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SPORTS • 1B

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JOURNAL COURIER

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Breaking news at myjournalcourier.com

Saturday, August 31, 2019 • \$1

Morgan County coroner steps down after 34 years

By Rosalind Essig

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Longtime Morgan County Coroner Jeff Lair is resigning at the end of September.

Lair notified county commissioners Friday of his plans, citing health concerns.

The resignation will be effective Sept. 30. His current term expires in November 2020.

"I must take this regrettable action due to health issues that inhibit my ability to con-

tinue to effectively serve the citizens of Morgan County," he said.

Lair, who is 68, said he had heart surgery earlier this year and has done treatments for colon cancer.

Lair was first elected Morgan County coroner in 1984.

Born in Jacksonville, he grew up in Winchester and started his law-enforcement career as a Scott County Sheriff's deputy. He later became Scott County coroner and a deputy coroner in Morgan

County before running for his current post.

Lair also was a founding member of the Jacksonville/Morgan County Underwater Search and Rescue Dive Team.

From the dive team to making a pamphlet to help grieving families through next steps to training in organ and tissue donation — for Lair, it's always been about helping people.

"If I can help somebody, that's what I do," he said.

Lair said he attended Illinois

College for a time, but his heart wasn't in it. That's when he became a sheriff's deputy.

"You have to do all this other stuff, which I don't care about," he said. "I just wanted to do (police work)."

Lair said he has also worked in hospitals over the years and, though he is retiring as coroner, he is still a certified death investigator.

Looking at photos of his motorcycle on his phone, Lair said, "I've got to laugh."

In addition to the investiga-

tions and the autopsies, a job of a coroner is to tell families.

He recalled a mother whose son had died began hitting Lair on the chest when he told her. He said there wasn't anything he could do but try to help.

"You see things and then you see people — people you know," he said. "The worst thing, the worst thing, is going to somebody's house and knocking on the door to tell them 'your kid's been killed.' That's the worst."

Feds confirm balloon tests, deny 'spying'

By Greg Bishop

The Center Square

The U.S. Department of Defense has confirmed balloon tests designed to locate drug traffickers over several states were part of a Congressionally approved project called Cold Star, but said no tests will be happening over Illinois "at this time."

The Guardian newspaper earlier this month reported 25 high-altitude surveillance balloons launched from South Dakota would be coming down somewhere in central Illinois in September. State police didn't know about it. Officials with Scott Air Force Base referred questions to the Department of Defense.

A Department of Defense representative said the tests have already been conducted and that no tests impacting Illinois airspace were planned.

"DoD recently conducted a Congressionally-approved Joint Capability Technology Demonstration Project called Cold Star," the representative said in an email. "The intent of the project is to advance stratospheric radar imaging capability, which provides all weather maritime and terrestrial imagery. The project is a joint effort."

An FCC filing by the Sierra Nevada Corp., an aerospace contractor for the Department of Defense, said the purpose of the operation was to "conduct high altitude mesh networking tests over South Dakota to provide a persistent surveillance system to locate and deter narcotic trafficking and homeland security threats."

The Department of Defense confirmed the tests launched from South Dakota.

"Two successful 'risk reduction' test flights were conducted near Baltic, South Dakota, on July 11 and Aug. 7. In each flight, a single stratolight launched from South Dakota and landed in Iowa," the Department of Defense representative said.

See BALLOON | 2A



Rosalind Essig | Journal-Courier

Lauren White's post on social media about her experience after a job interview went viral this week, with thousands of reactions and shares. White's engagement to another woman was the reason a Springfield Catholic school was "unable to complete the hiring process," according to a statement from the school.

On the basis of sexual orientation

Workplace equality questions unsettled

By Rosalind Essig

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Lauren White wrote a post on Facebook this week about a job she didn't get.

By late Friday, it had 6,200 reactions, 4,200 shares and 3,500 comments.

White was offered a job

Aug. 5 — an offer that was taken back the same day when the employer learned she was engaged to a woman.

"Just by way of general chit chat she asked me about my fiancée who I had briefly mentioned during my interview," White wrote on social media. "She asked me

where 'he' was from and I responded with 'she.'"

The school where she had applied to teach French, Sacred-Heart Griffin High School in Springfield, issued a statement Tuesday that was also shared with students and their families, as well as school faculty and staff. The statement did not name White, but was issued in response to a request for comment

about White's Facebook post.

On Aug. 5, Principal Kara Rapacz offered a teaching job to a candidate after her interview "went very well," according to the school.

"In the process of signing the contract, it was discovered that the candidate has a fiancée of the same sex," according to

See WORKPLACE | 2A

Evaluation OK'd in fatal shooting

By Samantha McDaniel-Ogletree

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PITTSFIELD — A Pike County man facing charges of attempted murder, aggravated battery and possession of a weapon by a felon will be evaluated for his mental fitness after a motion filed by his attorney was granted this week.

A request for a court-compensated psychiatrist to evaluate Chaz W. Carter,

32, was granted without objection from State's Attorney Zach Boren.

Carter's attorney, Mark Wykoff, asked the court to appoint Terry Killian, a Springfield-based psychiatrist, to evaluate Carter.

"Defendant's sanity is a crucial issue and goes to the crux of his defense," the motion said.

Boren said there was significant discussion of Carter's mental fitness dur-

ing the discovery hearing.

Officers were investigating a disturbance on West Fayette Street in Pittsfield on April 30 when a man came out of the house and shot a family member, according to reports.

Victor Delong was shot first in the chest and was shot a second time when he turned away, according to court records. He was injured in the chest, lungs, buttocks and thigh.

An officer fired his weapon, but Carter was not struck, according to reports. Carter was Tasered before being taken to the Pike County Jail.

Boren said Carter will be evaluated, but he said he is not sure of the timeline.

"We are on hold while we wait for the report," Boren said.

Carter will appear in court for a status hearing on Oct. 1.

A NEWS

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Classifieds: 6B-7B
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Balloon

From page 1A

“The stratolight flew as planned for 6 hours and collected high-quality imagery as planned from an altitude of 50,000 feet.”

ACLU of Illinois communications director Ed Yohnka said even if the operation was a test, people should be aware of the power of such massive surveillance that can track movements en masse.

“If I know that someone goes to a political meeting, if I know that someone goes to see a psychiatrist on a regular basis or if I know that someone travels to see someone they’re not married to or if I know someone goes to a bar every Wednesday night, that tells me a lot about a person,” he said.

Yohnka questioned how any information collected during the tests will be used and if it would be for law enforcement.

“I think it’s just a really

difficult thing to know with the kind of vagueness that’s been around this kind of program to really understand what’s happening here,” Yohnka said.

A Department of Defense spokesperson said in an email that the tests “fully comply with U.S. law, to include the law’s prohibition of surveillance activities directed at U.S. citizens.”

“No tracking information was collected during these flights, and none will be collected in future

flights,” the statement said.

Yohnka said he was cautious about the blurring of lines between military tools to domestic policing.

“This is again one of these dangerous developments that we go from that military application to a domestic application with almost no discussion, or no public sense of what’s going on,” Yohnka said. “I think in terms of what people can do is to just pay attention to these sorts of things.”

POLICE BEAT

Morgan County

Sheriff

ARRESTS, CITATIONS

• Evan N. Schlieker, 19, of 3 Bonnie Lane was booked into the Morgan County jail at 3:47 a.m. Friday on charges of consumption of alcohol by a minor, leaving the scene of an accident and

improper lane use.

• Jennifer L. Scott, 42, of 103 S. West St. was booked into the Morgan County jail at 4:03 a.m. Friday on a resisting a peace officer charge.

Jacksonville Police

ARRESTS, CITATIONS

• Andrew M. Maxwell, 26, of 722 W. College Ave. was booked into the Morgan County jail at 10:48 p.m. Thursday on a

domestic battery charge.

• Haley S. Brown, 26, of 320 S. Fayette St. was booked into the Morgan County jail at 10:52 p.m. Thursday on a retail theft charge.

BURGLARIES, THEFTS

• Three heaters were taken from a home in the 400 block of South East Street between 8:30 p.m. Thursday and 10 a.m. Friday, according to a report filed at 10:06 a.m. Friday.

• Approximately \$300 worth of beer was taken from the Handlebar between 9:30 p.m. Thursday and 11 a.m. Friday, according to a report filed at 11:07 a.m. Friday.

• A window air conditioner unit was taken from a home in the 300 block of East Walnut Street, according to a report filed at 2:27 p.m. Friday.

Compiled by Rosalind Essig and Samantha McDaniel-Ogletree

Workplace

From page 1A

the statement. “In keeping with Roman Catholic teaching on same-sex marriage, we were unable to complete the hiring process.”

White said she wrote the Facebook post so that those involved with the school would be aware of the decision.

“Like I said in my post, the one thing I did want to come out of it was just an opportunity for the parents, the students, the community to recognize that this is something that happened,” she said.

The Dominican Catholic high school, founded in 1988 when Sacred Heart Academy and Griffin High School merged, enrolls around 600 students.

The statement said the school administrators “recognize the difficulty of this situation” and see it as “a complex issue,” but that their employment contract includes a provision that makes conduct “inconsistent with the norms and dictates of the Roman Catholic Church” grounds for dismissal.

The statement also said all Roman Catholic institutions are “standing face-to-face with this reality that deserves more theological reflection, growing understanding and deeper conversation.”

Both the Illinois Human Rights Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibit employment discrimination based on a number

of characteristics, make exceptions for religious employers.

White said she understands “why they had to do it, but it doesn’t mean that it’s right.”

This month, President Donald Trump’s administration filed a brief with the U.S. Supreme Court arguing that the Title VII prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex does not apply to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

In October, the court will hear three cases that could settle the question of whether employees are protected under a federal law from workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

The administration disagrees with some of the primary arguments appeals courts used to decide that employees would be protected from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation under Title VII. Title VII is the part of the Civil Rights Act that prohibits discrimination by employers on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

Camilla Taylor is director of constitutional litigation at Lambda Legal, a nonprofit organization that provides legal representation and advocacy with the aim of “full recognition of civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and everyone living with HIV.” She said appeals courts have ruled that discrimination based on sexual orientation is a

form of sex discrimination, that it’s prohibited stereotyping or that it is associational discrimination.

Taylor said that before an appeals-court decision prohibited such discrimination, Illinois law did.

“Illinois, therefore, is going to be among the few states — the minority of states — that will retain some protection for LGBT employees if the Supreme Court decides to take federal protection away from them,” Taylor said.

Taylor explained that the exceptions for religious employers especially apply to situations in which the employee has a role in inculcating faith, such as a minister, and for employers who only hire members of their denomination.

Taylor said the U.S. has a generation gap in understanding about gender identity and comfort level with a more diverse workforce, but she thinks it is diminishing.

Court decisions, including the Supreme Court’s 2015 decision on marriage equality, have caused people to feel more capable of coming out, Taylor said. Young people, in particular, have led the way.

“Once a family member, or someone you know or love, or a colleague has come out to you and you realize that you appreciate and respect them for who they are, it’s very difficult to maintain stereotypes and discriminatory notions about that group of people,” she said. “And you can’t put that genie back in the bottle. Once people know and realize

that they know and love someone who is a member of the LGBT community, it’s hard for that person to go back to demonizing them and thinking that there’s some reason why they shouldn’t be allowed to participate in the workforce in an equal way.”

White said she applied for the job because it was a good opportunity and she felt from her interactions with the administrators during the interview that it was a place she would be respected.

“It’s 2019 and a lot of churches are moving forward and reassessing the biblical texts that they’re all quoting over and over again,” she said. “And so, I just had an inkling of hope that this would be a situation like that, instead of what it did turn out to be.”

White grew up attending a small-town, Methodist church in Carthage.

“A lot of my experiences have been with smaller-town life and smaller-town ideals,” she said. “And the fact that I felt like I could see members of my own community and my own church community moving forward I think kind of spurred me to be a little bit more ambitious with this type of job.”

Though faith isn’t a big part of her life any more, she feels at home in her old church community.

“I think some of my biggest supporters and the people who have really stuck by me through most of this, the ones that I get positive feedback from most often,” she said, “are people from my church.”

DAILY UPDATE

Journal-Courier

Today

Farmers Market: 7 a.m.-noon, Lincoln Square, 901 W. Morton Ave. Prices vary. | Through Nov. 2.

Family Fun Festival: 7 a.m., Our Saviour Parish, 453 E. State St. | Variety of events throughout the day. Pancake and sausage breakfast, Tour de Routt 5K walk/run, silent auction, live music and more.

Story Time: 10:15 a.m., Our Town Books, 64 E. Central Park Plaza. Free | Every Saturday.

Brown Bag Lunches: Noon, Congregational Church UCC, 520 W. College Ave. Free | For those who are hungry.

Woodlawn Farm-Underground Railroad Tours: 1-4 p.m., Woodlawn Farm Museum, 1463 Gierke Lane. Suggested donation \$4 for adults, \$3 for children | Educational tours of 1840s farmhouse used as an Underground Railroad site. Tours available Saturday and Sunday through September.

Gov. Duncan Mansion Tours: 1-4 p.m., Gov. Duncan Mansion, 4 Duncan Place. Suggested donation \$5 for adults and \$3 for children. | Tours of the historic mansion, which served as Joseph Duncan’s official residence during his time as governor.

Prairieland Chautauqua: 4-9 p.m., Central Christian Church, 359 W. College Ave. | Meals available each evening for a charge. Historical programs free and open to the public. Event runs 4-9 p.m. through Monday.

Stan Robinson, Roy Mathy and Lynn Ruby: 4:30-6:30 p.m., Glasgow Park, Glasgow. Free | Music and dancing.

Alfano/McKinnon Celebration of Life: 6 p.m., Evandy’s Boatel, 100 Bob Michael St., Naples. | Food, prizes, and music from the Longmeyer Band.

Off The Wall: 7-10 p.m., Wild Pickins Winery, 14223 Illinois Route 111, Chesterfield. \$5 | Live music.

Tapestry: 8-midnight, Lone Starrs, 155 E. Market St., Glasgow. Free | Music and dancing.

Sunday

Family Fun Festival: 10:30 a.m., Our Saviour Parish, 453 E. State St. | Variety of events throughout the day. Chicken and ham dinner, silent auction, bingo and more.

Brown Bag Lunches: Noon, Congregational Church UCC, 520 W. College Ave. Free | For those who are hungry.

Woodlawn Farm-Underground Railroad Tours: 1-4 p.m., Woodlawn Farm Museum, 1463 Gierke Lane. Suggested donation \$4 for adults, \$3 for children | Educational tours of 1840s farmhouse used as an Underground Railroad site. Tours available Saturday and Sunday through September.

Flipside: 2-6 p.m., Wild Pickins Winery, 14223 Route 111, Chesterfield. Free | Live music.

Big Eli Ferris Wheel Rides: 4-6 p.m., Community Park, 1309 S. Main St. Free | Every Sunday.

Prairieland Chautauqua: 4-9 p.m., Central Christian Church, 359 W. College Ave. | Meals available each evening for a charge. Historical programs free and open to the public. Event runs 4-9 p.m. each day through Monday.

New Jerusalem Singers at Liberty Church: 5-6 p.m., Prairie Land Liberty Church, 1003 W. Michigan Ave. Free | Traditional gospel music.

To submit items to the calendar, go to myjournalcourier.com and select “calendar.” Items must be submitted at least 48 hours in advance.

ILLINOIS LOTTERY

SPRINGFIELD (AP) – These Illinois lotteries were drawn Friday:

LuckyDay Lotto Midday
01-05-26-32-40

Pick Three-Midday
4-5-7, Fireball: 6

Pick Three-Evening
8-7-0, Fireball: 3

Pick Four-Midday
4-1-4-7, Fireball: 3

Pick Four-Evening
1-7-5-7, Fireball: 0

Lucky Day Lotto
01-04-13-19-28

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GOT PREDICAMENTS?



Q

My girlfriend knows I’m not a talented fixer-upper, but she has a never ending list of projects to do. I’d rather be driving a Titleist! Now she wants me to repair our (antique) shower faucet. Any suggestions?

A

The effects of calcified water and daily use make repairing old faucets a challenge even for skilled mechanics. And parts are mostly impossible to find! But I have an idea that you have predicaments that extend beyond simply fixing a faucet. First - don’t take apart anything older than your dog unless you are dead-on certain you can get it back together – in time to make your tee time of course! And your girlfriend’s list? Well, why not get her some clubs and lessons, and see if that helps your relationship. At least you’ll be on YOUR TURF, with no paint brushes or shingles to wrestle with.

(Send your questions to: The Irish Plumber, P.O. Box 842, Jacksonville, 62651-0842)

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