

WEDNESDAY  
FEBRUARY 15, 2023



FREE



## An amazing read

Johnson County resident hopes book helps foster understanding of autism.

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# Edinburgh Courier

## THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

“Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.”

— Will Rogers

## WHAT'S UP?

### Take-home craft

Edinburgh Wright-Hageman Public Library's February craft is a DIY button bowl, which could be used as a candy dish or place to put your spare change. The free craft is for all ages.

Sign-ups will be taken through Feb. 16. Call the library at 812-526-5487 or stop by the Circulation Desk.

Buttons, balloons and glue all supplied.

### Free fishing days

Indiana's four Free Fishing Days for 2023 are May 7, June 3-4 and Sept. 23.

On Free Fishing Days, Indiana residents do not need a fishing license or a trout/salmon stamp to fish the state's public waters. All other rules such as seasons, bag and size limits apply.

Visit <https://www.in.gov/dnr/fish-and-wildlife/fishing/where-to-fish-interactive-map/> to find public waters sites.

### Valentine's dinner

Grace Tabernacle Church will host a free night out for Valentine's Day on Feb. 18, 5 p.m. at the church, 512 W. Center Cross St. Edinburgh

Evening includes a spaghetti dinner with sides and desserts, games and prizes. You don't have to be a couple to enjoy the dinner and fellowship. Everyone is welcome.

### Zumba

Edinburgh Parks and Recreation offers Zumba classes on Wednesdays through March 29. Classes start at 6:10 p.m. Participants are asked to arrive early to pay and sign a waiver. Cost is \$5 per class.

## NEWS

Amy May, editor ..... 317-736-2726 or 812-379-5761  
Editorial fax ..... 317-736-2766  
Editorial email ..... [courier@dailyjournal.net](mailto:courier@dailyjournal.net)

## ADVERTISING

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Email ..... [cwarren@dailyjournal.net](mailto:cwarren@dailyjournal.net)  
Advertising fax ..... 317-736-2754

## DEADLINES

Display ads ..... 5 p.m. Wednesday  
News ..... 9 a.m. Monday  
Library drop box ..... noon Wednesday

CIRCULATION 317-736-2777

## 'THE BECHTEL WAY'

# Community remembers longtime school secretary

By Andy Bell-Baltaci

DAILY JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

**T**here is one phrase people remembered when it came to Edinburgh Community School Corporation's longtime secretary: The Bechtel Way.

For 35 years, Cindy Bechtel was a face everyone saw when they came to school in the morning. For generations of students, she was there practically every day, even when battling cancer. That was The Bechtel Way.

On Jan. 14, that disease took her life. Bechtel retired from her post at the end of the school year in June. The 63-year-old was able to spend the last seven months of her life primarily with her husband, Rick Bechtel, who retired at the same time she did.

For 25 years, Bechtel worked across from Debbie Behnke, another secretary at the combined middle school/high school building. Bechtel was someone she could count on seeing five days a week throughout the school year, through good times and bad.

“There's a big void with her being gone and I miss her terribly,” Behnke said. “She worked probably a lot longer than she needed to. She always had on a brave face and she was gonna see me tomorrow, she wasn't going to be beat down. She's one of a kind, she was a gem. We lived life together five days a week.”

Bechtel also shared the main office with Edinburgh High School/Middle School Principal Kevin Rockey, who worked alongside her for 17 years. Rockey became familiar with not just Bechtel, but her husband, Rick, who worked at Edinburgh Community High School, and their two kids.

Along with being a dedicated worker, she had a vibrant personality. Bechtel was an avid St. Louis Cardinals fan, loved the song “Brandy” by Looking Glass and hated “Yesterday” by The Beatles. When she laughed, she did so heartily, Rockey said.

“She would always get tickled, that's what she would call it,” he said. “I could hear her laughing and she couldn't stop laughing if something struck her. It would go on for the afternoon because she would start again thinking about the same thing.”

Bechtel was also dedicated to life outside of school. She was a member of Plainville Christian Church, the Edinburgh Wright-



**SUBMITTED PHOTO**  
Cindy Bechtel holds sunflowers on her 58th birthday at Edinburgh Community Middle School/High School in 2017.

SEE BECHTEL, PAGE 5



## OBITUARIES

TIPTON

## David Massey

David E. Massey, 76, of Tipton died on Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2023 at his residence. David was born David Edward Hoagland in Madison, Aug. 15, 1946 to Bernard & Leona (Rusk) Hoagland. Seven months after Dave was born, his mom was in an accident that led to her demise.

Myrel & Aggie (Altherr) Massey were close family friends and they stepped right up and volunteered to take care of Dave. Bernard was happy to have the help. Dave spent a lot of time at the Massey's house. Of course they fell in love with this baby boy and Dave felt the same way about them.

The Masseys' landlord noticed how much time Dave was spending with them and he reminded them that they were living in a "no children allowed" apartment. That evening the Masseys sat down with Bernard and his mother. After a lot of prayer and as many tears the adoption process was started the next day. Bernard knew he was doing the right thing for David. It wasn't until later, however, that the entire Hoagland family realized what they had gained.

Aggie, Myrel and Dave came for every family event. They never missed a Hoagland family reunion until health issues caused travel problems for them.

Dave graduated in the Class of 1965 from Nevato (California) High School. Dave was a toolmaker, working until his retirement in 1995. He did two tours in Vietnam from 1966 - 1969 in the U.S. Navy as a dog handler and then joined the U.S. Army serving as an MP. He became a member of the Vietnam Dog Handlers Association. David was also a member of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church and was a life member of the National Rifle Association.

Dave is survived by his siblings, Rita (Allen) Watson, Hope, Kim Estep, Columbus, Pam (Farley) Sinclair, Edinburgh, Vickie East, Taylorville, Carolyn Laswell, Columbus, Roger Hoagland, Columbus, Danny (Debbie) Hoagland, Columbus, and Bernie Hoagland, Seymour, Tennessee. He is also survived by several cousins from the Massey and Altherr families.



MASSEY

Dave was preceded in death by his adoptive and birth parents; and three siblings, Larry Hoagland, Peter Hoagland and Sharon Kay Elliot.

A Mass of Christian Burial is planned for 11 a.m. on Friday, March 24 at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church with Rev. Dennis Goth presiding. Burial will be in St. John's Cemetery. Young-Nichols Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

EDINBURGH

## L. Ruth Smith

L. Ruth Smith, 84, of Edinburgh passed away Monday, Feb. 6, 2023, at Our Hospice of South Central Inpatient Facility.

Ruth was born in Shelbyville, Aug. 6, 1938, the daughter of William and Ettamay Ruth Keith Alford. She married Robert E. Smith in Shelbyville, July 12, 1959; he preceded her in death Jan. 25, 2011.

Ruth worked for 32 years as a teacher's aide at North High School. She was a 50-year member of Union Village Chapter Order of Eastern Star in Bargersville. She was a long time active Bulldog fan. She loved talking on the telephone and listening to music, especially Jimmy Swaggart. She was a member of a euchre club and enjoyed sewing.

She is survived by her children, Dana (John) Hodson of Columbus, Randall (Linda) Smith of Roswell, Ga., Rodney (Tracy) Smith of Indianapolis; sisters, Alicia (Larry) Platt of Sugar Hill, Ga. and Jane Alford of Edinburgh; grandchildren, Jessica (Brandon) Purdy, Ross (Elizabeth) Smith, Amanda (Kevin) Kimsey, Drew and Bailey Runnebohm, Bridget Elswick; and eight great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband; grandson, Jeremiah Jarboe; and six brothers and sisters.

A funeral service was conducted at Myers-Reed Chapel in Columbus with her son Randall Smith officiating. She was buried next to her husband at Rest Haven Cemetery in Edinburgh. Online condolences may be sent to the family at [www.myers-reed.com](http://www.myers-reed.com).

Memorial may be sent to Our Hospice of South Central Indiana.



SMITH

## GOOD OLD DAYS

75 years ago: The Edinburg American Legion Post 233 and its auxiliary will have a testimonial dinner to honor Oscar Wertz for his years of work in the Legion.

70 years ago: Marilyn Wertz, escorted by Joe Lain, reigns as queen of the Sweetheart Dance at the high school gymnasium given by the Girls Athletic Association.

65 years ago: Edinburg's Freshman-Sophomore Girls Athletic Association basketball team defeats Greenfield's girls team, 32-21, behind Linda Rubush's 21 points.

60 years ago: The Edinburg Chapter of the Eastern Star elects Mr. and Mrs. Meridith Coy a Worthy Matron and Worthy Patron at their meeting at the Masonic Temple.

55 years ago: Johnson County residents are faced with a 17.6 percent increase in total property tax resulting in a \$1,320,025 increase for county taxpayers.

50 years ago: The Edinburg Lancers win their first Mid-Hoosier Basketball Championship by defeating the Hauser Jets, 77-76, in four overtimes to finish the season 15-5.

## COMMUNITY CHATTER

## Dollars for Scholars

Edinburgh Dollars for Scholars website is open now through April 15 for students to apply for a college scholarship for the 2023-2024 school year. Students must be a graduate of Edinburg Community High School or an Edinburg Community High School senior graduating in 2023.

To apply go to [www.edinburgh.dollars-forscholars.org](http://www.edinburgh.dollars-forscholars.org).

## Love Local Edinburg

The Community Center is giving away over \$250 in local gift cards and Edinburg swag for Love Local Edinburg. Each day the Community Center's Facebook page will post ways to win and encourage participation to show local businesses some love. Visit [facebook.com/jrdcc.edinburgh](http://facebook.com/jrdcc.edinburgh)

## Yoga

Yoga classes are held twice a week in Edinburg. Classes are \$5 and instructor is Sonia Aponte of Yahara Studio.

Beginner Yoga for ages 12 and older are Wednesdays at 7:10 p.m. at Edinburg Parks & Rec, 722 S. Eisenhower Drive.

Chair Yoga for 55 and older are Thursdays at 11 a.m. at John Drybread Community Center, 100 E. Main Cross St.

## Free spay/neuter

The Humane Society of Johnson County is offering free spay/neuter for Edinburg dogs and cats after receiving a grant.

There are no income requirements for the service, which will be continued as long as the grant lasts.

Pet owners must have an Edinburg address.

A low-cost spay/neuter clinic in Brownsburg will perform the procedures. Residents can call the clinic at 317-675-0072 to make an appointment. On the day of the

appointment, pets can be taken to HSJC at 3827 Graham Road in Franklin and Humane Society volunteers will transport them to the clinic and return them to Franklin the same day. The transportation is also free.

## Animal wellness clinic

The Humane Society of Johnson County will conduct an animal wellness clinic March 4, 9 a.m. to noon, in the old transportation garage.

The clinics, which are offered four times a year throughout Johnson County, include free rabies and yearly vaccinations, micro-chipping and take-home flea medication.

Call HSJC at 317-535-6626 to make an appointment.

## Spring Clean Out &amp; Crafts Sale

Edinburg Parks and Recreation's Spring Clean Out & Crafts Sale is set for April 1, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at East Side Elementary School. Handmade and home-made craft vendors and people wanting to sell clothing and household items in an indoor space can reserve a 10-by-10-foot booth at Parks and Rec, 722 S. Eisenhower Drive.

Cost is \$20, plus \$5 if you want a table provided.

Information: 812-526-3535

## Craft fair

Hoosier Handmade Craft Fair and Spring Market will be April 1, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Johnson County fairgrounds. Fair features work from more than 120 local artisans selling items such as leatherwork, pottery, jewelry, wood carvings, candles, goat milk products and home decor. Event also includes Easter Bunny from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., scavenger hunts for kids, music and local food trucks.

Free admission and parking.

## MARRIAGE LICENSE

Janna Milburn and Daniel Garvey both of Edinburgh

## Edinburgh Courier

A weekly publication serving the greater Edinburgh area.

Published by: Daily Journal  
P.O. Box 699, Franklin, IN 46131

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# Fifth, sixth graders compete in Hope Tourney

Both the JV boys and the sixth grade boys recorded wins last week and the fifth-grade boys continued their winning ways as they notched a pair of victories in the week.

Things got rolling on Feb. 6 with the middle school girls riding the bus to North Vernon. Unfortunately, the seventh-grade team was forced to forfeit their game, which dropped their season record to 2-4. The eighth-grade girls played well but were defeated by the young Panthers, 36-22. Chloe Hancock led the way with nine points, Mya Denton had four, Faith Smith three, Madison Britton two, Kaydra Peters two and Gracelyn Adcock two. The loss dropped them to 1-5.

Feb. 7 saw Shelbyville High School come to Edinburgh to face the varsity and reserve Lancers. In the JV contest, the Lancers couldn't keep up with the fire power of the Golden Eagles, falling 56-31. Rylan Londeree topped the Edinburgh scoring with 15 points, Lucas Seegers had six, Tyler Branigin four, Eli Smith four and Milas Burkman two.

The varsity tilt was much closer and saw the Lancers rallying throughout the second half but they fell short, losing to the Golden Bears 53-46. Caleb Dewey paced the good guys with 15 points followed closely by Braylon Bryant with 12, Connor Ramey 10, Jarrett Turner six, Jackson Hartwell two and Austin Brockman one.

The seventh-grade girls were back in action on Tuesday evening as they hosted Columbus Central Middle School. The Lancers were set back by the visitors, 16-11



Brian Ingels

## Lancer Notebook

in this one. Chloe Hancock scored four points, Shyla Watt three, Kaydra Peters two and Gracelyn Adcock two.

After getting a welcomed night off on Wednesday, the middle school girls were back at home on Thursday evening facing Waldron. The seventh graders lost a nail-biter in the evening's opener, 21-19. Faith Smith and Chloe Hancock shared high point honors in this game with five points apiece, Gracelyn Adcock had four, Shyla Watt three and Elliot Smith two. In the eighth-grade game, the Lancers were out-gunned by the Mohawks, 47-4. Sophia Pace scored three points and Chloe Hancock added the other. After this evening, the seventh-grade girls stood at 2-6, while the eighth graders were 1-6.

In a rare night on Thursday playing in the high school Auxiliary Gym, the fifth- and sixth-grade boys also hosted Waldron. Their evening kicked off with a convincing win by the fifth-grade boys, 43-16 over the Mohawks. Kendall Bennett had it dialed in on this night as he led the Lancers with 19 points. Caiden Coy and Mason Turner each scored eight, Weston Burroughs had two, Elijah Roberts two, Amir Petronilo two and Carson Gentry two. They improved to 8-2 with the victory. The sixth-grade Lancers led most of the way but allowed the Mohawks to rally late to drop this game, 37-33. Kayden Talbott led his team

with 10 points, Charlie Roberts put in nine, Mason Burton eight, Landon Garris four and Brayden Burton two. They fell to 4-7 with the set-back.

Edinburgh's boys varsity and JV went south to Sellersburg to play Rock Creek Academy on Friday evening. To kick-off the night, the JV played tough but fell by nine, 54-45. Lucas Seegers led the reserves with 14 points, Rylan Londeree scored 12, Bailey Totten 11, Eli Smith three and Caleb Murphy three.

In the varsity game, despite holding a halftime lead, the Lancers trailed by ten at the final buzzer, falling 64-54. Senior Caleb Dewey poured in 27 points to Pace Edinburgh, Connor Ramey had nine, Jarrett Turner eight, Braylon Bryant seven and Austin Brockman three.

The reserve Lancers had to get back at it quickly as they hosted their own JV tourney on Saturday morning. Facing Austin in the day's opener the Lancers recorded a nice 42-38 victory to move into the championship round. Rylan Londeree claimed his usual spot leading the Lancers with 18 points, Lucas Seegers had 13, Bailey Totten seven, Milas Burkman two, and Eli Smith two.

The Lancers faced off against Rock

SEE LANCER, PAGE 7

## SCHOOL NOTEBOOK

### College notes

Abby Sweet of Edinburgh made the dean's list in the Nursing Program for the Fall 2022 semester at IUPUC. She will graduate in May with her RN,BSN degree.

### College Goal Sunday

On Feb. 26, at 37 sites across Indiana, financial aid experts will once again help Hoosier families file FAFSA, the most important form for free money for college.

Nearby locations include IUPUC, 4601 Central Ave, Columbus, and Ivy Tech Community College, 2205 McClain Dr, Franklin. Experts will be in hand 2-4 p.m. to help families file the forms. Filers are also entered to win a \$1,000 educational prize.

Families must file the FAFSA to be eligible for state and federal financial aid.

April 15 is the priority deadline to guarantee state aid for those that qualify.

For information, visit [CollegeGoalSunday.org](http://CollegeGoalSunday.org)

### Calendar

Feb. 20: Presidents Day  
 March 10: End of third nine weeks  
 March 13-17: Spring break (snow makeup days if needed)  
 March 20-24: Spring break, protected days



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## SIBLING REVELRY

# Bond between brother, sister tells story of autism acceptance

By Ryan Trares  
DAILY JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

**N**one of the books seemed to speak to her. Bethany Lynn knew she had two amazing children — Noah, 11, and a sweet 6-year-old, Addy. And she knew that the two siblings had a unique and special bond. Noah is on the autism spectrum, and Addy not only adores and idolizes her big brother, but seeks to protect him from bullies as well.

Lynn had hoped to find a book that would reinforce the positivity between them. But she couldn't find anything that fit.

So she decided to write one herself. "There weren't any books out there that spoke on that. Especially with my son being non-verbal, there aren't very many books about that, especially when it comes to siblings," she said.



LYNN

The result is "My Brother is AU-Mazing!" a children's book released in October. Lynn used her own kids' experiences to depict the realities of autism, both the challenges that come

with it as well as the rewarding moments.

She envisions the book helping families such as hers and the community as a whole better understand autism in general.

"I hope they take away that there is a special bond between siblings, and that autism should be accepted — to end the stigma," she said. "These kiddos are so loving and kind and talented."

Even though my son can't verbally say what he likes and what he likes to do, he's the happiest kid that I've ever met. And his sister adores him, and he adores her."

Writing children's books has been a longtime goal for Lynn. She had fostered her love of reading since her childhood, and her head was filled with stories.

It turned out the best story was spun from her own life.

Her oldest child, Noah, was diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum when he was 2. After Addy was born in 2016, she witnessed the loving relationship that formed between them.

She thought that other families would benefit from seeing that depicted in a book.

"I wanted to write something from her perspective, seeing her brother through her eyes that other families could relate to," she said.

### AT A GLANCE

"My Brother is AU-Mazing!"

What: A children's book telling the story of a young girl and the bond she has with her older brother, who is on the autism spectrum.

Author: Bethany Lynn, a Johnson County resident

Pages: 26

Where to get it: Amazon and Barnes & Noble

er who is on the autism spectrum, and what her own experiences had been.

"I studied her, and how she goes about her day. She's always wanting to help, so I kept that in mind. Then I wrote the book, speaking in a way she would to other people about her brother," she said.

Lynn wove in how her children use sign language to communicate, and the kinds of devices available to help people who are non-verbal.

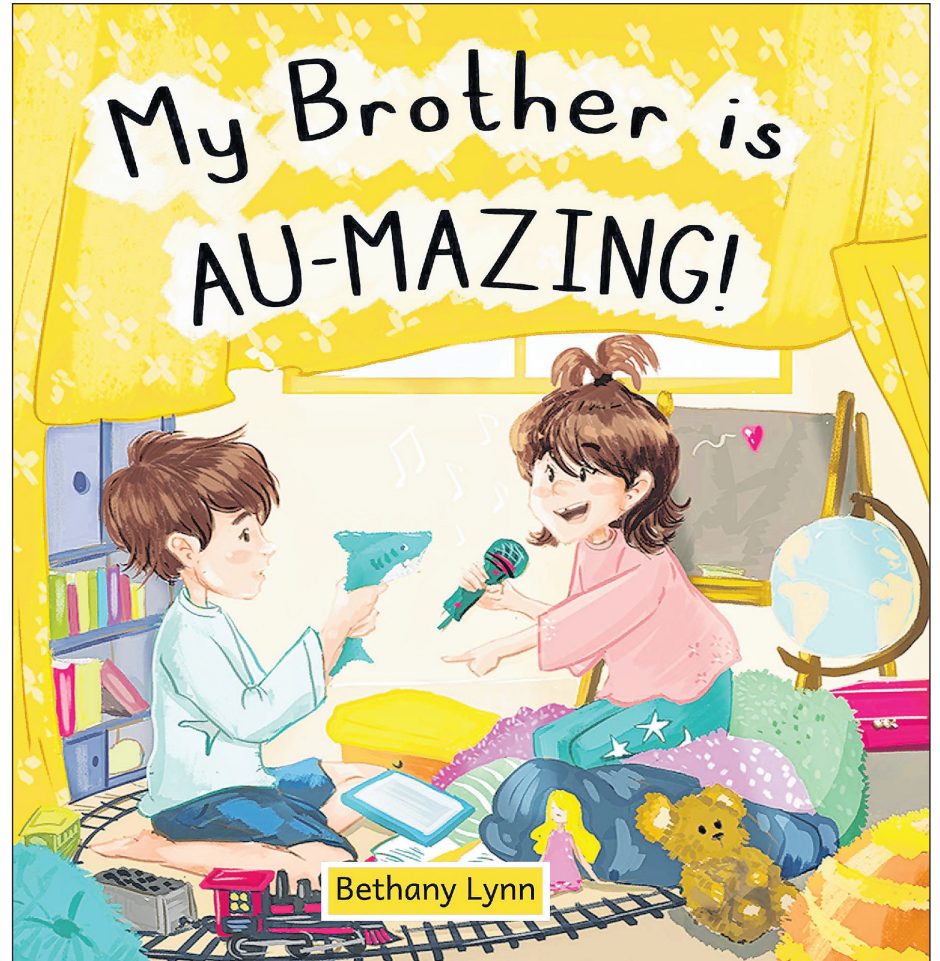
The central emotion that Lynn wanted to convey was Addy's protective nature over Noah.

"In the book, my daughter says that it's not nice to make fun of people, because we've had to deal with that," she said. "She's had to deal with her friends making fun of her brother and making fun of her. She handles it very well, for a 6-year-old, but we want to make clear that it's not OK to do those things and to be kind to those who are different than you."

To illustrate the book, Lynn was able to find a friend who used photographs of Addy and Noah to create a visual world capturing the vivid energy and tender love between the main characters.

"She's very talented. She did all of the

Addy played a major role in helping the book come together. Lynn leaned on her daughter's thoughts about having a broth-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

"My Brother is Au-Mazing!" is the first children's book by Bethany Lynn, a local resident who based the book on the bond between her son, who is on the autism spectrum, and his little sister. The book is now available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

illustrations and all of the formatting for me," Lynn said.

"My Brother is AU-Mazing!" was released on Oct. 28. In just a few short months, the independently published release has earned praise from around the world. "My Brother is AU-Mazing!" received the Golden Wizard Book Prize, a distinction given to outstanding children's books chosen by qualified childcare practitioners, preschool teachers, early years professionals, other award-winning authors, illustrators and professional writers.

Reviews have been positive from other readers as well, and was named a Readers Favorite Five Star Award winner.

"My Brother is AU-Mazing!" is available on Barnes & Noble as well as Amazon, and Lynn is working to have it stocked in local book stores as well.

Having the physical copy of her work, to hold in her hands, was a surreal experience for Lynn.

"To see it on the computer, on the TV, because I had a lot of people reviewing it. I could Google the book, I could Google my name," she said.

**"I hope they take away that there is a special bond between siblings, and that autism should be accepted — to end the stigma,"**



## Bechtel

FROM PAGE 1

Hageman Public Library board and did volunteer work with Tri Kappa. With Tri Kappa, she helped run the Fall Festival Queen Contest, encouraging students at Edinburgh schools to enter, and took part in an initiative to distribute books to East Side Elementary School students multiple times a year, said Janet Totten, a friend and fellow Tri Kappa member.

She also recruited scholarship candidates for the American Legion Auxiliary's Hoosier Girls State program, Totten said.

"I'm sure there is hardly anyone in this town who she hasn't helped from a child's standpoint," she said. "She was very generous and very family-oriented, as well. Almost all holidays were spent at her house and she did all the cooking and had her whole family over."

Totten remembers Bechtel for their trips together to Las Vegas and Gatlinburg and for her love of books and basketball, she said.

It was basketball that brought Jo Anne Hollenbeck, a retired East Side Elementary School teacher, and Bechtel together. At one time, their husbands coached the high school boys basketball team together. Bechtel was someone you could count on when the going got tough, Hollenbeck said.

"We sat together at a lot of ball games, we took vacations together and I became part of their family," she said. "They were by my side when I lost my husband in 2011. We've been through lots of good times and bad times, too. Just was genuinely caring and concerned about what was going on with my family and seemed like she wanted to connect."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Cindy Bechtel celebrates her 60th birthday at Mama Carolla's restaurant in Indianapolis in 2019.

Chris Hoffman, director of the Edinburgh Public Library, worked with Bechtel on the library board, where she worked for 16 years. Hoffman, however, knew her well before that. He was a childhood friend of her oldest son, Brett Bechtel.

"I've known Cindy since I was about seven years old," Hoffman said. "Cindy was someone who was always there for you. If you were part of her circle, she cared about and loved you and there were no conditions on that. She was the most supportive person you can imagine. She was not just willing to help, but wanted to. She went out of her way and did more than was necessary to make your life better."

## AT THE PARKS

### Edinburgh Parks & Recreation

722 Eisenhower Drive

Hours: Monday through Saturday, noon-8 p.m.

Info/to register: 812-526-3535, ext. 3, or parks.recreation@edinburgh.in.us

- Signups are being taken for youth baseball, softball and T-ball until March 4 at Parks and Rec. Practices will begin the week of April 3 and games will begin the week of April 24; tournament week is June 19-26. All players will be drafted to teams by the coaches.

Cost is \$35 for T-ball and midgets; \$45 for 8-12U baseball and softball; and \$75 for Babe Ruth and middle school.

### Johnson County Park

2949 E. North St., Nineveh

Hours: Monday through Friday: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturdays (April-October), 8 a.m.

to noon

Info/register for programs: 812-526-6809 or jocopark@co.johnson.in.us

April 15: Scrambled Eggs adult Easter egg hunt, 10 a.m., at the Scout Building, 6600 S. Nature Trail Drive. Participants will hunt numbered eggs and win prizes. Event is for 18 and older only. \$10 per person. Registration is required between March 6 and April 7. Stop by office or call to register.

May 13: Pours in the Park, noon to 4 p.m. craft beer event. Register after Feb. 10 at poursinthepark.com. Ticket prices vary.

June 30: Sparks in the Parks. Family-friendly event includes live music, beer/wine, food trucks, inflatables, and more. Gates open at 6 p.m. Band starts playing at 7 p.m. Fireworks will start at approximately 10 p.m. Ride with the Indiana Live Steamers 6-8 p.m. for \$4 per person.

## LEGISLATIVE INTERN



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Jacob George is serving as an intern for the Indiana Senate Majority Caucus during the 2023 legislative session, said State Sen. Greg Walker (R-Columbus).

George, a resident of Edinburgh, is the son of John and Candance George. He graduated from Edinburgh Community High School and is a sophomore at Ball State University studying political science.

As a legislative intern, George tracks and analyzes bill data, provides constituent services, attends Senate committee hearings and meetings and conducts legislative policy research. Senate Majority interns work through the legislative session, which is scheduled to end in April.



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# THIRD HOUSE

## Area legislators discuss mental health, housing at Third House

By Jana Wiersema  
THE REPUBLIC STAFF WRITER

Legislators representing Bartholomew County are wading through 676 bills filed in the Indiana House of Representatives for the 2023 legislative session. Rep. Ryan Lauer, R-Columbus, said last Monday that 40 of those bills had already passed the House and 54 were on their second reading.

“This session has started at quite a clip,” he said.

Lauer, along with Rep. Jennifer Meltzer, R-Shelbyville, and Sen. Greg Walker, R-Columbus, discussed some of these bills — along with those being considered by the state Senate — during the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce’s virtual Third House Session. Mental health services, development incentives and economic development grants were just a few of the topics legislators touched on.

Walker discussed Senate Bill 405, which he authored. The bill “requires the office of judicial administration to establish and administer a program to provide a regional pool of mental health examiners who are available for appointment upon request by a court to conduct: (1) a competency examination of a defendant; and (2) mental health evaluations following a notice of an insanity defense; in a criminal case.”

As of Feb. 2, the bill had been reassigned to the committee on appropriations.

In discussing his reasons for authoring it, he said that county jails have become “de facto mental health treatment centers” across the state, despite this not being their intended function or area of expertise.

“I had a judge in a rural county talk about the fact that they can see the opportunity and there may even be some resources,” he said. “But in order to do the

assessment, if it’s a low-level offender, they might have to hold that person longer in order to get the mental health assessment at a cost to the county of \$3,000, \$4,000, \$5,000. It’s easier and cheaper to hold that person, even if they’re found guilty of the offense, their sentence may be time served, and they’re back on the street without any consideration for their mental health. It just becomes a revolving door. It’s not good for the community. It’s not good for them.”

Walker hopes that the bill will continue forward and move the burden from the county budgets to that of the state.

Meltzer said that the House is also focusing on mental health and pointed to House Bill 1006, which was referred to the Senate on Feb. 1. It outlines the circumstances under which a person “may be involuntarily committed to a facility for mental health services and specifies that these services are medically necessary.” The bill also establishes a local mental health referral program to provide mental health treatment for certain individuals who have been arrested.

“It specifically addresses the 72-hour holds for individuals who are a danger to themselves or others, or gravely disabled,” said Meltzer. “So those individuals that desperately need help and, I agree with Senator Walker, that they do not belong in our jails. And currently that’s where they are. And our criminal justice system, which is made up of lawyers like myself, are not trained to deal with individuals who have mental health diagnoses, including addiction.”

Lauer also expressed support for House Bill 1006.

“It’s going to help these people that need mental health services and to get well, instead of sitting in a jail cell without addressing the root problem,” he said.

Additionally, Meltzer has joined House Bill 1194 as a co-author. This legislation pertains to competency to stand trial and which individuals are able to perform competency exams. The bill also allows a court to dismiss criminal charges, without prejudice, if “(1) a substantial probability does not exist that a defendant will attain competency restoration or if the defendant has not attained competency restoration after six months of restoration services; (2) the defendant has a certain diagnosis; and (3) the defendant is charged with a misdemeanor or Level 6 felony.”

Lawmakers are looking to expedite the competency exam process so that individuals are not sitting in jails for six months,

### Next Third House

The Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce’s next Third House session will be held at 8 a.m. on March 6 via Zoom and is expected to include questions for state lawmakers from students at ABC Stewart school. The final session is scheduled for April 3. More information about how to submit questions in advance and tune in is available at [columbusareachamber.com](http://columbusareachamber.com).

### Where to learn more

Recordings of the Third House Sessions are available on the “Columbus Chamber, Indiana” YouTube channel.

Visit [iga.in.gov/legislative/2023/bills/](http://iga.in.gov/legislative/2023/bills/) for more information about the bills that have been filed for the Indiana General Assembly’s 2023 session.

said Meltzer. They’re also seeking to identify the proper healthcare providers to fulfill this service.

Columbus Chamber President Cindy Frey posed questions about House Bill 1005, which would establish a residential housing infrastructure assistance program and residential housing infrastructure assistance revolving fund.

About 70% of the money from this revolving fund would be used for housing infrastructure in municipalities where the population is less than 50,000. The other 30% would be used for housing infrastructure “in all other political subdivisions.”

When asked about his opinion on House Bill 1005, Lauer noted that its language could change before it reaches the House floor.

“I’m watching it closely, and I think the idea is OK, but I’m reserving my judgment for the final version,” he said.

“Representative Meltzer, I could see this being helpful in parts of your district, thinking about eastern Bartholomew County, where we have some developable land,” said Frey. “Your take?”

Meltzer expressed interest in the bill and agreed there is a desperate need for more housing.

“I was speaking to a Realtor over the weekend, and I know in Shelby County, we’re looking at approximately 44 to 50 houses in the entire county that are available for sale right now,” she said. “That’s just not sustainable. And it’s been this way in a lot of the district, including eastern Bartholomew County, for over a decade. And so we need houses.”

One issue for rural communities is that adding infrastructure is expensive, which makes the houses themselves more expensive. Funding from the state could help offset some of these costs, said Meltzer.

Like Lauer, she plans to watch the bill

carefully as it progresses to ensure that it really will be helpful for local governments.

Frey also asked Lauer and Meltzer about the state’s proposal to fund a second round of Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI) grants.

The competitive matching grant program encouraged Indiana communities to partner on proposals for growth and improvement in their region, particularly in regards to talent attraction and retention. The South Central Indiana Talent Region — which includes Bartholomew, Jackson and Jennings counties, as well as Edinburgh — was awarded a \$30 million READI grant in December of 2021.

However, communities later found out that their use of these funds was limited by federal restrictions, as the state had used American Rescue Plan dollars to fund the READI grant program. At a local level, this meant that plans to use READI funding for a research and development test track complex at the former Walesboro airport had to be scrapped, as this was not an eligible use of funds.

Frey said that Columbus City Councilman Tom Dell had submitted an inquiry about whether the proposed second round of READI grants might feature fewer restrictions and more flexibility as to which projects qualify.

Meltzer said this will depend on whether the state uses American Rescue Plan funds to support the second round.

“I have not read the specific language, so I cannot speak to whether the current bill is removing those (limitations),” she said.

She added that some of the program’s restrictions were put in place by the Indiana Economic Development Corp. and fiscal agency Ernst & Young.

Lauer said he believes it’s likely that more flexibility could be added to the application requirements for these grants.

“Also, the Community Crossings grants, I think, have worked out very well,” he said, “and so with regard to the scope and the dollar amounts for these and the maximum for cities and towns, these are all on the table, being discussed and trying to find the right path forward to not only help our communities to grow and have the resources that they need, but also to make sure that we pass a fiscally responsible budget and a balanced budget.”

Both he and Meltzer expressed approval of what READI grants have accomplished so far.



WALKER



MELTZER



LAUER



## Lancer

FROM PAGE 3

Creek Academy in the title bout for the second time in just over 12 hours. After dropping their game to the Lions by nine points the night before, the Lancers played them a tad closer but fell in the final game of the day by two, 36-34. Rylan Londeree was Edinburgh's high point man with 15 points, Bailey Totten added 10, Lucas Seegers five and Milas Burkman four.

Also competing in a tourney on Saturday at Hope, the fifth- and sixth-grade boys teams both made it to the championship game. The fifth graders met Southwestern in the tourney's first round and easily downed the Spartans. Kendall Bennett paced the young Lancers with 12 points, Elijah Roberts scored eight, Caiden Coy seven, Mason Turner six, Spencer McGaha two and Amir Petronilo two. That win allowed them to advance into the championship round against Hope. The Lancers dropped this one in a heartbreaker, 28-24. Kendall Bennett led his team once again with 19 points, Mason Turner added five and Carson Gentry four.

Things went much the same way for the sixth-grade Lancers. They defeated Southwestern in their first game of the morning, winning 41-28. Charlie

Roberts led Edinburgh with 14 points, Kayden Talbott put in nine, Mason Burton eight, Landon Garris four, Brayden Burton two, Bentley Roseberry two, and Zyan Richardson two. They also moved on to face the host Jets in the final. The Lancers came up just short in a barnburner, 29-28. Charlie Roberts led his team again, this time with 13 points, Landon Garris was close behind with eight and Mason Burton scored seven.

### On tap

#### Thursday

Boys 5&6 basketball, at home vs. Morristown, 6 p.m.

Girls MS basketball, at home vs. Morristown, 6 p.m.

#### Friday

Boys JV & varsity basketball, at home vs. Greenwood Christian, 6 p.m.

#### Saturday

Boys JV & Varsity basketball @ North Davies, 6 p.m.

#### Monday

Girls MS basketball, at home vs. South Decatur, 6 p.m.

*Brian Ingels is a retired Edinburgh Community High School teacher. Send comments to Edinburgh Courier, P.O. Box 699, Franklin IN, 46131, courier@dailyjournal.net*

## Sediment education program available for contractors

Johnson County Partnership for Water Quality will conduct a free symposium for Johnson and Shelby contractors on Feb. 24, from noon to 2:30 p.m., at the Johnson County Museum in Franklin.

A Construction Stormwater General Permit requires operators of construction sites to implement stormwater controls and develop a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan to minimize the amount of sediment and other pollutants associated with construction sites from being discharged in stormwater runoff. New guidelines are in place.

Learn what's new, ask questions from IDEM and local MS4's regarding the top 10 things you want to remember for your site. Johnson County's BAMWX will also present a program on weather changes that can impact a site plan. Lunch is included. Sign up at [JCPWQFEB2023.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com)

For more information, contact Jessie Biggerman, Executive Director, Johnson County Recycling District at 317-738-2546 ext1 or [jessiebiggerman@jcrd.org](mailto:jessiebiggerman@jcrd.org)

## RESTAURANT INSPECTIONS

The information below was compiled from reports of the health departments of Bartholomew and Johnson counties. Critical violations may expose customers to illnesses and typically must be corrected immediately or within days. Noncritical violations, if not corrected, could lead to critical violations or make critical violations more likely to occur.

#### Edinburgh United Methodist Church

107 W. Campbell St., Edinburgh

Critical: 0

Non-critical: 3

#### Cracker Barrel

11701 N. US 31, Edinburgh

Jan. 17

Critical violations: None

Noncritical violations: 7

#### Montana Mike's Steakhouse

3720 W. Marketplace Drive, Edinburgh

Jan. 18

Critical violations: 2

Employee drink in meat cutting/prep area. Food and drinks must be kept out of prep areas unless the drink container has a lid and straw to prevent contamination. Can opener blade heavily coated with food debris. Food contact surfaces must be kept free of soiling and food debris.

#### Holiday Inn Express and Suites

12225 N. Executive Drive, Edinburgh

Jan. 27

Critical violations: None

Noncritical violations: 2

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Send photos and notices to [courier@dailyjournal.net](mailto:courier@dailyjournal.net)

# Join Us In Worship



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#### EDINBURGH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

306 East Main Street, Edinburgh, IN 46124

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on Facebook

### NON-DENOMINATIONAL

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Sunday School & Children's

Church 10 AM

Sunday Worship 11 AM

Sunday Eve. Service 6 PM

Wednesday Worship &

Youth Service 7 PM

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### BAPTIST

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905 S. Main St. • Edinburgh, IN 46124

812-526-2225 • [edinburghseparate@att.net](mailto:edinburghseparate@att.net)

Pastor Danny Bailey



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Evening Worship

6 p.m.

Wednesday Prayer

Service 7 p.m.



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