

## GIRLS TRACK

Zapala, VanSchoyck stand out for LP

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## LOCAL

First Friday features live performance by Frassine

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## LA PORTE COUNTY

# Herald-Dispatch

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# County BZA makeup insufficient

By ELIZABETH BUNTON  
Staff Writer

La PORTE — The current makeup of the La Porte County Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) was found to be insufficient.

On April 21, the BZA unanimously approved that one member would have to



VOELTZ

board on May 12. Right after the BZA com-

pleted their rollcall on April 21, new County Plan Commission and BZA attorney Andrew Voeltz — who the Plan Commission approved the hiring of at a meeting on April 7 after the boards' longtime attorney Doug Biege resigned — informed the board that its current makeup is in violation of In-

diana Code (IC) 36-7-4-902. According to the Indiana Code, which Voeltz read to the BZA on April 21, three members of the five-member board must be "appointed by the executive of the municipality or county," which, for La Porte County, is in reference to the Board of Commissioners.

Of those three appointees, one of those members must also sit on the County Plan Commission, while the other two cannot be sitting members of that board. A fourth member of the BZA must be an appointee from the county's "fiscal body," or, in other words, the County Council.

The BZA's fifth member must be appointed by the Plan Commission, who not only sits on that commission, but is also "a county agricultural agent or a citizen member of the Plan Commission other than the member appointed under" the

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Photos by Amanda Haverstick

Participants in the 14th annual Blue Walk: Prevent Child Abuse cross Lincoln Way after gathering at the La Porte County Courthouse on Thursday. The walk, held for National Child Abuse Prevention Month, served to bring awareness to child abuse and neglect.

## Having someone that knows you

Blue Walk in La Porte urges public to prevent child abuse

By AMANDA HAVERSTICK  
Staff Writer

La PORTE — Dressed in blue and carrying signs, participants in the 14th annual Blue Walk: Prevent Child Abuse spread the message of protecting children through downtown La Porte

on Thursday evening. Organized by La Porte First United Methodist Church, the walk started in the church parking lot at 1225 Michigan Ave. Participants then made their way down Michigan Avenue — a route slightly changed this year due to construction on Indiana Avenue — and gathered at the La Porte County Courthouse. "Protecting our children is everyone's responsibility. In 2026 we don't tolerate what

we tolerated 60 years ago. We don't tolerate that children can be neglected and abused and abandoned and people not held accountable for it," said the Rev. Tim Ahlemeyer, pastor of La Porte First United Methodist Church. "We don't tolerate children that have no voice. If you see something you report it. If you suspect something, you let somebody know who can do something about it. You take action yourself to get to know the children of the com-

munity so that they know that people know their names and they're cared about and they're loved," he added. Ahlemeyer shared his story of growing up in a children's home along with his siblings, which included two brothers and a sister. "We were truly abandoned children ... I was not even a year old when we went into the orphanage — that was 1963," he said.

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The Blue Walk makes its way across Lincoln Way on Thursday before converging on the La Porte County Courthouse.



Those participating in the 14th annual Blue Walk encouraged motorists on Lincoln Way to honk as they approached the La Porte County Courthouse.

## Hamann advances in America's Favorite Teacher contest

STAFF REPORTS

MICHIGAN CITY — A Michigan City educator has advanced in America's Favorite Teacher contest. Barker Middle School STEM teacher Amy Hamann, who is competing in the National Science Teachers Association's "America's Favorite Teacher" Competition, is among the first place teachers from 896 teacher groups that have advanced to the contest's quarter finals. Hamann, who has been teaching for 31 years, is a three-time PAEMST Indiana Science/STEM State Finalist (Presidential Award for Excellence in Math & Science

Teaching) for 2013, 2021 and 2025. She previously stated that the nationwide competition could earn Barker Middle School prize money to purchase new STEM equipment to expand their "Drone Wolf Academy" and a school visit from Bill Nye the Science Guy. Hamann is seeking the community's help in the remaining rounds of the competition to get the word out to vote and keep the momentum going. Anyone may cast a free vote every 24 hours of the competition by visiting <https://americasfavteacher.org/2026/amy-hamann>. Quarter finalists will be

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## LP County neighborhood disturbance leads to arrest

STAFF REPORTS

La PORTE — A La Porte man was arrested following a disturbance in a rural La Porte County neighborhood over the weekend. Donald H. Tharp, 55, La Porte, was arrested on a charge of intimidation with a deadly weapon, a Level 5 felony. On Saturday at 10 p.m. La Porte County Sheriff's Deputy Micah Dokmanovic was dispatched to a residence located in the 2500 east block of CR-500S in reference to a neighborhood disturbance. According to the Sheriff's Office, information was provided that a citizen had emerged from a residence armed with a rifle and threatened a neighbor. Several deputies arrived and met with the 37-year-old victim who was host-

ing an event where he and several of his friends had gathered around a bonfire. The neighbor, identified as Tharp, exited his residence several times and verbally engaged the victim and a friend. Tharp exited a final time armed with a rifle. He proceeded to threaten the victim and returned to his home. The encounter was captured on video. Deputies attempted to make contact with Tharp, however, were unsuccessful. A search warrant was applied for and later obtained. The LCSO Emergency Response Team (ERT) was

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## La Porte Little Theatre Club to present a 'door slamming farce'

Ludwig's 'Moon Over Buffalo' premiering Friday

By MATT FRITZ  
Staff Writer

La PORTE — The year is 1953. Television and movies are decimating the live theater landscape, and actors George and Charlotte, the heads of a repertory theater company, are watching their livelihoods slip away. So what do they do when they finally get the chance to star in a major Hollywood production? Well, they

blow it of course. But not without a chance at another shot. That's the story behind the La Porte Little Theatre Club's latest comedy, "Moon Over Broadway," set to premiere Friday at the La Porte Little Theatre, 218 A St., La Porte. Co-directors Bonnie Quigley and Jim Snyder, both long-established veterans of the Little Theatre Club, described the show alternately as a "five-door farce," a "door-slapping

farce" and just good old fashioned "funny silliness." It was written by Ken Ludwig from "Lend Me a Tenor" fame. The duo promised many standout performances from their cast. Snyder highlighted the work of both leads, Mike McCalment and Greta Friedman, saying McCalment was returning to the Little Theatre after several years' absence. "We've worked together for many, many shows. He's one of the funniest guys on stage you'll ever see," he said.

About Friedman, who many may know as a La Porte County Superior Court judge, Snyder said she really lets loose in this production. "Greta comes from a long history of actors. ... at the Little Theatre [her mom and dad] were legend. ... both just over-the-top type people. Greta is more reserved, but she gets to let loose on this one. I think she's hysterical. I've known Greta for 50 years and this is a type of Greta I haven't seen for a long time," Snyder said. He also singled out the per-

formances of Trent Kaercher and Max Principe, both younger actors, whom he described as "some of the funniest, best, most talented actors in Little Theatre now." And Quigley pointed out the importance for the club to fill out the "30-somethings demographic," which these two provide. "We've got older folks and young kids that are so intrigued by [theater] and want to come down, but this middle [group], we've now got some terrific, terrific actors to draw

from," she said. The directors also noted the work of Kaercher's wife, Kasandra, who plays Kaercher's love interest in the production; Katie Newton, whose character is trapped in a love triangle between George and Charlotte; and Matt Robinson, who plays "the only sane person in the entire cast." "And the jewel of the crown is Ava [Abraham]," Quigley said. "She has been on stage at the

See LITTLE THEATRE, page A4

