



## RECORD SETTER

Chiefs bowlers set marks in win

# Bellefontaine Examiner

## WEEKENDER

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\$1



### ARTIST FEATURE

# Contest participant inspired by warm days at the lake

BY SHARYN KOPF  
EXAMINER STAFF WRITER

**C**reating art isn't particularly new to Barb Harpst, so when she was asked to participate in this year's Not So Bad Art by Good People contest, she was ready to challenge herself ... in a peaceful kind of way.

Harpst first picked up a paintbrush later in life—about nine years ago—and soon was using the newfound talent around the county.

"I feel God gave this gift to me to bless others," she admitted. "So I use [it] at nursing homes, the Recovery Zone and churches. I do my best to help people create their own art."

Until now, Harpst has stuck with acrylic paint for her work. To make this project more of a challenge, though, she decided to try her hand at watercolor. A different experience she enjoyed.

Born in Kenton, Harpst moved often in her youth thanks to her stepfather's position in the Army. This included living in Germany as a teenager. But she came back to Ohio in time to graduate from Kenton High School before moving to Logan County. A resident here since 1990, Harpst started working at Citizens Federal Savings & Loan in 2000.

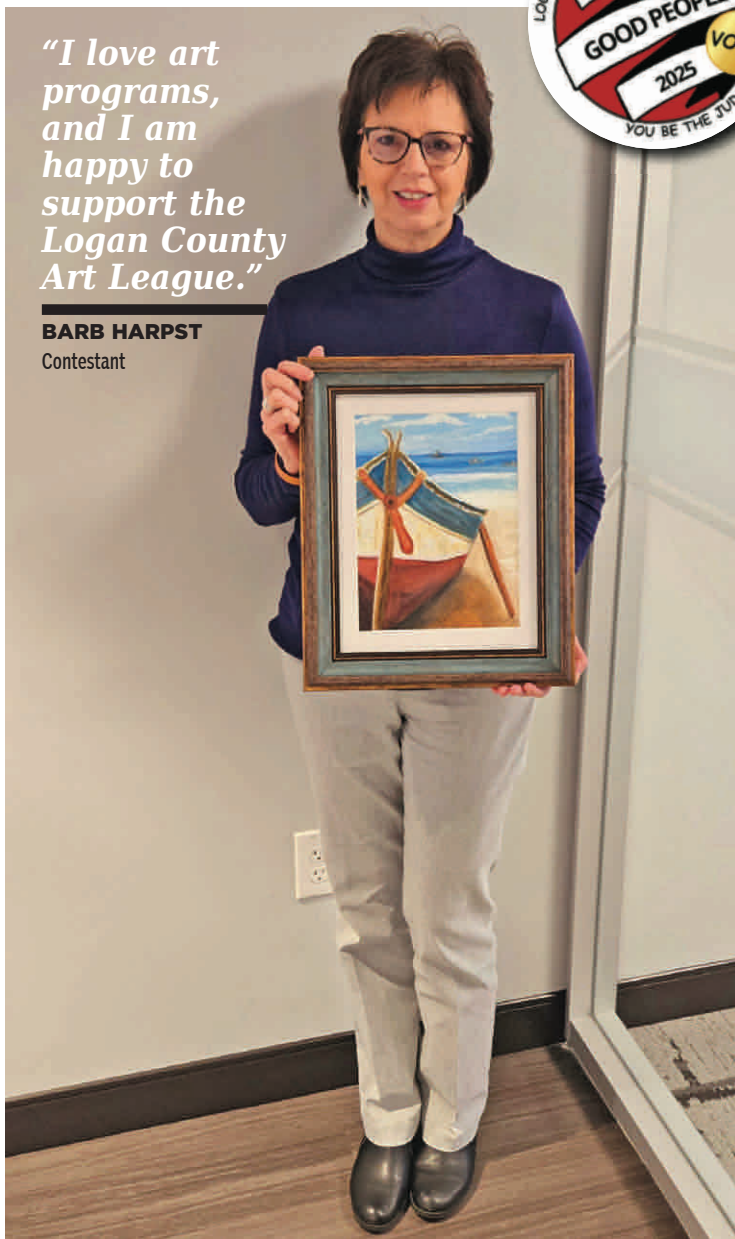
Harpst confessed she was honored to be included as a Not So Bad artist. "I love art programs, and I am happy to support the Logan County Art League," she said.

As for her project, she knew two things: it needed to be related to warm weather and the water, specifically lakeside living. She ended up with a red, white and blue beached rowboat against calm blue waters and sky.

Though she questioned her choices several times, Harpst kept going, determined to finish her work. She was willing to start over, if necessary, but admits she was happy with how it turned out.

*"I love art programs, and I am happy to support the Logan County Art League."*

BARB HARPST  
Contestant



Barb Harpst with Citizens Federal Savings & Loan holds the artwork she submitted to the 2025 Not So Bad Art by Good People contest/fundraiser. Her painting is on display at Citizens, and people are encouraged to come by and vote on their favorite submission during bank lobby hours, Monday through Friday, until Jan. 31. (SUBMITTED PHOTO)

Harpst described her process in this piece as slower, which allowed her to let her mind wander into the scene. "I learned to have patience and to not be obsessed with perfection," she said.

"Since I started creating art late in life," Harpst stated, "I am thankful to be included."

The Not So Bad Art by Good People fundraiser once again gathered art work by local celebrities. Each piece will be on display at Citizens during bank lobby hours, Monday through Friday, until Friday, Jan. 31. People can vote on their favorite by putting \$1 in the artist's box next to the particu-

lar piece.

That winner will be announced at a celebration event and dinner starting at 5 p.m. on Jan. 31 at Honey Birch Farm, 550 Township Road 30E, West Liberty, where each of the works of art will be auctioned off. All proceeds from the votes and the auction will go to the Logan County Art League.

Anyone in the community can attend. Tickets for food and drinks, including dinner at 6 p.m., can be purchased online for \$30. Reservations are due by Friday, Jan. 24. You can find the form at [logancountyartleague.org](http://logancountyartleague.org) or by emailing [art@logancountyartleague.org](mailto:art@logancountyartleague.org).



# Parks department addresses hopes/concerns of area youth

BY SHARYN KOPF  
EXAMINER STAFF WRITER

### BJRD 2025 CAPITAL PROJECT LIST

In a special presentation to the Bellefontaine Joint Recreation District (BJRD) Board of Trustees at their Tuesday, Jan. 7, meeting, Kris Myers, parks superintendent, gave a brief overview of what he's learned recently about the concerns and aspirations of Logan County youth.

Working with the Harwood Institute for Public Knowledge, the Logan County Youth Team came up with three central themes they want to focus on based on information they gained during the six-month project.

Myers' report stated the goal was "to foster a supportive and engaging community that encourages our youth to stay and thrive in Logan County."

Besides interviewing 88 children of various ages, the team also facilitated nine community conversations, bringing together youth and adults. Out of that, they came up with these themes:

One - A safe, family-friendly environment and initiative to encourage growth. A standout concern was accessible sidewalks.

See HOPES on Page 3

1. Parks Superintendent Kris Myers stated the Harmon Park project will be the biggest one of 2025 and it will have two phases, starting with community meetings to nail down the design. They plan to use social media posts and neighborhood flyers to get the word out and will conduct the meeting at Lutheran Community Services. This project doesn't come out of the budget but has separate funding. Myers hopes to keep the cost to less than \$1.5 million.

2. Myers also said there's a need to repave the east and west walking paths at Southview Park, so efforts will be made to address that.

3. They will refurbish the restrooms at Mary Rutan Park and the north and south ones at Ratteff Park. Changes will include vandal-resistant doors and stainless steel sinks. With these facilities more than 50 years old, the board agreed it's time for updates.

4. Finally, they've recognized a need to address the signage at the parks—not only to make them better but to have a consistent look to all of them. The BJRD will work with Freytag & Associates Inc., Sidney, to create a new design.

# CANINE COMPANION READING BUDDIES



Jackie Thompson's second-grade class at Benjamin Logan Elementary School recently adopted plush puppies as reading companions in an engaging classroom activity designed to enhance reading skills and boost confidence. To kick off the project, each second-grader received a plush puppy, along with an adoption certificate and a reading log, encouraging regular reading practice. This creative effort allows each student to practice reading aloud at school and home to their furry friend, who offers unconditional support. These plush puppies serve as non-judgmental, comforting listeners, enabling students to read without fear of criticism. Beyond reading, the project encourages students to develop empathy and responsibility through their interactions with their plush companions. (BL SCHOOLS PHOTO)

## LOGAN COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT

# Innovative vending machine makes health items accessible 24/7

BY MANDY LOEHR  
EXAMINER STAFF WRITER

Vending machines typically offer an easy and convenient approach to snacking and grabbing a quick energy boost, making foods and beverages accessible at the quick touch of a button.

In a similar approach to making health and harm reduction items more readily available to the community, the Logan County District Board of Health members learned at their Wednesday, Jan. 8, meeting about an innovative program and new piece of technology that dispenses these types of items for the community, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Just several weeks ago on Dec. 11, a vending machine was installed outside of the front entrance to the Logan County Health District, 310 S. Main St. It offers more than a dozen different items — including COVID tests, emergency Narcan, first aid kits, pregnancy tests and personal hygiene kits — and unlike the typical snack-dispensing vending

machines, all of the items are free.

The vending machine is currently up and running and available to the community, and a ribbon cutting to celebrate the new piece of equipment is planned for Jan. 29.

Megan Bailey, director of community outreach, said she had the idea for the health-related vending machine after hearing about a similar project through a webinar. She and fellow LCHD officials were able to acquire grant funding and donations to cover the entire cost of the project, including assistance received through COVID grant funds.

"We're so excited to unveil the vending machine to the community and for people to have this easy access to so many health and harm reduction items, at any hour of the day," she said.

"Many of the items in the vending machine were things we made available to the community inside our office, but this makes it even more convenient for them to stop by anytime and to receive just what they need."

See HEALTH on Page 10



Megan Bailey, director of community outreach, unveils the new vending machine available outside of the Logan County Health District, 310 S. Main St., that dispenses health and harm reduction items for free 24 hours a day. (EXAMINER PHOTO | MANDY LOEHR)

# Examiner NEWS

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## ABE MARTIN



"No wonder anybody that's got as much money invested in shoes and hose as a woman don't want t' stick around home."

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

#### Man arrested following assault with baseball bat

William Board, 37, of Bellefontaine, was charged with abduction, criminal damaging and negligent assault following a domestic dispute that escalated early Thursday morning, Jan. 9, and reportedly also involved extensive damage to the victim's car.

Officers of the Bellefontaine Police Department responded to a call on Jan. 9 at approximately 3:40 p.m., where they spoke with the victim, who reported she'd been attacked by her ex-boyfriend about 12 hours earlier. She told officers the altercation began around 3:30 a.m. at Board's residence in the 300 block of Walnut Street.

The victim explained she had gone to Board's home to retrieve her belongings following the end of their relationship a week prior. The defendant reportedly locked the door and forcibly restrained her by pulling her arms and taking her belongings to prevent her from leaving. After an extended struggle, the victim managed to escape the residence.

As she attempted to leave, Board reportedly followed her outside with a baseball bat, yelling that she would not be allowed to leave. The victim stated that Board struck her wrist with the bat as she tried to protect her car from being damaged.

The victim further reported that a struggle ensued over her car keys before she was able to start her vehicle and close the door. At that point, Board allegedly struck her windshield with the bat, causing significant damage. The victim then fled the scene and later contacted a victim's advocate before reporting the incident to authorities.

Officers documented the victim's injuries and damage to her vehicle, including a smashed windshield, both of which were consistent with her account.

When officers visited Board's residence, he admitted to breaking the victim's windshield with the bat, but denied the other allegations. Board was arrested and transported to the Logan County Jail. The baseball bat used in the incident was seized and logged as evidence.

# Baldwin guilty on 32 felonies

BY MARYSVILLE JOURNAL-TRIBUNE AND BELLEFONTAINE EXAMINER STAFFS

MARYSVILLE — The criminal trial against former Union County Humane Agent Steffan Baldwin has reached an official decision.

In the verdict filed Thursday, Jan. 2, Judge Daniel T. Hogan found Baldwin guilty of 32 felony crimes, including one count of bribery, 12 counts of telecommunications fraud, four counts of tampering with records, 11 counts of cruelty to animals, one count of grand theft of a firearm, two counts of grand theft and one count of engaging in a pattern of corrupt activity.

Baldwin was found not guilty of three counts of telecommunications fraud, two counts of tampering with records and two counts of cruelty to animals.

Baldwin, 44, whose court-listed address is 3235 Trout Creek Ct., St. Augustine, Florida, stood trial in January of 2024 where he was accused of 39 total felony counts.

Baldwin opted for a bench trial, meaning there was no jury of his peers and that the judge was tasked with issuing the verdict based on the presented evidence.

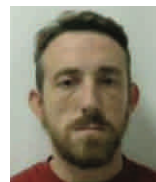
In the court documents of the verdict, it was determined that at least 18 dogs were euthanized or died during a three-year period from Jan. 1, 2014, to Dec. 31, 2016, while under Baldwin's care.

Baldwin was appointed Union County Humane Agent on Nov. 15, 2012, where he formed the Animal Cruelty Task Force (ACT). ACT was quickly established as a nonprofit corporation through the State of Ohio.

The Union County Probate Court appointed Baldwin as a Humane Agent representing ACT, where he "displayed a badge and had the legal authority of a Humane Agent," according to court documents.

ACT was operated out of three locations in Union County, a house at 323 S. Main St. in Marysville, a residence on State Route 31 and a farm house at 20365 State Route 739, Richwood.

"Testimony at trial from a number of witnesses clearly showed that Baldwin, from his



BALDWIN

appointment in 2012 up until early 2015, did good work," according to court documents. "It is unclear when exactly things started to change, but by early 2015 there was a change."

Baldwin also previously served as a board member for the Humane Society Serving Logan County and a former director for the Top of Ohio Pet Shelter, which closed in 2016 due to financial constraints. Baldwin helped conduct internal investigations at the Top of Ohio Pet Shelter of two former executive directors accused of impropriety.

Ultimately though, Logan County Commissioners at the time determined the Logan County shelter could not be trusted with additional funding to continue operating because the board, including Baldwin, could not be relied upon to show an accurate accounting of the funding.

The documents state that Baldwin's focus shifted from being a Humane Agent in a rural setting to concentrating on rescuing and rehabilitating aggressive dogs, where he "recognized he could be successful in the dog rescue world."

Court documents say that Baldwin formed his personal business, "Save Them Dogs Training," where he generated a following as well as donations from the national and international rescue community.

"Baldwin's scheme was to promote himself as a gifted rehabilitator of aggressive dogs and rescue dogs from the shelter euthanasia lists or from cruelty or neglect situations. Then post on social media about the successful rescue of the dog," according to court documents.

Court documents say that Baldwin would attempt to have the dogs adopted or placed with fosters, but some placements would not work out and they would be returned to ACT.

The documents say that Baldwin had limited space for dogs.

"Through various forms of electronic communications... Baldwin concealed the dogs'

deaths from individuals who inquired about them. He lied about the dogs' status months and even years after they died. He did this to protect his reputation. He was able to successfully continue "rescuing dogs," soliciting and receiving donations," according to court documents.

The verdict said during this time, from Jan. 1, 2014 to Feb. 8, 2017, Baldwin used the ACT financial account as his own, where money was used for his personal expenses and "there was virtually no corporate structure."

Through a forensic accounting analysis, it was indicated that Baldwin controlled the funds for his personal use.

"What portion was used for the care and maintenance of the dogs is not evidence before this court," according to court documents.

Of Baldwin's 11 guilty counts of cruelty to animals, seven counts are labeled as dogs that Baldwin "needlessly killed", according to court documents.

A date for sentencing will be determined based upon completion of the Pre-sentence Investigation.

Union County Prosecutor Dave Phillips said that the length of sentence is dependent on the sentences imposed and whether the judge imposes a consecutive or concurrent sentence.

The bench trial in January lasted for three weeks, where it saw 58 witnesses testify and 303 exhibits admitted.

The case was originally filed in June 2020 and took nearly four years to get to trial as attorneys argued the timeline and statute of limitations on misdemeanors, dealt with health issues for witnesses and the defendant, resolved alleged bond violations and a change of defense attorneys midway through the process.

Aug. 4, the case slowed again after Baldwin's defense counsel learned of a disciplinary action against Detective Jim Conroy of the Campbell Police Department, the lead investigator in the case. Hogan ordered the state to provide additional information about the disciplinary action. On Nov. 27, the trial was reconvened for further examination of Conroy.

## ■ LOGAN COUNTY BEAT

### SHERIFF & HIGHWAY PATROL

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP POLICE

#### Drug charges filed after traffic stop

A routine traffic stop on State Route 708 near U.S. Route 33 led to a drug-related arrest Thursday, Jan. 9.

Officers of the Washington Township Police Department stopped a vehicle at 5:50 p.m. for an expired registration violation. During the interaction, officers noticed the driver, Shannon Byrd, 50, of Lakeview, appeared overly nervous and showed signs of drug use. While speaking with Byrd, officers observed her reaching around the vehicle, prompting a consent search.

Officers discovered methamphetamine and a methamphetamine pipe inside the vehicle. Byrd was arrested and taken to the Logan County Jail, where she was charged with possession of drugs and possession of drug paraphernalia.

#### Suspect arrested in domestic dispute

A domestic dispute at an apartment on Stephenson Street ended with one person in custody late Thursday, Jan. 9.

Officers were dispatched to 275 Stephenson Street, Apt. B, at 9:11 p.m. after receiving a report of a fight inside the residence. The caller said the argument had been ongoing for several hours and had escalated.

Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim, who had visible injuries. The apartment showed signs of a physical altercation, with items thrown about the residence.

Delaney Hernandez, 19, of the address, admitted to assaulting the victim during the incident. She was arrested and transported to the Logan County Jail, where she was charged with domestic violence.

Read It Online: [www.examiner.org](http://www.examiner.org)

## OHIO SUPREME COURT EXPLORATION



The West Liberty-Salem High School Mock Trial Team recently had the opportunity to visit the Supreme Court of Ohio and The Thomas J. Moyer Judicial Center in Columbus. The team includes Collin Thompson, Taran Logwood, Anna Cole, Ava Chamberlain, Silas King, Greyson Horsley, Connor Garman-Ferguson, Sadie Paul and Gwen McCullough. Organized by government teacher and mock trial team adviser Sean Stormes, this trip offered students an up-close look at the history, role, and crucial responsibilities of our court system. During the visit, students participated in discussions about the importance of civic participation, the election of justices and judges and the significance of jury duty. They also explored thought-provoking case studies, gaining a deeper understanding of the legal process. This experience was a valuable opportunity for the Mock Trial Team to examine the past, present, and future of our judicial system while engaging in hands-on learning at the Ohio Supreme Court. The team will compete in districts at the Marion County Courthouse Jan. 17, for a chance to advance to the regional and state competitions in February. (WL-S PHOTO)

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## ■ OBITUARIES

### John M. Elliott

John M. Elliott, 87 of Bellefontaine passed at his residence Monday, January 6, 2025 with his wife by his side.

John was born January 26, 1937 in Zanesfield to the late Howard and Doris (Cronkelton) Elliott. On December 31, 1959 in Mt. Victory, OH he married his high school sweetheart and love of his life Carmel Ann Rife, who survives.

John grew up on the family farm in Zanesfield where he farmed part time with his father. He later proudly served his country in the U.S Army. He then came back home and worked at Rockwell International for 24 years, then Rockwell moved out of Bellefontaine and John got a job at Bellemar. He later moved to HTM where he worked for 23 years before retirement. Carmel and John loved to visit the Smokey Mountains and normally went every Fall until he got sick. John had his private pilot license and enjoyed flying frequently. John and Carmel attended the Quest Community Church in West Liberty. He enjoyed his Saturday morning trips to McDonalds where the "Liars Club" got together. John also enjoyed the phone calls he made, sometimes daily, to his friends when he was unable to leave the house. He was a loving husband, father, brother, uncle and friend. He will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege to get to know him.

He is survived by his loving wife of 65 years, Carmel A. Elliott; son, Christopher Elliott; daughter, Tamara & Michael Irwin; many loving friends, nieces and nephews.

He is preceded in death by his sisters, Marilyn Green and Beverly Kerr.

There won't be any services for John at this time. The family would like to give a thank you to Universal Home Health and Hospice and their staff for the loving care they gave to John.

Memorial Contributions may be made to Universal Home Health and Hospice, 921 Rush Ave, Bellefontaine, OH 43311 or Quest Community Church, 110 South St, West Liberty, OH 43357.

Online Condolences may be expressed at [www.jenningsfarley.com](http://www.jenningsfarley.com).

### Janet L. Inskeep

Janet L. Inskeep, a cherished member of her community and family, passed away peacefully on January 7, 2025, at her home in Bellefontaine, Ohio, just shy of what would have been her 89th birthday.

Born on January 21, 1936, in the small town of Mingo, Ohio, Janet lived a life marked by love, dedication, and a deep sense of compassion.

For many years, Janet worked at the Lutheran Thrift Store and Botkins Egg Farm.

She was the beloved wife of James L. Inskeep, with whom she shared a joyful marriage that began on August 25, 1951.

Together, they crafted a life full of rich experiences and loving memories, with family at its heart. Janet's marriage to James was one of her life's greatest achievements, offering those around her a shining example of devotion and partnership until James' passing.

Known for her remarkable capacity for compassion and her mischievous sense of humor, Janet had a gift for bringing light into the lives of those around her. Whether it was through a heartfelt conversation or a shared laugh, she had a unique ability to make others feel cherished and understood.

Janet was a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother. Debra Yoder, her daughter, survives her and carries forward her mother's legacy of love and laughter. Janet is also survived by 7 grandchildren, 19 great grandchildren, and 8 great great grandchildren, who were her pride and joy.

Janet faced the profound loss of many loved ones, including her parents, Mildred Vaughn Larry (Johnson) and Alfred Lee Larry, her husband James, her sister Mabel Wayman, her brothers Grant Sherman Larry and Charles Larry, as well as her children Pamela K. Inskeep, Lowell Inskeep, and James E. Inskeep, and grandchildren Eddie Inskeep and Jeremy Inskeep. Despite these losses, she demonstrated resilience and grace, remaining a beacon of strength for her family.

Those who had the privilege of knowing Janet will remember her not only for her kindness and humor but also for her love of family, which transcended all else. Her memory will live on in the hearts of those she touched, a testament to a life well-lived. As we remember Janet, we celebrate her remarkable journey—a life characterized by generosity, love, and laughter. She will be dearly missed, but her spirit will forever illuminate the paths of her loved ones.

A memorial service will take place at noon Saturday, January 18, at Jennings Farley & Seeley Funeral Home & Crematory, 5591 U.S. Route 68 S., West Liberty. Visitation will be from 10 a.m. to the time of the service.

Burial will be in the Highland Memorial Cemetery at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to Universal Home Health & Hospice Care, 921 Rush Ave, Bellefontaine, OH.

### Nathaniel Gage Jones

Nathaniel Gage Jones, 23, of Bellefontaine, passed away on Tuesday, December 24, 2024. He was born on January 2, 2001, in Bellefontaine, Ohio, to the late Danny Jones, and mother Crystal Jones who survives in Lima.

Nate was adopted and adored by Bill and Vicki Yuretech, who loved him as his own for over two decades. Nate was known for his quirky personality, funky style and the kind of love he had for his family. Nate enjoyed taking walks, drawing, hanging out with friends, collecting rocks, playing games, listening to music, and watching scary movies.

Nate is survived by a large family, all included, are his mother and father, Vicki and Bill Yuretech; his brothers: William Yuretech, Jr., Hunter (Aubria) Yuretech, Tony (Kaylon) Yuretech, Bobby Yuretech, Charly Yuretech, Quinn Yuretech, Stephen Coe, all of Bellefontaine, and Brent Jones of Lima. He is also survived by his sisters: Virginia (Terry) Yuretech, Brenleigh Mustain, Rhonda Savage, and Crissy Todd, all of Bellefontaine. Additionally, he is survived by his grandmothers: Katie Casey of Bellefontaine, Patricia Yuretech of Darien, IL, and Lavone Reid of Darien, IL. Other survivors include an aunt Toni Schoepfle, and countless other nieces, nephews, cousins, and close family friends who held dear to him.

He was preceded in death by his biological father Danny Jones, and adoptive grandfather Charles Paul Yuretech.

Nate will be missed beyond what words can express. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18: "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary,

but what is unseen is eternal."

Matthew 11:28-30: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

The family will be having a memorial service at a later date.

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

### Edward L. Miller

Edward L. Miller, 82, of Bellefontaine, stepped into Glory on Tuesday morning, January 7, 2025, at his home after a long battle with lung cancer, with his wife and daughter by his side.

Ed was born in Lewistown, Ohio, on December 19, 1942, to the late John F. and Roxie L. (Sanders) Miller. He was also preceded in death by 2 sons, Brian Edward and Aaron Patrick Miller, and a brother Carl "Gene" Miller.

Ed is survived by his wife Rosilynn D. (Byrd) Miller, whom he married on June 29, 1965. Also surviving is daughter Lori J. Bechtel of Bellefontaine; a granddaughter Azlynn Vaneese Bechtel of Sidney; 2 brothers: Frank S. Miller of Bellefontaine, and John R. (Nancy) Miller of Lewistown; a sister-in-law Pamela Miller of Lewistown; and numerous nieces and nephews, including Tina Knight, Ty Miller, and Theresa Grant who was a caregiver to Ed. Ed is also survived by many loving brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law on Rosilynn's side.

A 1961 graduate of Indian Lake High School, Ed served in the Army National Guard from October 1964 – February 1970. He worked at Airstream for 8 years, then was a truck driver for Super Foods / Nash Finch for 34 years before retiring in February 2003. Ed enjoyed having friends over for Saturday morning coffee, a ritual that lasted for more than 30 years. He also enjoyed helping out his friends and neighbors by plowing snow, working on lawn mowers or whatever needed fixed. In his younger years, Ed won several prizes at the county fair for his quilting abilities. He attended Gretna Brethren Church for many years.

Friends may call on Wednesday, January 15, from 3 to 6 p.m. at Eichholtz Daring & Sanford Funeral Home & Cremation Center, Bellefontaine. Pastor Rob Starnes will officiate Ed's funeral service on Thursday, January 16, at 11 a.m. at Gretna Brethren Church, 1546 Twp Rd 46, Bellefontaine. Burial will follow in Huntsville Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to Our Daily Bread, c/o Lutheran Community Services, 820 W. Sandusky Ave. Bellefontaine, OH 43311.

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

## ■ DEATH NOTICES

■ **BILLINGS (Brunson), Sondra Jo**, born in Bellefontaine on September 6, 1937, passed away December 22, 2024 in Lake Wales, FL.

At Sondra's request, no services will be held. See the full obituary and send condolences to the family at [www.marionnelsonfuneralhome.com](http://www.marionnelsonfuneralhome.com).

## Ohio state Sen. Ben Espy, who died at 81, to be remembered at service for breaking barriers

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Columbus, Ohio, attorney and former state Sen. Ben Espy will be remembered at a service for his decades of service to the state and city. Espy died Jan. 4 at age 81 after a brief illness and the service is scheduled for Monday. He played football for the Ohio State Buckeyes and broke racial barriers as the first Black president pro tem of Columbus City Council and first Black minority leader of the Ohio Senate. He was a Democrat, but garnered respect from members of both parties. Espy was tapped to lead an investigation into sexual harassment allegations at the Ohio Attorney General's Office and was the keynote speaker at Republican Maureen O'Connor's swearing-in as chief justice.

## HOPES

### Continued from P1

"It came up in every group conversation," Myers said. Issues included condition, connectivity and neighborhoods without sidewalks. Specifically, young people with a job but no car want a safe option when they need to walk to work.

Two – Creating a close-knit community where people can connect through neighborhood events and gatherings.

One of the first topics raised in this discussion was the Fred Carter Park project. Last summer, the youth group from Vineyard Christian Fellowship spent a week cleaning, weeding and establishing trails through the park, which sits off Lakewood Drive in Bellefontaine.

"Dave Schwieterman and I started that conversation, which involved kids," Myers reminded the board. In essence, they began doing the work of this theme before they had the discussion. In fact, Myers plans to meet with Schwieterman this week to discuss future projects.

Three – A focus on compassion, accessibility and positive change to create a nonjudgmental environment where everyone feels valued.

For Myers, though, the key takeaway came from asking young people who they trust. Surprisingly, they expressed a general distrust of their schools, teachers and guidance counselors. That was counteracted by a clear dependence on parents.

Speaking for the youth, Myers put it this way: "In the end," they said, "no matter if I'm a turd or not, my parents will defend me."

In response to the report, the board discussed options for local events, like bringing

back concerts in the park. "I think that's something our community is ready for," Myers concluded.

Football Program  
The meeting started with an issue expressed by Rob Palmer, who serves the department as a football, basketball and baseball coach. Three other area coaches attended in support.

Palmer's intent, he stated, was not to criticize the recreation department or Bellefontaine schools, but to advocate for their young athletes.

According to Palmer, this was the first time in 12 years they'd enjoyed such a feat. He credited much of that to the dedication of the coaching staff, which includes board member Keyne Strickland, Dean Whetzel, Tyler Vermillion, Doug Robb, Shawn Cox, Brendan Keneson, Chris Hoge, Nach Eaton and Wes Bach.

Though they had initially planned to cut seven players from a roster of 40, the effort and potential of all the boys inspired the coaches to keep them on the team. They're glad they did.

The coaches asked that some kind of recognition take place during halftime of a Bellefontaine High School boys' basketball game, which was denied. Palmer feels such an acknowledgement would only take about 10 minutes, "yet it could significantly boost community engagement and enthusiasm for youth sports."

With that in mind, Palmer approached the board with the request they consider ways to highlight the boys' achievement.

Though Myers said he did have several conversations about this, it didn't work out and, as a result, didn't move forward.

"It was nothing malicious," Myers admitted, "but there are so many things like that already and it just didn't fit at that time." He also apologized for not pushing harder, and the board agreed they should do more to support their student athletes.

**In other board news:**  
• MacKenzie Fitzpatrick will now serve as the liaison between the board and the Bellefontaine City Council.  
• The sports program continues to have an officiating shortage and Danny LeCompte, recreation coordinator, has often had to step in to help out.

• Despite the weather on Monday—or, perhaps, because of it—the first night of the Winter Walking Program saw 17 people show up. They are still looking for volunteers to monitor that.

• The department now has three tournament dates for 2025: first weekend of May, first full weekend of June and second weekend of July. Registrations are already filling up.

• Log work has been completed on the log cabin at Myeerah Nature Preserve and they're wrapping up the roof and gutters.

• They also plan to move forward on adding pickleball courts at the high school. Since they see young people there almost every night, that's where the impetus is originating. "They are clamoring for more space," Myers said.

• 2025 final budget included "tweaking" the salary for the administrative assistant, costs to hire retired contractors, and an adjustment to potentially fill another maintenance position. It also included a check from the state to reimburse the Blue Jacket Park project and an expected tax revenue of

1.6 million. Additional revenue is projected at \$120,000.

Myers reminded the board they will owe a \$750,000 debt payment in 2026. The board passed the 2025 final budget, which now goes to the city council. They should approve it by March.

For the next three months, the BJR board will deviate from its regular schedule and location and will meet in the police training room on the second Tuesday instead of the first. As a result, their February meeting will take place at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 11.

## FUNERAL 101

### [ PRE-PLANNING ]

**Q:** Mom & Dad have told us kids that "everything is all taken care of." What should we do now?

**A:** Great question! Ask them specifics - what is taken care of? Cemetery lots, headstone, casket & vault? Many times, we have biographical information in our files - but nothing has been pre-funded. Ask Mom & Dad if they have any paperwork.

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# Ohio State claims CFP title berth

BY STEPHEN HAWKINS  
AP SPORTS WRITER

ARLINGTON, Texas — Quinshon Judkins ran for two touchdowns before Jack Sawyer forced a fumble by his former roommate that he returned 83 yards for a score with 2:13 left as Ohio State beat Texas 28-14 in the Cotton Bowl on Friday night to advance to a shot for their sixth national title.

The Buckeyes (13-2) got the semifinal victory in the same stadium where 10 years ago they were champions in the debut of the College Football Playoff as a four-team format. Now they have the opportunity to be the winner again in the debut of the expanded 12-team field.

Ohio State plays Orange Bowl champion Notre Dame in Atlanta on Jan. 20

Sawyer got to Longhorns quarterback Quinn Ewers on a fourth-and-goal from the 8, knocking the ball loose and scooping it up before lumbering all the way to the other end. It was the longest fumble return in CFP history.

Ewers and Sawyer were roommates in Columbus for the one semester the quarterback was there before transferring home to Texas, and helping lead the Longhorns (13-3) to consecutive CFP semifinals. But next season will be their 20th since winning their last national title with Vince Young in 2005.

Texas had gotten to the 1, helped by two pass-interference penalties in the end zone before Quintrevion Wisner was stopped for a 7-yard loss.

Judkins had a 1-yard touchdown for a 21-14 lead with 7:02 left. That score came four plays after quarterback Will Howard converted fourth-and-2 from the Texas 34 with a stumbling 18-yard run that was almost a score.

Howard was 24-of-33 passing for 289 yards with a touchdown and an interception.

Ewers finished 23 of 39 for 283 yards with two TD passes to Jaydon Blue and an interception after getting the ball back one final time.



Will Howard of Ohio State prepares to throw a touchdown pass to TreVeyon Henderson in the second quarter of the Cotton Bowl against Texas on Friday. Applying pressure for the Longhorns is Trey Moore. (AP PHOTO)



Gracie Hood of Bellefontaine, above, set a record for a 2-game series and also broke 30,000 pins for her career in a match against Northwestern on Wednesday (SUBMITTED PHOTO)

## Hood, Chieftains set records in bowling win

BY THE EXAMINER STAFF

The Bellefontaine girls bowlers had team and individual records set in a win over Northwestern on Wednesday.

The team had a total of 2,892 to reach a new high mark for a match total. Northwestern finished with 2,249.

Gracie Hood rolled a 558 series with two games of 279. That is a record for a series, breaking her own mark of 445. Hood also went over 30,000 pins for her career with the Chieftains.

Chloe Heminger had a

402 series (200-202), followed by Haylee Yelton at 401 (187-214), Avery Mullins at 351 (190-161) and Nevaeh LaFollette rounding it out with 338 (167-171)

They had 2,050 in the regulation games and 842 in the four Baker game set.

Northwestern won the boys match with a total of 3,016 to the Chieftains' 2,826.

Rory Pierce had the high series for Bellefontaine at 495 (231-264). Next was Alex Moon with 442 (231-211), then David Allen at 324 (169-155). Other game

scores were Robert Spain (219), Paul LaFollette (206), and Colton Wisner (155).

Bellefontaine had 2,023 in the regular games and 803 in the Bakers.

The JV lost by a count of 2,179 to 1,865. Timmy Phillips had the high series of 344 (158-186).

Bellefontaine's boys will participate in a tournament today at Poelking Lanes in Dayton. The girls are off until next Thursday when they will face Tecumseh.

See **BOWLING** on Page 5

## Tigers fall to Fairbanks

BY THE EXAMINER STAFF

West Liberty-Salem lost to host Fairbanks 49-37 in Ohio Heritage Conference boys basketball Friday.

The Panthers scored 5-2 in the OHC and 5-4 overall.

Fairbanks had a 13-12 lead after the first period, and outscored the Tigers 10-8 in the second for a 23-20 halftime lead.

The Panthers scored 13 in each of the other periods, holding West Liberty-Salem to six and 11, respectively.

Scoring information for the Tigers was not available.

West Liberty-Salem is back in action today at Southeastern. JV play begins at 5 p.m.

### BOYS BASKETBALL

#### Ben Logan edged by Graham

Benjamin Logan lost to Graham 38-35 in Central Buckeye Conference play Thursday.

Peyton Vermillion had 12 points for the Raiders. Collin Powell and Maddox Vermillion scored six each.

Peyton Vermillion had nine rebounds, Camden Spriggs had eight, and Roman Maxwell pulled down seven.

Ben Logan trailed 15-7 after the first and was down 22-15 at the half.

Graham had the edge

in the third. Ben Logan rallied in the fourth, scoring 15 points.

Ben Logan's JV won 31-23. Adam Tinsman had 12 points and Carter Fey added six.

The Raiders (0-5 CBC, 1-10 overall) will host Tecumseh on Tuesday.

### GIRLS BASKETBALL

#### Riverside falls to Milton-Union

Riverside lost 52-42 to Milton-Union in a Three Rivers Conference game Thursday.

Miah Carman led the team with 15 points. Avery Perk had nine and Kenna Johnson scored eight.

Each team had 10 in the first period, with Riverside taking a 19-17 lead at the half.

Milton-Union used a big 17-point third quarter to go ahead, then outscored the Pirates by four in the final stanza.

In the JV contest, each team scored 11 points in two quarters. Kenzie Stotler had five and Valerie Knight had four.

Riverside (1-6 TRC, 4-8) hosts Bethel today at 11 a.m.

### BOWLING

#### WL-S defeated by Greenon

West Liberty-Salem was swept by Greenon in Ohio Heritage Conference bowling matches on Thursday.

In the boys' contest, Greenon had 2,963 pins to 2,604 for the Tigers.

Devon Jones led WL-S with a 475 series (200-275), followed by Zander Gluckle at 386 (193-193), then Tucker Searles 381 (181-199), Luke Thomas 339 (169-170) and Evan Borgerding at 309 (170-139).

They had 1,890 pins in regular games and 714 in the Baker games.

For the girls, Greenon had a total of 2,749 versus the Lady Tigers' 2,273.

Alyssa Mueller rolled the high series for WL-S at 429 (172-257), followed by Sadie Paul at 376 (223-153). They were followed by Elli Ullery at 324 (168-156), Lilly Gearheart 306 (164-142) and Jenny Reprogle 224 (82-142).

The regular games total was 1,659, with 614 in the Baker games.

West Liberty-Salem faces Fairbanks at the Southwest Bowling Center in Urbana today at 10 a.m.

#### Riverside boys win on road

The Riverside bowling team beat Northridge in a match on Thursday at Poelking Lanes in Wilmington.

The Pirates had 2,272 pins to Northridge's 1,397.

Cooper Crouch had a 420 series and Aidden Manning rolled a 182 game.

## L.A. Rams try to focus on game

BY GREG BEACHAM  
AP SPORTS WRITER

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles Rams wrapped up practice at their training complex Friday under blue skies with bruise-colored clouds of wildfire smoke lurking on the horizon.

The players and coaches then joined a traveling party of 355 people, six dogs

and two cats and headed to the airport, where the Arizona Cardinals had sent two team planes to aid their journey.

"We're going in there for everybody in Los Angeles — everybody affected by the fires, everybody displaced, everybody evacuated," Rams linebacker Michael Hoecht said.

See **RAMS** on Page 5





# The Los Angeles landmarks from film and TV damaged by wildfires

BY LINDSEY BAHR  
AP FILM WRITER

The high school where Brian De Palma brought Stephen King's "Carrie" to life, Will Rogers' ranch house and a motel owned by William Randolph Hearst are among some of the famous structures that have been damaged or destroyed by the California wildfires.

Los Angeles is a town full of landmarks, thanks to its co-starring role in over a century of filmed entertainment. Some famed spots — like the Hollywood Bowl, the TCL Chinese Theatre and the Dolby Theatre, where the Oscars are held — initially seemed imperiled by the Hollywood Hills fire, yet remained at least largely unharmed Thursday. But the fires have taken a toll on some familiar sites.

## Palisades Charter High School

There was "significant damage" to Palisades Charter High School, though the main campus building stands. Founded in 1961 and built for a reported \$6 million, the high school currently serves some 3,000 students throughout the Los Angeles area, though they were not in session this week.

**FAMOUS CREDITS:** De Palma's 1976 adaptation of "Carrie," starring Sissy Spacek as the outcast teen, is perhaps Pali High's most recognizable credit. It's also played high schools in the 2003 remake of "Freaky Friday," with Lindsay Lohan and Jamie Lee Curtis, the Kirsten Dunst movie "Crazy/Beautiful," the Anne



The Andrew McNally House, built in 1887 by the co-founder of the Rand McNally publishing company, is pictured after it was destroyed by the Eaton Fire, Thursday, Jan. 9, 2025, in Altadena, Calif. (AP PHOTO/CHRIS PIZZELLO)

Hathaway film "Havoc," the television series "Teen Wolf" and "American Vandal" and the music video for Olivia Rodrigo's "good 4 u." Notable alumni include filmmaker J.J. Abrams, actors Jennifer Jason Leigh and Forest Whitaker, musician will.i.am, Los Angeles Lakers owner Jeanie Buss and Golden State Warriors coach Steve Kerr.

## Will Rogers' ranch house

Will Rogers' Western Ranch House, a property dating back to the 1920s, was completely destroyed in the Palisades Fire. Built on 186 acres in the Pacific Palisades area, overlooking the Pacific Ocean, it had 31 rooms, corrals, a stable, riding ring, roping arena, polo field, golf course and hiking trails. It was where the famed actor (once one of

the highest paid) and radio personality would ride horses and practice roping before his death in 1935. His widow, Betty Rogers, gave the property to the state in 1944 and it became a historic state park.

**FAMOUS CREDITS:** The state park was featured in the 1975 Barbra Streisand sequel "Funny Lady."

## Topanga Ranch Motel

The Palisades Fire also destroyed the Topanga Ranch Motel, a 30-room, bungalow-style motel built by William Randolph Hearst in 1929. The property had been uninhabited and deteriorating for nearly 20 years, but there were plans for a restoration and reopening in the works.

**FAMOUS CREDITS:** The 1970s television series "Mannix" as well as an

episode of "Remington Steele," the 1986 Judd Nelson and Ally Sheedy movie "Blue City" and the 1991 Bridget Fonda movie "Leather Jackets."

## Reel Inn Malibu

This seafood shack on the Pacific Coast Highway and across the street from Topanga Beach State Park opened in 1986 and burned to the ground in the fire. In an Instagram post, the owners wrote that they weren't sure what would remain of the beloved spot.

"Hopefully the state parks will let us rebuild when the dust settles," Teddy and Andy Leonard wrote.

**FAMOUS CREDITS:** It's been featured on shows like "Man vs. Food" and "The Chew" and counted the likes of Cindy Crawford, Paris Hilton and Jerry Seinfeld as fans of its fried seafood fare. It also made a cameo in "24."

## The Bunny Museum

A quirky Los Angeles-area oddity, The Bunny Museum, located in Altadena and dedicated to all things bunnies, was also destroyed. The museum had all sorts of bunny-themed items, from Trix boxes and bottles of Nesquik, Bugs Bunny paraphernalia and magazine covers of per-

former Bad Bunny. There was also a Chamber of Hop Horrors detailing the historical abuse of bunnies that had an age requirement: 13 and up.

**FAMOUS CREDITS:** It's made the Guinness Book of World Records, and been featured in Ripley's Believe It Or Not!, the Smithsonian Magazine and an episode of "Visiting...With Huell Howser."

## "Hacks" mansion

The 1915 Spanish Colonial Revival mansion that played Deborah Vance's Los Angeles home in the HBO series "Hacks" was located in Altadena and fell victim to the Eaton fire. According to the trade publication Deadline, only the facade remains.

**FAMOUS CREDITS:** It played the "side mansion" belonging to Jean Smart's character in "Hacks." According to reports, it will be seen in the fourth season.

## The Andrew McNally House

The Queen Anne-style mansion in Altadena that dates back to 1887 and was commissioned for wealthy map-maker Andrew McNally was lost in the Eaton Fire. Designed by architect Frederick L. Roehrig, the house had nine

bedrooms, six bathrooms, seven fireplaces, a distinctive bell-shaped turret (that had a view of the San Gabriel Mountains and the Pacific Ocean) and a wrap-around porch. It was adorned with hand-carved woodwork, stained glass windows and included an opulent "Turkish Room" decorated with Moorish influences. The grounds also had an aviary. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2007.

**FAMOUS CREDITS:** The 2001 Whoopi Goldberg and Jada Pinkett Smith movie "Kingdom Come."

## Charles S. Farnsworth Park

A picturesque 15-acre park with a playground, amphitheater, walking paths and a baseball field was damaged in the Eaton Fire. The Los Angeles County Parks department wrote on Instagram that the Altadena park's Davies Community Center, a stone building that dates back to 1934, was destroyed.

**FAMOUS CREDITS:** The amphitheater, directly next to the community center, can be seen in "American Pie 2" as the location of the band camp concert. The park has also been used in the Apple TV+ series "Shrinking."



A welcome path leads to the charred remains of the Bunny Museum, Thursday, Jan. 9, 2025, in Altadena, Calif. (AP PHOTO/CHRIS PIZZELLO)

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## Open Letter to Ohio Power Seating Board Case Number - 24-0801-EL-BGN-Grange-Solar

Grange Solar – Let's Talk About the Jobs and the Details in the Fine Print!

I am writing to express my opposition to the Grange Solar Project by Open Road Renewables (ORR) and their unidentified client.

Raised in Russell's Point and now living in Pirate's Cove on Indian Lake, my wife and I have deep roots in the community, with family in the Indian Lake School District and Logan County.

I have read ORR's 2,750-page application to the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB), attended their community sessions, and had discussions with ORR representatives and management.

ORR's application relies on software modeling, public data, charts, tables, and hired consultants to present its benefit claims as facts. However, these claims are inaccurate when considering the actual benefits and burdens to the Indian Lake community. While these benefits may apply to the State of Ohio and other regions, they do not hold true for Indian Lake, Logan, Auglaize, Shelby, or Hardin County.

My business background, experience, and roots in the Indian Lake area give me a unique qualified perspective that challenges ORR's conclusions. I receive no financial benefit from my opposition, avoiding conflicts of interest—unlike ORR and their consultants. My commitment to Indian Lake drives my stance.

ORR's application uses confusing terms from its software modeling tools, such as direct jobs, indirect jobs, and induced jobs. For clarity, I will focus on direct jobs, as they are the primary drivers behind the effects represented by the other terms.

The **fine print** shows these new jobs will not benefit Indian Lake or Logan County enough to justify the burden the solar farm will cause.

**Misleading Claims by ORR About "Local" Job Benefits:**

- Most residents of Indian Lake understand "local" to mean within Logan County or the Indian Lake School District. ORR's marketing literature promotes this by stating they are investing in Logan County and Indian Lake by providing money and jobs.
- ORR's application to OPSB defines "local" as either Indian Lake, Logan, Auglaize, Hardin, Shelby Counties, or the State of Ohio, depending on the topic.
- The PILOT tax abatement program legally requires 70% of construction workers to be Ohio residents. This is the actual meaning of "local," as the \$200 million PILOT program provides a key financial reward for ORR and is promoted as the main benefit to the Indian Lake community.

**Solar Project Job Types and their Economic Impact:**

- **Loss of Farming Jobs:** Converting 2,600 acres of prime farmland into a solar farm will result in a \$2 million annual loss in crop income and the loss of eight farming jobs, each paying \$41,000 annually. This will harm workers, their families, and local businesses. **ORR's claim that increased yields on remaining farmland in Logan County will mitigate this loss is false.** These jobs are tied to crop acreage, not yields. The income loss will compound yearly, weakening Logan County's farming economy. Over 40 years, this totals \$80 million, unadjusted for inflation, excluding future economic opportunities, which could triple this amount.
- **Sheep Grazing Jobs:** The proposed sheep grazing operation will create eight new direct jobs over the next 2-7 years, each paying \$32,000 annually. **These jobs pay less than crop farm jobs and are not equal replacements.** They are meant to maintain vegetation around solar panels and are heavily subsidized by the solar farm to reduce mowing costs and maintain soil quality. Agriculture output is a benefit to reduce mowing costs, not to establish a profitable new agricultural business.
- **Solar Farm Operation Jobs:** Once completed, the solar farm will create ten new direct jobs for operation and maintenance, each paying \$63,000 annually. **These jobs require specialized training and skills, and it is unlikely they will be filled by current residents of Indian Lake or surrounding counties.** ORR characterizes these labor needs as minimal.
- **Construction Jobs:** The construction of the solar farm will create 1,156 new direct jobs lasting 13 months, each paying \$49,000 annually. ORR's analysis shows the current construction worker labor pool of 5,114 workers in Logan, Auglaize, Hardin, and Shelby counties makes it challenging to fill these jobs locally. The low unemployment rate means this labor pool is considered fully employed by most economists. Even if unemployment rises by one percent, less than 60 of these jobs will be filled by local residents, representing **less than 4% of the new jobs.**

**Of the 1,156 direct jobs created, 1,100 will be filled by a migrant solar farm construction workforce currently living outside Logan, Auglaize, Hardin, and Shelby counties.**

- Many of these workers will seek temporary housing for their families in the Indian Lake and Logan County area, potentially increasing the population by 4,000 (current population of Russell's Point is 1,300). This demand will compete with the tourism economy and local residents, leading to increased rents and housing shortages. **ORR's claim that this effect will be minimal is false.** We only have to look to Springfield, Ohio, to see the effect of a large sudden increase in local population; rents have nearly tripled in some areas.
- There is also the potential for eight hundred (800) or more new school-age children to the area (current Indian Lake School District enrollment is 1,400).

**The Indian Lake community will face major disruptions during the 13-month construction phase.**

- The influx of ~1,200 workers commuting daily into the area will bring the following:
  - 10-20% increase in crime levels
  - 20-30% increase in traffic congestion
  - Parking needs ~1,200 additional vehicles.
  - Eight food trucks (current eating establishments are insufficient)
  - 120 porta-potties
  - Fifty dumpsters for weekly trash

**ORR claims that the construction of the solar farm will provide a significant boost to area retail businesses. This is likely overstated and false.** There are no significant retail areas in Russell's Point, Lakeview, Bloomfield, McArthur, Richland, Stokes, or Washington Townships. The nearest relevant area is over ten (10) miles away.

**Sanitation, garbage services, and food trucks in Logan County could benefit over 13 months, but relatively speaking this a small fraction of the economic boast claimed by ORR.**

- **120 Porta Potties** - Estimated \$234,000
- **Trash Dumpsters and Garbage Removal** - Estimated \$222,000
- **Food Truck Spending:** 1,200 workers could spend an estimated ~\$3 million on lunch, assuming \$12.50 per meal and 70% participation daily.

**Indian Lake/Logan County receives no meaningful short-term or long-term economic benefits when it comes to direct jobs from the construction or operation of the solar farm.**

**Indian Lake/Logan County gets only 1% of the benefits from the new jobs but bears 100% of the burden.**

I urge my Indian Lake and Logan County neighbors to oppose the Grange Solar Farm.

Charles Mallory | Russell's Point, OH  
chuck.mallory2359@gmail.com

# entertainment

## For Elton John, 'Never Too Late' isn't just a documentary and song — it is a life mantra

NEW YORK (AP) — Capturing Sir Elton John's 50-year career is a herculean task. Good thing his husband, David Furnish, and filmmaker R.J. Cutler were up for the challenge.

"Elton John: Never Too Late," one of The Associated Press' picks for the best music documentaries of 2024, was inspired by John's final U.S. tour in 2022 — but quickly became a celebration of his life and work. It is filled with insight into his music, relationships — including a fiery friendship with John Lennon — troublesome childhood and struggles with addiction. It is bookended by myth-making performances at Los Angeles' Dodger Stadium in 1975 and 2022.

For fans — and even John himself — it is revelatory viewing.

"I was struck by how good the music was in those first five years, because I very rarely listened to my music. I was very proud of that," John told the AP this week. "And also, it brought back the incredible

struggle that I had with success, having no foundation underneath it. I turned to alcohol, drugs and then had redemption by getting sober."

Success and satisfaction are not one in the same, a fact that's quickly established in the film. John had fame but hungered for connection. Having a family changed him.

"The greatest things in my life are my two kids and David. And the music comes secondary to them," he says.

"The title 'Never Too Late' sums it up for everybody, not just me. You can change things. It's never too late to change anything. Thank God I did. Because when I got sober, my whole life completely changed." He's now been sober for 34 years.

"It's been glorious compared to what it was for about 10 years, 15 years," he says of his past struggles with drug and alcohol addiction.

"You know, I was still playing and touring while I was doing drugs. I

never stopped. Because music kept me alive. Music kept me alive. It nearly killed me, but it saved me, if you get what I mean. I am just so proud because now I have a family."

He views "Never Too Late" as not only a celebration of that journey, but an effective "piece of advocacy," as he describes it. "You can have children, and you can be gay, and you can have a happy family. I couldn't be happier."

"Never Too Late" is also the title of an uplifting theme song written by Brandi Carlile, Andrew Watt, John and his longtime lyricist Bernie Taupin, currently shortlisted for the 2025 Oscars. Carlile was the catalyst; she paid John and Furnish a visit to their home in France, saw a rough cut of the documentary and felt moved to write a song.

"This song was about my life, and I found it very easy to write to," he said of the collaboration. And its message is simple: "I've

been through hell," John says. "And I still come out fighting the other side. So, you know, it's very true to what I am."

And while his days of touring are behind him, the song "Never Too Late" is part of a "new era," as John explains it. Fans can expect new music in the future. "There will be a new album sooner or later," he said. "I'm dying to record new stuff."

A project like "Never Too Late" allows for reflection. When asked what John hopes his legacy becomes 50, 100 years from now, he says simply: "I just want, on my tombstone to say, 'He was a great dad.' That's what I want. The musical legacy will speak for itself. But from a human point of view, 'He was a great dad and a great husband.'"

Last month, John revealed he had lost some vision after contracting an infection. "The eyesight is a problem. But we're looking into treatment for it. I'm a huge opti-

mist. I basically lost the eyesight in my right eye for the time being. My left eye is not the greatest," he says.

He's been adjusting to the condition for six months. "I've had, since this happened, such an empathy for sight-impaired people and blind people... When you see so many other people who just can't see at all — I'm very blessed."

John's positivity is felt throughout "Never Too Late." He's uninterested in looking backwards; in the same way his record-breaking accomplishments are celebrated on film, so too are contemporary moments that spotlight his enthusiasm for his family and younger talent.

"For me, it's all about what's going to happen in the future, not what's happened in the past," he says. "With this documentary, we leave certain time behind. And now it's all about starting again."

"Elton John: Never Too Late" is available to stream now on Disney+.

# comics

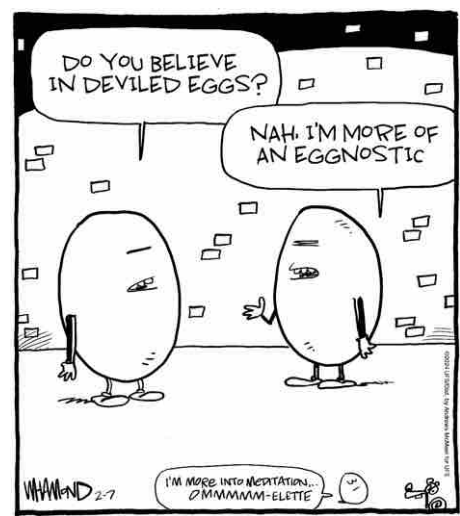
**MODERATELY CONFUSED** Jeff Stahler



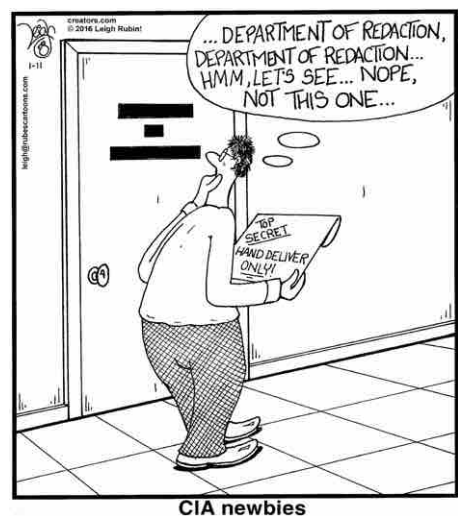
**DENNIS THE MENACE** Hank Ketcham



**REALITY CHECK** Dave Whamond



**RUBES** Leigh Rubin



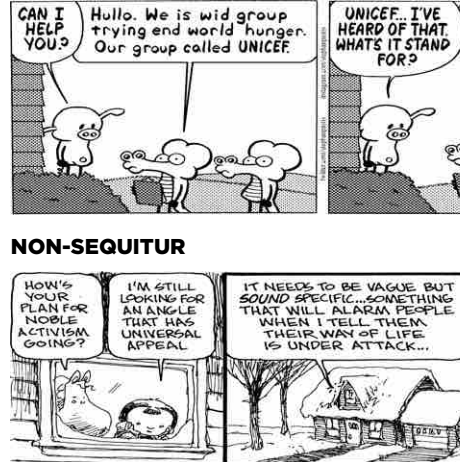
**PEANUTS** Charles Schulz



**PEARLS BEFORE SWINE** Stephan Pastis



**NON-SEQUITUR** Wiley Sequitur



**KING FEATURES**



## CROSSWORD

**ACROSS**  
**1** — Ark  
**6** Con games  
**11** French novelist  
**12** Heckler's weapon  
**14** "Delta Wedding" author Welty  
**15** Defeated in a footrace  
**16** Govt. stipend  
**17** Roly-poly  
**19** Roast VIPs  
**20** Golf pegs  
**22** Docs' org.  
**23** Lap dog, for short  
**24** Former First Daughter  
**26** Most sore  
**28** 401(k) alternative  
**30** Med. plan  
**31** Popeye's veggie

**35** Muslim legal expert  
**39** Centers  
**40** Pos-sesses  
**42** Uttered  
**43** Before  
**44** "Grace-land" singer Paul  
**46** The Browns, on scoreboards  
**47** Chew out  
**49** Tex-Mex treat  
**51** "I, Robot" author  
**52** Leg joints  
**53** Hosiery shade

**54** Repaired shoes  
**11** Defeats  
**13** Start  
**18** Hollywood's Thurman  
**21** Tibia settings  
**23** Reverent  
**25** Altar in the sky  
**27** "Let me think ..."  
**29** Reach  
**31** Biblical realm  
**32** Least spoiled  
**33** Portugal's place  
**34** Sandwich meat  
**36** Glib  
**37** Inclined  
**38** Concepts  
**41** Remote locations?  
**44** Halt  
**45** iPod model  
**48** Asia's — Darya river  
**50** Keypad trio

**Solution time: 23 mins.**

O	P	T	S		F	I	G		I	R	I	S			
P	E	A	K		I	N	N			N	O	D	E		
P	R	I	Y		A	N	K			S	O	L	E		
					P	I	N			R	H	Y	M	E	S
W	A	V	E		D					U	L	A	N		
A	C	I	D		P	R	I	N		C	E	S	S		
R	E	D			W	A	G	E		D		D	I	L	
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G	U	S	H		E	E	L			N	I	N	E		
E	S	T	E		S	O	Y			Y	E	T	I		

**Yesterday's answer 1-8**

**SUDOKU** KING FEATURES

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★ 1/11

## HOROSCOPES

ROYAL STARS | FROM KING FEATURES SYNDICATE By Georgia Nicols

**MOON ALERT:** Avoid shopping or important decisions from 6:30 p.m. to 11:45 p.m. EST today (3:30 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. PST). After that, the Moon moves from Gemini into Cancer.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY** for Saturday, Jan. 11, 2024: You're a hardworking, truth-seeking perfectionist. You want the answers to the big questions. You're efficient and astute. Take time to enjoy this year. It's your turn to have fun! Let your guard down and loosen up a bit. Old friends may reappear to rekindle friendships.

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19) ★★★★★ Be extra clear in all your communications with others today to avoid confusion. Meanwhile, cut yourself some slack if you want to spend time daydreaming or being lost in a fantasy world. On the upside, your imagination is excellent today! Take it easy. Tonight: Cocoon at home. **TAURUS** (April 20-May 20) ★★★★★ This is a poor day to make important financial decisions, because an element of confusion is present. This means you might have misinformation. People dealing with you might make mistakes or they might try to deceive you — could go either way. Think twice before you part with your hard-earned cash. Tonight: Lively conversations.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 20) ★★★★★ Today is the classic day to kid yourself about something. This is because the Moon is in your sign today at odds with fuzzy Neptune. This can make the emotional aspects of relationships difficult. People (including

"Who, me?" Tonight: Be frugal.

**CANCER** (June 21-July 22) ★★★★★ Today you might feel disoriented, mildly troubled and ready to second-guess yourself. Relax, because this is a fleeting thing that is gone by the end of the day. Nevertheless, because you lack the confidence of your convictions, do nothing important. Take it easy. Tonight: You win! **LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22) ★★★★★ Your interactions with friends and members of groups might be a bit confusing today. Although you feel sympathetic for someone and want to extend a helping hand, your efforts could be misunderstood by someone. Or perhaps you misunderstand what they want. Don't jump the gun. Tonight: Enjoy solitude.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) ★★★★★ Be careful, because your communications with parents, bosses and people in authority could be confusing today. Make no assumptions. Make an effort to clarify what others expect of you. Make sure they understand what you are saying to them. Communications are cloudy! Tonight: Warm friendships. **LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) ★★★★★ Your appreciation of beauty is heightened today; nevertheless, be careful about spending money and buying beautiful art objects, which you like to do, because there's an element of hazy confusion present in the world today. It's brief and gone by the end of the day. It's a poor day to spend money.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) ★★★★★ Because you might be focused on making decisions about inheritances, shared property, taxes, debt or other financial matters, do be aware that this is a poor day to do this. Your information might be faulty. People might jump to the wrong conclusions. Just

new ideas!

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) ★★★★★ Don't try to do too much today. This is good day to relax. However, discussions with partners and close friends are subject to misunderstandings. If you're dealing with an important issue, make an effort to clarify what's going on, especially about health matters. Tonight: Check your finances. **CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) ★★★★★ If you're at work today or dealing with pets, issues might get confusing. Remember that when something is really confusing, it means you don't have the right facts and you don't know it. Therefore, postpone important decisions today. Relax and take it easy. Tonight: Be cooperative.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) ★★★★★ Because you feel laid-back this is an excellent day for creative work, hanging out with kids or socializing. You're open to new ideas and concepts. In fact, your imagination is heightened! However, this is a poor day to make important decisions about kids. Be aware of this. Tonight: Get organized. **PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20) ★★★★★ Family conversations might be confusing today because of a misunderstanding or incorrect assumptions. It's also remotely possible that someone is hiding something or dodging the truth. Either way, be aware that issues are easy to misunderstand. Postpone decisions for tomorrow. Tonight: Socialize!

**BORN TODAY**  
 Singer Mary J. Blige (1971), actress Amanda Peet (1972), actress Son Ye-jin (1982)

Find more Georgia Nicols horoscopes at georgianicols.com.





# ILHS juniors gain insights through 'The Game of Life' simulation

BY THE EXAMINER STAFF

ILHS College and Career Readiness students recently got a valuable look at the costs of living in the real world playing "The Game of Life."

Honda Federal Credit Union teamed up with the Midwest Regional Educational Service Center and the Logan County Chamber of Commerce to bring this expense-planning exercise to area high school students. Indian Lake juniors were the first to take part locally.

Honda Federal Credit Union Business Development Manager Cindy Haavistow patterned "The Game of Life" after a program taught near the Indiana Honda facility.

"I really saw the value, especially when the hot topic is financial wellness and literacy," Haavistow said. "What better way to give these students the opportunity to understand the journey that's ahead of them once high school is over?"

Prior to the event, CCR students researched

careers, selected a job and chose their family situation.

During "The Game of Life," they got a monthly pay stub with their earnings after taxes. Then students made their way around the cafeteria to about 20 different local business and organization representatives where residents typically spend their money.

Students were required to pay for housing, transportation and insurance, but could make other spending decisions based on their income. They had to consider groceries, utilities, child care, pet care, recreation, student loans, charitable giving and many other types of possible costs.

Participants were also required to draw a card from SRO Miller with an unexpected life event, like a speeding ticket, that might cost them more money.

After they visited each station, the pupils took their budget sheet to Honda Federal Credit Union employees to get advice and recommendations on their spending.



Indian Lake High School junior Alyssa Powell uses her calculator to determine if she can afford to donate to the United Way during The Game of Life at Indian Lake High School. (INDIAN LAKE SCHOOLS PHOTO)

Junior Matthew Culp played the game as an aircraft mechanic making \$5,567 per month with a spouse and one child. He made ends meet, but just barely.

"I really tried to save money on my house and save money on my car. This was very eye-opening compared to what I thought it was going to be — I thought I was going to come up with a lot more money at the end, but I only had \$15 left."

ILHS College and Career Readiness educator Alex Jacobs plans to take this concept and

continue it in the classroom over the next few weeks while teaching more on financial literacy.

Honda Federal Credit Union also presented a Car Buying Experience workshop to help students understand their credit and be knowledgeable with what could be the first major purchase of their early adult life.

Students from other schools around Logan County will be taking part in "The Game of Life" and the Car Buying Experience over the next few weeks.

# HEALTH

Continued from P1

Bailey demonstrated the machine, noting that for two of the items — emergency Narcan and COVID tests — codes are available to enter into the vending machine to quickly dispense these items. For emergency Narcan, patrons are advised to first dial 911 and then access the Narcan.

For all other items in the vending machines, patrons should scan the QR code on the machine and they'll be directed to a link with a short survey and then they will receive an access code to enter into the machine for their item or items.

Other products available in the vending machine include: fentanyl tests, period kits, Sharps container, safe sex kits, safe smoke supplies, test before you drink kit, injection supplies and medication disposal.

Also at the meeting, members voted on officers to lead the board for 2025. Dr. Grant Varian was re-elected board president and Chris Watkins was re-elected vice president.

Health Commissioner Travis Irvan noted that Dr. Varian is up for re-election for a new term on the board when the Logan County Health District Advisory Council meets in March.

During the nursing report, Director of Nursing Lee Watts said she and her staff will be assisting the Kenton-Hardin Health Department with vaccine clinics once or twice a month for a temporary period, while the KHHD works through staffing/budgetary issues.

"They're in a tough spot right now," Irvan noted, stating that other area health departments are providing assistance to the KHHD as well.

Watts said the demand

locally at the LCHD for seasonal vaccines has waned recently, so her staff are available to offer this type of off-site clinic.

In addition, Irvan said health district employees also are stepping up to help staff the local warming shelter, offered on evenings when temperatures dip below 20 degrees, at the Bellefontaine First Church of God, 1000 E. Brown Ave. The Recovery Zone is spearheading this effort for the winter of 2024-25.

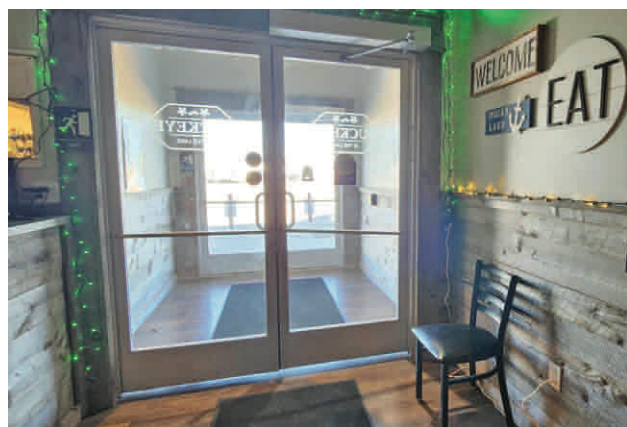
Intake for the warming shelter is from 6 to 8 p.m. at the youth center entrance, door 9.

Also during the community health report, Bailey offered updates on NaloxBox placements throughout the county, noting that 10 of the emergency Narcan boxes have been installed in recent months, and there is continued community interest from other entities about obtaining the boxes for their place of business or organization.

In addition, LCHD staff recently provided Narcan training to approximately 150 staff members at Indian Lake Schools, and also offered "Behind the Bar" Narcan training to staff at the Fraternal Order of Eagle's of Bellefontaine, Axe Ventura, The Syndicate and Brewfontaine. The next meeting is 1 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 12.

**In other action, the board:**

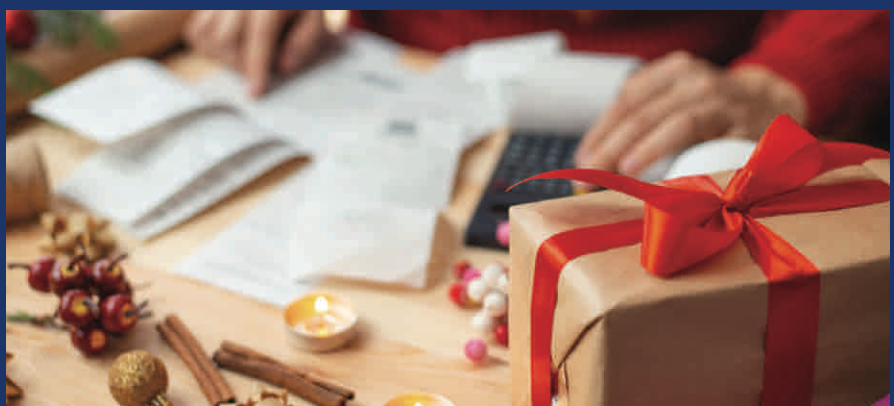
- approved the finalized 2025 budget, with Director of Business Operations Christina Bramlage noting it is the same budget approved by the county budget commission, with no changes;
- ordered Suzanne Gillespie, 7890 Rose Path, Russells Point, with a private well casing that is damaged and broken off at ground level, leaving the casing open to contaminants, to correct the violation by sealing the well within five days; and
- approved well variance requests for Kay and Jeff Dorer of Wapakoneta for their property at 10793 Seminole Shore Drive, Huntsville; Dennis Steinke of Piqua for his property at 7755 Park Drive, Russells Point; and Tammy Mansfield for her property at 7594 County Road 91, Lewistown.



## Board of DD project helps open doors at 3 area businesses

Every day, people with developmental disabilities face barriers to accessing facilities and services, preventing them from fully taking part. The Logan County Board of Developmental Disabilities expressed interest in helping local businesses install accessible doors with the use of one-time ARPA grant funds. Three area businesses, Homegrown Yoga, 138 W. Columbus Ave., Bellefontaine; Gathering Grounds, 337 E. Main St., Russells Point; and Buckeye at the Lake, 11977 State Route 235, Lakeview; were interested in the project and now have a welcome addition to their facilities. The LCBDD allocated ARPA grant funds distributed by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities to complete this project. These funds have allowed LCBDD to assist our community with offering a more inclusive and accessible Ohio, one that continues to recognize and value the contributions of all citizens. (SUBMITTED PHOTOS)

## Pay off Your Holiday Bills with MyCash



### Apply for a MyCash personal loan Loan amounts up to \$5,000.

Use MyCash, a quick and easy personal loan for up to \$5,000 from United Midwest Savings Bank to pay for holiday bills, car repairs, new appliances or whatever expenses arise. With a lower rate than most credit cards\* and flexible repayment options up to 60 months, wrap up your holidays with MyCash! Qualified customers can receive:

**2.99% A.P.R.\*\***

Apply for a MyCash personal loan online at [www.umwsb.com/mycashloan](http://www.umwsb.com/mycashloan)

or

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937-585-5861

\*Credit card rate information per [www.wallethub.com](http://www.wallethub.com). \*\*MyCash is a consumer loan program with 2.99% APR for approved borrowers in low or moderate census tracts and/or have low or moderate income. The rate for approved borrowers outside the low-to-moderate census tract or income parameters is 9.99% APR. Maximum loan amount is \$5,000. Maximum loan term is 60 months. Assuming a loan amount of \$5,000 for 60 months, the monthly payment for a MyCash loan is \$89.92 at 2.99% APR and \$106.21 for 9.99% APR. Rates, terms, and conditions may vary and are subject to change without notice. All loans are subject to credit review, underwriting guidelines, verification of identity, and approval. Low and Moderate Census Tracts per the FFIIEC geocoding; Low-to-Moderate income levels per 2024 U.S. Department of HUD-state of Ohio guidelines. Borrowers must be residents of Logan or Champaign counties in Ohio. Offer as of 1/1/2025. NMLS#516627



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