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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2016

BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection

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## Up in the air

### Scientists use drone to map trees in flood plain

By DAVE SCHULTZ

Scientists were at work Wednesday afternoon at the city's reforested area north of the Wabash River near the White Bridge, and they were using a new tool in their quest for knowledge: A drone.

The men flew over the site that the city of Bluffton took over 15 years ago, using it as a flood plain that would be reforested. The last tree was planted on the 140-acre site eight years ago, and the scientists with the U.S. Geological Survey were at the location with a drone, getting a bird's-eye view of the place. The particular emphasis is on the trees.

It was actually a return trip for a USGS team to the reforested area. A group came last year and walked the site, looking for insects, small mammals, and plant life. Matthew Struckhoff was part of that group last year and returned this year. Even with the drone, Struckhoff



Josip Adams holds a controller and watches the drone fly off to the west, while Shawn Meyer actually guides the drone on his laptop under the canopy. At his right is Daniel Westrich. Adams is from the USGS office in Denver, while Meyer is from the USGS's Indiana/Kentucky Water Science Center. Westrich and a fourth member of the team, Matthew Struckhoff, are from the USGS office in Columbia, Mo. (Photo by Dave Schultz)

said, the team still walked and did its own survey work. The drone enhances that.

The drone took off three or four times during a half-hour late Wednesday afternoon. Struckhoff said that there were five cameras

with each photographing on a different wavelength on the color spectrum — red, green, blue, near infrared and "red edge" infrared. Those color images each provide information about the status of the

(Continued on Page 2)

## 12 years in prison for meth maker

By JESSICA WILLIAMS

Following a hearing on the defendant's motion to withdraw his guilty plea, a Bluffton man was sentenced to 12 years in prison.

Bret S. Beiler, 43, was in Wells Circuit Court Wednesday morning for a hearing on his motion to withdraw his guilty plea. After the hearing, during which Beiler argued ineffective counsel and prosecutorial misconduct, Judge Kent Kiracofe denied the motion. Beiler, who has been most recently representing himself, and Prosecutor Andy Carnall agreed to move forward with the sentencing hearing at that time.



Bret Beiler

Kiracofe then accepted the previously negotiated guilty plea and sentenced Beiler to six years in prison for a Level 4 felony count of dealing in methamphetamine and an additional six years as a habitual offender enhancement. No time was suspended from the aggregate 12 years and Beiler will be credited for time spent in confinement awaiting disposition since his Jan. 1, 2015, arrest.

(Continued on Page 2)

## Jail and prison for self-confessed user of heroin

By GLEN WERLING

A Bluffton man, Jacob T. Maggart, 25, has pleaded guilty to possession of a narcotic drug, a Level 6 felony; unlawful possession of a syringe, a Level 6 felony; and possession of drug paraphernalia, a Class C misdemeanor.

He was sentenced in Wells Circuit Court to two years in jail on the syringe and paraphernalia charges and two years in prison on the narcotic drug charge.

The sentences are to be served consecutively and also consecutively to a 185-day jail term meted June 30 for violating probation following a conviction for operating a motor vehicle with a blood alcohol content of .15 percent or greater.

Maggart was also found to be an habitual offender, resulting in an additional three years in prison being added to the sentence.

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Jacob Maggart



Xavier Walden, 14, leans over a plate of stir fry made with scorpions, tarantulas and other bugs Wednesday at Southern Wells High School. The meal was made as part of a biology lab organized by teacher Dave Butler. (Photo by Matthew LeBlanc)

## Bugs: They're what's for dinner

By MATTHEW LeBLANC

Cameron Lightle and Wesley Moore milled around a stove at Southern Wells High School Wednesday, working to prepare a stir fry meal.

Vegetables were added to white rice as the two dutifully watched over the culinary creation.

Then the black scorpions were added to the mix. And then tarantulas. Ants also were added.

Lightle, 16, and Moore, 17, were putting their kitchen skills to the test as part of a lab organized by biology teacher Dave Butler. For nearly two decades, Butler has included entomophagy — the practice of eating insects — in his curriculum as a way of teaching students about biology and the proteins and carbohydrates present in the creepy crawly creatures.

"It started as an activity for Halloween," Butler said. Discussions about the nutritional value of insects would come later.

It's been a hit with students over the years, even if some are squeamish. Lightle, for his part, insisted he would not try the food he had helped prepare.

"I had my fair share back in the day," he said, referring to the spiders he used to chase and eat as a child.

Others who entered the kitchen, though, weren't so easily disgusted.

Xavier Walden, 14, came from study hall to see what was cooking. After asking what was in the stir fry, he took a bite.

"I don't taste bugs," he said.

Perhaps moving away from novelty status, eating insects appears to be

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Cooked tarantulas and scorpions cool on paper towels at Southern Wells High School Wednesday. The insects were used to create meals as part of a biology lab at the school. (Photo by Matthew LeBlanc)

## Trump promises huge boost in military spending

By STEVE PEOPLES

Associated Press PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Republican Donald Trump vowed Wednesday to boost defense spending and deploy more active troops, fighter planes, Navy ships and submarines as he works to convince skeptics in both parties that he's ready to lead the world's most powerful military.

The New York businessman, who has struggled at times to demonstrate a command of foreign policy, also seemed to acknowledge he does not currently have a plan to address cyber security or the Islamic State group.

If elected, Trump said he would give military leaders 30 days to formulate a plan to defeat the group, commonly known as ISIS. He also said he would ask the joint chiefs of staff to conduct a review of the nation's cyber defenses to determine all vulnerabilities.

Trump's address came hours before his national

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Donald Trump

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### Outside



A chance of rain all day

Table with 3 columns: Today, Friday, Saturday. Values: High 84, High 81, High 77; Low 67, Low 67, Low 54.

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### Online

For more photos of Southern Wells High School students eating bugs, visit our "On the Beat" blog at www.news-banner.com

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The drone sits in the landing area while the U.S. Geological Survey scientists discuss the machine's most recent flight. (Photo by Dave Schultz)

## Up in the air

(Continued from Page 1)

land, much more than a single photograph would do.

"You can combine them and change them a little bit and get an idea of where plants are doing well and where they're struggling," he said.

The operation of the drone — Struckhoff referred to it as the unoccupied aerial system program — "is really in its infancy," he said.

Doug Sundling, who manages the flood plain area for the city, said the goal of the scientists' work is to do a cost-based analysis. "They're not just doing this because they're curious," he said.

Struckhoff agreed. "A lot

of money gets put into this type of activity," he said. What they want to know, he said, is simple: "Is the restoration achieving what it was intended to do, to provide habitat for 'critters'?" he asked. "We're only 15 years in here, though. Are there ways to detect, in these early stages, whether or not they're on the right path to achieve these objectives?"

When asked whether Bluffton's reforested area is doing well, Struckhoff said it appears to be.

"I think the survival rates out here are very high, except this patch right here," he said, pointing to a rather featureless area just off the entrance to the site on Elm Grove Road. "Over-



A drone glides in for a landing after a survey run over the reforested area north of the Wabash River and west of Wells County Road 450E and Elm Grove Road. (Photo by Dave Schultz)

all, (survival rates are) very high, and the other sites where we've been looking at are also very high. So the methods that were used here seem to be working."

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## 12 years

(Continued from Page 1)

While before the judge Wednesday, Beiler filed a host of other motions as well, including a request to amend his material witness list, for copies of documents, and a request to continue the matter. These motions gained no traction.

As part of his argument of ineffective counsel, Beiler argued there were issues in the case that his public defender at the time, Jeremy Nix, did not bring up before the plea was signed. However, Kiracofe said Wednesday that he believed Beiler was attempting to readdress matters previously discussed when Beiler's motion to suppress evidence was denied earlier in the case history.

As part of his prosecutorial misconduct claim,

Beiler argued Carnall misstated the penalties in the case; Beiler questioned the enhancements in his case. However, it was determined that when Carnall previously indicated in correspondence that Beiler faced a maximum of 32 years — up to 12 years for the felony and 20 years for an enhancement — that he was correct.

According to state law, the burden falls to whichever party that moves to withdraw the plea "of establishing his grounds for relief by a preponderance of the evidence."

The law continues: "... Withdrawal of the plea is necessary to correct a manifest injustice whenever the convicted person was denied the effective assistance of counsel, the plea

was not entered or ratified by the convicted person, the plea was not knowingly and voluntarily made, the prosecuting attorney failed to abide by the terms of the plea agreement or the plea and judgment of conviction are void or voidable for any other reason."

Nix took the stand as well Wednesday, outlining his involvement in the case. As part of his testimony, Nix said the original offer to Beiler to plead guilty was six years, but that offer was taken off the table at some point and a 13-year term was brought forward.

Nix said Beiler agreed to the plea but instead wanted 12 years.

"He didn't like the number 13," Nix said of his former client.

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## Jail and prison

(Continued from Page 1)

The total of all of the sentences against Maggart would be 7 1/2 years, although he has already spent some of his time of incarceration since being sentenced on the probation violation charge June 30.

Judge Kent Kiracofe also fined Maggart \$200 and assessed a total of \$366 in court costs against him.

As part of a plea bargain agreement, a second count of unlawful possession of a syringe, a Level 6 felony, and a second habitual offender enhancement were both dismissed.

Police were summoned to Maggart's apartment June 14 to assist the probation department in locating Maggart, who was on probation for the drunk driving charge.

Efforts to get someone to come to the door had been unsuccessful, but the probation officers could hear movement inside the apartment.

A call was placed to Maggart's phone and he reportedly told officers that he was

at Bluffton Regional Medical Center in the obstetrics department because his wife was in labor. Maggart, however, could not be located anywhere at Bluffton Regional and employees at the hospital reported he had left sometime earlier.

With the aid of the mother of another man who was reported to be inside the apartment, Maggart and the other man were eventually coaxed out of the apartment.

A search of the apartment by officers turned up a bag containing items used to ingest heroin. Also found was a device used to smoke marijuana hidden under a mattress.

Just five days later, officers responded to the obstetrics department at Bluffton Regional after Maggart passed out in the bathroom of the room his wife was staying in after having their baby.

The woman reported Maggart came into the room, kissed the baby, then went into the bathroom. Shortly afterward, she heard a loud thump and found Maggart

passed out on the floor. She exited the room and called a nurse to the room. The nurse had also heard the noise. Maggart was reportedly ashen, but still breathing and was "vomiting everywhere." He was transferred to the hospital's emergency room. Also found in the bathroom was paraphernalia that Maggart had used to inject the heroin.

Court documents state that Maggart's overdose came two days after the Department of Child Services put into effect a plan to try and protect the infant from his parents' drug abuse.

That same day, Maggart reportedly left the emergency room with an IV in his arm before being discharged by the hospital staff, and had to be tracked down by a police officer to Maggart's apartment. Maggart had removed the IV on his own and agreed to return with the officer to the hospital to sign discharge papers.

Maggart allegedly admitted to a police officer that he had been undergoing

## Weather

There's More! Check out our Weather Widget at [www.news-banner.com](http://www.news-banner.com)

Thursday, Sept. 8, 2016  
(24-hour observations at 8:36 a.m.)

High: 89

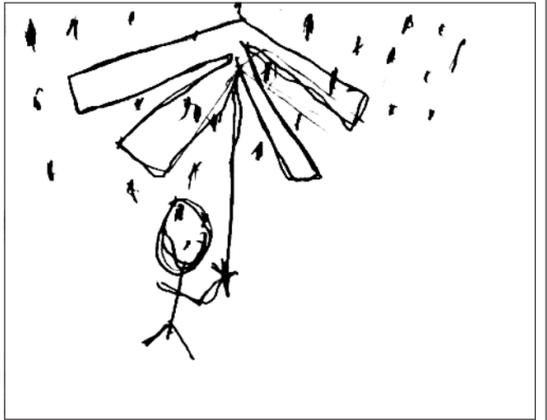
Low: 73

Precipitation: 0.07"

Wabash River Level  
(at the Crosbie Bridge):  
1.24 feet at 6:45 a.m.

Today's Weather Picture by  
Brandon Kirtley  
Southern Wells  
Elementary School

Daily Weather Cartoons  
are also posted on our  
Weather Blog!



**Today:** Chance of showers and thunderstorms this afternoon. Highs in the mid 80s. Southwest winds 10 to 15 mph. Chance of precipitation 70 percent.

**Tonight:** Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Lows in the upper 60s. Southwest winds around 10 mph.

**Friday:** Slight chance of showers and thunderstorms in the morning, then showers and thunderstorms likely in the afternoon. Highs in the lower 80s. South winds around 10 mph. Chance of precipitation 60 percent.

**Friday Night:** Showers and thun-

derstorms likely. Lows in the upper 60s. South winds 5 to 15 mph. Gusts up to 20 mph through midnight. Chance of precipitation 70 percent.

**Saturday:** Mostly cloudy with a 50 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Highs in the upper 70s. West winds 10 to 20 mph with gusts up to 30 mph.

**Saturday Night:** Mostly clear. Cooler. Lows in the mid 50s. Northwest winds 5 to 10 mph. Gusts up to 20 mph through midnight.

**Sunday:** Sunny. Highs in the lower 70s.

## Trump promises

(Continued from Page 1)

security acumen is tested at a "commander in chief" forum on NBC.

"We want to deter, avoid and prevent conflict through our unquestioned military strength," Trump declared of his Democratic opponent in his Wednesday speech, delivered inside the exclusive Union League of Philadelphia, which first allowed women in 1986.

The appearances mark an intense, two-day focus on national security by Trump, who has offered tough rhetoric — but few details — on America's challenges abroad.

Trump's rival, Democrat Hillary Clinton, has tried to paint the billionaire businessman as erratic, making the case that his disposition would be a major liability on the world stage.

"They know they can count on me to be the kind of commander in chief who will protect our country and our troops, and they know they cannot count on Donald Trump," Clinton said Tuesday. "They view him as a danger and a risk."

Trump's team has

worked aggressively in recent days to turn deflect such criticism back at Clinton.

"She's trigger-happy and very unstable," Trump said of his Democratic opponent, calling her use of a private email server while secretary of state "reckless."

While Clinton and Trump will be featured at the Wednesday night forum, they will appear at separate times and will not face each other on stage. The forum could serve as a warm-up to their highly anticipated first presidential debate, scheduled for Sept. 26 in New York.

Trump's Union League address also included his plans to eliminate deep spending cuts, known as the "sequester," enacted when Congress failed to reach a budget compromise in 2011. Republicans and Democrats voted for the automatic, across-the-board cuts that affected both military and domestic programs.

Military leaders have said that they can live with

an active duty Army of 490,000 — bolstered by nearly 500,000 soldiers in the National Guard and Reserves — as long as Congress provides enough funding to support that troop level. Gen. Mark Milley, the Army chief of staff, said last month that he is comfortable with a 1 million-soldier Army, and would welcome a larger force, only if Congress provides the money to maintain troop readiness.

Increasing the size without increase other support, he said, will decrease readiness and hollow out the force.

As for how he would pay for it, Trump insisted on Wednesday that he would fully offset the costs of his new spending through savings and new revenue. He said he would make the government "leaner," in part by using attrition to shrink the workforce, and said he'd bring in new money by asking countries like Germany, Japan and Saudi Arabia to pay more for the security the U.S. provides them.

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## Bugs

(Continued from Page 1)

gaining some mainstream acceptance.

Some high-end restaurants offer dishes that include some of the more than 1,900 edible species of insects in the world. Also, a 2013 report from the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization urged consumers to eat more bugs as the world population continues to grow.

"Insects as food and feed emerge as an especially relevant issue in the 21st century

due to the rising cost of animal protein, food and feed insecurity, environmental pressures, population growth and increasing demand for protein among the middle classes," the report states.

Still, it can be a challenge to convince eaters to consume meals or snacks made from insects — call it the "ick" factor.

So, how does one make a pitch for food that contains insects?

"You don't tell them what's in the cookies," said

Kammie Kress, 17, who worked with partner Shanda Miller, 16, to make cookies with grubs, ants and termites.

Mason Taylor, 14, didn't seem put off by the ingredients in the cookies.

"Can't even taste it," he said after taking a bite.

Moving back to his stir fry, Moore took a piece of tarantula onto his fork and popped it into his mouth.

"It tastes kinda like chicken," he said. "It really does."

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