

Yadier Molina, Albert Pujols headline Cardinals Hall of Fame class, 1B



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Belleville cuts weeds at resident's property by court order

BY TERI MADDOX
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Belleville city workers converged on Stewart Lannert's property on South 29th Street early Thursday and began cutting tall grass and weeds, brush and saplings around his house.

They were acting on a judge's order that gave them permission to access the property after Lannert failed to appear for two

court dates related to a citation he received last fall for an ordinance violation, according to Scott Tyler, the city's director of health, housing and building.

"It was like a jungle back there," Tyler said, adding that neighbors have complained about mosquitoes, rodents, groundhogs and snakes.

Some people also dislike the dozens of political signs in Lannert's front and side yards, his scrap-metal cross, Confederate

flag and homemade cannon, but those will remain on the property.

"It's a First Amendment right," Tyler said.

Police Sgt. Sam Parsons, the city's code enforcement officer, couldn't immediately be reached for comment, nor could Jason Poole, director of public works, who oversees street department workers involved in the cleanup.

A Belleville ordinance prohib-



JOSHUA CARTER Belleville News-Democrat

Belleville city workers clear overgrown grass and weeds, brush and saplings around the home of Stewart Lannert at 318 S. 29th St. on Thursday. The property also is lined with controversial political signs.

its residents from allowing grass and weeds to reach a height of 8 inches and states that the city can cut them, send bills to prop-

erty owners and place liens on titles if bills aren't paid.

SEE WEEDS, 2A



This collage shows individuals listed as missing persons in the metro-east.

Provided

31 missing-person cases each represent a family seeking answers

BY MIKE KOZIATEK AND LEXI CORTES
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Debra Wilkerson, whose daughter was reported missing two years ago, finds it difficult to answer one of the most basic questions of motherhood: "How many children do you have?"

Wilkerson, 67, didn't know immediately what to say when someone asked her recently.

Her adult daughter, Brittany Moeser, disappeared in April 2024 from their home in Clarmin, an unincorporated community in Washington County near Marissa and the St. Clair County border.

"I couldn't answer because 'How many children do I have?' Do I say I have four children and let it go?" she said. "Do I say I have four children but one I don't know because that brings up a whole conversation that I don't want to have. Do I

say I have three? I don't know."

Moeser's story is one of 31 behind a Belleville News-Democrat review of missing-person cases across the metro-east.

The BND compiled the list with information from local law-enforcement agencies and two national databases.

Moeser's case stands out because it was not listed in the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, or NamUs — a public database intended to help investigators

and families across the country identify patterns and generate leads.

The list, which the News-Democrat will update as cases are added or resolved, begins with the most recent reports.

OMISSION IN NATIONAL DATABASE

Moeser's case has not been listed on the National Missing and Unidentified Persons Sys-

SEE MISSING-PERSON, 3A

St. Clair County seeks \$50.8M tax levy for 2026 budget

BY LEXI CORTES
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St. Clair County will ask taxpayers for \$50.8 million to support the county budget, a 1.3% increase from last year.

Board members voted Mon-

day night to finalize this year's tax levy. The levy is typically set high in the fall and lowered the following spring after property assessments are finalized.

County Board Chairman Mark Kern said during the meeting that the county's tax rate will drop from 0.9535 to

0.8959, which he described as a significant reduction.

Republican board member Ed Cockrell of District 20 pushed back on that framing.

"We don't levy tax rates," he said. "Tax rates are determined by the county clerk based upon the equalized assessed valua-

tion and the levy from the county."

The tax rate determines how much each property owner will pay.

A lower rate for St. Clair County means if a home's value didn't change, you'll pay the county less than you did in 2025. But tax rates generally fall when overall property values increase, which is the case in St. Clair County for this tax cycle.

SEE BUDGET, 2A

Mother charged after child brings gun to school

BY MADISON LAMMERT
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UPDATE April 29, 4 p.m. - This article was updated to include comment from the accused woman.

The mother of a child who allegedly brought a firearm to school has been charged with three misdemeanors in St. Clair County Circuit Court.

Breanna B. Robison, 35, was charged Thursday with placing a child in circumstances that could endanger the child's life or health, a Class A misdemeanor; allowing a minor to access a firearm by unsafely storing or leaving the weapon, a Class C misdemeanor; and possessing a firearm with an expired Firearm Owner's Identification card, a Class A misdemeanor.

New Athens Community Unit School District Superintendent Brian Karraker previously told the BND that an unloaded gun was found in a student's backpack in the elementary wing of New Athens' combined elementary and junior high building. He said it occurred in the late morning or early afternoon.

Another student reported the gun, Karraker said.

New Athens Police confirmed Wednesday that the charges against Robison are related to the incident.

In a private message to the BND, Robison said the gun was an "inoperable antique shelved collectable gun."

While Karraker stressed the situation was handled immediately, parents criticized the school's response at a special board meeting Thursday. Multiple parents cited what they called "vague" communication from the school — saying they were not notified until after the school day ended — and pushed for updated policies. Some advocated for age-appropriate gun safety education.

Karraker confirmed this week that elementary and junior high Principal Stephanie Kennedy is on leave but declined to share the reason. Kennedy has not been charged in connection with the incident.

Robison is out on bond, provided she appears in court at 9 a.m. Friday, June 5.



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