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Benjamin Harrison

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Death case ends with plea agreement

By Jon Awad
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A plea agreement has been accepted in the case of a former nursing home employee indicted by a Dearborn County Grand Jury for battery resulting in the death of an endangered adult and for reckless homicide. Dearborn County Superior Court 2 Judge Sally McLaughlin accepted the agreement from the Dearborn County Prosecutor's office and attorneys for Kathy Hess, Bright, Monday, Feb. 8. Hess pleaded guilty to ne-

glect of a dependent, a Class D Felony. All other charges, including battery resulting in death of an endangered adult and reckless homicide, were dismissed, said defense attorney Robert Ewbank.

Hess waived her right to an appeal or to modify the sentence. If the case had gone to trial and Hess was found guilty, she faced three to six years in prison and a \$20,000 fine. She will serve no time, said Ewbank.

The plea agreement required Hess to admit to putting Scalf in a situation that led to her death.

The case dates to December 2013. Hess, then a nurse, initially was charged with frac-

turing the vertebrae of an elderly woman, resulting in her death, by jerking her back and forth to force the woman to release a walker, according to an affidavit of probable cause.

The woman was then seated on the bed, and apparently stopped breathing. CPR was administered by the nursing home staff. The woman was taken to Dearborn County Hospital by EMS, and died 14 minutes after she arrived.

The defense, contended, in part, that Scalf's spine was broken during CPR. Hess initially was charged with battery resulting in death of an endangered adult; neglect of a dependent resulting in serious

bodily injury; and reckless homicide, all felonies. Prosecutor Aaron Negangard then dismissed the case with prejudice in autumn 2014. Dismissing the case with prejudice allowed him to convene the grand jury.

The grand jury ruled in March 2015 that Hess "touched" the woman in an insolent and angry manner that resulted in fracturing her spine, and "recklessly killed" the woman.

Ewbank said he was satisfied with the plea agreement, particularly because Hess will serve no time in prison and because she was given non-reporting probation. Negangard did not return a phone call.

Preparing for their futures

JAG helps students find careers after high school grad

By HARRY KANE
Contributor

Students from Lawrenceburg High School, who are part of Jobs for America's Graduates, will travel to Columbus, Ind., Friday, Feb. 12, to compete in a career development conference with five other schools.

All year long, students learn job skills in the non-profit, nationwide program, which aims at assisting teens with the necessary tools to overcome barriers and jumpstart their careers. The conference will put those skills to the test.

"It is a career-oriented program," said April Pearson, JAG specialist at Lawrenceburg High School.

JAG has been in Indiana since 2007, and was originally launched in 1979 in Delaware, but this marks the first year the "school-to-work transition program" is being offered at Lawrenceburg.

Not only does JAG help youths obtain jobs, but the program aims at preventing at-risk students from dropping out of school, explained Pearson. "It's for students who need a little extra help deciding what they want to do after high school," said Pearson of the 42 students enrolled in the class.

The JAG class, an elective, meets once a day, five days per week for 55 minutes. It's a regular class, and students receive a grade.

Students have been eagerly preparing for the regional convention now scheduled for Friday. It had been postponed.

Breyanna Wickizer, 16, a junior at Lawrenceburg High School, is enrolled in the JAG class. She's interested in becoming a nurse.

Wickizer is competing in an "Entre-



JAG Specialist April Pearson and a JAG student prepare for a food drive community service event.

preneurial Challenge" at the convention. "We had to come up with a business plan," she said.

Wickizer created a business plan for her idea of starting a bar and grill, making 30-40 slides about how she would build and market her venture. A variety of competitions such as public speak-

ing and interviewing are just a couple of the activities at the conference.

If students from Lawrenceburg should win first place at the conference, they'll go on to compete in the State JAG Conference in March.

SEE PREPARE PAGE 5A

Should road be built between Bright and I-74? Weigh pros and cons at Feb. 17 open house

The Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Council of Governments will hold the first of three public open houses on the Bright 74 Study

The Bright 74 Study is being undertaken by the OKI to identify multi-modal transportation needs, develop conceptual solutions and evaluate improvement alternatives for the area.

Possible improvement options include a new road from Bright to Interstate 74, straightening current roads or leaving the roads in their current condition.

Improvements aim to improve safety, cut down driving times and spur economic development. All possible options remain on the table at this time.

The purpose of this first

meeting is to gather input from those who know the area best, residents and property owners, as well as others who use or are interested in the area.

In accordance with the American Disabilities Act, if anyone has a disability and requires assistance or, in accordance with the Limited English Proficiency Executive Order, requires translation services, call Florence Parker at 1-513-619-7686 or 1-800-750-0750 (Ohio Relay Service).

Should you have concerns or questions about the open house, contact Karen Whitaker karen@okl.org or 1-513-619-7692.

For more information about the study, visit <http://bright74.oki.org/>



Clearing will begin at Ind. 1 to prepare for utility relocation

Indiana Department of Transportation's contractor plans to begin clearing along Ind. 1 at Greendale Monday morning, Feb. 15, weather permitting, in preparation for relocating utility service outside a future work zone.

This clearing operation is part of a \$830,000 project to remove and replace the deteriorating box culvert located .69 miles north of U.S. 50.

Signs will be posted and flaggers in place to jog motorists around crews and equipment.

Beuty Construction, the state's contractor, is charged with installing a new reinforced concrete box structure in multiple sections—each with a 5-foot span and 7-foot rise. The 50-foot-wide culvert bridges a tributary of Tanners Creek.

Ind. 1 will close for up to 60 days during late summer or early fall months. The contract completion date is Oct. 31.

Stay informed. Updated information and a map of the closure are available on the Indiana Department of Transportation TrafficWise service at indot.carsprogram.org. Roadway information also is available by calling 1-800-261-ROAD (7623) or 511 from a mobile phone. Follow @INDOT-Southeast on Twitter at www.twitter.com/INDOTSoutheast and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/INDOTSoutheast.

The plunge is almost here. Are you ready?

You have always wanted to give it a try, but you could never quite justify why jumping into cold water in the middle of winter is a good idea.

Now you have the perfect excuse.

Your participation in the 2016 Freezin' for a Reason Polar Plunge and After Splash Bash Saturday, Feb. 20, at Versailles State Park, will give 11,000 Special Olympics athletes throughout Indiana the means to train and compete in several Olympic-type of sports.

Versailles is one of 16 plunge sites throughout the state during January and February that help raise more than \$600,000 for Special Olympics Indiana.

So that quick dip in the water surrounded by the beautiful backdrop of the state park does not sound too bad after all, does it?

But if you do decide you are not quite ready to make the plunge this February, there are plenty of other ways to help that will keep you nice and dry (even warm and toasty).

Your options?

■ Running or walking in the Polar Climb 5K/10K

■ Donating money to another plunger from the warmth and comfort of your own home.

■ Experiencing the plunge as a

SEE PLUNGE PAGE 5A

Freezin' For A Reason



Special Olympics Indiana

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Today: High: 24 Low: 8

Fri.: High: 28 Low: 10

WEATHERforecast

Sat: High: 19 Low: 4

Sun: High: 26 Low: 22

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