but he missed both of his attempts.

The Railroaders continued to be patient, moving the ball around and forcing the Tigers to put them in the bonus. By the time the Tigers did that, only 19 seconds remained.

A bizarre sequence followed — one the Tigers will probably cringe if they watch the game tape later on.

Carter Coffman, who led Garrett with 18 points, went to the line for two shots. He missed both, but Jake Gonya grabbed the rebound and drew the fifth foul on Green.

Gonya proceeded to miss both shots. But Parker Reed came up with the rebound and was fouled by Griffin Morgan.

Reed then bricked both shots. Incredibly, Gonya spun around Morgan and snared yet another offensive rebound, fouling out Morgan in the process.

His first attempt missed, bringing the streak of missed free throws to seven. He made the second, giving Garrett a 49-47 lead with 16 seconds to play.

Bluffton took a timeout, likely looking to win the game instead of going to overtime, having already lost two players to fouls, and having another with four.

But the play never materialized, with the Tigers

turning it over and fouling with less than a second remaining.

"We were coming off a slip ball screen, looking to go with the post, or reverse pivot for the three," Teagle said. "We just got too deep and didn't get the ball where we needed it."

Declan Grieser led the Tigers with 18 points, while Green added 11 and Morgan had eight. Garrett also got 17 from King and eight from Reed.

Teagle felt the combination of turnovers, rebounds and free throws was simply too much for his team to overcome.

"If you look at the big picture, 12 turnovers, 14 o-boards, and we were three of nine from the foul line,"

he said. "Take any one of those, and that got us beat. Cut two or three of those down in each area, you win the game. Again, it's on me. I've got to do a better job and get us prepared better for those situations."

Bluffton will travel to Norwell Saturday night.

The junior varsity game went to Garrett in overtime, 42-37. Gavin Grieser scored 16 points while Abram Gehrett had nine.

Bluffton won the C-team matchup 44-3. Bennett Stoller led the Tigers with 10 points, Rafe Gerber had seven and Andy Baumgartner added five.

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## High School Calendar

MONDAY, DEC 23

WRESTLING: Bluffton at ECIC Tournament at Jay County, 9 a.m.