

IN BRIEF

Search continues for missing Indy girl

INDIANAPOLIS — Police continued their search Saturday for a 10-year-old Indianapolis girl missing since Friday afternoon.

The girl, Tatyana Staten, disappeared about 1:45 p.m. Friday. Police think she climbed out her window and ran away after being suspended from school.

Her brothers said Saturday that she was suspended for stealing food from the teacher's lounge at Robert Lee Frost Elementary School, where she is in fourth grade. Staten was afraid of being grounded at home, said her brother, Jeremiah Bonner, 15.

"She doesn't like being punished," he said. "So that's basically it."

He and Staten's other brother said they suspected she was in an apartment complex somewhere.

Death of man found in road probed

TIPTON — Police are trying to determine if a man whose truck crashed on a county road died from the accident or exposure to single-digit temperatures.

The man's body was discovered lying in the road after it was struck by another car early Saturday. Investigators believe 22-year-old Joseph Richards was dead by then.

Police say the Atlanta, Ind., man lost control of his pickup truck sometime after midnight. The truck careened down an embankment and ended up in a drainage ditch holding 3 feet of water.

Richards escaped and walked about a half-mile before collapsing in the roadway, where he was later hit.

Three are injured in ambulance crash

NOBLESVILLE — An ambulance transporting a dialysis patient crashed, injuring three people and closing Indiana 37 for about two hours.

Hamilton County Sheriff's Deputy Bryant Orem said the ambulance apparently hit a slick spot on the highway north of Noblesville on Saturday morning and veered off into a wooded ravine, where it struck a tree.

Snow was falling.

Orem said police closed the highway for about two hours while investigators studied the accident scene.

He said the ambulance was not on an emergency run. The driver, the medic and the patient were taken to River-view Hospital in Noblesville.

Toddler found in trashy hotel room

BLOOMINGTON — Police have arrested a father after his 3-year-old son was found barefoot in a frigid hotel room littered with hypodermic needles and trash.

Twenty-three-year-old Zachary Frame was being held on neglect charges Friday in Monroe County Jail in Bloomington.

Police arrested Frame on Thursday after they found four people trespassing in an unheated, closed section of the University Inn in Bloomington. Police say the temperature was below 20 degrees.

The other two adults were not arrested.

Authorities said the child is with his mother.

— Wire reports

Bill targets cyberbullies

Opponents claim law violates students' free speech rights

By Jessica Contrera
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Facebook is one of the world's most well-known websites, but Oakland High School Principal Clare Lutgen knows it by a different name: "Things I would never say to your face" book.

Lutgen is talking about cyberbullying, a growing problem across the country and the tar-

get of Indiana House Bill 1015.

The bill takes aim at cyberbullies by allowing school administrators to punish students for out-of-school activities that interfere with school purposes or educational function.

"Students say horrible things to each other on Facebook that they would never, ever say in person," Lutgen said. "And then students come to school upset and embarrassed. It doesn't matter where it originated, it's disrupting their ability to learn."

As the law stands now,

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Hundreds take the plunge to chill out for Special Olympics

Annual event draws more than 400 people; organizers hope to top \$45,000 raised last year

More than 400 people turned out for the Polar Plunge, a morning for participants to dress up — or down in some cases — and leap into cold water in February temperatures, all to support the Special Olympics.

Wearing everything from full-fledged costumes to only shorts, people lined up single file outside Purdue University's Lambert Fieldhouse as they prepared to take the plunge.

"I feel great," said Caitlan Simpson of Lafayette, the first person to jump.

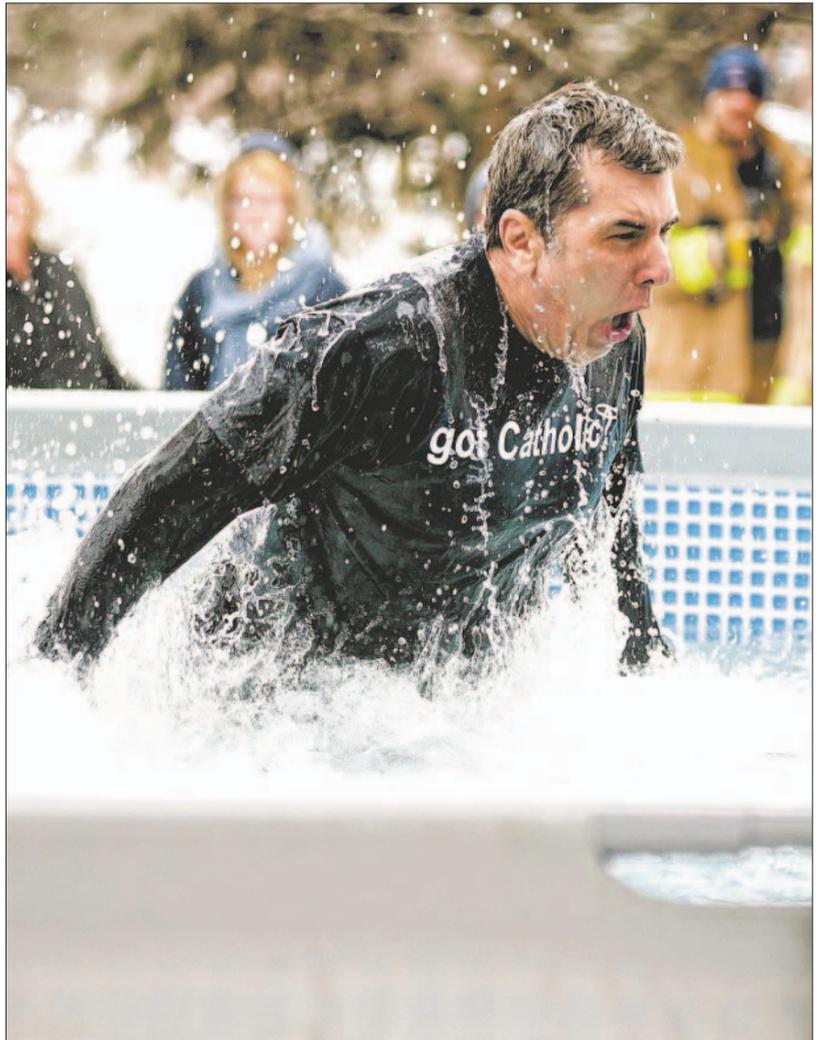
Simpson came dressed as a crocodile, while her friend, Lori Essert, wore a crocodile costume draped about her shoulders. The two were on a team representing LifeSmiles Dentistry.

"There's a lot of anticipation, and then you jump and it's gone," Simpson said, describing the experience. "It was a good time. I'm glad we did this."

The event was one of 12 polar plunges to be held across the state throughout February. Funds raised go to support Special Olympic athletes throughout Indiana.

Last year the event raised more than \$45,000, said event co-chairwoman Lynne Noble. This year organizers are hoping to surpass \$50,000.

"It's for a great cause and everyone should do it," Simpson said. "If you don't give, who's going to?"

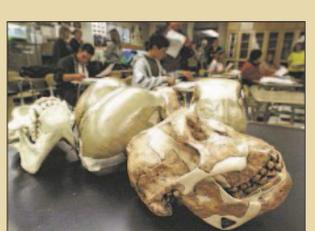


The Rev. Patrick Baikauskas of St. Thomas Aquinas Church reacts Saturday after leaping into a pool to benefit the Special Olympics.



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BRENT DRINKUT/JOURNAL & COURIER



Replicated skulls representing periods of evolution on a table in a Jefferson High School science class. J&C FILE PHOTO

ONLINE

» To read and track House Bill 1283, go to www.in.gov/apps/lisa/session/billwatch/billinfo and type in the number of the bill.

» To read the "truth in education" law in Tennessee, along with links to similar bills filed in other states, go to jconline.com and click on the link to this story.

Evolution of a classroom debate

House bill aimed at academic freedom can be seen as stealth attack on science

A retired high school chemistry and physics teacher, not to mention a Purdue University graduate, state Rep. Jeff Thompson says he just wants to get at the truth in the classroom, even when it's not necessarily something he sees in the textbook handed to the teacher and distributed on every student desk.



Jeff Thompson

A bill the Danville Republican filed in the Indiana House on Jan. 23 — one that would "allow a teacher to help students understand, analyze,

critique and review in an objective manner the strengths and weaknesses of conclusions and theories being presented" — might not get Indiana closer to that truth.

At least not this year, given that he senses that House Bill 1283 likely won't get the courtesy of a House Education Committee hearing this session.

"Some would argue that it's not needed," Thompson said last week. "What it really does is clarify that teachers, no matter the subject area, can teach facts. And if those facts are disputable, you can teach both sides. That's all it says. Nothing more you can read



DAVE BANGERT
COLUMNIST

into it."

Or is there?

A few days after HB 1283 was filed, radar went up. The National Center for Science Education put out a notice under the headline, "A stealth antisience bill in Indiana," warning of a fight to be had over what might seem like innocuous buzzwords about "critical thinking" and "strengths and weaknesses" of coursework.

"This is really just code

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Muncie levee to lose 135 trees

Associated Press

MUNCIE — More than 100 trees will be removed from a Muncie levee built in the 1940s under a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers policy that residents say will ruin a popular greenway.

The Muncie Sanitary District says the policy is forcing it to remove an estimated 135 trees, including towering shade trees, in order for the corps to certify the levee.

ee.

Failure to remove the trees would expand the floodplain and require residents protected by the levee to buy expensive flood insurance, according to Rick Conrad, director of the Muncie Sanitary District's bureau of water quality. It also would mean Muncie wouldn't qualify for assistance from the corps if it had to rebuild the levee.

Conrad said that

leaves few options but to remove the trees, but he acknowledged it will be "quite a change in scenery" along the White River Greenway.

"It's really disappointing to have to do this," he said.

Corps engineers worry that winds could knock down trees and undermine the stability of the levee. They say trees and other vegetation can block access to levees for inspection.

Kids delight in drawings



Seung Ju, 6, works Saturday on drawing a groundhog inside a hole during "Shadows and Groundhogs" inside the Creation Station at Teacher's Delight in Lafayette. The kids club meets from 3 to 4 p.m. every Saturday. BRENDRINKUT/JOURNAL & COURIER

BULLIES

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schools can discipline students for "unlawful" out-of-school activities against other students or teachers. HB 1015 would broaden that to any "delinquent, criminal or tortious" act.

Supporters of the bill say it would provide school administrators with the legal support they need to properly discipline online bullies. The bill's critics argue that it is a violation of students' First Amendment rights and a burden to already-busy teachers and principals.

HB 1015's purpose

State Rep. Eric Koch, R-Bedford, authored HB 1015 in response to feedback from the Indiana School Board Association. In 2012, he co-authored a similar bill, but it did not pass the Senate because of complaints that it was too broad.

Koch said the new bill's focus is narrower but would achieve the same goal.

"Our existing laws were written before today's technology existed," Koch said. "The laws are no longer adequate to allow administrators to handle the cyberbullying issue."

By giving the school permission to punish for acts that are "tortious," students can be disciplined for defamation, or intentionally saying something false about a person to harm his or her reputation.

The bill also allows students to be penalized for "juvenile" acts. Indiana University law professor Daniel Conkle said since the word juvenile is not specifically defined in Indiana law, administrators would have more leeway to determine what to punish someone for.

Indiana already has a cyberbullying law, but it is limited. It makes it illegal to harass another person using a computer network or other form of

electronic communication. But the communication must be "with a person" or transmitted to the person through an "obscene message."

Not all cyberbullying is committed through messages or directly to a person. One popular form of bullying seen in Greater Lafayette and around the country is through Facebook's "pages" function.

A person can create a page anonymously. Usually the page is about one person or a group of people. The page can include text and photos to make fun of, harass or intimidate the victim. Other users can "like" the page and send messages, usually containing more ridiculing comments, to the page's anonymous administrator, who then often posts the messages to the page for all to see.

Oakland dean of students Lindsey Martin said students and parents have been found to post on and administer such pages. The only way to stop the postings is to contact

Facebook to take down the site, but Facebook will not identify the page creator.

In situations when cyberbullies can be identified, principals try to step in as much as they can.

HB 1015 would give administrators more legal power to interfere, in case their authority to do so was ever questioned in court.

Protecting the First Amendment

Koch's 2012 bill did not pass largely because opponents believed it limited students' First Amendment right to free speech. The American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana called it an off-campus "overreach."

The worry is that principals will use their power to punish students for posting or doing things that are constitutionally protected.

Frank LoMonte, executive director of the Student Press Law Center, said HB 1015 is an improvement but still is too

vague. LoMonte worked with a number of Indiana organizations to testify against Koch's first bill.

"If a student wants to post 'school is a horrible place,' they could be punished," LoMonte said. "Or, what if they are handing out condoms on the weekends, and the school teaches abstinence? They could be punished for voicing any opinion contrary to the school's position."

LoMonte said HB 1015 not only invites censorship, it oversteps the boundaries of parental authority.

"If my kid is doing something the law allows him to do, and I don't mind that he's doing it, why should the school be able to stop him?"

A burden on principals?

Some local principals said they already deal with cyberbullying issues, and they don't want more authority than they have.

Tippecanoe School

Corp. Superintendent Scott Hanback said many situations arise in which disgruntled parents expect principals to get more involved in a conflict between two students.

"We want to protect our kids and keep them safe," Hanback said. "But there is a boundary between what is a principal issue and what is a parent issue. We don't want to get into the business of policing students' home computers, especially if it is not spilling over to become an educational disruption."

Neal McCutcheons, principal of Wainwright Middle School, said he and his staff don't have the resources or time to investigate what students do on their home computers. He tries to remind parents to teach children how to act on the Internet.

"Get to know what they are doing and who they are talking to," he said. "We should all promote safe Internet activity, because you never know who is on the other side."



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