



## Marion-area track athletes shine on ovals

SPORTS, 1B

# The Marion Star

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## Council pushes back on transit fare hike



Julie Welch, transit administrator, presented her plan to raise bus fares to Marion City Council on June 23.

Abby Bammerlin  
Marion Star | USA TODAY NETWORK

After Marion Area Transit announced it would raise rates for the first time in 21 years, a few Marion City Council members objected to the increase. A public meeting will be held on the matter Monday, July 14.

Currently, the new rates are scheduled to begin Aug. 15.

The proposal raises bus rates from 60 cents to \$1 for elderly riders, disabled riders and students, and \$1.25 to \$2 for adults. The monthly pass will increase from \$15 to \$24 for elderly riders, disabled riders and students, and from \$30 to \$48 for adults.

Transit Administrator Julie Welch announced the changes at the June 23 City Council meeting.

She said the reason for the increase is to bring Mar-

ion County in line with other counties in Ohio, some of which charge higher fares than Marion. She said as time has passed, fuel, buses and other expenses have become more expensive.

“What you made 20 years ago is not what you’re living on today,” Director of Budget & Finance Tacy Courtright said at the June 23 meeting. “We’ve had 20 years of raises. ... Health insurance has gone up in 20 years. The cost of buying new buses, fuel prices are more. All of these monies do help and support transit and the staff that we already have out there doing this...”

Currently the bus fares cover about 6% of Marion Area Transit’s budget, but with the change, fares will

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“I just think we’re taking more from people that already don’t have it.”

Ayers Ratliff  
Second Ward

### FIVE THINGS

## Great things to do in Marion this week

Abby Bammerlin  
Marion Star | USA TODAY NETWORK

Looking to try something new this week? Here’s five things going on in Marion:

#### 1. Third Thursday

**When:** 5 p.m. Thursday, July 17  
**Where:** Corner of Church and Main streets  
**What:** Third Thursday welcomes community members for its third event of the summer. Joe’s Grub Hut and Lili’s Kitchen will serve food. Cherry Blonde will provide the music.

Cost: Free

#### 2. Waldo Summer Festival

**When:** Friday and Saturday, July 18-19  
**Where:** Downtown Waldo  
**What:** For two days Waldo will be celebrate at its summer festival. Friday festivities begin with food and craft vendors, games and finally a magic show. Saturday take part in a 5k, compete in the cornhole tournament or explore all the other fun things going on. For a complete schedule visit the festival

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### ANALYSIS

## Trump-Putin bromance flowered, then soured

U.S. president appears to be shifting his thinking

Kim Hjelmggaard, Francesca Chambers and Cybele Mayes-Osterman  
USA TODAY

President Donald Trump said he would end the war in Ukraine within his first 24 hours in office.

But now, more than 4,000 hours in, Trump’s patience with Russian President Vladimir Putin, whom the U.S. president in June called “very kind,” appears to be wearing thin.

Relations have hit a wall as Russia’s leader has pushed forward with intensifying drone and missile attacks on Ukrainian cities while appearing to repeatedly rebuff Trump’s attempts to broker a cease-fire.

“We get a lot of (expletive) thrown at us by Putin, if you want to know the truth,” Trump told reporters on July 9, summing up what Ukrainians and other seasoned Russia watchers have been saying for two decades. “He’s very nice to us all the time, but it turns out to be meaningless.”

Trump initiated direct talks with Putin shortly after taking office, saying – much to Putin’s delight – that he was effectively ready to let Russia keep the Ukrainian territory it had already taken when Moscow invaded Kyiv in February 2022. Trump also said Ukraine’s Crimea region, which Putin seized in 2014, “will stay with Russia.” At the same time, Trump said he was not interested in spending more on Ukraine’s defense, an issue that exploded out into the open when Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy visited the White House in February.

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President Donald Trump, right, has spent years praising and appearing to carefully avoid criticizing Russian President Vladimir Putin.

MARCOS BRINDICCI/REUTERS

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