

# BELLEFONTAINE TOTAL MARKET COVERAGE Examiner

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Vol. 134 • No. 2 • 1 DOLLAR

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2024



**TIGERS WIN ON ROAD**  
West Liberty-Salem tops Ben Logan girls



FORECAST  
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▼ 32

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## 3 INJURED IN AMISH BUGGY, SUV CRASH



Three children were injured, two critically, in a crash involving an Amish buggy and a sport utility vehicle around 8:30 a.m. Monday, Dec. 16, at the intersection of state routes 274 and 638. Deputies from the Logan County Sheriff's Office report that the buggy, traveling along S.R. 274, attempted to turn onto S.R. 638, but failed to yield to an SUV traveling on S.R. 638. Huntsville Fire and EMS along with BMRT squad responded to the scene. Two of the injured children were transported to Lima Memorial Hospital with critical injuries, while the third child was transported to Mary Rutan Hospital for treatment of less severe injuries. No additional injuries were reported. The crash remains under investigation. (EXAMINER PHOTO | T.J. HUBBARD)

## Homestead Exemption program changes announced

BY THE EXAMINER STAFF

Logan County Auditor Jack Reser recently announced an increase in the Homestead Exemption for senior citizens, effective for the 2025 property tax year (to be paid in 2026).

The Ohio Department of Taxation has raised both the income threshold and the amount of market value that can be exempted for eligible homeowners.

Homeowners with an Ohio Adjusted Gross Income of \$40,000 or less are now eligible to apply for the Homestead Exemption. This exemption is available to senior citizens aged 65 and older, individuals who are 100 percent disabled, and

surviving spouses of qualified applicants. The Homestead Exemption allows eligible homeowners to exempt up to \$28,000 of the market value of their home from property taxes. Disabled Veterans can exempt up to \$56,000.

"Homestead Exemption is a valuable tool for those who qualify in controlling property tax changes. I believe the Ohio Legislative must broaden the use for all seniors among the age of 65 years or older," Auditor Reser said.

Late applicants — homeowners who qualified for the exemption in the previous year with an Ohio Adjusted Gross Income

See EXEMPTION on Page 3

## LaRose honors sacrifices of local veterans at wreath ceremony



Secretary of State Frank LaRose, third from the right, poses with local veterans Saturday at Calvary Cemetery. (SUBMITTED PHOTO)

BY THE EXAMINER STAFF

**A number of local volunteers and residents paused Saturday, Dec. 14, in the midst of the busy Christmas season to offer a special remembrance and tribute for veterans at three area cemeteries for National Wreaths Across America Day.**

A state official who also happens to be a decorated veteran made a special visit to one of the cemeteries — Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose. He was a featured speaker at the ceremony at St. Patrick Church's Calvary Cemetery, located at 1793 County Road 18, Bellefontaine, joining in the commemoration alongside 4,800 cemeteries participating across the U.S.

LaRose, a veteran of the U.S. Army, served with the

U.S. 101st Airborne and as a member of the Special Forces Green Berets.

In addition to his many commendations, he was awarded the Bronze Star, one of our nation's highest honors. He is to this day a member of the U.S. Army Reserve.

LaRose spoke passionately about the dedication and sacrifice our veterans make to defend and support our country.

Volunteers then laid

See WREATHS on P10



## JOY IS CONTAGIOUS AT ANNUAL EVENT

West Liberty Police Chief Shane Oelker shops with a youngster Saturday morning, Dec. 14, at the Shop with Kids event at Walmart of Bellefontaine. Officers, deputies and troopers from the Bellefontaine Police Department, Logan County Sheriff's Office, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Ohio State Highway Patrol, Russells Point Police Department and West Liberty Police Department, participated in the annual event organized by the Fraternal Order of Police Hi Point Lodge 60, which elicited smiles and cheer among the children participants and their law enforcement shopping helpers. The FOP Hi-Point Lodge 60 expressed appreciation to everyone who helped make this event possible, "especially the great staff at Walmart." (FOP HI-POINT LODGE PHOTO)

## Police launch homicide investigation after bodies of 3 women found in home

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Authorities in Ohio launched a homicide investigation after the bodies of three women were found Saturday inside a home in Columbus.

Officers were called to a home on the city's south side just before 4 p.m. Saturday for what a 911 caller described as a medical event. Police found three women who were pronounced dead at the scene, according to police spokesman Sgt. James Fuqua.

He said the killings were considered homicides, but he did not have further details, including what led up to the killings.

"Unfortunately, this is a very complex scene with the amount of victims that we have," he told reporters Saturday. "It's going to take a little bit longer to make sure that we're very careful in going through the scene meticulously so we do

See BODIES on Page 4



Columbus Police Department investigate the scene of a homicide on South Ohio Avenue as seen from the intersection of East Mithoff Street and South Ohio Avenue on Saturday, Dec. 14, 2024, in Columbus, Ohio. (SAMANTHA MADAR/THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH VIA AP)



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The Examiner reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity. Forum letters and guest editorials are the opinions of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Examiner. E-mail letters may be sent to:

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**The Forum**  
 Bellefontaine Examiner  
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**ABE MARTIN**



"It's gittin' so children are neither seen or heard unless we sit up all night."

Written prior, 1931, by Kin Hubbard, a world-famous newspaper humorist and father of late T.E. Hubbard, former Examiner owner/publisher

## BELLEFONTAINE BEAT POLICE & FIRE

### Motorist charged after aggressive driving complaint

Jaime Diaz Hernandez, 28, of Texas, was charged with drunk driving following a traffic stop early Saturday morning, Dec. 14. Officers from the Bellefontaine Police Department also charged Hernandez with weaving and failure to maintain assured clear distance ahead as a result of the stop.

Officers on patrol were alerted around 2:35 a.m. a vehicle being followed on the south end of the city. The vehicles in question were located in the 1000 block of south Main Street. Officers report a Dodge Ram pickup truck was closely following a Kia Soul. The truck's hazard lights were on, and it was weaving within its lane, nearly crossing lane dividers.

Officers pursued the vehicles as they traveled northbound, reaching speeds of 60 mph to catch up. Officers initiated a traffic stop at the intersection of south Main Street and Lake Avenue. Upon approaching the vehicle, officers observed signs of impairment from the driver, Hernandez, including bloodshot, glossy eyes, the smell of alcohol and slurred speech.

Hernandez admitted to consuming alcohol. Inside the truck, officers found a plastic cup containing what appeared to be an alcoholic beverage.

Field sobriety tests indicated impairment, and Hernandez was arrested and transported to the Bellefontaine Police Department, where he provided a breath sample showing a blood-alcohol content of .231, nearly three times the

legal limit. Hernandez also provided a urine sample for further testing after officers received information suggesting he may have consumed cocaine earlier in the evening.

Hernandez was lodged in the Logan County Jail and faces multiple charges, including operating a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs and the traffic violations. The case has been forwarded to the Bellefontaine Municipal Prosecutor's Office for further review.

### Man lodged for domestic violence

Nicholas Dolan, 24, of Lakeview, was charged with domestic violence around 2:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 13, following a physical altercation at an apartment complex at 500 Gunntown Road.

Officers of the Bellefontaine Police Department were dispatched to the residence after a report of a domestic dispute. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim, who reported that Dolan struck her in the face during an argument about a dehumidifier. Officers were shown a photo of a handprint on the right side of the victim's face.

Dolan left the victim's apartment and was located in a neighboring unit. He claimed the argument began when he returned home, and that he was holding his daughter during that part of the dispute. He denied hitting the victim and attributed the redness on her face to her temper.

Officers placed Dolan under arrest for domestic violence. He was transported to the Logan County Jail without incident.

## LOGAN COUNTY BEAT SHERIFF & HIGHWAY PATROL

### Woman charged after dog bites neighbor

Sharleen Carter, 49, of West Liberty, was charged Thursday, Dec. 12, with failure to confine her dog after the animal reportedly attacked chickens and bit and injured a neighbor, according to deputies from the Logan County Sheriff's Office.

Deputies were dispatched at approximately 3:29 p.m. to 1636 County Road 173 on a report of a dog bite. The caller informed deputies that her neighbor's red and white husky had attacked her chickens. When she attempted to grab the dog by its collar, the animal bit her right hand twice. She was able to confine the dog in her barn before contacting law enforcement.

The victim also reported to deputies that this was not the first incident involving the dog, and said that a similar attack occurred last month on Nov. 5. That attack reportedly resulted in the death of two of her chickens. The caller told deputies she wanted to press charges against Carter.

Deputies spoke with Carter at her residence on County Road 173. She admitted to housing the dog but stated

she no longer wanted the animal. Carter was issued a summons and given a mandatory court date.

The victim was transported to Mary Rutan Hospital by for treatment of her injuries. Deputies took photographs of her hand but were unable to obtain a written statement due to her condition.

The dog was transported to the Logan County Sheriff's Office.

### WEST LIBERTY POLICE

#### Motorist from from U.S. 68 crash

An Urbana man was flown by medical helicopter from the scene of single-vehicle crash Saturday, Dec. 14, that occurred along U.S. Route 68 in West Liberty.

Kevin Lycans, 28, was operating a southbound vehicle around 4:45 p.m. just north of County Road 5, when he lost control of his vehicle and struck a guardrail, resulting in heavy damage, officers of the West Liberty Police Department report.

Macochee EMS evaluated Lycans at the scene. MedFlight was called, and the driver was flown to Grant Medical Center in Columbus for treatment. The crash remains under investigation.

## LOCAL NOTES

### 'Examiner' Christmas/New Years holiday printing schedule announced

During the week of Dec. 22 and Dec. 29, the Bellefontaine Examiner will be published Tuesday, Dec. 24; Saturday, Dec. 28; Tuesday, Dec. 31, and Saturday, Jan. 4.

There will be no print editions Thursday, Dec. 26, or Thursday, Jan. 2, because of the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

Check *examiner.org* for any breaking news items and continuing local coverage.

### 'Picking and Grinning' Christmas music set

Picking and Grinning invites area residents to the Liberty Gathering Place in West Liberty for casual Christmas music from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 18. Arrive early and eat.



### BCS dismisses early Friday

Bellefontaine City Schools will dismiss one hour early Friday, Dec. 20, which is the final day of school before the holiday break.

Classes will resume Monday, Jan. 6.

### Blood drives planned for Dec. 20, 21

Versiti Blood Center (formerly Solvita Blood Center) is encouraging community members make an appointment to donate blood this coming week at a community blood drive near them.

- Green Hills Community Blood Drive — Friday, Dec. 20, from noon to 3 p.m., Green Hills Community Center, 6557 U.S. Route 68 South, West Liberty.

- Mary Rutan Hospital Blood Drive — Saturday Dec. 21, from 8 to 11 a.m., Mary Rutan Hospital donor coach.

All attempting donors will receive a holiday T-shirt. Walk-ins are welcome, or you can make an appointment by calling (937) 461-3220. To register online, visit *www.versiti-dayton.org*.



### East Liberty Christmas cantata planned for Dec. 22

The East Liberty Community Choir presents a Christmas cantata at 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 22, at the East Liberty Church of Christ.

This hour-long program celebrates the birth of Jesus. The program is open to the public and is free of charge.

### Churches join together to serve free Christmas meal

West Liberty area churches join together to serve a free Christmas meal from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 25. Drive-thru pick up meals are available at the Liberty Gathering Place, 111 N. Detroit St., West Liberty, or join in for dine-in fellowship at the Liberty Gathering Place.

Meal delivery requests are also available by calling Oak Grove Mennonite Church at (937) 465-4749 by Dec. 24.

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## ILHS CHORALE SINGS AT STATEHOUSE



The Indian Lake High School Chorale filled the Ohio Statehouse with sweet sounds of the season recently. The ILHS Chorale was invited to perform as part of the Holiday Concert Series at the state capital building. They sang several selections from their recent Winter Choir Concert, along with some Christmas songs and patriotic songs. Before the performance, students were treated to a tour of the facility including the rotunda, the Ohio House of Representatives chambers, the Governor's Office and more. For many of these high school students, this was their first tour of the Ohio Statehouse because Covid-19 regulations prohibited them from going on their annual tour in eighth-grade. If you'd like to see their performance, check out <https://ohiochannel.org>. (IL SCHOOLS PHOTO)

## RAIDER SNOWBALL COURT CELEBRATED



Benjamin Logan Schools capped off an exciting week of spirit and celebration by crowning Talan Archer and Kelley Forsythe, pictured, center, as the 2024 Snowball King and Queen during Friday night's game, Dec. 13. The 2024 Homecoming Queen and King, Mia Stahler and Landon Stoodt, had the honor of presenting the crowns. The Snowball Court also includes representatives from each grade: freshmen Belen Palmer and Hunter Zoldak; sophomores Kylie Harner and Dillion Brown; juniors Evelyn Allen and Blake Zoldak; seniors Estella Wenger, Kelley Forsythe, Sidney Saltee, Micah Ackley, Carter Yoder and Talan Archer. The Winter Wonderland Snowball Dance was Saturday, Dec. 14, at BLHS, hosted by the Student Government. Court photos were taken by yearbook staff members Elizabeth Rosebrook and Madi Oakes. (YEARBOOK STAFF PHOTO)

## EXEMPTION

Continued from Page 1

of \$38,300, but did not sign up — can still apply and have their 2023 property taxes (billed in 2024) adjusted, if they apply before Dec. 31, 2024, deadline.

Residents who have previously qualified for Homestead will automatically receive the benefit

without needing to reapply. Those who have not yet applied can find additional information and applications on the Logan County Auditor's website or request an application by phone.

For more information, residents can contact the Logan County Auditor's Office at (937) 599-7209 or visit the website at [www.logancountyohio.gov](http://www.logancountyohio.gov).

## TikTok asks for emergency order to block a US ban unless it's sold

WASHINGTON (AP) — TikTok is asking the Supreme Court to step in on an emergency basis to block the federal law that would ban the popular platform in the United States unless its China-based parent company agrees to sell it. Company lawyers and China-based ByteDance on Monday urged the justices

to act before the law's Jan. 19 deadline. Content creators who rely on the platform for income and some of TikTok's more than 170 million users in the U.S. filed a separate plea. The companies say a shutdown lasting just a month would cause TikTok to lose about a third of its daily users in the U.S.

## DEATH NOTICES

■ **STANLEY, Robert Jr.**, 77, of West Liberty, passed away Sunday evening, Dec. 15, 2024, at his home; funeral arrangements pending, Eichholtz Daring & Sanford Funeral Home, West Liberty.



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## OBITUARIES

### David Paul Anderson

David Paul Anderson, 69, of Bellefontaine, crossed the finish line and reached the checkered flag on his final lap, surrounded by his family on Saturday, December 14, 2024, in Ayden Health Care of Belle Springs, Bellefontaine.



He was born in Lima, Ohio on April 25, 1955, the son of the late Loyd and Kay B. Anderson.

On August 22, 2014, after a 16-year relationship, David married Diane (Shields), and she survives in Bellefontaine.

He is also survived by two brothers, Ron (Linda) Anderson and Tim Anderson, special cousins, Rita (Dan) Johnson, Ronnie Branham, and George Clark, an uncle, Ron (Rose-deceased) Branham, an aunt, Ruby Clark, family caregiver, Sherri (Perry) Hodies, nieces and nephews, Stephanie Johnson, Becky (Sam) Palmer, Brittany (Josh) Porter, Charles Manahan, Falon (Travis) Cooperrider, Monica (Adam) Hannah, Josh Shields, great nieces and nephews, Josalyn and Sophia Porter, Aubrey and Emma Cooperrider, and Hazel and Hunter Hannah, and many other loved-in-laws, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, and nephews.

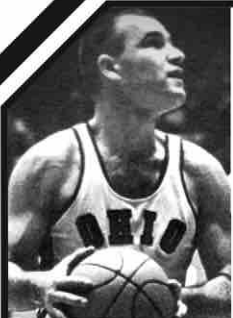
He was preceded in death by his grandfathers, Paul Hackenberger and Ray Anderson and cousin, Kim Clark.

David graduated from Bowling Green High School and worked in the janitorial field with Tier One Property Services (TOPS) as well as at the First Lutheran Church, Bellefontaine. He loved to fish, especially with his brothers, and enjoyed spending time with his family. He was a big fan of NASCAR as well as the Cleveland Browns, naming his cat, Chubbs. He enjoyed playing the guitar and country music as well as visiting Key West, Florida.

Pastor Larry Novak will officiate a funeral service at 5 p.m. Friday, December 20, in the Eichholtz Daring & Sanford Funeral Home, 321 N. Main St., Bellefontaine, Ohio 43311. Visitation will be two hours prior to the service from 3 to 5 p.m. Friday at the funeral home. Burial will be at a later date. There will be a dinner following the service held at the First Lutheran Church, Bellefontaine, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Memorial contributions may be made to the First Lutheran Church, 208 W Sandusky Ave, Bellefontaine, OH 43311.

Eichholtz Daring & Sanford Funeral Home & Cremation Center, Bellefontaine, is honored to serve the Anderson family and encourages anyone to share a fond memory or message of condolence at [www.edsfh.com](http://www.edsfh.com).



### RICHARD PAUL [DICK] RICKETTS

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*My very dear husband,*  
Not a moment goes by that I don't long for you so. Your unwavering love and devotion to God and to our family here. You are so missed, appreciated, and loved. You are never forgotten!

*Dad,*  
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*Love, your wife Brenda and  
son Richard P. Ricketts II*

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## NO UTILITY SOLAR AT INDIAN LAKE



## FFA FRUIT SALE PARTICIPANTS REWARDED



Benjamin Logan FFA members sold more than \$33,000 worth of fruit, cheese, jerky, summer sausage and cheesecake for their 2024 Annual Fruit Sales. Members sold orders online and face-to-face. Students who met the chapter goal had the opportunity to earn a free trip to Scene 75 in January or an FFA three-quarter zip pullover, pictured. Members who met the goal were Adi Gregg, Addison Huffman, Emily Godwin, Mallory Chapman, Wyatt Gordon, Kayley Knox, Ricky Tevis, Landon Weber, Kelsey Chambers, Lillian Kelley, Miley Buetter, Micah Ackley, Kaylyn Elliott, Abigail Shafer, Shyanne Schoepfle, Miley Trees, Tanner Anderson, Lauren Kennedy, Klayten Chamberlin, Ashley Peters, Brian Zerkle, Emily LeVan and Holden Lautenschlager. (BENJAMIN LOGAN PHOTO)



## Drumming up holiday excitement

The Riverside Music Department shared the Christmas spirit with attendees at their Holiday Concert Dec. 11. The concert featured the Sixth-Grade Band, Junior High Choir, Junior High Band, High School Choir and High School Concert Band. The ensembles performed various pieces of music such as

"Jingle Bells," "Carol of the Bells," "Sleigh Ride," selections from the movie Frozen and many others. Music teacher Kassandra Crockett expressed appreciation to the Riverside administration for their continued support of the music program; Branita Holbrook-Bratka for accompanying the choirs; Alisha Robinson for taking pictures of the event; and the Riverside community for their continued support of the program and the student musicians. (RIVERSIDE SCHOOLS PHOTO)

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# Drone detectors in New Jersey have found 'little or no evidence' of wrongdoing, governor says

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — Drone-detecting devices deployed in New Jersey in the past week have found "little to no evidence" of anything nefarious or threatening, Gov. Phil Murphy said Monday as calls grew for action to address the mysterious nighttime sightings of suspected unmanned flights across the northeastern U.S.

Murphy told reporters in Trenton that there were 12 sightings of suspected drones in the state on Saturday and one on Sunday. He declined to go into detail about the detection equipment, but said it was powerful enough to disable the drones, although he added that is not legal on U.S. soil.

Murphy, a Democrat, echoed calls by state officials elsewhere for Congress to allow them to deal with drones. Nearly all the power now rests with the federal government.

"It is extraordinary to me that, that a nation as great as ours and as powerful as ours has the deficiencies that we have now seen in living color as it relates to drone incursions," Murphy said.

Federal officials, including Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, have repeatedly said there are no signs that any drone operators have shown bad intent, nor is there evidence of foreign involvement.

"There's no question that people are seeing drones," Mayorkas told ABC's George Stephanopoulos on Sunday. "But I want to assure the American public that we are on it. We are working in close coordination with state and local authorities."

But that hasn't reassured everyone. Conspiracy theories about foreign actors, the U.S. government and the "deep state," abound online, while elected officials concerned about threats to military bases, airports and other locations have increased their calls for federal officials

to act.

The skeptics include President-elect Donald Trump, who suggested Monday that "the government knows what is happening."

"Our military knows and our president knows and for some reason they want to keep people in suspense," Trump said. He refused to say whether he had been briefed on the drone sightings.

New Jersey Sen. Andy Kim, a Democrat, told The Associated Press that officials could do a better job helping the public to understand what is going on, especially when people wrongly conclude they are seeing unmanned aircraft.

"What the public could use is like walking through that rather than just, you know, as a statement that says nothing, nothing to be concerned about," he said. "I think it's reached a level of just public attention that some greater level of depth is necessary."

Kim said he's heard no supporting evidence for the president-elect's statement Monday that information is being withheld and that a lack of faith in institutions is playing a key part in the saga.

"Nothing that I'm seeing, nothing that I've engaged in gives me any impression of that nature. But like, I get it, some people won't believe me, right? Because that's the level of distrust that we face."

Over the past two days, New York and Pennsylvania officials have also requested drone-detecting equipment from federal officials.

"It is imperative our communities in Pennsylvania are protected and questions on the presence of these drones are answered," U.S. Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, a Pennsylvania Republican, wrote in a letter to Mayorkas on Monday. "State-of-the-art radar systems will provide insights into where these drones are deploying from and what the motives for their flights may be."

After reports of drones in Connecticut, state police said they were monitoring drone activity and state officials said analysts were comparing reported sightings with federal flight data.

"One of the drone sightings had the word Frontier on the back, that was an airline," Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont, a Democrat, said Monday. "But some of them

are big and unexplained and we're going to get to the bottom of this. Right now, what we do is we make sure that our security and airports are secure."

At a media briefing on Monday, the Pentagon's press secretary, Air Force Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder, said defense officials have seen no indication that the drones flying over multiple locations in the U.S. are being controlled by a foreign country. According to the Federal Aviation Administration, he said, there are approximately 1 million registered drones in the U.S. and about 8,000 are flying any given day.

Ryder said that while military bases overseas can use surveillance methods that quickly address the origin of drones, that power is limited in U.S. airspace because of domestic surveillance laws. He said most drones are operated through either radio frequency transmissions or satellite-guided GPS navigation, which can provide information about the operators. If they're not controlled by those methods, that's another clue, he said.

"So I'm kind of talking around it because I don't necessarily want to get into talking classified capabilities, but the bottom line is that all of that gives us an idea that, hey, these are not foreign origin," Ryder said.

Christopher Stadulis, a retired New York City firefighter and drone hobbyist, said he's seen clusters of drones near his home in Clinton Township, New Jersey. He said the lights he has seen at night are different from those used by commercial airlines, and the drones he has seen are very large.

"When you look at what I'm seeing with the naked eye, you can see it's not a normal aircraft," he said in a recent interview. "This and we don't have this much traffic, you know, usually on any given night in this area. So it seems like definitely some of them are aircraft that we can't explain what they are."

More suspected drone sightings over the weekend led to a temporary airspace shutdown at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, for about four hours late Friday into Saturday, and the arrests of two men in Boston accused of flying a drone "dangerously close" to Logan International Airport.

## Bodies

Continued from Page 1

not miss any key piece of evidence."

He said investigators were interviewing witnesses and looking for video evidence.

Fuqua said Saturday that no suspects had been taken into custody.

Columbus police did not immediately have an update on the homicides on Sunday.

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## Lady Tigers overwhelm Ben Logan

BY MIKE FRANK  
EXAMINER SPORTS WRITER

Gaining experience takes time.

West Liberty-Salem defeated host Benjamin Logan 57-27 in nonleague competition on Monday night.

The Tigers got off to a big start, thanks to good shooting on offense and defensive pressure that led to a number of turnovers.

The lead was over 20 points by halftime. Both sides lit things up in the third quarter, but WL-S kept its cushion throughout.

West Liberty-Salem moves to 6-2 on the season, while the Lady Raiders are now 1-7.

"We shot the ball really well to start the game," said Lady Tigers coach Dennis McIntosh. "I thought our defense in the first quarter was really good and forced them into some tough shots."

He added that "when Ava (Astorino) and Addi (Wallen) get going, the rest of them know to get them the ball. They can light it up. It was fun to watch."

Astorino had a game-high 21 points and Wallen made four 3-pointers plus one other basket for 14.

Ben Logan coach Greg Saylor said, "We can't over-

come shooting less than 20 percent from the floor and turning the ball over. We might have had a shot if we did one or the other, but both is the kiss of death."

He noted that the starters are one senior and one junior, with the others sophomores and freshmen.

He praised the team's effort. "They're hungry, they're athletic, they get after it and they don't ever quit. You would just like to see the ball go through the basket a few more times."

Kylie Harner finished with 10 points and Lahna Cook scored seven for Ben Logan.

West Liberty-Salem opened with a three by Wallen and a two by Maddie McGill. Ben Logan finally got a shot to fall with 5:10 to go on a jumper by Harner.

WL-S then went on a 12-0 run over the next four minutes. That included 3-pointers by Astorino and Ava Johnson. Ben Logan called timeout with just over a minute and a half to go in the first.

The rest of the period saw only free throws, with two by Joplin Schneider for Ben Logan and one by Ava Poppe. That left the margin at 18-4 in favor of the Lady Tigers.

Neither side was able to



Ava Johnson of West Liberty-Salem drives to the basket during Monday's game against Benjamin Logan. (EXAMINER PHOTO | MIKE FRANK)

score for the first three minutes of the second period. Johnson was knocked down on a three-point attempt and made two shots at the line. Astorino then nailed two from long range, one

from the side of the arc and one from near the top.

The Lady Raiders got a three-pointer by Cook with 30 seconds left, though Poppe got the last score of the half at the other end.

The teams headed off with WL-S ahead 28-7.

The teams traded scores to open the third quarter, then WL-S got baskets by McGill and Wallen.

Both sides turned to

their outside game, with Wallen hitting two more, and Harner connecting in between for Ben Logan near the midway point.

See TIGERS on Page 6



Grady Feasel of Bellefontaine swims in an event at the Cougar Invitational on Saturday. (SUBMITTED PHOTO | CAROL FULTZ)

## Chieftains swimmers take first, third at invitational

BY THE EXAMINER STAFF

The Bellefontaine swim teams traveled to Wittenburg for the Cougar Invitational on Saturday.

The boys took first place out of 10 teams with 110 points, and the girls finished third with 76.

"We loved watching our athletes race today," said Bellefontaine coach Sharon Lewis. "The swimmers focused on race plans and put in the effort to get results. All eight of our available boys scored points and our girls adjusted to some last minute changes and still managed to finish in the top three."

For the boys, Elias Abrego was first in the 100 butterfly and second in the 200 freestyle. Cody Hudson took third in both the 200 individual medley and 100 breaststroke.

Jaylen Henry was third in the 100 backstroke, Grady Feasel third in the 100 butterfly and Beckham Harman fourth in the 200 IM.

Blaine Mitchell was sixth in the 200 freestyle and seventh in the 100 breaststroke. Also taking sixth were Ryan Alexander in the 100 freestyle and Oliver Grandstaff in the 100 backstroke.

Harman, Hudson,



Ella Fultz is shown in action for the Bellefontaine girls during Saturday's invitational. (SUBMITTED PHOTO | CAROL FULTZ)

Abrego and Henry won the medley relay. Alexander, Harman, Hudson and Abrego are second in the 200 free relay, and Feasel, Grandstaff, Mitchell and Alexander took third in the 400 free relay.

On the girls' side, Kate Myers was second in the 500 freestyle and eighth in the 50 free.

Ella Fultz got fourth in the 200 freestyle and seventh in the 100 butterfly. Kaeleigh Flora was fourth in the 200 IM and seventh in the 100 backstroke. Maddie

Ullom took seventh in the 200 IM, Claire Grandstaff was eighth in the 200 free and Elaina Ullom was eighth in the 100 breaststroke.

The 400 free relay of Myers, Maddie Ullom, Flora, and Elaina Ullom was second. The two Ullom plus Flora and Myers were fourth in the medley relay. McDaniel, Freeman, Fultz and Steele got fifth in the 200 free relay.

Bellefontaine's next meet is Wednesday at Trotwood.

## West Liberty-Salem bowlers swept by Mechanicsburg

BY THE EXAMINER STAFF

MECHANICSBURG — The West Liberty-Salem bowling teams traveled to face Mechanicsburg Monday in Ohio Heritage Conference action. The Indians won both matches.

In the boys' action, Mechanicsburg had a total of 2,740 to the Tigers' 2,543.

For West Liberty-Salem, Luke Thomas had the high series with 426 (180-246).

He was followed by Tucker Searles at 368 (184-184), then Devon Jones 362 (140-222), Brock Mills 356 (172-184) and Evan Borgerding 352 (157-195).

WL-S had 1,864 in regular games and 679 (168-170-209-132) in the four Baker games.

The Mechanicsburg girls won by a count of 2,419 to 1,676.

Leading WL-S was Sadie

Paul with a 332 (139-193), followed by Elli Ullery 324 (122-202), Alyssa Mueller 288 (124-164) and Lilly Gearheart 264 (146-118).

The regular game total was 1,208 with a Baker games total of 468 (103-131-107-127).

Both teams are now 2-1 in conference action and 4-2 overall. They will face Southeastern on Thursday at 4 p.m. at the Southwest Bowling Center.

## Tennessee keeps top spot in poll

BY DAVE SKRETTA  
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

Tennessee held onto No. 1 in the AP Top 25 for the second consecutive week, though No. 2 Auburn closed the gap as the top five remained unchanged in the men's college basketball poll Monday.

The Volunteers received 50 first-place votes from the national media panel after wins over Miami and Illinois pushed coach Rick Barnes' program to 10-0 for only the fifth time in school history. Auburn picked up nine first-place votes from last week and had 12 total. Iowa State, Duke and Kentucky rounded out the top five.

Tennessee is among five unbeaten left in men's Division I basketball and one of three from the SEC, joining No. 7 Florida (10-0) and No. 14 Oklahoma (10-0). Drake (9-0) and Utah State (10-0) also enter this week

undefeated.

"We know watching film there's a lot of areas we have to get better with, more consistent," Barnes said Monday. "It's everybody. Coaches getting better, players getting better. When you're in December, you have to be real. Look at film and realize we've done this or that, but we have a long way to go to be where we want to be."

Auburn improved to 9-1 with its 91-53 blowout of Ohio State in Atlanta. Johni Broome showed the way with 21 points and 20 rebounds for the Tigers' first 20-20 game in 35 years, then he raced back to Auburn for his graduation Saturday night.

"They may be the best team in the country right now," Ohio State coach Jake Diebler said. "They have a lot of experience, and they made us pay when we made a mistake."

The SEC continued to dominate the Top 25 with the Vols and Tigers joined

by Kentucky, No. 6 Alabama and No. 7 Florida in giving the league five of the top seven. Kansas moved up two spots to No. 8 while Marquette and Oregon rounded out the top 10.

Two-time defending national champion UConn jumped seven spots to No. 11 after beating then-No. 8 Gonzaga. The Huskies were followed by Texas A&M, the Bulldogs, the Sooners and Houston, which remained at No. 15.

Purdue dropped five spots to No. 16 after its loss to the Aggies, and was followed by Ole Miss, UCLA, Cincinnati and Michigan State. Dayton entered the poll for the first time this season at No. 22, just behind Memphis, which returned after its win over Clemson. Wisconsin dropped out after its loss to Illinois while Mississippi State fell out after a narrow win over McNeese State.

## JUNIOR HIGH

### Raiders girls down Lakers

Ben Logan defeated Indian Lake in eighth grade girls basketball 56-24 on Monday.

For Indian Lake, Claire Tidwell had 11 points and 14 rebounds. Makayle -Clary had seven points, with three each by Laura Metzger and Kyler Carruthers.

Ben Logan won the seventh grade game 28-16. For the Lakers, Addison Headings and Abby Bihn each scored six, Samantha Altstaetter had three and Caroline Jones one point.

### Chiefs girls earn split

The Bellefontaine junior high girls faced Graham on Monday. Graham won the eighth grade game 39-24, while Bellefontaine took the seventh grade matchup 28-18.

### WL-S eighth graders win

The West Liberty-Salem eighth grade boys defeated Springfield Catholic Central 48-40 Monday.

Brandel Sullivan had 14 and Grant Krabill 12 to lead the Tigers. Other scoring: Eli Jones 9, Isaiah Barth 7, Tyler Hershberger 2, Nate Shively 2, and Carter Pratt 2.



# SPORTS

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## Tigers



Lahna Cook of Ben Logan drives around defenders from West Liberty-Salem during Monday's game. (EXAMINER PHOTO | MIKE FRANK)

Continued from Page 5

After a pair of free throws by Elliott Butler, WL-S got answers with a three by Astorino and a layup from Belle Sarver. Harner and Astorino kept up the long distance exchanges about a minute apart as time wound down. Cook then made a free throw for the hosts. Astorino closed out the scoring in the frame to make it 51-19. Scoring in the final eight minutes was light on both ends. Both Ben Logan and West Liberty-Salem made three shots from the floor,

and the Lady Raiders also got a pair of free throws by Adilynne Gregg.

Ben Logan won the JV game against Madison Plains.

West Liberty-Salem (3-1 Ohio Heritage Conference, 6-2 overall) will play its final game of 2024 on Saturday at Madison Plains.

The Lady Raiders (0-3 Central Buckeye Conference, 1-7 overall) also has one contest left this month, with a trip to

**WL-S 57, BEN LOGAN 27**

TIGERS	18	10	23	6	-	57
RAIDERS	4	3	12	8	-	27

**WEST LIBERTY-SALEM (3-1, 6-2)**

Airanna Weaver 0 0-0 0: Grace Jones 0 0-0 0: Ava Johnson 2 2-3 7: Maddie McGill 3 0-0 6: Ava Poppe 1 1-2 3: Addie Wallen 5 0-0 14: Ava Astorino 8 0-1 21: Belle Sarver 1 0-0 2: Lucy Cole 1 0-0 2.

**TOTALS 21 3-6 57**

**BEN LOGAN (0-3, 1-7)**

Kyle Harner 4 0-0 10: Milley Buettner 0 0-0 0: Bonnie Brunson 0 0-2 0: Kaylee Hays 1 0-0 2: Elliott Butler 0 2-6 2: Daylin Varner 0 0-0 0: Aubrey Harris 1 0-0 2: Halley Smith 0 0-0 0: Joplin Schneider 0 2-2 2: Lahna Cook 2 1-2 7: Adilynne Gregg 0 2-6 2.

**TOTALS 8 7-18 27.**

Graham Saturday.

**Triad drops home contest to Fairlawn**

The Triad girls basketball team lost to Fairlawn 35-22 in nonleague action Monday at home.

The Lady Cardinals' Jazz Ford scored 14 points and grabbed seven rebounds. Mia LeMay had six points and nine rebounds. Bre Parsons had six rebounds and Grace Martin made three assists.

Fairlawn took an 11-8 lead in the first quarter. Each team had four in the second, making it 15-12 at the break.

Fairlawn had an 8-6 edge in the third period, and 12-9 in the fourth to maintain the lead to the finish.

Triad (1-4 OHC, 2-7 overall) will host Madison Plains Wednesday at 6 p.m. Triad will be playing only varsity games the rest of the season.

**JACK RESER**  
LOGAN COUNTY AUDITOR

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December 10, 2024.....11-2	DeGraff Village Office - DeGraff
December 13, 2024.....1-4	Richwood Bank – Huntsville
December 14, 2024.....9-12	Gathering Grounds Coffee – Russels Point
December 17, 2024.....9-12	Field's Grocery – West Mansfield
December 27, 2024.....9-12	Winner's Market – Lakeview
January 3, 2025 .....3-6	Thoman's – West Liberty
January 10, 2025 .....2-5	Middleburg Grab and Go – Middleburg
January 11, 2025.....9-12	Lakeview Community Market – Lakeview
January 14, 2025 .....2-5	Winner's Market – Lakeview
January 24, 2025 .....4-6	Rushsylvania One Stop – Rushsylvania
January 31, 2025 .....1-4	DeGraff Village Office – DeGraff

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# Entertainment

## Rock pioneer Brenda Lee shines in new documentary. 'I just wanted to sing'

NEW YORK (AP) — Come and take a trip to the giddy birth of rock 'n' roll through the eyes of one of its pioneers — Brenda Lee.

The "I'm Sorry" and "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" hitmaker who shared stages with both Elvis Presley and the Beatles is a guide to those heady years in "American Masters — Brenda Lee: Rockin' Around," which premieres Monday on PBS.

"That era can never be repeated again," she tells The Associated Press on the eve of the broadcast. "That was an era when the money wasn't thought about, the fame wasn't thought about. I know that sounds crazy, but it is true. The artists of that time were there to do their thing, and they loved it, whether they got paid or not."

Lee, 80, had her first hit



BRENDA LEE

record in 1960 at age 15 and went on to sell more than 100 million albums. In the '60s, she earned more Hot 100 singles in the United States — 46 — than any recording artist besides the Beatles, Presley or Ray Charles. She won a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009.

She is the rare artist inducted into both the Country Music Hall of Fame and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, moving effortlessly in her career

between country, pop, rock and rockabilly sounds.

"I never classified myself as a ballad singer, as a rock singer, as a country singer or anything. I just wanted to sing," she says in the interview. "Some artists can sing it all. Not me. I have to love what I'm singing or it's not believable."

The documentary draws on the commentary of musicologists and such stars as Keith Urban, Tanya Tucker, Trisha Yearwood, Jackie DeShannon, Pat Benatar and Neil Giraldo.

"I had no trouble getting people to talk about Brenda and why she matters and why we should look to her," says director Barbara Hall. "This is what's possible when you just get your head down and stay focused and do what you know you're good at and don't give up."

Lee was the daughter of a carpenter in Atlanta who died in a construction accident when she was just 8. Her mother soon was forced to work in the cotton mill. When she was 10, country music singer Red Foley put her on his national TV program "Ozark Jubilee." By age 12, she had appeared on various network TV variety shows.

The portrait that emerges is a rare one for the music industry, the story of a young woman who is protected and nurtured. Lee credits producer Owen Bradley; her manager, Dub Allbritton; and the musicians she worked with for looking out for her, treating her like a little sister.

"I hear horror stories about children in show business, but I certainly didn't have that experience, and I'm grateful for

that," says Lee. "It was like I was one of the group, and that was so important to me."

The holidays are when Lee shines most, with her hit "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" in high rotation. In 2023, it topped the Billboard Hot 100 chart for the first time ever, 65 years after the song's debut.

"She is in your house every Christmas," says Hall. "She is a part of something that so many Americans celebrate. So, I'm hoping that people will embrace her story and her music once they get reintroduced to it."

She recorded it at age 13 in July 1958, not exactly a snowy time in the South. The air conditioner was cranked up in the recording studio and there was a Christmas tree set up to get everyone in the mood. It

initially was a bigger hit abroad and later got a boost in the 1990 film "Home Alone."

"You get a wonderful song and it may lay around for a few years like 'Rockin' did, but if it's as wonderful as 'Rockin' was, it'll show its head sooner or later, and that's what happened," Lee says.

Hall, who worked on a 2017 "American Masters" documentary on Patsy Cline, says she tried to find any dirt on Lee and simply couldn't. Even when Lee broke her leg during the shoot and had to be hospitalized, she was gracious and kind.

"If my leg was broken in 10 places and I had to be in a rehab facility, I'd probably be in a bad mood the whole time," she says. "She was cracking jokes and everyone in the room felt like she was their friend."

### COMICS

#### MODERATELY CONFUSED

Jeff Stahl



#### DENNIS THE MENACE

Hank Ketcham



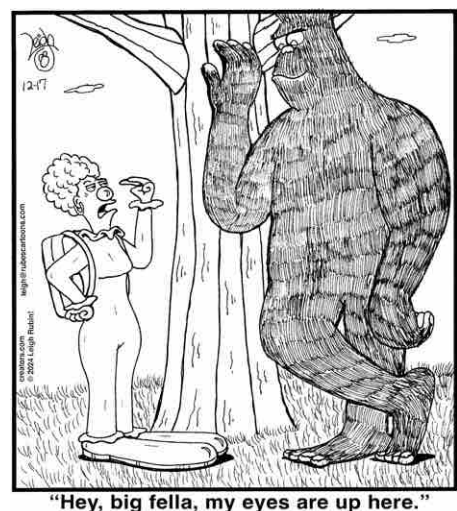
#### REALITY CHECK

Dave Whamond



#### RUBES

Leigh Rubin



#### PEANUTS

Charles Schulz



#### PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

Stephan Pastis



### CROSSWORD

Sheffer

**ACROSS**

- 1 Vatican VIP
- 5 Watch chain
- 8 Dandies
- 12 Unsilently
- 13 Bathroom, in London
- 14 Classic theaters
- 15 No-cost perk from a publisher
- 17 Sty cry
- 18 Nourished
- 19 Dawn goddess
- 20 Concepts
- 21 Gift tag word
- 22 PC key
- 23 Some surreal paintings
- 26 Busybody
- 30 Fashion's Cassini
- 31 Scoundrel
- 32 — Major
- 33 Redeem one's chips
- 35 Top of a wave
- 36 Italian "three"

**DOWN**

- 1 Magic dragon
- 37 Cave flier
- 38 Finch, say
- 41 Luau
- 42 "Adorbs!"
- 45 Towering
- 46 Specialized drag racer
- 48 Birthright barterer
- 49 Raw rock
- 50 Formerly
- 51 Belgrade resident
- 52 Ballot markings
- 53 Super-bright, as sneaker colors
- 21 1999 Brad Pitt film
- 22 Conclusion
- 23 Physician's nickname
- 24 — carte
- 25 French article
- 26 Posed for a portrait
- 27 Season opener?
- 28 Twisty turn
- 29 Snitch
- 31 Maestro's signal
- 34 Scrap
- 35 First son
- 37 Dog biscuit shapes
- 38 GPS suggestions
- 39 Lighten
- 40 Winged
- 41 Chaste
- 42 Unwanted breakout
- 43 Texas city
- 44 Wee songbird
- 46 Sly one
- 47 Thither

**Solution time: 21 mins.**

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Saturday's answer 12-16

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Difficulty: ★★ 12/17

### Horoscopes

ROYAL STARS | FROM KING FEATURES SYNDICATE By Georgia Nicols

**MOON ALERT:** Caution! Avoid shopping or big decisions from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. EST today (10 a.m. to 4 p.m. PST). After that, the Moon moves from Cancer into Leo.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY** for Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2024: You are strong, determined and organized, and you have business savvy. You're a natural leader. This year has been the beginning of a new nine-year cycle for you. It still offers opportunities for new directions and chances to explore new opportunities. Stay flexible so you can act fast.

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19) ★★★ Today you might feel sympathetic to a family member. Nevertheless, be aware of the limitations of the Moon Alert today, and avoid spending money (except for on food and gas) or making important decisions during this time. Forewarned is forearmed. Tonight: Socialize!  
**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20) ★★★ This is a dreamy, absent-minded day, and you might have some idealistic (but unrealistic) ideas. Be aware of the restrictions of the Moon Alert and don't shop during this time (except for food or gas). Tread carefully. Tonight: Cocoon.  
**GEMINI** (May 21-June 20) ★★★ Today you're focused on financial matters, cash flow and perhaps wanting to spend money. However, most of this day is a Moon Alert, which means it's a poor day to spend money except for on food and gas. Be aware of this. Tonight: Discussions.

**CANCER** (June 21-July 22) ★★★★★ For most of this day, you might feel more emotional than usual and probably indecisive. It will be hard to make decisions. One thing to know is to avoid shopping during this Moon Alert. Restrict your spending to food and gas. Tonight: Check your belongings.  
**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22) ★★★★★ Today you will seek out privacy and be happy to work alone or behind the scenes. Avoid important decisions. However, late in the day, the Moon will move into your sign, which will energize you. Suddenly, it's all systems go! Tonight: You win!  
**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) ★★★★★ Discussions with members and groups will interest you today. However, agree to nothing important, because most of this day is a Moon Alert. However, it's a creative day. It's a good time to kick around ideas and explore options. Tonight: Seek privacy.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) ★★★★★ People notice you today. In fact, some people know personal details about your private life. Be aware of this in case you have to do some damage control. Postpone important decisions or shopping (except for food and gas) until after the Moon Alert is over. Tonight: Friendships.  
**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) ★★★★★ You might not get much done today. However, having said that, this is a potentially creative day for many people. That's because you can think outside the box. Nevertheless, don't push yourself. Escape somewhere if you can. Check the Moon Alert. Tonight: You've noticed!  
**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) ★★★★★ Although you might be focused on financial matters — especially

something to do with taxes, debt, insurance issues or shared property — this is a poor day to make important decisions or to spend money. (See the Moon Alert.) Do your homework. Get your facts. Wait until tomorrow or until the Moon Alert is over. Tonight: Explore!  
**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) ★★★★★ For most of today, the Moon is opposite your sign. Quite likely, you will feel sympathetic to someone close to you. However, because the Moon Alert is in effect for most of this day, it's a poor time to make important decisions or to spend money. Be aware of this. Tonight: Check your finances.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) ★★★★★ You feel sympathetic to others today. You might want to help a co-worker — if not a co-worker, then perhaps someone related to your health or a pet. In any event, wait until the Moon Alert is over to make important decisions or to spend money. Tonight: Listen and cooperate.  
**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20) ★★★★★ This is a fabulous, creative day for you! If you work in the arts or on any creative projects, or you need to develop your artistic talents, the energy of this day will support you. You will easily explore new ideas. Postpone spending money (except for on food and gas) until the Moon Alert is over. Tonight: Get organized.  
**BORN TODAY**  
 Actress Sarah Paulson (1974), actress Kathryn Winnick (1977), actor, comedian Eugene Levy (1946) \*\*\*  
 Find more Georgia Nicols horoscopes at georgianicols.com.  
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# Stage spoofs of Hallmark TV movies are Christmas gifts for theaters

PHOENIX (AP) — A career woman from the big city gets stranded in a quaint town just before Christmas but somehow finds love on the holiday with a prince in disguise ... or a high school crush ... or a widowed father.

Sounds like a plot line from a Hallmark Channel holiday movie? This Christmas, stories like this are also playing out off-screen on theater stages around the country. As spoofs.

While a lot of theater companies are dusting off traditional chestnuts like "A Christmas Carol" or "White Christmas," some are tackling the TV Christmas rom-com. Almost like a plot from Hallmark's playbook, regional and community theaters are putting on a festive show. But these are gentle send-ups of the films and all their cheesy spirit.

Love 'em or hate 'em, formulaic meet-cute holiday flicks have become as tied to the yuletide as ugly sweaters and hot chocolate. Theater directors say the movies have a universal appeal since most audiences can recognize the story beats. And judging by the high ticket sales, these parodies are gaining a holly jolly reception.

Meet our stars, Holly, Joy and Carol.

Ghostlight Theatre, a community theater in the Phoenix suburb of Sun City West, is presenting "The Holiday Channel Christmas Movie Wonderthon," by Don Zolidis. The story juggles six different would-be couples at the same Vermont inn.

They all represent archetypes, from the movie star seeking anonymity to a Christmas-themed shop proprietor. All the female characters have holiday-ish names like Holly, Joy and Carol. In one funny twist, real-life husband and wife Michael and GinaKay Howell play one of the couples. She says the experience has been "the greatest Christmas present." Their courtship banter, however, was nothing like in the play.

"There are moments where I'm like, 'What? What are we even saying?'" laughed Michael, who plays the prince of a fictitious

country with a "Borat"-like accent. "It really hit the nail on the head of everything that Hallmark stands for and then, like, makes fun of it."

Zach Athanasakis, the director, emphasized to the 16-member cast that much of the humor depends on them saying their lines with a straight face.

"A lot of these lines are very, very corny and you have to be able to say it with your chest and really, truly embody how much weight that holds for the character in it — no matter how silly it is," Athanasakis said.

Laura Vines, Ghostlight's executive director and co-founder, had been looking for something "that would kind of set us apart" in metro Phoenix. She read in a Facebook group that another community theater had found a hit in "Wonderthon."

Economically, the show doesn't break the bank to stage. "It actually in the script calls for everybody to just wear red and green sweaters. We're doing something a little bit different, but it's kind of along those lines," Vines said.

Five golden rings! And an audience embrace

The day before Thanksgiving, Broadway Rose Theatre Company in Tigard, Oregon, unwrapped

"Five Golden Rings: A Greeting Card Channel Holiday Musical." This show also takes place in a Vermont bed-and-breakfast with a protagonist named Holly. She's a business executive who falls for the "hunky lumberjack widower" owner of the B&B, said the director, Dan Murphy.

The regional theater, which employs 250 people, has built a reputation for choosing shows "off the beaten path," says Murphy, a founding member. He really felt good about the choice when he saw the reactions across age groups.

"This last weekend we had a group of donors come in and watch rehearsals and they were laughing at some of the jokes," Murphy said. "The crew, they are interns from high school seniors to college. They come in and watch a rehearsal. They were laughing hysterically."

At both theaters, most performances for the Hallmark spoofs have sold out.

Murphy thinks people are looking for something different but still multigenerational. Plus, tried-and-true favorites like "The Nutcracker" and "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas! The Musical" will be around every December.

"It might scare some theaters. For us doing this, it's a

risk that we're taking that's totally paying off," Murphy said.

Some theaters set the action in their own quaint town

The Williamston Theatre in Williamston, Michigan, is reviving an original play by John Lepard, a founding member of the company, who binged 15 Hallmark Christmas movies, taking notes, and then sat down to write "A Very Williamston Christmas" in 2022.

"The reason I wrote this is because my wife found something on YouTube, like a three-minute spoof," Lepard said. "She said, 'You should write something like this for the theater.'"

It took him about a month to knock out a script. He used the nom de plume Robert Hawlmark, thus making it a "Hawlmark original." The play is a love letter to Williamston, which has a population just over 3,800. The corporate career gal comes home from the big city of Lansing, the state capital 20 miles (32 kilometers) to the north.

"A lot of people said seeing our town get to be in a Hallmark movie was really fun," said Lepard, who is directing.

But the play's appeal isn't limited to Williamston. Lepard has gotten requests to license it to theaters else-

where in Michigan, and in Texas and Colorado. They could rejigger it like a Mad Libs game, he said, and "just plug in your town, your local antique store and all the things local to your place."

The source material is treated fondly

Hallmark is on board with these stage shows satirizing their "vibrant, beloved storytelling style."

"It makes sense to us that it's leapt off the screen and onto the stage," Samantha DiPippo, senior vice president of programming, said in a statement. In the plays, she said, "people are finding fun ways to emulate our signature messages of hope, love, humor, and meaningful connection in their own communities."

The send-ups gently jab at the movies — not the movie-watchers, Athanasakis made clear. Both those who relish and those who roll their eyes at Hallmark Christmas fodder will have a good laugh.

The goal, he says, is being able to poke fun "in a way that's not necessarily disrespectful to Hallmark movies, but in a way that it takes those jokes and just makes them that much bigger" on the stage.

"In a movie, you still want to keep a sense of realism," he said. "In a show like this, you don't have to."



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The Bellefontaine Examiner does not knowingly accept help wanted advertisements in violation of the Age Discrimination Employment Act. The ADEA prohibits arbitrary age discrimination of persons age 40 or over and applies to employers with 25 or more employees, employment agencies and labor organizations. Advertising containing such terms as "young", "boy", or "girl" or designating a certain age such as "age 35 to 55" or other similar specification indicates discrimination against employment of older persons and are considered in violation of the act. Information about the Act may be obtained by calling or writing the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division.

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## FINANCIAL

Consumer Affairs toll free at 1-866-278-0003 to learn if the mortgage broker or lender is properly licensed. (This notice is a public service of the Bellefontaine Examiner.)

## LEGALS

**NOTICE**  
The Bellefontaine Examiner does not knowingly accept Help Wanted ads from employers covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act if they offer less than the legal minimum wage or fail to pay at least time and one-half for overtime hours.

**LEGAL NOTICE**  
Village of DeGraff will be selling the following property listed at 312 Race St., DeGraff, OH 43318 **Parcel # 26-117-06-12-003-000** Property to be sold as is with no representations, warranties or inspections. All closing cost and title work to be paid by buyer. Buyer responsible for title insurance, if desired. Possession at closing. Mayor reserves the right to reject any bids and re-advertise until real estate is sold. Sealed bids with highest and best bid should be sent to: PO Box 309 c/o Mayor Orsborne DeGraff, OH 43318 Bids will be opened on 12/19/2024 at 7 pm at 107 S.

## LEGALS

Main St., DeGraff, OH 43318. Pictures of the property can be viewed at 107 S. Main St., DeGraff, OH 43318. During the following hours ONLY Monday and Friday 9am-4pm, Tuesday and Thursday 10am-4pm. All back taxes will be paid from proceeds of sale. Successful bidder, if any, will be notified the night of December 19th and will have ten (10) days to provide a cashier's check for the proceeds of sale. Village of DeGraff Nov. 26; Dec. 3, 10, 17, 2024

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Jefferson Township Board of Zoning Appeals will be holding a public hearing for a **CONDITIONAL USE** on Monday, December 30, 2024, at 7pm in the Conference Room at Tri-Valley Fire Department, 2568 Sandusky St. Zanesfield, OH 43360. The application, as requested by Michael James Hilgefort requests that a **CONDITIONAL USE** be granted for the property at the following address: 2322 Twp Rd 55, Bellefontaine, OH 43311 (Parcel # 12-093-00-00-050-011); and currently zoned as U-1. The proposed use of the above-listed property is for parking and a temporary structure to be used as an office for the property owner's trailer rental business. Jake Bradley, Chairman Jefferson Township Board of Zoning Appeals Dec. 13, 2024

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**'SHOP WITH KIDS'**



In addition to Saturday's event, a fundraiser for the Shop with Kids program is taking place throughout the month of December at the Logan County Fairgrounds, a Hometown Hero Nights of Lights holiday light display presented by the FOP Hi-Point Lodge 60. The mile-long display continues every weekend in December on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights from 5:30 to 9 p.m. Entry into the light display is \$10. Youth participants, officers, deputies, troopers and a mischievous character, The Grinch, gather for a group photo Saturday, Dec. 14, at the Shop with Kids event at Walmart of Bellefontaine. (FOP HI-POINT LODGE PHOTO)

**Schools in Chicago are cutting bus service for children**

**Parents are turning to ride-hailing apps**

CHICAGO (AP) — Reliance on school buses has been waning for years as districts struggle to find drivers and more students attend schools far outside their neighborhoods. As responsibility for transportation shifts to families, the

question of how to replace the traditional yellow bus has become an urgent problem and a spark for innovation. Several startup companies have begun working with school systems to provide rideshare services. A 2023 Federal Highway Administration survey says only about 28% of U.S. students take a school bus. That is down from about 36% in the previous survey conducted in 2017.

**WREATHS**

Continued from Page 1

wreaths on veteran graves. These special ceremonies and wreath laying also took place at Bellefontaine City Cemetery and Fairview Cemetery on State Route 273 near Belle Center.

Wreaths Across America is a program to recognize not only our deceased veterans, but those still with us today. This year, more than three million wreaths placed on veteran graves nationwide.

The program was founded to continue and expand the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery initiated

by Maine businessman Morrill Worcester in 1992.

The organization's mission — Remember, Honor, Teach — is carried out in part each year by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies in December at Arlington, as well as at thousands of veterans' cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and beyond.

If you would like to volunteer to support this project or donate toward purchasing a wreath (all wreaths are purchased through donations) contact Wreaths Across America, c/o VFW Post 1080, Bellefontaine. Wreaths sponsorships are \$17 each.

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Secretary of State Frank LaRose, right, is welcomed to Calvary Cemetery by local veteran John Matthews, Father Shawn Landenwicht, pastor of St Patrick's Church; and Sue Carman, local Wreaths Across America coordinator for Cavalry Cemetery. (SUBMITTED PHOTO)

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<sup>1</sup> Benefits are available to personal checking account owner(s), and their joint account owners subject to the terms and conditions for the applicable Benefits. Some Benefits require authentication, registration and/or activation. Benefits are not available to a "signer" on the account who is not an account owner or to businesses, clubs, trusts, organizations and/or churches and their members, or schools and their employees/students.

<sup>2</sup> Special Program Notes: The descriptions herein are summaries only and do not include all terms, conditions and exclusions of the Benefits described. Please refer to the actual Guide to Benefit and/or insurance documents for complete details of coverage and exclusions. Coverage is provided through the company named in the Guide to Benefit or on the certificate of insurance. Insurance Products are not insured by the FDIC or any Federal Government Agency; not a deposit of or guaranteed by the bank or bank affiliate.