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SEDALIA DEMOCRAT

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Spay and Neuter Clinic to host 100 free spay/neuter event

By Chris Howell
chrish@sedaliademocrat.com

Saturday already full but more events planned

The Sedalia Spay and Neuter Clinic, 214 W. Main St., has the ambitious goal of providing 100 free pet alterations Saturday, Feb. 24.

On Tuesday, Feb. 20, Dr. Olivia Bloom was busily operating on a feline at her West Main Street clinic and spoke to the Democrat between stitches.

"We are doing 84 cats and 16 dogs," Bloom said. "We are doing all surgeries, vaccines, and microchips for the respective animals at no charge to the clients. The 100 Pet Challenge, I like that. I was doing Sedalia Saturday Special, but I like 100 Pet Challenge better. We want to help the community and do things to help people out. This was something I thought would be a step in the right direction."

Besides the gesture of offering 100 free pet alterations this weekend, Bloom offered the public a glimpse of the second phase of her community outreach.

"It hasn't been publicized yet, but you can release Part 2 early in the paper," Bloom said. "We will be selling poker chips – there's a cat one and a dog one, people can purchase these poker chips for a free spay or neuter and they can hand them out to people they think need it."

See SPAY | A5

Dr. Olivia Bloom owns the Sedalia Spay and Neuter Clinic, 214 W. Main St. The clinic will host the 100 Pet Challenge on Saturday, Feb. 24, offering 100 free pet alterations. FILE PHOTO BY CHRIS HOWELL | DEMOCRAT

On Tuesday, Feb. 20, Shelby Dotson, on left, and Karli Smith, on the right, both seniors and FFA members at Pettis County R-V Northwest High School in Hughesville, help pack meals for food insecure students in the county. FFA students from Hughesville, La Monte, Green Ridge, and Smithton helped pack 15,000 meals during the second annual event. PHOTO BY FAITH BEMISS-MCKINNEY | DEMOCRAT

Pettis County FFA students pack food for a cause

By Faith Bemiss-McKinney
faithb@sedaliademocrat.com

HUGHESVILLE — For the second year, Pettis County FFA students are looking out for fellow youth with food insecurities. On Tuesday, Feb. 20, 40 students packed 15,000 meals during the FFA Meal Packing Event at Pettis County R-V Northwest High School in Hughesville.

Last year, FFA students packed thousands of meals at Smithton R-IV High School. This year, Shelby Haag, the ag instructor at Northwest High School, oversaw the event. She said FFA members from Hughesville and La Monte R-IV, Smithton R-VI, and Green Ridge R-VIII helped pack food packages on Tuesday.

"Our thought was to give back to kids in Pettis County," she noted. "So, we chose our Pettis County FFA Chapters.

"The idea for this came from the (Missouri) State Fair," she continued. "The Missouri FFA does a drive to feed kids just like this. So, we as ag teachers got together and said, 'What can we do here in Pettis County to make a difference?'"

She added the FFA students "stepped up" and helped with the idea.

"So, we're doing 15,000 meals," she explained. "And we'll divide those out between our four chapters to distribute within our communities.

"So, here we have a small food pantry in Hughesville," she continued. "And we have one in Houstonia, and then we fill the one in Georgetown, right outside of Sedalia. Then we also give them out in Buddy Packs at our elementary (school)."

See FFA | A6

Pettis County Commissioners Israel Baeza, left, and Bill Taylor and Jim Marcum, on right, welcome newly-appointed Pettis County Prosecuting Attorney Robert Anthony Farkas, center, as he is sworn into office Tuesday, Feb. 20. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PETTIS COUNTY COMMISSION

Farkas appointed as Pettis County Prosecuting Attorney

By Democrat Staff

Tuesday, Feb. 20, the Pettis County Commission appointed Robert Anthony Farkas as the new Pettis County Prosecuting Attorney, effective immediately, for a term ending when his successor is elected or appointed and qualified by Gov. Mike Parson.

Prior to his appointment, Farkas served as an Assistant Prosecutor for the Pettis County Prosecutor's Office.

"Farkas brings decades of county and legal experience as Pettis County Prosecuting Attorney," the commission noted in a news release. "The County Commission recognizes his commitment to justice. With a distinguished career marked by integrity and duty to uphold the law, Farkas is well-equipped to serve the citizens of Pettis County and ensure the fair and

See FARKAS | A5

House votes to ban celebratory gunfire days after parade shooting

By Summer Ballentine
Associated Press

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Missouri's Republican-led House on Monday passed a bill to ban celebratory gunfire in cities less than a week after a deadly shooting at the Kansas City Chiefs' Super Bowl parade left some attending lawmakers hiding in bathrooms.

Kansas City police have said the shooting appeared to stem from a dispute between several people and not celebratory gunfire. One woman was killed and 22 people were injured. About half of the injured people were under the age of 16.

But the largely bipartisan-supported bill on celebratory gunfire represents a rare effort to regulate guns in a state with some of the most expansive laws on firearm ownership.

Already emotional Republicans and Democrats used Monday's debate on the measure to fight over the best way to address last week's shooting, and gun violence more broadly.

Kansas City Democratic Rep. Patty Lewis spoke through tears as she described hiding in an alcove to avoid being trampled.

"What made me most sad was fear that nothing was going to happen," Lewis said, referencing state gun laws. "I've seen it happen over and over."

Republican Rep. Ben Baker spoke against reacting emotionally to the shooting as Democrats shouted at him from across the House floor.

"There's always a call for stricter gun laws. It's the almost immediate reaction by many in this body when something happens like this," Baker said. "But the fact is, no law that we could pass in this body would have prevented the terrible tragedy that happened last week."

Lawmakers shortly after voted 120-26 to make shooting a firearm within city limits a misdemeanor for the first offense, with exceptions.

The measure was named after 11-year-old Blair Shanahan Lane, who was dancing with a sparkler on July 4, 2011, outside her suburban Kansas City home and was struck in the neck by a stray bullet.

Missouri lawmakers had passed Blair's Law last year as part of a sweeping crime-related bill, but GOP Gov. Mike Parson vetoed the legislation. He cited issues with other crime provisions in the bill unrelated to celebratory gunfire.

GOP Rep. Chad Perkins on Monday slammed some Democrats for voting against the bill last year, highlighting tensions between the two parties on the issue.

See GUNFIRE | A5

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OBITUARIES

Charles Kevin 'Mike' Pyle

Charles Kevin "Mike" Pyle, 68, of Sedalia, MO, passed away on Sunday, February 18, 2024, at his home. He was born on September 3, 1955, in Bremerton, WA, the son of Charles Curtis Pyle and Patricia Rose (Kindle) Pyle, who preceded him in death.

On February 2, 1979, in Sedalia, MO, he was united in marriage to Lynne Renee Cleland, who resides in the home.

Mike was a 1973 graduate of Windsor High School. Right after high school, he enlisted in the United States Navy. He served his country honorably from 1973 to 1977. He was stationed aboard the USS Ranger. After his military career, he returned to Sedalia and met the love of his life, Renee. They recently celebrated their 46th wedding anniversary.

Mike was a small business owner. He and his wife opened the Shear Happenings beauty salon in Sedalia. Later, they both got their real estate license and started Spouses Selling Houses. Mike went on to become a real estate broker with a career spanning 30-plus years.

What Mike loved above all was his sons, grandchildren, and his family. Mike was passionate about restoring homes in Sedalia. He also enjoyed mushroom hunting, fishing, deer hunting, and tinkering with his classic muscle cars.

In addition to his wife, Mike is survived by two sons, Ryan Pyle (Jamie) of Olathe, KS, and Dustin Pyle (Nasly) of North East, PA; five grandchildren, Ben, Annabelle, Jacob, Reksten, and Mariangel; four siblings, Debbie Brewer (John) of Windsor, Kirby Pyle of Windsor, Christy Pyle of Sedalia, and Kerry Pyle (Theresa) of Sedalia; and numerous, nieces, nephews, and cousins.

In addition to his parents, Mike was preceded in death by a brother, Curtis Pyle.

A celebration of life gathering will be announced by the family at a later date.

Mike was a giving person. He gave more than he took in this world. Memorial contributions may be made to the family to continue Mike's legacy of giving.

Arrangements are in the care of Rea Funeral Chapel.

FUNERALS

Rosann Saddler

2 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22 at Calvary Cemetery in Sedalia. Arrangements are under the direction of Rea Funeral Chapel in Sedalia.

William "Bill" Douglas Talbott

10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 24 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Cole Camp. Arrangements are under the direction of Fox Funeral Home in Cole Camp.

Irene L. Rudloff

1:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 24 at Markland-Yager Funeral Home in New Franklin. Arrangements are under the direction of Markland-Yager Funeral Home.

David Oconel "Rerun" Waters

1 p.m. Saturday, March 2 at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses in Sedalia. Arrangements are under the direction of Heckart Funeral Home in Sedalia.

CRASH REPORTS

Warsaw pedestrian seriously injured in Benton accident

Troy C. Ethridge, 39, of Warsaw, was seriously injured at 9:55 p.m. Monday in a Benton County accident.

According to a Missouri State Highway Patrol report, an unknown vehicle struck Ethridge as he was walking on the shoulder of U.S. Highway 65 on the Osage River bridge.

Ethridge was transported by Warsaw-Lincoln Ambulance District to Bothwell Regional Health Center in Sedalia.

Information is taken from preliminary Missouri State Highway Patrol reports, which do not necessarily contain statements from all parties involved.

Compiled by Chris Howell.

Check out our E-Editions to find what you're looking for!

SEDALIA DEMOCRAT

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Photo Submissions

We invite readers to submit photos for "Community Snapshot," which features images of local residents and events. Images must be current, in JPEG format and must be the property of the person submitting the photo. Please include your name, city and a contact telephone number with your submission (phone numbers will not be published). Please also include the names of all persons in the photo and any additional information. Email your submissions to news@sedaliademocrat.com.

POLICE REPORTS

This list is a sampling of crime in Sedalia and the surrounding area. Information is taken from official police reports, which do not necessarily contain statements from all parties involved in each case.

Sedalia Police Department Arrests

Feb. 14

1:35 a.m.: John R. Snethen, 47, of Green Ridge, was arrested after a traffic stop for one working headlight in the 800 block of Winchester Drive. Snethen had a revoked driving status and was transported to the Pettis County Jail, booked and released.

Feb. 15

10:26 a.m.: Ronda Simmons, 40, of the 500 block of West Fourth Street, was arrested after a vehicle stop for expired registration near West Seventh Street and South Missouri Avenue. Simmons had a revoked driving status, a failure to appear warrant from Pettis County, and was intoxicated. She was transported to the Pettis County Jail for driving while intoxicated-drugs, driving with a suspended license, and failure to appear.

Feb. 16

4:28 a.m.: Jimmy Wayne Torres, 63, of the 400 block of East Chestnut Street, was arrested after an officer was dispatched to West Sixth Street and South Missouri Avenue to assist with a traffic stop. The driver had a denied driving status and was intoxicated. Torres was arrested and transported to Bothwell Regional Health Center for a blood draw. A request for charges of driving while intoxicated-chronic offender and driving with a revoked license were submitted to the prosecutor.

Feb. 17

11:16 p.m.: LaTasha Reams, 52, of Jefferson City, was arrested after a traffic stop for a lane violation near West Broadway Boulevard and South Limit Avenue. Reams was intoxicated and had a revoked driving status. She was transported to the police department and then the Pettis County Jail pending charges of driving while intoxicated-persistent offender and driving with a revoked license.

Feb. 16

Midnight: John Henry Carney, 25, of the 1300 block of South Missouri Avenue, was arrested after being stopped for moving violations and suspicion of driving while intoxicated in the 900 block of Marshall Avenue. Carney was intoxicated and was transported to the Pettis County Jail and booked for DWI-prior offender.

3:11 p.m.: James Marion Curd, 30, of the 1100 block of Wilkerson Street, was arrested after a vehicle stop for speeding. Curd was transported to the Pettis County Jail and for driving while intoxicated-drugs and driving with a revoked license.

9:48 p.m.: Steven Weeks, 26, of the 1400 block of South Harrison Avenue, was arrested after a vehicle stop for a headlight out and speeding at West 13th Street and South Missouri Avenue. Weeks was impaired by drugs, transported to the Pettis County Jail, booked and released for driving while intoxicated-drugs.

Feb. 17

7:38 p.m.: Paul Joseph Lewman, 19, of the 600 block of East 12th Street, was arrested after officers responded in reference to an assault. An assault had occurred and Lewman was issued a summons.

8:52 p.m.: Charles Nelson Showman, 36, of Otterville, was arrested after a vehicle stop near North Hurley Avenue and East Saline Street. Showman was in possession of methamphetamine and was transported to the Pettis County Jail and placed on a 24-hour hold pending charges of felony possession of a controlled substance, driving without a valid license, failure to maintain financial responsibility, and no registration.

10:50 p.m.: Rudy Sub Choc, 20, of the 400 block of West Henry Street, was arrested after an officer stopped a vehicle for a defective headlight near West Main Street and Industrial Boulevard. A computer check revealed Choc did not have a valid driver's license and he was transported to the Sedalia Police Department, booked and released.

Feb. 18

2:47 a.m.: Latasha T. Reams, 52, of Jefferson City, was arrested after a traffic stop for failing to maintain a lane on East Broadway Boulevard. Reams was driving while intoxicated with a revoked driver's license and was transported to the Sedalia Police Department, booked and released to a sober driver.

See **POLICE REPORTS | A3**

LOCAL BRIEFS

Knights of Columbus to host Lenten Fish Frydays

The Knights of Columbus will host its annual Lenten Fish Frydays from 4 to 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 23, Friday, March 8 and Friday, March 22 at the Sedalia Knights Hall, 1708 Elm Hills Blvd. All are welcome to attend.

Women's Service League to host Cupid's Ball

The Women's Service League of Sedalia is planning its 25th annual Cupid's Ball for 6:30 to 9 p.m. Saturday, March 2.

The "Welcome to Candy Land"-themed ball will take place at the Smith-Cotton High School cafeteria. Girls ages 5-12 are invited to ask their favorite guy – father, stepfather, uncle, or grandfather – to the dance. The goal is to create an opportunity for fathers and daughters to spend time together at a fun and memorable event that raises funds to support the community.

Tickets are $25 per person and are on sale at wslsedalia.org. The ticket includes light refreshments, a professional photo booth and selfie stations, crafts, face painting and dancing.

Upcoming local blood drives

The American Red Cross urges donors to give blood or platelets to continue to strengthen the national blood supply this month. People of all blood types, especially type O blood donors, the most needed blood group by hospitals and platelet donors, are needed daily to ensure blood products are available for hospitals.

While thousands of donors have answered the call to donate in recent weeks to combat a significant drop in the blood supply, more donors are needed to ensure the blood supply remains ready for those in need of lifesaving medical procedures.

Donors can make an appointment to give blood or platelets by visiting RedCrossBlood.org, downloading the Red Cross Blood Donor App, or calling 1-800-RED CROSS. All who come to give in February will get a $20 Amazon gift card.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities:

Feb. 22 from noon to 4 p.m. at Lamy's, 108 W. Pacific St. in Sedalia.

Feb. 23 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Missouri Department of Social Services, 505 N. Ridgeview Drive Suite A in Warrensburg.

Feb. 29 from noon to 5 p.m. at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1201 W. Broadway Blvd. in Sedalia.

Feb. 29 from 1 to 5 p.m. at Countryside Eagles 4286, 29354 state Highway H in Lincoln.

Democrat Salutes

Reed & Sons' Fine Jewelry and Repair hosted a food drive to help Open Door Service Center fight hunger in Pettis County. Reed & Sons' collected 117 pounds of food. From left are Open Door Director of Development Michelle O'Donnell and Executive Director Amanda Davis. PHOTO COURTESY OF OPEN DOOR SERVICE CENTER

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MIZZOU FALL 2023 DEAN'S LIST

Editor's note: *In the Feb. 1 edition of the Democrat, the spring 2023 list was inadvertently published instead of the fall 2023 list. The Democrat apologizes for the error.*

The University of Missouri-Columbia has announced the 11,617 undergraduate students who made the dean's list during the fall 2023 semester.

Blackburn: Katarina E. Langan.

Calhoun: Jessalyn E. Caple.

California: Grace Ann Henley, Gabrielle Ruth Rohrbach, Camryn J. Schlup, Caitlyn Elizabeth Thompson.

Clinton: Kylie Jo Bateman, Quincy R. Crawford, Jeffry Bradford Davis, Olivia S. Goth, Olivia Ann Kiely, Olivia Marie Klassen, Mallory Elizabeth Millsap, Katie Carlene Mitchell, Heaven Leigh Portman, Bryanne Carolyn Kennedy Smith, Ella Christine Swaters, Christian Dehn Voelmeck, Aidan Robert Wirkkula.

Cole Camp: Brooklyn N. Cross, Malachi James Fox, Keygan C. Fox, Ethan Cameron Ives, Aiden W. Murphy, Ashley Paige Schear, Carter B. Wienberg.

Deepwater: Corbin James Meeker.

Gravois Mills: Camryn C, Bass, Julia Danielle Beil, Dominick Alexander Sampson, Maria A. Silva, Grace K. Whitmer, Ruby Ashton Wright.

Houstonia: Emily A. Gregory, Mason A. Locke.

Hughesville: Alyssa Brooke Gear, Lily Brooke Ream, William Richard Boone Schroeder.

Jamestown: Emma J. Baepler, Sara Marie Hanrahan-Peck, Clark S. Rohrbach, Kylee J. Russell, Anna R. Scheperle.

Kingsville: Avery D. Vance.

Knob Noster: Timothy Mitchell Anderson, Alyssa Marie Anderson, Abigail E. Collier, Jayden C.E. Grisham, Ella Rose Konrad, Krystiana Therise Valelo.

Leeton: Regan Suzanne Shaffer.

Marshall: Kailei Marie Allen, Genesis R. Barcenas, Maxwell Smith Betz, Trevor Shane Borgman, Margaret Violet Bunch, Grant M. Clemmons, Connor D. Grossenburg, Jack J. Huston, Ella Ryan Ming, Kylie Jane Pestka, Nicholas Edward Shireman, Jeremiah Robert Trussell, John H. Ulbrich, Skylar Paige Walton, James Brendan Weaver.

Rocky Mount: Bailey Grace McCuddin, Gillian Lea Rens.

Sedalia: Zachary Charles Amos, Robert William Biermann, Chloe Elizabeth Buckley, Michael Scott Castiglia, Chloee J. Crafton, Jacquelyn LaRue Fairfax, Raegan Nicole Fairfax, Chloe Ann Fiet, Mya D. Fowler, Katelin Ashley Frame, Jack Richard Joshua Franklin, Natan Godunok, Laura Granados, Kaden John Green, Carlos Guzman Nunez, Maribeth Elaine Hammers, Elise R. Hawley, Maggie He, Marigrace C. Heinze, Gracie Kay Hofheins, William Reese Hooton, Anita A. Husyeva, Faith Lin Johnson, Envie Lakota B. Johnson, Chase Matthew Marshall, Caroline Alaine Matz, Brian Lewis Oster, Elijah James Reed, Mariana Restrepo, Allyson Keeley Sampson, Arden M. Schupp, Jessi B. Sparks, Abigail Rose Tippie, Ethan A. Trotter, Austyn Klay Wenner, Megan Nicole Wingerter.

Smithton: Josie Rachel Bray.

Sweet Springs: Kolton Michael King, Grant Thomas Knipmeyer, Zachary Ron Vogelsmeier.

Tipton: Madeline R. Baer, Kiley A. Bailey, Spencer Ray Gross.

Warrensburg: Rebecca Lynn Burns, Victoria Noel Crabtree, Tiyana Christine Crankfield, Breanna J. Derritt, Yia Si Huang, Qi Huang, Emily E. Ikerd, Todd L. Lancaster, Aidan Byron McMurphy, William Stewart Samson, Jillian F. Voskovitch.

Warsaw: Morgan Taylor Branson, Justice Benjamin Gutierrez, Nicole Pauline Hockett, Andrea Elizabeth Merritt.

Windsor: Adam Wayne Warlen.

Astronomers find what may be the universe's brightest object

By Marcia Dunn
AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Astronomers have discovered what may be the brightest object in the universe, a quasar with a black hole at its heart growing so fast that it swallows the equivalent of a sun a day.

The record-breaking quasar shines 500 trillion times brighter than our sun. The black hole powering this distant quasar is more than 17 billion times more immense than our sun, an Australian-led team reported Monday in the journal Nature Astronomy.

While the quasar resembles a mere dot in images, scientists envision a ferocious place.

The rotating disk around the quasar's black hole — the luminous swirling gas and other matter from gobbled-up stars — is like a cosmic hurricane.

"This quasar is the most violent place that we know in the universe," lead author Christian Wolf of Australian National University said in an email.

The European Southern Observatory spotted the object, J0529-4351, during a 1980 sky survey, but it was thought to be a star. It was not identified as a quasar — the extremely active and luminous core of a galaxy — until last year. Observations by telescopes in Australia and Chile's Atacama Desert clinched it.

"The exciting thing about this quasar is that it was hiding in plain sight and was misclassified as a star previously," Yale University's Priyamvada Natarajan, who was not involved in the study, said in an email.

These later observations and computer modeling have determined that the quasar is gobbling up the equivalent of 370 suns a year — roughly one a day. Further analysis shows the mass of the black hole to be 17 to 19 billion times that of our sun, according to the team. More observations are needed to understand its growth rate.

The quasar is 12 billion light-years away and has been around since the early days of the universe. A light-year is 5.8 trillion miles.

POLICE REPORTS

Continued FROM A2

3:42 a.m.: Alicia Carlos, 24, of the 400 block of North Prospect Avenue, was arrested after a vehicle stop for a plate light out. Carlos was intoxicated, had no license and provided a false identity. She was arrested on state charges of driving while intoxicated, driving without a license, failure to maintain financial responsibility and ID theft and placed on a 24-hour hold.

11:22 p.m.: Rachel Kathleene Becker, 32, of the 700 block of 11th Street, was arrested after a traffic stop at the intersection of West Broadway Boulevard and Park Avenue on a vehicle with a defective headlight and expired registration. Becker was placed under arrest for driving with a suspended license.

2:14 p.m.: Cody Allen Edgar, 25, of Smithton, was arrested after a traffic stop for traveling into the oncoming lane of traffic near North Hurley Avenue and East Saline Street. Edgar's driving privileges were found to be revoked and he was arrested and transported to the Pettis County Jail.

Feb. 19

12:57 a.m.: Julio David Farias Valencia, 21, of the 2200 block of South Washington Avenue, was arrested after a vehicle stop near the 2000 block of South Washington Avenue for failing to stop prior to the stop line and indications of impaired driving. Valencia was intoxicated by a combination of drugs and alcohol and was in possession of two different identifications. He was placed under arrest and transported to the Pettis County Jail and placed on a 24-hour hold pending State charges of driving while intoxicated-drugs and identity theft.

Incidents

Feb. 13

10:31 a.m.: Officers took a report in the police department lobby regarding an alleged harassment report. They spoke with the reporting party from the 400 block of Welch Court and gathered information for a report.

Feb. 18

11:59 p.m.: Officers were dispatched to a business in the 3200 block of West Broadway Boulevard in reference to a dog being stolen from inside someone's vehicle. A written statement from the person reporting the theft of their pet was gathered in the police department lobby.

Feb. 16

8:50 a.m.: Officers were dispatched to a business in the 2300 block of West Broadway Boulevard for a report of goods purchased with counterfeit money. They gathered information and a report was completed.

1:28 p.m.: Officers were dispatched to the police department lobby for a harassment report. Information was collected and a report was completed.

5:22 p.m.: Officers were dispatched for a harassment report in the 1000 block of West Seventh Street. Information was gathered, documentation of the harassment was sent to officers and a report was completed.

Feb. 17

4:27 p.m.: An officer responded to a business in the 1100 block of South Limit Avenue for a report of identity theft and fraud. The victim reported an account was opened in their name and more than $1,000 was used in the account without their knowledge.

11:15 p.m.: Officers responded to the 1000 block of South Marvin Avenue for an attempted vehicle theft. Information for a report was collected.

Feb. 18

9:43 a.m.: Police responded to a business in the 700 block of East Broadway Boulevard after receiving information a subject was burning things in the restroom. A report was completed because the subject left behind medications.

12:26 p.m.: Officers were dispatched to the 1000 block of Marvin Avenue after a pair of unknown suspects trespassed onto the property in an attempt to get into a car. The suspects are unknown at this time.

1:06 p.m.: Officers were dispatched to the 200 block of East Second Street about property damage involving a vehicle. They spoke with the victim and gathered information for a report.

11:53 p.m.: Officers responded to a hit-and-run that occurred at East Fourth Street and Engineer Avenue. They met with the reporting party, who stated the vehicle was hit in the rear and the other car sped off through an alley. A case report and accident report were completed.

Feb. 20

2:13 a.m.: Officers responded to the 1800 block of South Quincy Avenue in reference to a property damage report. They spoke with a reporting party who stated his door was kicked in, causing damage. No suspects have been identified.

Pettis County Sheriff's Office Arrests

Feb. 16

8:45 p.m.: Arely Metacua, of Sedalia, was arrested after a traffic stop for speeding in the 6500 block of Highway Y. Metacua did not have a current operator's license and was arrested and released on scene with a citation.

Missouri State Highway Patrol Arrests

Feb. 18

9:44 p.m.: Lonnie E. Nelson, 22, of Sedalia, was arrested in Johnson County for driving while intoxicated and speeding. He was transported to the Warrensburg Police Department and released.

Compiled by Chris Howell.

HOOVER'S
BULK FOOD STORE, LLC
HooversBulkFoodStore.com Prices Good til Feb 27
Deli Sale
Deli Pepperoni $5.99/lb.
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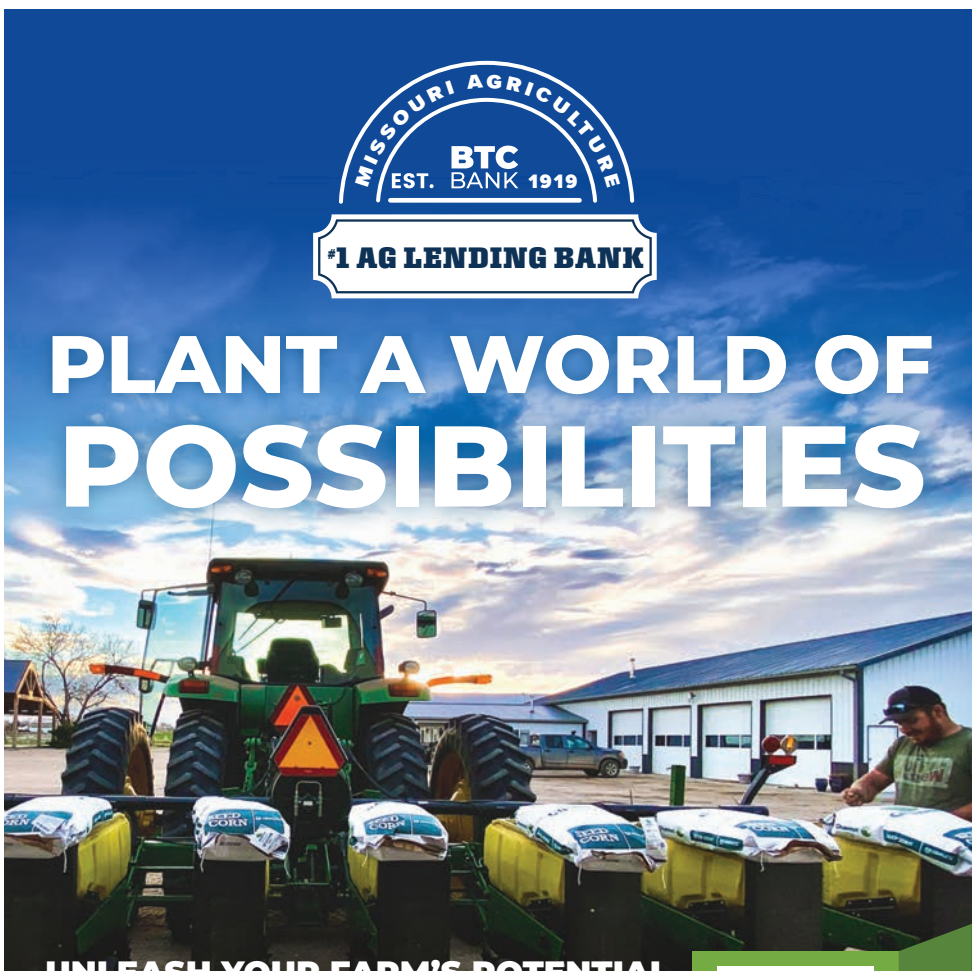
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THE ROCKWOOD FILES

Mom and daughter hit some turbulence

Gwen Rockwood
Syndicated Columnist

Life was at a comfortable cruising altitude, and we were happy to be along for the ride. But then it nosedived, and some unseen force shoved me and my mom into a small room and slammed the door behind us. We looked around and realized we were alone in the cockpit, expected to take control and make a thousand different decisions to safely land the plane.

The only problem? We've never had flying lessons.

It's probably not the perfect metaphor for beginning cancer treatments, but it's as close as I can get. The process is complex, and the stakes couldn't be higher.

After being diagnosed with colon cancer in October and recovering from a November surgery, my mom recently completed chemotherapy's Round One – a 21-day cycle. As her co-pilot, I organized the pills, went with her to doctors' appointments, and watched for side effects. But the first eight days were all blue skies and sunshine. We're good at this cancer thing, we thought. We can do this.

Slowly, the fatigue crept in, followed by the mouth sores, but Mom continued to work her 40-hour-a-week job through Day 14. We were due for the first "off week" from chemo, which we naively believed was going to be a relaxing seven days of no side effects.

We could not have been more mistaken. By Day 16, she was as sick as I have ever seen another human be. She felt betrayed by her own body, and I felt helpless to make it better. It took five phone calls to nurses, four bags of IV fluids, three extra prescriptions, and over two solid weeks of severe "adverse reactions" before things improved.

Now I finally understand why chemo is described as a "round." It's no accident that the same word used in a boxing match is used for chemo treatment, too. She fought against extreme side effects while I endured the gut punch of watching someone I love suffer so intensely. The whole experience was visceral and raw.

When Mom and I sit among other cancer patients at the clinic, we know that they understand what this experience is like. There are so many of us there – the patients and those of us who love them. Last week, as I watched these fellow flyers in the waiting room, I realized how ironic it is when people say that someone "can't work" anymore because they have cancer. I've honestly never seen people work harder than they do when they're getting treatment for a severe illness. I'm stunned and humbled by it.

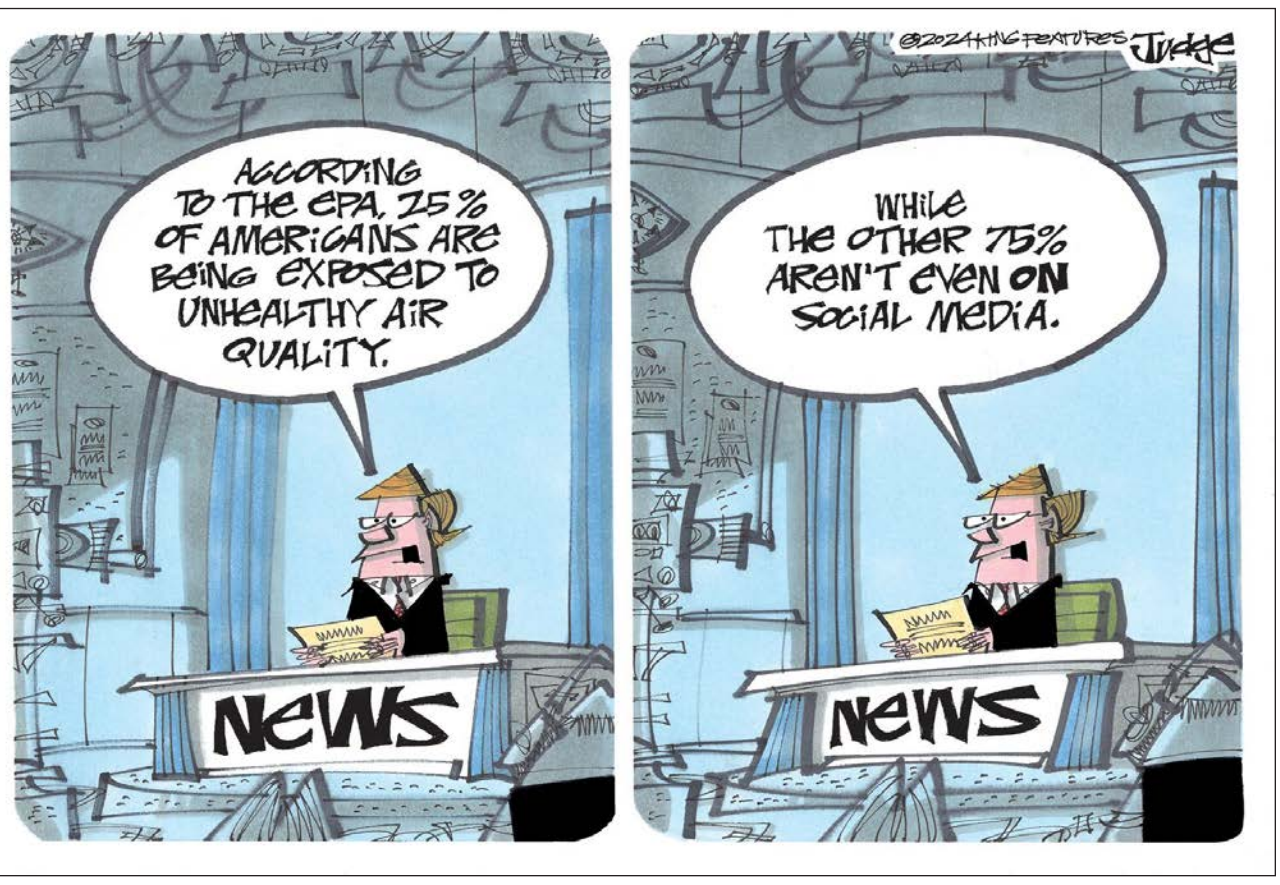
When simply standing up and walking a few steps to the bathroom takes every ounce of strength and determination you have, you understand the true essence of work.

Having recovered from a brutal Round One of oral chemo, my mom began Round Two yesterday at a reduced dose. We're not newbies anymore, so we're trying to brace for the turbulence we know may come. We're an ever-changing mixture of terrified and hopeful.

Even though I grew up in a culture that taught us to keep a stiff upper lip and "stay strong," I've already failed that mantra many times. I hope it truly is "okay to not be okay" because some of these moments wreck me.

All I know how to do is crack, break, repair, recover, and move forward – over and over again – as we fly toward hope on the horizon.

Gwen Rockwood is a syndicated freelance columnist. Email her at gwenrockwood5@gmail.com. Her book is available on Amazon.



CONTRIBUTING COLUMN

Pettis Countian hosts successful sale of jacks & jennets

Rhonda Chalfant
Contributing Columnist

Because of premiums won at international shows, Louis Monsees and Sons of Limestone Valley Farm near Smithton were recognized throughout the world as breeders of quality mules, jacks, and jennets. According to the Sedalia Democrat, the farm's annual sales drew buyers from several states and brought in high dollars, largely due to Monsees' reputation not only for offering quality stock but also for his "truthfulness and honesty."

The 31st annual auction was held on Tuesday, March 3, 1908. This was a sale not of mules, which are sterile and so cannot breed, but of jennets, a female offspring of a male donkey and a mare, and jacks, the male donkeys that are bred to mares to produce mules. Over the years, selective breeding had resulted in jacks that were tall, well-muscled and powerful. Solid black or black with white markings was the preferred color.

Monsees arranged for the comfort and convenience of his buyers. He had hired a special train with two cars under the direction of Conductor Winner to leave the Sedalia depot at 8:40 a.m. and take out-of-town visitors to Smithton. He had also arranged for enough "conveyances," most likely carriages and buggies, to take them to the farm for the sale.

At the farm, Monsees had erected a large tent with seating for the buyers and spectators. The tent was warmed with what the Democrat snidely called "auctioneer gas," the hot air generated by the amount of talk between the auctioneer and the customers during the auctioneer's chant.

Monsees had also arranged for a noon meal to be offered to the visitors. The ladies of the Smithton Christian church served a "most excellent dinner" for 25 cents. Monsees told the women to allow each guest to have "all he could eat." In return, Monsees gave the women an additional 10 cents for each meal they served.

The women earned "something over $130" for their church and its mission work, or approximately $4,495 in 2022's dollars, according to measuringworth.com, a website that compares the relative purchasing power of money over time. Considering the increase in prices since 2022, the total amount earned was probably even higher.

The auctioneers included R.L. Harrimon of Bunceton, J.W. Sparks of Marshall, C.J. Kemp Hieronymus of Sedalia, H.V. Harrison of Fulton, Lafe Burger of Wellington, Kansas, and John Snyder of Winfield, Kansas. D.O. Monsees handled the books, properly recording each sale.

The sale began with auctioneers Harriman and Sparks selling a group of jennets. The 23 jennets sold for a total of $3,650 (or $126,893). The highest price paid for one animal was $320 (or $11,064).

After lunch, the sale of jacks began. Twenty-six jacks brought a total of $20,245 (or $699,989). The first jack sold was High Tide 1564, a black jack with white markings. The 5-year-old animal was 16 and a half hands high.

A "hand" as a unit of measure is 4 inches, and measures the height of a horse or jack from the ground to the withers or the top of the shoulders. Thus, High Tide 1564 measured 5 feet, 6 inches tall at the shoulders.

After 30 minutes of bidding, E.J. Hutchins of Sterling, Kansas, purchased High Tide 1564 for $2,030 (or $70,189), the highest price ever paid for an animal at one of Monsees' auctions.

J.B. Finley of Houstonia purchased The Admiral 1937, a 7-year-old black jack with white markings, for $1,200 (or $41,491).

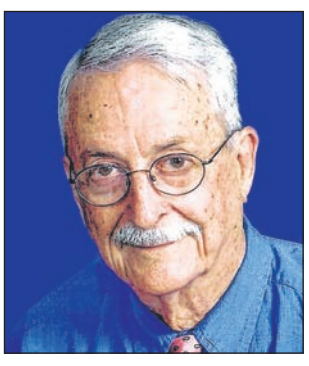
The sale continued until all 26 jacks had been sold. The lowest price for an animal was $230 (or $7,952), paid by Frank Palmer of Illinois for Lion Prince, a 2-year-old black jack with white markings.

The total amount generated by the sale was $27,500 (or $950,837). However, Monsees paid the cost of purchasing or raising the breeding stock, maintaining the farm and its buildings, feeding the animals, providing veterinarian care, paying the employees, and all the other expenses that go into running a successful farm, as well as dividing the profits with the sons that co-owned the operation, so no one actually made a great deal of money.

Rhonda Chalfant is active in the Sedalia/Pettis County chapter of NAACP and the Pettis County Historical Society.

CONTRIBUTING COLUMN

Hur's report isn't just about Biden



Doug Kneibert
Contributing Columnist

Independent counsel Robert Hur's report on President Joe Biden's mishandling of highly classified material has been submitted to the Justice Department. It's both critical and exonerating.

The report, which covers Biden's public career from 2009 to 2017, states that he stored highly classified material in unsecured locations, which posed "serious risks to national security."

But Hur declined to recommend criminal charges on the grounds that President Biden's "memory appeared to have significant limitations," citing several examples in his report.

That prompted the White House and Democrats to circle the wagons and express their shock and outrage that Hur would say such things about the president, even though it's required in an independent counsel's report.

Is telling the truth now to be condemned? That Biden has been in cognitive decline for years is painfully evident to everyone, especially his handlers.

And things are getting worse. Who can forget the sight of Biden, after making a speech in Pennsylvania last month, being led off the stage by his wife as one would lead a child? That this is the president of the United States we're talking about elevates Biden's condition to a looming constitutional crisis.

President Biden deserves our sympathy for his medical condition, but that shouldn't obscure the shocking weakness in the Executive Branch, which our enemies are eager to exploit.

What isn't explained in the Hur report is how it was possible that Biden retained – for years – many boxes of classified material that he stashed in his home, an office he used in Washington, and even his garage. He kept it even after he became a private citizen, and "knew that he was not allowed to do so," the Hur report states. In other words, Biden willfully broke the law.

If he was allowed to remove those boxes from wherever they were stored in Washington, which never should have happened, did anyone in authority care that he never returned them? Evidently not.

What Biden did should have alerted someone in Washington to start asking questions, for questions regarding the "chain of custody" governing classified material clearly called for action. That also was a major security breach, every bit as serious as what Biden did.

The House of Representatives needs to investigate how such a thing could have happened, and ensure that the nation's secrets get the protection they deserve.

Doug Kneibert is a former editor of the Sedalia Democrat.

Letters to the Editor Policy

The Sedalia Democrat welcomes letters from its readers on topics of general public interest.

Persons with questions concerning Letters to the Editor may contact the Democrat at 660-826-1000 during regular business hours. Please note the following guidelines for letters and their submission:

- All letters to be considered for publication must include the name and address of the writer and a daytime telephone number where the writer may be reached during normal business hours.
- All letters must be signed. The name and hometown of the writer will be published.
- Letters must be 250 words or less.
- Letters may be mailed to:

Letters to the editor, Sedalia Democrat, 111 W. Fourth St., Sedalia, Mo., 65301 or emailed to news@sedaliademocrat.com.

UCM to premiere 'Xanadu' in Highlander Theatre

Enjoy an evening of musical fantasy as University of Central Missouri Theatre and Dance and UCM Music present Douglas Carter Beane's "Xanadu" at the James L. Highlander Theatre. Curtain time is 7:30 p.m. Feb. 22-24 and matinees are planned for 2 p.m. Feb. 24-25.

"Xanadu" is a mystical mixture of Greek mythology and pop culture in a joyous celebration of love and inspiration set to the tunes of the Electric Light Orchestra. This musical comedy — based on the 1980s movie of the same name starring Olivia Newton-John and Gene Kelly — follows a Greek muse named Clio, who descends from Mount Olympus to Venice Beach in the 1980s. Disguised as an Australian roller skater named Kira, Clio helps struggling artist, Sonny, fulfill his dreams of creating a roller disco.

When asked about the production, Director Jenise Cook stated, "It is a musical full of '80s nostalgia. You won't be able to stop yourself from laughing, singing, and dancing along to the tunes of ELO! This show has always been one of my favorites because of how timeless it feels. It really is a good time."

UCM Theatre and Dance welcomes special guest actor and former UCM Theatre and Dance faculty member and chair, Dr. Richard "Buzz" Herman, in the role of Danny Maguire/Zeus.

"It is such an honor to be asked to return to the Highlander Stage and collaborate with these wonderfully gifted students and faculty members," Herman said. "What better time can one have than acting, singing and dancing?"

Prior to the performance at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, April 24, UCM Theatre and Dance will honor Todd Proffitt as the recipient of the 2024 Dr. Ed See Outstanding Theatre Alumnus Award. See, on his retirement from the University of Central

Outstanding Theatre Alumnus to be honored

Missouri, established this award through the University Alumni Foundation. The purpose of the endowment is to honor UCM Theatre alumni who have in some way distinguished themselves in theatre education, community theatre, or in some area of professional theatre and have demonstrated commitment and love for theatre arts. The award recognizes those alumni who have honored their alma mater through their dedication and various theatrical achievements.

Proffitt is a freelance lighting designer, also serving as Senior Assistant Dean for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at SUNY-Fredonia and Professor in the Department of Theatre and Dance where he teaches Lighting Design, Sound Design and Computer Technologies. He has served in a variety of technical and design positions in companies such as Theatre of Youth in Buffalo, The Chautauqua Theatre Company, Cortland Rep, The Paul Robeson Theatre, Buffalo State College, The Producers Circle, Wildwood Park for the Performing Arts, Angelfire Mountain Theatre Group, Central Missouri Repertory and others.

Proffitt has been active in the United States Institute for Theatre Technology for more than 15 years. He has worked in the Lighting Commission as the Student Volunteer Coordinator in the Light Lab, Light Lab Chair and Vice Commissioner for Programing 2011 and 2014. He served as the Lighting Commissioner for four years, and currently chairs the Awards Committee. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the Faculty Student Association at Fredonia and the Theater of Youth Company in Buffalo.

In May 1999, Proffitt received his Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Design at Texas Tech University, and in 1994, he graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from what was then Central Missouri State University. He was the recipient of The United States Institute for Theatre Technology's Barbizon Award for Lighting Design in 1999.

For three years, he wrote a blog on using computer technologies at Digital Tools for the Performing Arts and spent three years writing a column in "Stage Directions" magazine called "TD Talk." Proffitt's portfolio and website can be found at toddproffitt.com.

On Sunday, Feb. 25 for the matinee, UCM Theatre and Dance will present its Pay-What-You-Can performance. Audiences may choose to pay any amount, $1 or above, for a ticket. Additionally, for the Friday evening performance, ASL interpreters will be provided. New this year, all tickets for UCM Theatre and Dance productions are free for UCM students upon showing their UCM student ID. Tickets are also free for active military, veterans, and military families upon purchasing at the Theatre and Dance Box Office with a military ID.

Free parking is available in the parking lot directly south of the Highlander Theatre.

Tickets are available at the UCM Theatre and Dance Office in Martin 113 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, by calling 660-543-8811 or by visiting ucmboxoffice.universitytickets.com. Individuals who have questions about tickets should call 660-543-8811 or email boxoffice@ucmo.edu.

For more information, contact Dr. Aaron Scully at ascully@ucmo.edu or call the Theatre and Dance main office at 660-543-4020.

Release courtesy of the University of Central Missouri.

Supreme Court leaves admissions plan in place at elite Virginia school

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Tuesday left in place the admissions policy at an elite public high school in Virginia that some parents claimed discriminates against highly qualified Asian Americans.

The court's order, over the dissent of Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas, ended a legal challenge to a policy that was overhauled in 2020 to increase diversity, without taking race into account.

A panel of the federal appeals court in Richmond had earlier upheld the constitutionality of the admissions policy at the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, a school frequently cited among the best in the nation.

The high court's consideration of the case followed its decision in June that struck down admissions policies at colleges and universities that took account of the race of applicants.

The Fairfax County School Board overhauled the Thomas Jefferson admissions process in 2020, scrapping a standardized test. The new policy gives weight in favor of applicants who are economically disadvantaged or still learning English, but it does not take race into account.

The effect in the first freshman class admitted under it was to increase the percentage of Black students from 1% to 7% and Hispanic students from 3% to 11%. Both groups have been greatly underrepresented for decades. Asian American representation decreased from 73% to 54%.

For the current school year, Black and Hispanic students made up 6.7% and 6%, respectively, of those offered admission, the school board said. Asian Americans represented 61.6% of those admitted, the board said.

'We have long believed that the new admissions process is both constitutional and in the best interest of all of our students. It guarantees that all qualified students from all neighborhoods in Fairfax County have a fair shot at attending this exceptional high school," said Karl Frisch, Fairfax County School Board chair.

In 2022, a federal judge found the school board engaged in impermissible "racial balancing" when it overhauled admissions. The appeals court reversed that ruling.

Alito wrote that the district court got it right. The appeals court essentially ruled that "intentional racial discrimination is constitutional so long as it is not too severe," he wrote.

Farkas

From Page A1

effective administration of the office. His commitment to public service and his track record of success makes him an outstanding choice to lead the Pettis County Prosecutor's Office."

Farkas's appointment comes following the vacancy resulting from former Prosecuting Attorney Phillip Sawyer's appointment earlier this month as Associate Circuit Judge for Pettis County in the 18th Judicial Circuit.

Sawyer is filling the vacancy created by the appointment of Judge Jeff Mittelhauser to Presiding Circuit Judge. Mittelhauser was appointed as Presiding Judge in November and took over the role in January. Mittelhauser's appointment was to fill a vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Robert Koffman, who retired in December after serving in the position since 2005.

"We are thankful for Judge Sawyer's years of service and trust that Mr. Farkas will continue to represent the interests of the citizens of Pettis County," the commission said in the release.

Gunfire

From Page A1

"I am disgusted at the hypocrisy from the other side," Perkins yelled into a microphone. "It is this side that voted for a gun bill."

Majority Leader Jon Patterson, who lives in a Kansas City suburb, on Monday told reporters that House Republicans are "pretty adament" in their support for "law abiding citizens' Second Amendment rights." But he said lawmakers should be open to wide-ranging policy solutions in response to the shooting.

"What happened last week was tragic," Patterson said. "So we should be willing to look at gun policy, social policy, mental health policy, public safety and crime policy to address those problems."

Spay

From Page A1

The "poker chips," tokens that can be used to pay for a cat alteration, are $40, and poker chips costing $100 are available for dogs under 60 pounds.

"Say they have a friend or a neighbor they know needs to get an animal altered," Bloom said. "They can purchase it, they can hand it out, or they can drop money into our donation box up front. When we have enough for a free cat spay or neuter or a free dog spare or neuter, I will hand out the poker chips to the respective shelters, either Warrensburg or Sedalia, and their animal control can go around and hand it out."

Sponsors who want to buy tokens to be distributed are greatly needed, as the number of people reaching out for free pet alterations proves.

"We filled up," Bloom said. "We had over 300 phone calls within the first couple hours of it being published and it filled up. We weren't able to keep up with voicemails, so it took us 12 business hours to go through voicemails."

While there are no more free spay/neuters available this weekend, hopefully, with some generous sponsor's donation, more 100 Pet Challenges will happen at the clinic.

"This is something I wanted to start and keep going year-round," Bloom said. "People can sponsor chips. We have not obtained our sponsors for this event yet, but we're still going to do it regardless and I'm hoping that this will bring awareness to the sponsors in the community that I would like to do another one, and another one, and another one."

As the vet deftly finished stitching up one newly sterile kitten, she shared her plan for reducing pet overpopulation.

"I call it pay it forward, just donations," Bloom said. "Spread the word that we're here to help and we're working on different programs to help people in need."

Bloom promises new programs in the future to help stem the tide of unwanted litters of puppies and kittens.

"There are more things that we're going to try to do later on as far as maybe a community cat day, or a vaccine clinic," Bloom said. "Those are all things that I do want to do this year, and we'll get them done. Follow our Facebook page because that's where I'll be posting all the events."

Just the number of staff needed to cope with the 100 pet services Saturday shows the Spay and Neuter Clinic has a need to expand.

"It filled up so fast and I'm aware that there's a huge need for it, and my only fix that I know is to have people step up and help sponsor more of them so that we can do them more often," Bloom said. "They did wonderful keeping up with the phone lines and booking the appointments and I did the best that I could to plan and prepare for it because I knew it would be a lot. I did not expect the incredible outpour of cries for help I got. Even if I had four vets here full time, it would still be full, I can promise you."

For more information, visit www.facebook.com/thespayandneuterclinicllcsedalia or call 660-827-4844.

Chris Howell can be reached at 660-530-0146.

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FFA students Landon Blankenship, left, a sophomore from Green Ridge R-VIII High School, and Josh Birch, a junior, help seal food packages for the annual food packing event on Tuesday, Feb. 20, for students in Pettis County. PHOTOS BY FAITH BEMISS-MCKINNEY | DEMOCRAT

Food packages created by Pettis County FFA members sit ready on the table of Smithton R-VI High School students. On Tuesday morning, 40 FFA students from across the county packed food for food-insecure students.

From left, Kelcy Mullett, Addison Whitworth, Alissa Blakley, all FFA students from La Monte R-IV High School, and Greg Wehrman, the executive vice president of commercial/ag lending at Central Bank, pack food during the second annual FFA Meal Packing Event on Tuesday.

FFA

From Page A1

She added that the Pettis County FFA Chapters give the food packets in their own way in their own areas.

"It's because we don't have a big food pantry like Sedalia," Haag noted. "And I know we have a lot of hunger issues in our small rural communities. So, we wanted to be a resource for those kids."

Haag said the food packs this year consisted of chicken-flavored Missouri-grown rice, dehydrated peas, carrots, corn, and a chicken flavoring with a soy protein source, plus vitamins and minerals.

"So, a lot of vitamin A, B, C," she said. "A lot of times, it's the ones that kids lack if they're food insecure and not getting the correct nutrients at home."

The food packets are easy to use. One adds water to boil them, and they can be heated up in the microwave or on the stove.

"We've taste-tested them, and they are actually pretty decent," Haag noted.

Haag added that the Pettis County FFA Chapters partner with a company, Meals of Hope, out of Florida, for the ingredients in the food packs.

"They do a lot of this nationwide," Haag added. "They're a partner for a lot of FFA chapters; they're a partner with the national FFA. So that's how we got hooked up with them."

Haag noted the annual event is student-packed and student-run.

"Our kids came in yesterday (Monday, Feb. 19) and sat everything up and loaded the semi," she said. "And our kids are really proud of this event, to be able to give back to other kids. To me, the most important thing is how hard our kids work to help other kids in our communities."

Karli Smith, a senior at Northwest, said she enjoys helping because "it's extremely important" to her community.

"Because there are a lot of families here that are food insecure," she noted. "Which is basically why we do this whole meal-packing event.

"And another reason is that our FFA motto is 'Living to Serve,'" she continued. "And that's exactly what we're doing here."

Shelby Dotson, also a senior at Northwest, added that the event is crucial because it shows the community how much they care.

"It also shows members what they can do to help support the community in different ways," she said. "So, this is the second time we've done this, and we did it at the state fair. And we thought bringing it to our community would show them we're very personable."

Also helping the FFA students pack meals on Tuesday were staff members of Sedalia's Central Bank.

Faith Bemiss-McKinney can be reached at 660-530-0289.

THE WEATHER

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SEVEN-DAY FORECAST

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
71 / 49	63 / 37	59 / 34	60 / 44	69 / 44	75 / 57	71 / 36
Times of clouds and sun	Morning rain, then breezy	Sunny and mild	Sunny and mild	Mostly sunny and warmer	Breezy, warm	Gusty t-storms possible

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	6:57 a.m.
Sunset tonight	5:57 p.m.
Moonrise today	3:14 p.m.
Moonset today	5:47 a.m.

Full	Last	New	First
Feb 24	Mar 3	Mar 10	Mar 16

WEATHER HISTORY

A series of powerful twisters on Feb. 21, 1971, killed 121 people in Louisiana and Mississippi. The worst tornado traveled 200 miles from southwestern Mississippi to southern Tennessee.

ALMANAC

Sedalia Regional Airport Monday

TEMPERATURES

High	57
Low	30
Normal high	45
Normal low	24
Record high	76 in 2017
Record low	-18 in 1978

PRECIPITATION

Monday	0.00"
Month to date	0.08"
Normal m-t-d	1.41"
Year to date	2.14"
Normal y-t-d	3.33"

HEATING DEGREE DAYS

Index of energy consumption indicating how many degrees the average temperature was below 65 degrees for the day.

Monday	21
Month to date	375
Season to date	2947
Normal season to date	3809
Last season to date	3163

RIVER LEVELS

In feet as of 7 a.m. Tuesday

Blackwater	Stage	Chg	Fld Stg
Blue Lick	7.12	-0.02	24
Valley City	2.93	-0.01	22
Lamine			
Otterville	1.10	-0.03	15
Missouri			
Boonville	5.18	-0.27	21

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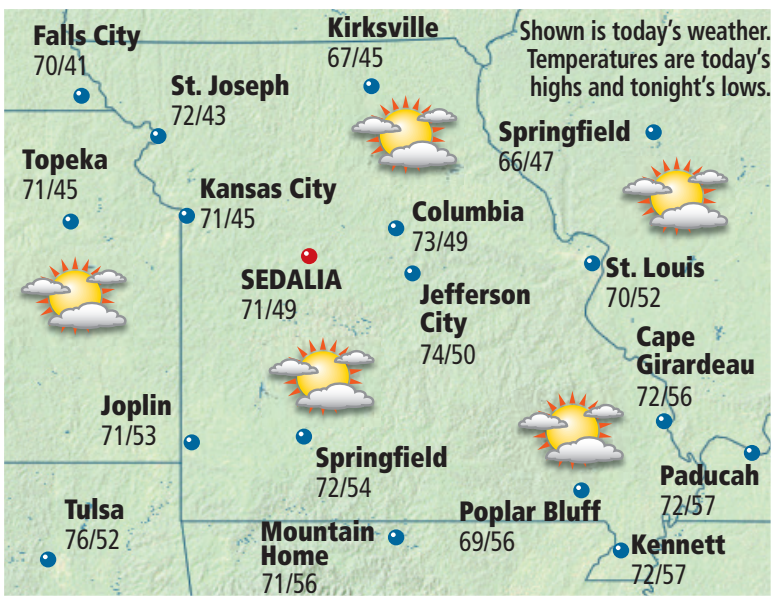


BRANSON
High: 73. **Low:** 56. Very warm today with clouds and sun; great day to be outside. A couple of heavy thunderstorms tonight. A bit of rain tomorrow.

KANSAS CITY
High: 71. **Low:** 45. Sun and clouds today with the temperature near the record of 75 set in 1935. Increasing clouds tonight. Partly sunny tomorrow.

ST. LOUIS
High: 70. **Low:** 52. Warm today with times of sun and clouds. A couple of thunderstorms tonight. Rain and a thunderstorm tomorrow, mainly early in the day.

NEW YORK CITY
High: 44. **Low:** 32. Periods of clouds and sunshine today. A moonlit sky tonight. Becoming cloudy tomorrow. Friday: periods of rain. Saturday: mostly sunny.

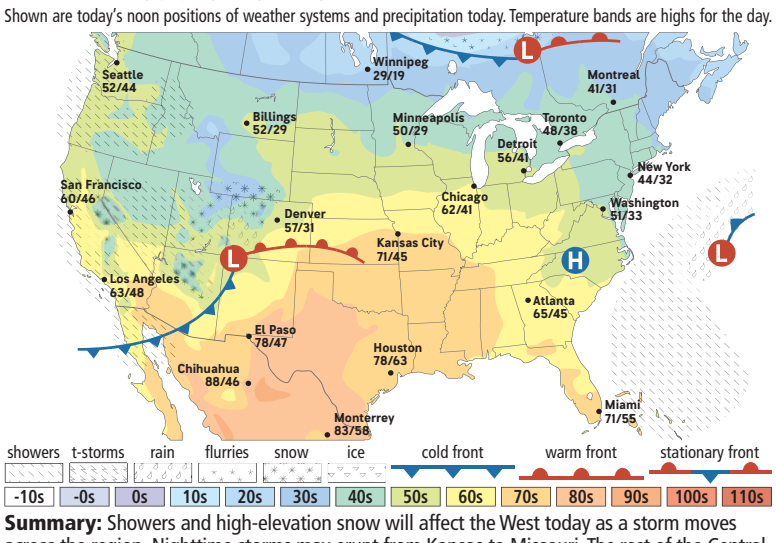
LOS ANGELES
High: 63. **Low:** 48. A couple of showers in the morning; otherwise, clouds breaking and cool today. Partly cloudy tonight.

NATIONAL WEATHER

	Today Hi/Lo/W	Thursday Hi/Lo/W
Atlanta	65/45/pc	68/56/pc
Baltimore	49/29/s	53/45/r
Billings	52/29/pc	51/30/s
Boston	37/28/pc	41/32/s
Buffalo	53/41/c	50/36/r
Charlotte	60/39/pc	65/53/pc
Chicago	62/41/pc	55/33/c
Cleveland	57/43/c	49/37/r
Dallas	81/60/s	73/49/s
Denver	57/31/c	50/29/c
Detroit	56/41/sh	49/32/r
Honolulu	80/69/c	81/69/pc
Houston	78/63/pc	81/56/pc
Indianapolis	64/48/pc	54/34/r
Las Vegas	64/48/sh	64/47/pc
Milwaukee	59/36/c	50/31/pc
Nashville	69/53/pc	63/47/t
New Orleans	74/58/s	75/61/pc
Norfolk	49/34/s	54/48/pc
Oklahoma City	77/49/s	62/40/s
Orlando	72/45/s	76/51/pc
Phoenix	71/52/pc	73/51/s
Pittsburgh	57/39/pc	53/40/r
Portland, ME	36/23/s	39/32/pc
Portland, OR	55/44/sh	62/41/c
Sacramento	62/43/sh	63/40/c
St. Louis	70/52/pc	60/39/r
San Francisco	60/46/sh	61/46/pc
Seattle	52/44/sh	57/40/pc
Washington, DC	51/33/s	54/47/r

Weather (W): **s**-sunny, **pc**-partly cloudy, **c**-cloudy, **sh**-showers, **t**-thunderstorms, **r**-rain, **sf**-snow flurries, **sn**-snow, **i**-ice

Shown are today's noon positions of weather systems and precipitation today. Temperature bands are highs for the day.



Summary: Showers and high-elevation snow will affect the West today as a storm moves across the region. Nighttime storms may erupt from Kansas to Missouri. The rest of the Central and Eastern states will be dry.

2 adults charged with murder in deadly shooting at Chiefs' Super Bowl celebration

By Nick Ingram and Margery A. Beck
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Two men have been charged with murder in last week's shooting that killed one person and injured 22 others after the Kansas City Chiefs' Super Bowl parade, Missouri prosecutors said Tuesday.

Dominic Miller and Lyndell Mays are charged with second-degree murder and other counts. They have been hospitalized since the shooting, Jackson County prosecutor Jean Peters Baker said during a news conference. Officials declined to answer whether the men were being treated for gunshot wounds or other injuries.

Court records lay out a basic view of how the shooting unfolded.

The men did not know each other before the shooting, according to prosecutors. They were among several people arguing when Mays "pulled his handgun first almost immediately" and several others did the same, Peters Baker said. Police say it was Miller's gun that fired the shot that killed a woman.

Online court records did not list attorneys who could comment on the men's behalf. The Missouri State Public Defender's Office said applications for public defenders for the men had not yet been received by the Kansas City office.

The new charges come after two juveniles were detained last week on gun-related and resisting arrest charges. Authorities said more charges were possible.

"I do want you to understand — we seek to hold every shooter accountable for their actions on that day. Every single one," Peters Baker said. "So while we're not there yet on every single individual, we're going to get there."

Police have said a dispute among several people led to the shooting, which happened even as 800 police officers patrolled the celebration.

The 22 people injured range in age from 8 to 47, according to police Chief Stacey Graves. Lisa Lopez-Galvan, a mother of two and the host of "Taste of Tejano," was killed.

The shooting was the latest at a sports celebration in the U.S. A shooting wounded several people last year in Denver after the Nuggets' NBA championship.

See **CHARGED | A12**

A person views a memorial dedicated to the victims of last week's mass shooting in front of Union Station, Sunday, Feb. 18, 2024, in Kansas City, Mo. Missouri prosecutors said Tuesday, Feb. 20, that two men have been charged with murder in last week's shooting that killed one person and injured multiple others after the Kansas City Chiefs' Super Bowl parade. FILE PHOTO BY CHARLIE RIEDEL | AP PHOTO

Smith-Cotton senior Keaton Belsha pins Rhodes Leonard of Boonville in 1:22 in the teams' dual meet Thursday, Jan. 11, in the S-C gym. It was Belsha's 17th consecutive pinfall victory, which broke a 25-year-old school record of most consecutive wins by fall. PHOTO COURTESY OF SEDALIA SCHOOL DISTRICT 200

Five Smith-Cotton wrestlers among region's 12 state qualifiers

By Democrat Staff

Five Smith-Cotton student-athletes will be represented in the MSHSAA Wrestling Championships, which will be held between Wednesday and Saturday at Mizzou Arena in Columbia.

The Tigers will take the mats on Friday and Saturday. The girls, consisting of junior Jazlyn Smith-Freeman, junior Jasmine Wolfe and senior Addisyn Hunt, will represent S-C first in the Class 2 Tournament beginning at 1 p.m. Friday.

The trio punched their ticket to state in the Class 2 District 3 Tournament back on Feb. 10. Ranked top five in the state according to MissouriWrestling.com, both Smith-Freeman (36-4) and Wolfe (31-5) were individual runner-ups.

Smith-Freeman lost the 120-pound district championship match by fall to Nixa sophomore Mylee Harper (36-10). Wolfe finished second in the 130-pound district title bout, losing to Nixa junior Addison Harkins (46-5) by a 7-2 decision.

Hunt (25-11) placed fourth in the 145-pound bracket due to a medical forfeit against Waynesville senior Maya Duncan (21-12). The two also battled earlier in the tournament, resulting in Duncan winning by a 10-4 decision. Hunt won her next two matches by fall.

The boys will compete in the Class 4 Championships beginning at 5:45 p.m. Friday.

The Tigers are highlighted by senior Keaton Belsha (28-3), who won the Class 3 District 3 Championship with a win by a 4-3 decision against Lee's Summit senior Roan McCarthy (30-8) Feb. 17 at Raymore-Peculiar High School.

Sophomore Chad Culp (30-3) finished fourth in the 138-pound bracket at districts, losing to Raymore-Peculiar sophomore Evan Galtin (29-14) by medical forfeit. He lost to Carthage senior Brayden Tate (48-2) in the semifinal round before tallying a win by a 4-0 decision against Lee's Summit West sophomore Jaxton Fetters (31-10) in the blood round to reach state.

There will also be representation from eight Kaysinger schools at state, with all wrestling in the Class 1 boys and Class 1 girls brackets.

The boys get things started at 8 a.m. Wednesday. The Tipton boys have three state qualifiers courtesy of finishes in the Class 1 District 2 Tournament on Feb. 17 at Butler High School.

Junior Dalton Doss (23-5) highlighted the Cardinals, finishing as the district runner-up in the 132-pound bracket following a loss by an 8-3 decision to Butler sophomore Preston Mallatt (28-10).

Freshman Cooper Doss (14-6) finished third in the 138-pound bracket, losing the third-place match to Fatima senior Tyler Kloeppel (24-12) by a 6-1 decision.

Freshman Paxton Pyle (34-14) will also represent Tipton courtesy of a fourth-place finish in the 165-pound bracket at districts.

Cole Camp sophomore Grant Rodriguez (39-5) placed third in the weight class by result, beating Pyle by a 5-2 decision. Sophomore Teagan Sharp (32-15) finished fourth in the 144-pound bracket, losing to Fatima freshman Ryder Herzing (31-24) by a 13-4 major decision.

Stover freshman Alias Murray (20-13) earned himself a runner-up finish at districts, losing the 106-pound championship to Fatima sophomore Tucker Tune (37-9) by fall. He is the first state qualifier in program history.

Windsor sophomore Chase Hampton (24-8) finished third in the 126-pound bracket at districts, beating Versailles sophomore Coen Arment (25-13) by a 12-8 decision.

Stover sophomore Chloe Zeller (25-10) will be the Bulldogs' first girls state qualifier courtesy of a fourth-place finish in the 100-pound weight class in the Class 1 District 3 Tournament on Feb. 10 in Nevada.

She lost to Nevada junior Averi Dawn (41-8) by a 4-1 decision in the third-place match. The Kaysinger Conference lone girls state qualifier, she will wrestle beginning at 1 p.m. Wednesday.

The state tournament is double-elimination, with the top eight wrestlers earning medals out of a bracket of 32.

MLS kicks off with all eyes on Lionel Messi & Co. at Inter Miami

By Anne M. Peterson
Associated Press

Messi Mania returns to Major League Soccer as Lionel Messi embarks on his first full season with Inter Miami.

But this year, there's a twist.

Inter Miami signed Luis Suarez in the offseason, reuniting the two close friends. The pair, along with former Barcelona teammates Jordi Alba and Sergio Busquets, have made Miami THE team to watch heading into the Major League Soccer's 29th season.

"Inter Miami offered me a nice opportunity to dream of winning the club's first MLS title, to play with big players, who everybody knows, and adapt to my new team and club," Suarez said. "I am motivated by that challenge."

Defender Dani Rosero and Sporting Kansas City players celebrate following a victory over Minnesota United on Oct. 21, 2023. Sporting made a historic run to the MLS Playoffs following a calamitous start and will aim to start 2024 in better position. PHOTO BY BRYAN EVERSON | DEMOCRAT

But with Messi, Suarez and the rest of Inter Miami set to open the season at home on Wednesday night against Real Salt Lake, MLS is in the middle of a labor dispute with its referees.

The Professional Referees Organization, which manages MLS referees, announced Saturday that it will lock out match officials after they rejected a proposed collective bargaining agreement just days before the start of the season.

PRO said it had reached a tentative agreement last weekend with the Professional Soccer Referees Association. But the union said nearly 96% of its members voted to reject it.

See **MLS | A12**

The Hoosier Gym, home of the Hickory Huskers, still resonates with basketball fans

By Tim Reynolds
AP Basketball Writer

KNIGHTSTOWN, Ind. — The court is the same one where Jimmy Chitwood played. The locker room is exactly as it was when Norman Dale coached. The wall separating the bleachers from the floor is still there.

Things change. The Hoosier Gym doesn't.

About 35 miles east of Indianapolis is the little town of Knightstown, which most people probably aren't too familiar with. Basketball fans, however, are likely very aware of the place that brings more people into the town than anything else — a small brick building that the Hickory Huskers of the movie "Hoosiers" called home. It's still there, still iconic nearly four decades after the film's release, hosting more than 50,000 visitors and dozens of high school games each year.

"When you get that many people coming here every year," said Larry Loveall, one of the volunteers that keeps the gym running, "you know you're doing something right."

The movie — ranked as the No. 1 sports film of all-time by The Associated Press in 2020 — was released in 1986. Gene Hackman starred as coach Dale, a man who was given a second chance at coaching after his first one ended for striking one of his players years earlier. Hackman famously thought the movie would end his career; he didn't think it would be a success.

He was very, very wrong. The tale of the Huskers, a small-town team that in the movie version took on the big-city South Bend Central in the 1952 Indiana state championship game and won in a David vs. Goliath story with Chitwood — a sharpshooter who initially didn't want to play for the team — hitting the buzzer-beater to win the state title, still resonates.

See **GYM | A12**

The Hoosier Gym is shown Monday, Feb. 19, 2024, in Knightstown, Ind. Thousands of people still visit The Hoosier Gym annually. PHOTO BY TIM REYNOLDS | AP PHOTO

SPORTS CALENDAR

Wednesday

ON TAP

HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BASKETBALL

Windsor at Tipton

Northwest at Concordia

Pilot Grove at Green Ridge

California at Cole Camp

Stover vs Warsaw (at Cole Camp)

ON AIR

BEACH SOCCER (MEN'S)

5:20 a.m. (Thursday)

FS2 — 2024 FIFA World Cup: TBD, Quarterfinal, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

CANADIAN HOCKEY LEAGUE

6 p.m. NHLN — Flint at Saginaw

COLLEGE BASKETBALL (MEN'S)

5 p.m. CBSSN — W. Carolina at UNC-Greensboro

5:30 p.m. BTN — Illinois at Penn St.

6 p.m. ACCN — Clemson at Georgia Tech

ESPN — Duke at Miami

ESPN2 — Florida at Alabama

ESPNU — Notre Dame at Louisville

FS1 — St. John's at Georgetown

7 p.m. CBSSN — Providence at Xavier

7:30 p.m. BTN — Nebraska at Illinois

SECN — Georgia at Vanderbilt

8 p.m. ESPN — Kentucky at LSU

ESPN2 — Mississippi at Mississippi St.

ESPNU — Tulsa at Wichita St.

FS1 — DePaul at Marquette

9 p.m. CBSSN — Colorado St. at New Mexico

10 p.m. FS1 — UNLV at Air Force

COLLEGE BASKETBALL (WOMEN'S)

5:30 p.m. FS2 — Xavier at Butler

COLLEGE SOFTBALL

2 p.m. PAC-12N — UTEP at Arizona St., Doubleheader — Game 1

4:30 p.m. PAC-12N — UTEP at Arizona St., Doubleheader — Game 2

GOLF

9 p.m. GOLF — LPGA Tour: The Honda LPGA Thailand, First Round, Siam Country Club — Pattaya Old Course, Chonburi, Thailand

4 a.m. (Thursday)

GOLF — DP World Tour: The Magical Kenya Open, First Round, Muthaiga Golf Club, Nairobi, Kenya

NHL HOCKEY

6:30 p.m. TNT — Philadelphia at Chicago

9 p.m. TNT — Boston at Edmonton

SOCCER (MEN'S)

1:30 p.m. USA — Premier League: Luton Town at Liverpool

2 p.m. CBS — UEFA Champions League: FC Barcelona at Napoli, Round of 16 — Leg 1

8:55 p.m. FS2 — CONCACAF Champions Cup: Orlando City SC at Cavalry FC, First Round — Leg 1

TENNIS

2 a.m. TENNIS — Dubai-WTA, Doha-ATP, Rio de Janeiro-ATP, Los Cabos-ATP Early Rounds

5 a.m. TENNIS — Dubai-WTA, Doha-ATP, Rio de Janeiro-ATP, Los Cabos-ATP Early Rounds

4 a.m. (Thursday)

TENNIS — Dubai-WTA, Doha-ATP, Rio de Janeiro-ATP, Los Cabos-ATP Quarterfinals

5 a.m. (Thursday)

TENNIS — Dubai-WTA, Doha-ATP, Rio de Janeiro-ATP, Los Cabos-ATP Quarterfinals

Oakland Athletics catcher Shea Langeliers hits during a baseball spring training workout, Friday, Feb. 16, 2024, in Mesa, Ariz. PHOTO BY MATT YORK | AP PHOTO

Playing for the Oakland A's hasn't been glamorous for years. In 2024, it could be downright weird

By David Brandt
AP Baseball Writer

MESA, Ariz. — Catcher Shea Langeliers made a little space to set down a cup of coffee in his locker, then gingerly turned around, careful not to disturb the belongings of teammates JJ Bleday and Max Schuemann that were all crammed into a corner of Oakland's spring training clubhouse.

Playing for the Athletics over the past few decades rarely has been glamorous — at least by MLB standards.

In 2024, it could also be downright weird.

The Athletics — set to move to Las Vegas sometime around 2028 — are facing a lame-duck season at the Oakland Coliseum, which hosted some of the smallest crowds in recent MLB history in 2023. The A's have met with Oakland city officials about extending the club's lease beyond 2024, but nothing is certain at the moment.

"I think if you focus on that, it can affect you," Langeliers said. "The main goal is just to focus on baseball and what you can control. That can get away from you sometimes. I think every player in here will tell you their focus is on the field."

But the franchise's uncertain future was enough of a topic that manager Mark Kotsay — along with team president Dave Kaval — were on hand at Hohokam Stadium in Mesa for a 45-minute team meeting on Monday, which was also the team's first full-squad workout.

"We talk a lot about distractions and this group has been through it to a certain extent last year," Kotsay said. "We did address the uncertainty of the '25 season, but ultimately, these guys are here to play baseball and have a long career, whether that's in Oakland or Miami, for that matter, the game doesn't change.

"The circumstances are what they are."

Kotsay said he wants to make sure players know his office is open if there are questions, though to be honest, he doesn't have many answers at the moment. It's unclear whether the franchise will play its 2025 home games in Oakland, Sacramento, San Francisco or a minor league stadium in Las Vegas.

The team reached an agreement with Bally's and Gaming & Leisure Properties to build a stadium on the Tropicana hotel site along the Las Vegas Strip, and the Nevada Legislature approved $380 million in public financing last June for a $1.5 billion stadium that the team wants completed for the 2028 season. MLB owners unanimously approved the move in November.

But the next few years could be rocky.

"We're very transparent," Kotsay said. "When we get information, we pass it along to the players. You get more information than I do, probably."

From a purely baseball perspective, the A's hope they're a franchise on the rise following a brutal 112-loss season. They've got a young nucleus of hitters that includes All-Star slugger Brent Rooker, speedster Esteury Ruiz and Langeliers, which improved over the final few months of the season after a rough start.

W-K ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

The Sedalia Democrat is pleased to announce Keaton Belsha and Chloe Zeller as area players of the week for Sunday, Feb. 11 to Saturday, Feb. 17.

Smith-Cotton senior Keaton Belsha won a district championship at the Class 4 District 3 meet at Ray-Pec High School. Belsha took the 175-pound division with a 4-3 decision over Roan McCarthy of Lee's Summit.

Stover sophomore Chloe Zeller became the first state qualifier in Lady Bulldogs program history. She won a 9-7 decision over Adrian's Teja Bradley in a consolation semifinal to qualify for state.

HOROSCOPES

By Georgia Nicols

Moon Alert: After 9 a.m. EST today (6 a.m. PST) there are no restrictions to shopping or important decisions. The Moon is in Leo.

Happy Birthday for Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2024:

You are independent with a dominating presence, which means you take the lead. Life is easiest for you if you are just yourself. This is a year of hard work and focus. It's also a year where you can build something internally or externally that will benefit you.

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★ Today you might experience challenges with romantic partners. Likewise, parents might experience challenges with their kids today. (Don't worry. This is nothing you can't handle.) Meanwhile, a friend or a member of a group might persuade you to do something. Tonight: Socialize.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★ Be circumspect today. It's important to have your own self interests at heart, because someone in authority might try to persuade you to do something you don't want to do. Mind you, this authority person could be your parent, and you might be 9. Just saying ... Tonight: Cocoon.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★ Steer clear of people who are coming on too strong or trying to convince you to agree with their political, religious or (fill in the blank) views. Some people are pushy and persuasive today, which doesn't mean they don't have a good cause. But you need the freedom of choice. Tonight: Discussions.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★ Be careful in discussions about shared property, taxes, debt, insurance issues or inheritances. There's an element of mental manipulation in the air today. You might encounter this. Someone might convince you that it's in your best interests to part with something. Don't do it. Tonight: Check your belongings.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★ Be patient and gracious when dealing with close friends and partners today, which, in one way, will actually be easy. However, in some cases, someone might try to make some sneaky demands or prey on your kindness and generosity. Don't be a sucker. Tonight: Be alert.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★ First, a reminder that you need more sleep. People might be working on your behalf now, which is a good thing. But if you feel someone is asking you to agree to something that you're not comfortable with, listen to your own hesitancy. Protect your own self interests. Tonight: Solitude.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★ A discussion with a friend or a group might be important today. However, be careful not to be manipulated by romantic partners or even your kids, because this is possible. Stand up for yourself and quit being a people-pleaser, at least for today. Tonight: Friendships.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★ You might be at odds with parents or bosses today. Perhaps you're trying to do something that you want. Or perhaps someone is asking you to do something that you're not really happy about. If so, listen to the little voice on your shoulder that is warning you. Protect yourself. Tonight: Be modest.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★ Refrain from trying to convince others to agree with your views today. Resist the temptation. And by the same token, don't let anyone coerce you into agreeing with them, because it's a fact that lively, persuasive conversations will take place today. Tonight: Learn.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★ Hold on to your money today. Someone might tempt you to part with it, or you might be tempted to part with it. You can't resist buying something, especially if someone is clever at "selling" you something. Persuasive maneuvers are everywhere today. Tonight: Check your finances.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★ Today Venus and Mars are lined up in your sign, which gives you tremendous persuasive energy. Very few will resist your demands or requests. (Take pity on the little people.) You can use this energy wisely, or you can abuse it. Likewise, don't let others manipulate you if you don't want to do something. Tonight: Cooperate.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★ For the most part, you are strong today because the Sun is in your sign. Nevertheless, a gaggle of planets is acting up in a hidden part of your chart, which could cause you to say or do something without thinking. Be mindful today. Be aware. Tonight: Work.

BORN TODAY

Actor Kelsey Grammer (1955), actor Jack Coleman (1958), filmmaker, actor, comedian Jordan Peele (1979)

William Byron celebrates in Victory Lane after winning the NASCAR Daytona 500 auto race at Daytona International Speedway, Monday, Feb. 19, 2024, in Daytona Beach, Fla. PHOTO BY JOHN RAOUX | AP PHOTO

Byron battled 'imposter syndrome' in his climb from computer racer to Daytona 500 champ

By Jenna Fryer
AP Auto Racing Writer

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — William Byron grew up in the hotbed of NASCAR, so close to the stars that he could trick-or-treat at Jimmie Johnson's house every Halloween.

He'd tell Johnson every year that someday he'd race alongside him at Hendrick Motorsports. But aside from decorating his Charlotte, North Carolina, bedroom with Johnson memorabilia, Byron had no idea how to actually make it into the top racing series in the United States.

After all, he didn't even race.

So he taught himself his race craft on a computer — to the point he'd get yelled at to stop messing around with his racing games — and became determined to make it in NASCAR.

"It's all about what gets you up in the morning, what is it that you absolutely can't go without? For me, that was racing," Byron said. "I didn't know I was going to be a race car driver. But getting in through iRacing and being on there, I was obsessed. I would go in there every hour of the day. I had to balance it with other things. ... but racing was what always was my passion.

"If you find something that you love, you spend every minute of the day thinking about it."

The self-taught racer made it in 2016, when he was 18 and of NASCAR's legal age to compete in a full season of Truck Series competition. He drove for Kyle Busch Motorsports and won seven races under the guidance of crew chief Rudy Fugle.

He was soon a development driver for Hendrick Motorsports and in a Cup car two years later. Team owner Rick Hendrick put Byron in the famed No. 24 Chevrolet that Jeff Gordon drove to four Cup titles and 93 career wins. Hendrick tried different crew chief pairings, and it was Chad Knaus, who led Johnson to his record-tying seven titles, who led Byron to his first victory in 2020.

The next year, Hendrick brought Fugle into the organization to work with Byron and there's been no looking back. Byron on Monday won the rain-postponed Daytona 500 to launch Hendrick Motorsports' 40th anniversary celebration on the exact day the team made its Daytona 500 debut four decades earlier.

"I think when you look at his work ethic and (Fugle), they're a lethal combination. The confidence level between both of them, it's amazing," said Hendrick. "William puts in the work. That's all he thinks about. He's in the simulator. He's watching tapes. He has worked so hard. People don't realize how much time he puts in. When you think about his age and how smart he is and how he races like a guy that's been doing it for a long time, doesn't make many mistakes, but he just eats and drinks and sleeps winning."

Byron snapped a Daytona 500 losing streak for Hendrick that dated back to Dale Earnhardt Jr. in 2014. He became the sixth different driver to win the 500 for the team and the ninth Daytona 500 win for Hendrick Motorsports tied the organization with Petty Enterprises for most in NASCAR history.

Gordon, now vice chairman of Hendrick Motorsports, believes Byron will make his own name for himself in Gordon's old car.

"I try not to be biased, but William is making it hard on me. It is 2024, and the 24 is always going to be very, very special to me," Gordon said. "But what I loved the most is seeing him make it his number and building that fan base not only 24 fans, they have been around for a long time, but his own fans.

"A win like this, my gosh, this is going to elevate that up to the next level and bring a whole lot more new fans to the sport and for William."

It might also be a boost for Byron's confidence, which he admitted he's sometimes struggled with as a racer who came through a non-traditional route to drive for the winningest team in NASCAR history.

He was teammates with Johnson, and at 26 years old is currently the youngest driver on a roster that includes Cup champions Chase Elliott and Kyle Larson, as well as Alex Bowman, who finished second to Byron on Monday at Daytona International Speedway.

"I'm the other guy," joked Byron, who lost last year's Cup title to Ryan Blaney, the older brother of Byron's girlfriend.

But he admitted to difficulty sometimes in accepting that Byron is where he's supposed to be in his career.

"I feel like I've always had a bit of imposter syndrome because I race against Jimmie Johnson, like this guy was my hero. Literally every Sunday I had his diecast cars in my room and just dreamed about what it would be like to be in his shoes and now I get to race against him," Byron said. "It's a pretty crazy emotion to go through, just getting into the Cup Series, just honestly being happy to be there, and then figuring out, 'OK, well, what are my goals? What are the things I want to accomplish?'

"I feel like I've always had a bit of kind of work through fear because of fear, and I feel like that's fueled me because I never want to lose the opportunity to race in the Cup Series and have a shot to win races with the team I'm with."

And so a year after winning a Cup Series-high six races, Byron opened 2024 with a bit of a chip on his shoulder — as if his peers don't actually take him seriously and they know Elliott and Larson are the stars at Hendrick. After his strategy led to a Daytona 500 win, Byron now wants to carry it all the way to the Cup championship in November.

"I don't know if I'll ever get that chip off my shoulder. It's always been there," he said. "There's always reasons to find. We didn't win the championship, and we don't get talked about the most, and other people get more publicity, things like that. Whatever I find, I use as motivation. It's just the way I've always been internally. I don't express that a lot. But it definitely burns inside.

"I feel like that's what fuels your off-seasons a lot of times is just what can I find? What little edge can I find to be the best? There's still tons to learn."

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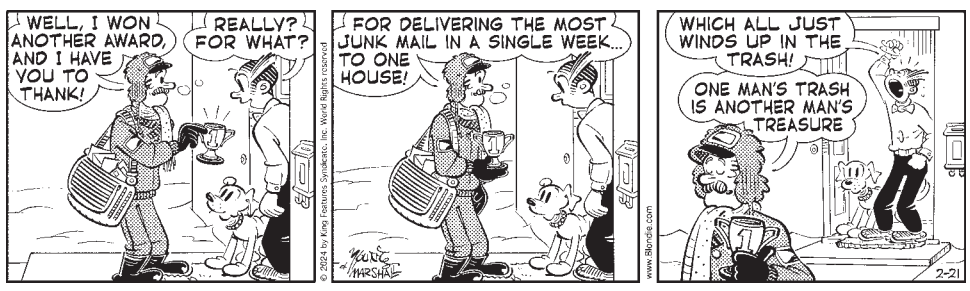
BLONDIE

BY DEAN YOUNG AND JOHN MARSHALL



BEETLE BAILEY

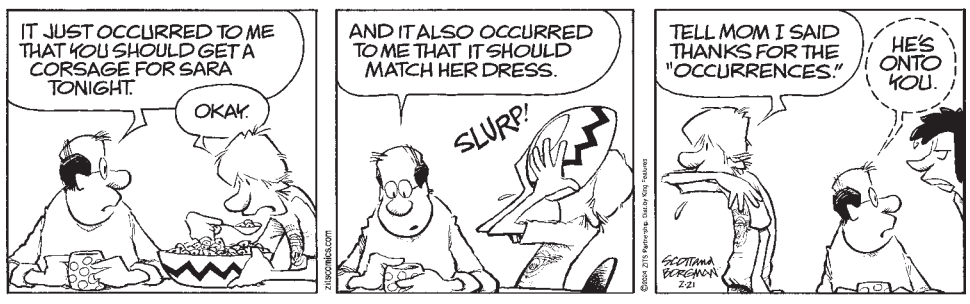
BY GREG WALKER, BRIAN WALKER AND NEAL WALKER

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE

BY CHRIS BROWNE

ZITS

BY JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



HI AND LOIS

WRITTEN BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER; DRAWN BY CHANCE BROWNE

PARDON MY PLANET

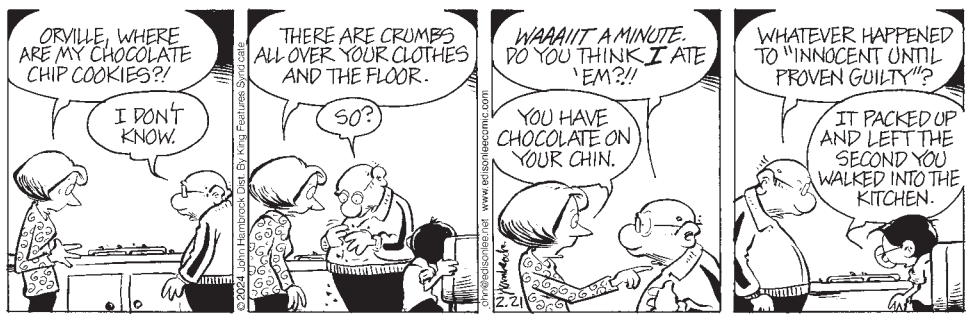
BY VIC LEE

RHYMES WITH ORANGE

BY HILARY PRICE

THE BRILLIANT MIND OF EDISON LEE

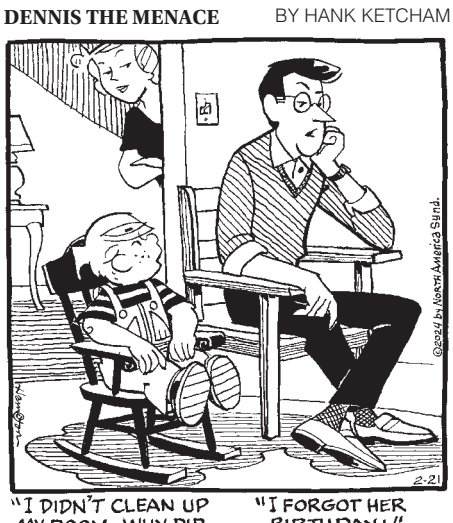
BY JOHN HAMBROCK



DUSTIN

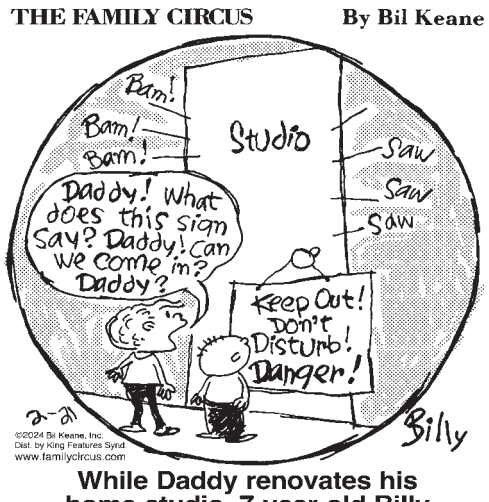
BY STEVE KELLEY & JEFF PARKER

DENNIS THE MENACE BY HANK KETCHAM



"I DIDN'T CLEAN UP MY ROOM. WHY DID MOM PUT YOU HERE?" "I FORGOT HER BIRTHDAY!"

THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



While Daddy renovates his home studio, 7-year-old Billy draws this week's cartoons.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

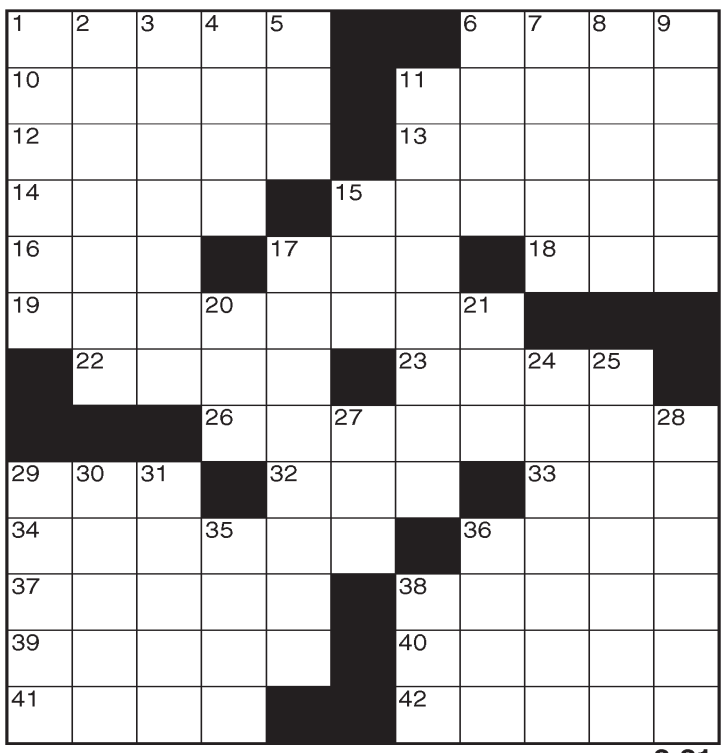
1 Serious
6 Theater failure
10 Rolling landscape
11 "My Fair Lady" lady
12 To any extent
13 Labyrinth-building king
14 Blocks up
15 Gadget protector
16 Music's Yoko
17 Caterer's pot
18 Notice
19 Sign on a truck
22 Euro division
23 Final, e.g.
26 Byway
29 Towel word
32 Fuming
33 Use deceit
34 Nevertheless
36 Course activity
37 Stone unit
38 Marisa of movies
39 Kitchen need
40 Make amends
41 Theater unit
42 Slugger Barry

DOWN

1 Sundial reading
2 Ship in 1912 headlines
3 Stylish
4 Miseries
5 Cable modem alternative
6 Move like a moth
7 Script makeup
8 UV stopper
9 Cut's counterpart
11 Came forth
15 Old hand
17 Last
20 USN rank
21 German article
24 Wise king
25 Concluding part
27 Week part
28 Stands up to
29 Bad writers
30 Laughable
31 Iraq neighbor
35 Float on the breeze
36 Attend
38 Bar bill

F	A	M	E	D	■	B	E	G	A	T
A	D	O	R	E	■	A	L	O	N	E
C	A	T	A	L	O	N	I	A	N	S
E	G	O	■	T	A	G	■	G	E	T
T	E	R	R	O	R	S	■	A	X	E
■	■	■	A	R	S	■	T	I	E	R
S	C	H	M	O	■	W	I	N	D	S
C	L	A	P	■	L	I	E	■	■	■
R	I	M	■	R	E	D	D	A	W	N
A	M	I	■	O	N	E	■	V	I	E
P	A	T	A	G	O	N	I	A	N	S
E	T	U	D	E	■	E	D	I	C	T
D	E	P	O	T	■	D	O	L	E	S

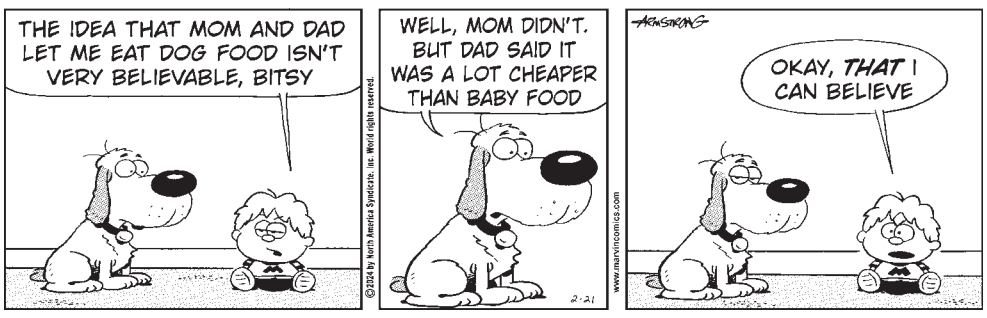
Yesterday's answer



2-21

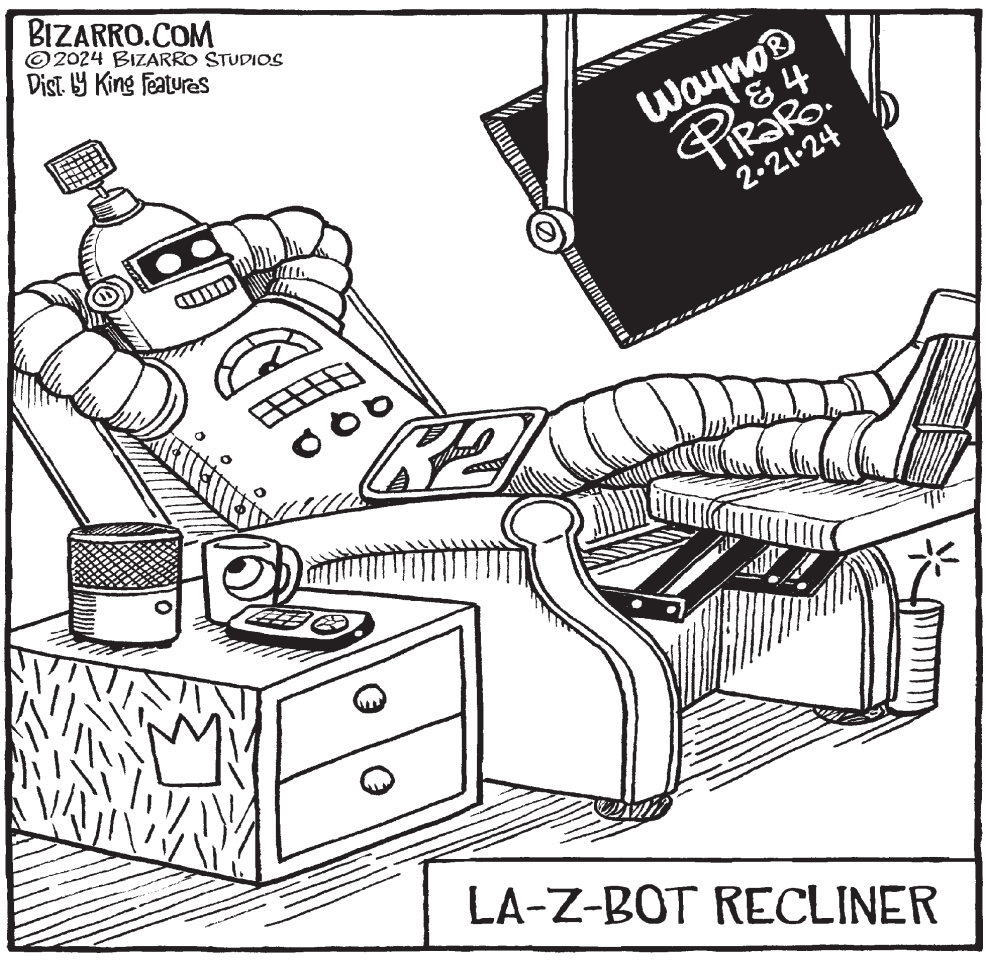
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG



BIZARRO

BY DAN PIRARO



King Classic Sudoku

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

Difficulty: ★★★ 2/21

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Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★ 2/20

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10x-2/15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 2024

Sedalia School District #200
Request for proposal
The Sedalia School District #200 is requesting proposals for VoIP Phones and Devices.
Proponents must submit one (1) printed original, signed in ink, and sealed. Proponents may elect to either personally deliver, or mail, their proposals to: **Hand, FedEx, UPS Delivery to Sedalia School District Attn: VoIP RFP 2806 Matthew Drive Sedalia, MO 65301.**
All proposals should be electronically generated, and the printed original signed in ink. Proposals need not be submitted in elaborate or expensive binders. Legibility, clarity, and

Legal Notice

completeness are important and essential. **The deadline for the submission of proposals is no later than March 1, 2024 at 10:00 AM Central Time.** Proponents may submit their proposals at any time prior to the above stated deadline. Failure to submit the required number of copies by this deadline may be subject to disqualification from the RFP process.
Requests for **additional information and questions** may be addressed to Madeline Kempton via email at kemptonm@sedalia200.org with subject title "VoIP RFP Request" **no later than February 20, 2024.**
Any changes to the RFP or the RFP process shall be posted to the website as addenda at https://www.sedalia200.org/site/default.aspx?DomainID=70 .
If you are having difficulty viewing RFP please contact Madeline Kempton at 660-829-6450 or kemptonm@sedalia200.org for instructions.
District reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals and to waive any formalities or technicalities if deemed in the best interest of the District. It is the responsibility of all responders to review the entire proposal, seek clarification of any item or requirement that may not be clear, and check all responses for accuracy before submitting a response.2x-2/17, 21, 2024

NOTICE-ACCEPTING BIDS
The I.O.O.F Cemetery located in Otterville is now accepting bids for mowing/trimming services for 2024.
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NOTICE TO BIDDERS
Reasbeck Construction Inc (RCI) is seeking bids from certified MBE / WBE or SDVE firms for construction projects at the University of Central Missouri (UCM) and Whiteman AFB. Please contact us to get added to our directory at (660) 429-0100 or mreasbeck@rcicon.com.
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State Fair Community College is soliciting sealed proposals for banking services.
Bids are due in the Business Office NLT 2:00 p.m. CDT, March 25, 2024.
Bid requests and specifications may be viewed and printed at… www.sfccmo.edu/bids, or by contacting:
Keith Acuff
Vice President for Finance and Administration
State Fair Community College
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MLS

From Page A7

That means there will likely be replacement refs officiating matches for the foreseeable future.

The lockout casts a shadow on the start of an intriguing MLS year. Messi will have a full season to work his magic. The eight-time Ballon d'Or winner arrived in Miami midway through last season, boosting ticket sales, jersey sales and Apple TV (the league's media partner) subscriptions.

He helped Miami to a trophy in the first season of the Leagues Cup tournament with Liga MX. But he couldn't quite make enough difference to push the team into the playoffs after Miami's slow start. Miami finished 9-18-7 last season, in 14th place in the Eastern Conference.

While Miami has the celebrities, the Columbus Crew showed last season they have the skills, winning the MLS Cup final 2-1. The Crew have their own star in Colombian forward Cucho Hernandez, a game changer who was named the championship game's MVP.

In addition to Suarez, the league welcomed some other big international names in the offseason, including Bundesliga veteran Emil Forsberg, who was signed by the New York Red Bulls, French goalkeeper Hugo Lloris with LAFC, Croatian forward Petar Musa with Dallas, and Belgian forward Hugo Cuypers with Chicago.

While Suarez is 37 and his knees are giving him more trouble, he still had 27 goals and 17 assists with Brazilian club Gremio last season. He'll play with Messi, Alba and Busquets for the first time since all four were with Barcelona in the 2019-20 season.

"One of the motivations for me coming here was to reunite with them," Suarez said after his first practice in Miami. "But more than anything, we are very ambitious, very professional and we are committed to showing the young talented Inter Miami players that your age doesn't matter, what matters is the commitment you have on and off the field."

SPORTING'S START, PROJECTED FINISH

Sporting Kansas City will look to put a rough offseason behind itself while also avoiding a repeat of last season's first few months that were ripe with injuries and defeats.

Few additions were made to this year's roster. Gadi Kinda, a Designated Player alongside Johnny Russell and Alan Pulido, was allowed to walk after his contract expired at the end of 2023. There was little in the way of smoke signals that the club would replace him in the offseason, and it appears more likely that addition could come sometime this summer when the secondary transfer window opens. A central midfielder or a winger that could succeed Russell would presumably be the target.

Age and depth is a concern for the roster. Depth along the front line will already be tested early after forward Khiry Shelton underwent surgery for a high ankle sprain on Feb. 5 and is expected to be sidelined until at least early April.

Expectations remain high regardless. On the league's official website, 17 experts voted and Sporting KC was picked to finish third in the Western Conference behind Seattle and LAFC. St. Louis CITY came in fifth.

SUCCESSES

MLS Commissioner Don Garber outlined some of the league's successes in an interview last week with The Associated Press.

Season ticket sales are up 15% this season over the same time last year, overall league sponsorship revenue is up 17% while club revenue is up 15%, and merchandise sales are up 44% over this time last year.

Is that the "Messi Effect?" Absolutely. It's a sign that MLS is becoming a destination league.

"I think that this will put MLS on a different trajectory that started when Beckham came to MLS and had us part of the global conversation," Garber said about Messi's stint in the league. "And who knows what that's going to look like years from now? But certainly we're in a different position today than we had been, with Messi in our league."

YOUNG STARS

MLS is already a proving ground young international players.

Among the newcomers are Gabriel Pec, a 22-year-old Brazilian with the LA Galaxy, Argentine forward Agustin Ojeda, 19, of NYCFC and LAFC's David Martinez, an 18-year-old winger from Venezuela.

Others promising players include center back Tomas Aviles, 20, at Inter Miami, teammate Benjamin Cremaschi, 18, who has a shot at making the U.S. Olympic team, and Real Salt Lake's Fidel Barajas, just 17.

And of course the reigning Young Player of the Year, Atlanta United's Thiago Almada, who was on Argentina's winning 2022 World Cup squad and is just 22.

LOOKING BACK

The Columbus Crew won their third overall MLS Cup with the victory over LAFC. FC Cincinnati won the Supporters Shield going away with 69 points, while St. Louis City finished atop the Western Conference in the team's first season.

LAFC's Denis Bouanga won the Golden Boot for most goals with 20.

Cincinnati's Luciano Acosta was named the league's Most Valuable Player with 17 goals and 14 assists. He also won Goal of the Year for his clinical right-footed goal after running through a series of Charlotte FC defenders in a September match.

LOOKING AHEAD

This season is slightly unusual compared to recent years in MLS in that there are no expansion teams kicking off in 2024. Major League Soccer's explosive growth has seen it rise from 19 teams just a decade ago. But don't fret, San Diego FC joins next season as the league's 30th team.

There's also going to be lots of attention on soccer in coming years, which will no doubt boost the league.

This year the United States is hosting the Copa America Tournament for the first time since 2016, and just the second time in the history of the tournament.

The FIFA Club World Cup will be held in the United States next year with an expanded field of 32 teams. The next year the U.S. hosts the World Cup with Mexico and Canada.

"I think we still have so much work to do. To look forward, the next couple of years are going to be the most important years in the history of our league with the eyes of the world again on us with Copa America, the Club World Cup in the FIFA World Cup in '26," Garber said. "We need to continue to work hard, operate almost as a startup and continue to build the fan engagement in our league at all levels."

Democrat Sports Editor Bryan Everson contributed to this report.

Unions oppose plan to move NBA, NHL teams to northern Virginia

By Matthew Barakat and Sarah Rankin
Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — Influential labor groups announced Tuesday they are opposing efforts to move two professional sports franchises from the nation's capital to northern Virginia, citing in part an apparent inability to reach a satisfactory deal for union workers on the construction projects.

The opposition of the Northern Virginia AFL-CIO and member unions including UNITE HERE Local 25, which represents hospitality workers in the national capital region, creates another hurdle for Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin and supporters of a proposed $2 billion deal to move the NBA's Washington Wizards and NHL's Washington Capitals from Washington, D.C., to Alexandria.

Youngkin, a Republican, responded to Tuesday's news by saying his administration and project partners had worked "in good faith" for months on negotiations that would give union workers a "substantial role" in the project. He said labor leaders had "backtracked," and he vowed to press forward with the proposal.

"Virginia is a right-to-work state and unreasonable demands from union leaders will not derail this project. I will continue to work with the General Assembly to complete this opportunity and bring $12 billion in economic contributions that will fund shared priorities in Virginia," he said in a written statement.

The governor was already facing obstacles in the Democratic-controlled Legislature, particularly in the state Senate, where he has so far been unable to convince leaders to advance a bill underpinning the deal.

The House of Delegates has passed its version of the legislation necessary for the relocation to go forward. But Democratic leaders from both chambers have made clear they wanted labor's voice heard in the negotiations over the deal, which have grown to encompass a range of unrelated Democratic priorities.

Senate Majority Leader Scott Surovell — who sponsored his chamber's version of the bill without fully endorsing the project — said labor's opposition won't make it any easier to get the legislation across the finish line. But he stopped short of saying the matter was dead and laid blame with Youngkin for the impasse, saying he'd personally been working to get this piece of the puzzle solved since before the legislative session.

Democratic Del. Luke Torian, who is carrying the House version of the legislation, said that he had not personally spoken yet with anyone from the AFL-CIO.

House Speaker Don Scott didn't respond to a phone call seeking comment but told The Washington Post the unions' opposition was important.

"If they're against it, then the arena deal is probably going to have a very difficult time," he told the newspaper. "If it dies, it dies."

The AFL-CIO says it tried to reach a deal with JBG Smith, the real estate developer on the Potomac Yard parcel in Alexandria where the arena would be built, and financial advisor J.P. Morgan to enter into a project labor agreement that would ensure organized labor is used to build the facility and include job protections. The group also sought a labor peace agreement to help ensure that workers at a proposed hotel that is part of the project would be able to unionize.

"To date, there's been no interest at all on the part of this developer to consider signing agreements that would protect the rights of workers," Virginia Diamond, president of the Northern Virginia AFL-CIO, said in an interview.

Diamond did say there had been more fruitful conversations about a possible memorandum of understanding involving the proposed stadium authority that would issue bonds to help finance the project. But that MOU, also intended to provide job protections, would cover only the publicly owned part of the project and falls far short of the AFL-CIO's other clear requests, she said.

In a written statement, Greg Akerman, president of the local Building Trades Unions, said, "Wage theft and exploitation of immigrant workers are common on construction sites in northern Virginia. The developers of this entertainment district have refused to take the necessary steps to prevent this."

JBG Smith and the teams' parent company, Monumental Sports and Entertainment, said in a joint statement that they were "disappointed and somewhat perplexed" at the AFL-CIO's announcement but they remained open to "continued discussion with labor."

"During near daily negotiations over the course of several months, this development partnership gave labor nearly everything it asked for including strong wages, benefits, and training commitments, as well as efforts to prevent wage theft and misclassification," the statement said.

Youngkin and Ted Leonsis, the founder and CEO of Monumental, announced plans in December to move the teams across the Potomac River to a parcel of land near Reagan National Airport, Amazon's new headquarters and a new Virginia Tech graduate campus.

The move would bring Virginia its first major pro sports franchises. But the deal has faced criticism from Alexandria residents concerned about traffic, and from D.C. officials who fear the loss of the team will devastate downtown Washington.

Others have questioned the economic wisdom of subsidizing a billionaire team owner and millionaire athletes, but proponents of the deal say it is structured in a way that the tax revenue generated by the project will more than pay for itself and provide a windfall that will boost state and local budgets.

News of the unions' decision was quickly highlighted by the Coalition to Stop the Arena at Potomac Yard, another group of critics of the proposal, which called on Youngkin and Assembly leaders to call off the deal.

———

Barakat reported from Falls Church.

Charged

From Page A7

That led Kansas City Mayor Quinton Lucas to wonder whether it's time to rethink championship celebrations, even as he promised last week that the city will continue to celebrate its victories. Next month's St. Patrick's Day parade will go on as scheduled, Lucas said.

The Kansas City shooting occurred in a state with few gun regulations and a city that has struggled with gun violence. In 2020, Kansas City was among nine cities chosen by the U.S. Justice Department in an effort to crack down on violent crime. In 2023, the city matched its record with 182 homicides, most of which involved guns.

On Monday, Missouri's Republican-led House on a bipartisan vote passed a ban on celebratory gunfire in cities following debate that ranged from tearful to angry. A similar measure was passed last year as part of a sweeping crime-related bill, but GOP Gov. Mike Parson vetoed the legislation. He cited issues with other crime provisions in the bill unrelated to celebratory gunfire.

Gym

From Page A7

It's an underdog story, a Cinderella story, one loosely based on the real-life story of small-school Milan winning Indiana's 1954 state championship.

"It's about basketball, obviously," said Brad Long, who plays Buddy Walker in the film. "But it's about redemption and anytime you have a movie where the underdog does well and overachieves, it makes people feel good about themselves. That formula always works."

It still does.

The movie plays on a loop in the lobby of the building, which was Knightstown High's home gym until 1966. The court, which is meticulously maintained, has been down since 1936 and there isn't a single dead spot to thwart dribblers. Down the steep staircase at the far end is the Hickory locker room; people have wanted to repaint it over the years but have smartly resisted — because the faded white walls and scuffed-up gray floor is how it looked in the movie, and so it shall remain.

There have been some upgrades, of course. The backboards are glass, not wood like they were in the film. There are digital scoreboards. Electric heat was added to the locker room. The playing surface was slightly widened to make it conform to current standards.

That's about it.

"I've been maintaining this gym since 1998," Loveall said. "It's our pride and joy."

The gym is in Knightstown, though the movie isn't about the town. The school — enrollment of nearly 400, not quite the 64 that Hickory famously had in the movie — goes by the nickname Panthers, not Huskers. The Panthers don't play their home games in The Hoosier Gym, and there has been a time or two where the gym and the school have disagreed on where some items like a long-abandoned victory bell belong; it's displayed at the gym, in a room filled with Knightstown memorabilia and not artifacts from the movie.

The place remains open largely because fans keep visiting. It has been the site of everything from political rallies to fundraising dinners. The court can be rented for $100 an hour — and groups come from all over to play or just get shots up.

"It's always an honor to be back," actor Maris Valainis, who plays Chitwood in the movie, said when the team was assembled in Knightstown for a 35th anniversary gathering a couple years ago.

Of the many lines in the movie that resonate, one — "Welcome to Indiana basketball," the line uttered by Dale as he fixes his tie before stepping onto the court for his first game as coach — might stand out a bit more than most others.

Thing is, the court isn't just about Indiana basketball anymore.

High school teams from across the country come to play there now, and from that was born a new tradition. They leave a jersey behind, all signed by players. They hang in the locker room and other parts of the building, more than 300 of them now in a collection that's constantly growing. Some leave little notes behind on the jerseys as well; Cale Leitch of Talawanda High in Ohio hit a shot at the buzzer to give his team a 48-46 win there last year and scrawled "Game winner" under his name and number.

"I envisioned it," Leitch told the Southwest Ohio Sports Daily after his winning shot.

There have been more famous visitors as well. LeBron James and Carmelo Anthony were there once as their NBA careers were starting, posing at midcourt with Magic Johnson and Larry Bird. Chris Mullin has gotten shots up there, while Greg Oden and Mike Conley Jr. played there as high schoolers.

The movie even got talked about at NBA All-Star weekend in Indianapolis. Commissioner Adam Silver and No. 1 overall pick Victor Wembanyama were on stage together at the tech summit discussing how artificial intelligence can change the way people view the game. Part of their presentation included a clip from "Hoosiers," a movie that Wembanyama had just been introduced to.

"It's based in Indiana," Silver told Wembanyama. "Parts of it were filmed right down the street here."

Maybe fittingly, there's still the whole David vs. Goliath thing going on, just like in the movie.

New Castle — like Knightstown, part of Henry County — boasts the biggest high school basketball arena in the country, the 8,400-seat New Castle Fieldhouse. The Hoosier Gym might hold 400, tops.

"They'll always tell us that they've got the world's largest high school gym," Loveall said. "And I said, 'Isn't that amazing, in the same county we've got the world's largest — and the world's most famous.'"