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Memorial Hospital in Shiloh considers abortion options

BY TERI MADDOX
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Abortion opponents have been carrying signs and distributing flyers outside Memorial Hospital in Shiloh for the

past month, maintaining that the hospital is making plans to start offering abortions to women carrying fetuses with "anomalies."

Twenty-eight out of 75 nurses and operating-room technicians in the hospital's Family Care

Birthing Center sent a letter of protest on March 2 to hospital President Michael McManus that the BND reviewed.

The letter called the issue "divisive and sensitive" and stated that allowing elective abortions to be performed in the

labor and delivery unit would hurt morale that already is suffering due to understaffing, fatigue, burnout and loss of trust with management.

"Since we are not God (and we are dealing with human life and mothers who are in a very

vulnerable position, we do not feel right about unnecessarily foisting this decision upon our patients," the letter stated. "... And making money off of these kinds of decisions goes all the more against our conscience."

The BND also reviewed a Memorial email thread announcing a Feb. 6 staff meeting on the topic of "terminations for fetal anomalies," and a revised medical-charting template that includes "termination" and "laminaria" as offered services. Laminaria is a material used to

SEE ABORTION, 8A



BRIAN MUNOZ St. Louis Public Radio

Local and state law enforcement respond to the scene where they report a man was shot to death on Monday, March 6, near Exchange Avenue and 9th Streets in East St. Louis.

Homicides fall 31% in East 'Safe' Louis

BY WILL BAUER
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EAST ST. LOUIS

This article was first published by St. Louis Public Radio, a BND content partner.

East St. Louis Mayor Robert Eastern III stopped himself just two sentences into his prepared remarks at Emerson Park's MetroLink station in late January.

Before the first-term mayor got into his speech about the new public safety center announced that day, he first had to explain his "new call sign" for his city.

"It's not East St. Louis anymore. It's East Safe Louis," Eastern said, as a few in the crowd chuckled and clapped. "I need everybody to say 'East

Safe Louis.'"

Eastern's reasoning: Homicides dropped 31% over the past four years, according to data from the Illinois State Police and the city's police department. Crime, in general, is down 37%, he told the crowd that day.

"People have this narrative of East St. Louis, like there's some crazy person waiting on every corner to kill you," said Marie Franklin, a community organizer who's running against Eastern in April's mayoral election. "That has never been our story. That has just been a narrative that others have portrayed about us."

PUBLIC SAFETY ENFORCEMENT GROUP STARTS

Why violent crime has dropped

in the town of 18,000 is a question that produces many answers.

Three years ago, the state police, the city's police department and community organizations created the Public Safety Enforcement Group. As part of the PSEG partnership, state police help the city's officers on violent crime investigations. That's not new; state police have helped with homicides in East St. Louis since the 1980s.

What makes this partnership different is the involvement of the community through the city's school district and a faith organization, acting as social and spiritual workers, according to those involved.

Leaders say homicides and nonfatal shootings dropped as a result.

"We're definitely heading in



BRIAN MUNOZ St. Louis Public Radio

Wyvetta Granger, CEO of Community LifeLine, on Tuesday, March 7, in East St. Louis.

the right direction, and we want to sustain that," said Illinois State Police Director Brendan Kelly, who formerly served

SEE HOMICIDES, 8A

Motorcyclist's wife says he saved her life in crash that claimed his

BY MIKE KOZIATEK
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Felicia Jordan says she got a last-second warning from her husband, "Big Kenny" Jordan, just before their Harley-Davidson collided with a van crossing in front of them.

"Big Kenny, he had enough time, and we knew each other so well that he was able to look at me and tell me we were going to hit, it was going to hurt like hell but to hold on as tight as I could," Felicia said.

Felicia survived the crash on March 4 in St. Clair County near Fairview Heights but her husband died in a hospital shortly after the collision.

She credits "Big Kenny" with saving her life.

"They said I ducked my head behind his back and I like bear wrapped him," she said from her hospital room where she is recovering from multiple broken bones.

"And I truly believe that if it wasn't for Kenny, I wouldn't have made it either. He took all of the impact basically and protected and shielded me.

"I truly believe that Kenny sacrificed himself ... so I could be here for our kids. I'm 125 pounds ... it's a miracle that I made it through it."

CRASH SCENE

Felicia said the crash happened just after the couple and other motorcyclists had left the Generation Church - Metro East following the celebration of life ceremony for her 53-year-old brother, Jesse Powell III, who died on Feb. 8 after being injured in a crash on Jan. 31 on an icy road.

The Jordans had only traveled

SEE MOTORCYCLIST, 5A

Highland man charged with murder in 3-month-old son's death

BY LEXI CORTES
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A Highland man was charged with two counts of first-degree murder on Friday in his infant son's death.

Dustin B. Shires, 38, is accused of causing injuries to

3-month-old Jameson Shires' chest and head, which led to his death on Tuesday, according to authorities.

An attorney is not yet listed for Dustin Shires in the Madison County court record. No court appearances have been scheduled.

Highland emergency services

and police officers responded to the Shire residence at 1:22 p.m. Tuesday after receiving a 911 call that a 3-month-old was not breathing, according to a Highland Police Department news release.

Jameson Shires was taken by ambulance to HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital in Highland and then

to SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital in St. Louis by medical helicopter, the release stated. Cardinal Glennon staff pronounced him dead at 6:09 p.m.

The Highland Police Department stated Friday it would not provide additional information about the case.

Dustin Shires remained in custody at the Madison County Jail on Friday afternoon. Circuit Judge Amy Maher set his bail at \$3 million.

First-degree murder carries a maximum sentence of 60 years

in prison upon conviction.

The agencies involved in the death investigation included the Highland Police Department, Southern Illinois Child Death Investigation Task Force, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Madison County Child Advocacy Center and the Madison County State's Attorney's office. The St. Louis City Medical Examiner's office performed the autopsy after the child died in St. Louis.

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Trump family failed to report foreign gifts, House Dems say

BY TIM BALK
New York Daily News

Former President Donald Trump's family failed to disclose more than 100 foreign gifts valued above a reporting threshold and collectively worth more

than \$250,000, House Democrats said Friday. The dazzling haul of gifts, many from foreign leaders, are detailed in a report by Democrats on the House Oversight Committee. They include a book set from President Xi Jinping of China and

golf clubs that then-Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan gave the commander-in-chief. The 15-page report said Trump also failed to report a \$12,000 silk carpet from Uzbekistan's president, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, and a \$35,000 dagger

with an ivory handle from Qatar's ruler, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

A "larger-than-life" painting of Trump from the president of El Salvador, Nayib Bukele, is also unaccounted for, the report said. Some of the gifts, including the portrait, are missing, the Democrats say.

"Committee Democrats are committed to determining the final whereabouts of these missing big-ticket gifts," said Rep.

Jamie Raskin, a Maryland Democrat and the ranking member of the oversight committee.

Raskin added that the report's findings illuminate the Trump White House's "brazen disregard for the rule of law and its systematic mishandling of large gifts from foreign governments."

Spokespeople for Trump did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The analysis also listed unreported foreign gifts to Trump family members, including Melania Trump, Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump.

Kushner received a sword from Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia, and Ivanka Trump scored a teddy bear valued at \$1,200 from Chancellor Sebastian Kurz of Austria, according to the report.

FROM PAGE 1A

ABORTION

dilate the cervix for abortion.

McManus didn't reply to BND requests for an interview. In February, spokesmen for the hospital and BJC HealthCare, the St. Louis-based system that has owned Memorial locations in Belleville and Shiloh since 2018, declined to confirm or deny that they were making plans to start offering abortions in Shiloh.

"No changes have been made to Memorial's reproductive health practices," BJC spokeswoman Laura High wrote in an email on March 7. "Any information to the contrary is inaccurate. As always, our primary focus continues to be the health and safety (of) our patients."

CHANGE IN PRACTICE, IF NOT POLICY

Memorial's bylaws already allow abortions in cases of "lethal fetal anomaly," but the hospital doesn't perform them on an elective basis, only in cases of medical emergency, according to a Birthing Center doctor who spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation.

The doctor said scheduled abortions would be

performed by Washington University physicians who formerly performed them at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, also owned by BJC HealthCare. An abortion ban went into effect in Missouri in June.

Fetal anomalies are conditions expected to result in birth defects. Lethal fetal anomalies are conditions expected to result in death soon after an infant is born or in the womb.

Many abortion-rights advocates argue that it's cruel to force parents to continue pregnancies under these circumstances. Some states that ban abortion make exceptions when the life of the mother is in danger or in cases of rape, incest or lethal fetal anomalies.

About 30 abortion opponents, four at a time, are distributing flyers at Memorial entrances in Shiloh from 6:15 to 7:45 a.m. to catch employees changing shifts, according to coordinator Lyndon Joost, of Swansea. He described it as an awareness campaign, not a protest.

"Our intent is to help make the public aware that this is being considered, and we're doing that silently," Joost said. "We're not stopping cars

or walking up to people. It's all very calm and peaceful."

NEW LANDSCAPE AFTER DOBBS

The legal and political landscape for abortion changed dramatically on June 24, 2022, with the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. It overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 decision that gave women a constitutional right to abortion.

Since that time, bans have been enacted in 13 states, including Missouri, Kentucky and Wisconsin, and they're being considered in others, such as Iowa and Indiana. This has increased demand for abortions in Illinois, where Gov. J.B. Pritzker promises to keep them legal.

In January, Pritzker signed a bill into law to expand access to abortions and protect out-of-state residents who seek them.

"Reproductive care is health care," he said at the bill signing. "A medical decision should be made between a patient and their health care provider, no one else. Every single person, regardless of gender, sexuality, race and economic status, has the right to privacy and bodily autonomy, and when people come to Illinois to exercise those rights, they will be welcomed and protected."

Illinois allows abortions up to 26 weeks of pregnancy. In the metro-east, they're performed at Fairview Heights Health Center, operated by Planned Parenthood, and Hope Clinic in Granite City.

Lyndon Joost describes himself as a longtime "pro-life" advocate. He and his wife, Elaine Joost, decided not to end her pregnancy in 1999 after doctors diagnosed fetal anomalies.

Today, the couple have a 23-year-old daughter, Emily Joost, with Aicardi Syndrome, a rare genetic neurological disorder. She can't feed, bathe or dress herself, speak or walk. Her parents call her "amazing" and "inspiring."

"I believe human life begins at fertilization and that someone needs to defend the rights of that human being, and I'm willing to do that," said Lyndon Joost, a retired city administrator and business owner.

BABIES ONLY DELIVERED IN SHILOH

Memorial Hospital formerly offered labor and delivery services at both its locations, but officials discontinued them in Belleville in April 2020, anticipating a surge in COVID-19 patients.

The flyer being distributed by abortion opponents at Shiloh entrances is titled "Why are We

rarely met with victim's families for an update.

"They were not happening in our city, probably in any form," she said.

Now, Granger can assure the families she works with that they can trust the police enough to pick up the phone and report what they saw.

"I think that it is changing. I think trust is being built," she said. "I think trust is being reestablished, and I think that's what it's going to take to address public safety. I think we cannot do this without the public."

Granger, a lifelong East St. Louisan, said she observed something different about the approach of this crime-fighting effort: It's the first time she's seen law enforcement approach the public and ask for input. In the past, she said, law enforcement simply said, "Here's what you're doing."

And that's not lost on Kelly, who also witnessed the many unsuccessful attempts to reduce crime during his time as St. Clair's state's attorney.

"The problem with some of those approaches is that you're doing things either to the community or for the community — instead of doing things with the community," he said.

Breaking that culture and the historic struggles of East St. Louis and crime are not lost on Eastern, who wants to think about crime progressively.

"It's not about putting people in jail," he said. "It's about changing the mindset, so you won't have to put anyone in jail."

A bad weekend in early February reminds him there is still work to be done, but that doesn't mean progress hasn't been made, he said.

"Can you always do better?" Eastern asked. "Yes, you can always achieve more."

FROM PAGE 1A

HOMICIDES

as the St. Clair County state's attorney. "We're cautiously optimistic that this is the right fuel mixture — this is the right combination of resources and law enforcement and community effort that's needed to turn a place like East St. Louis around."

There have been drops in East St. Louis homicides before. In 2015, for example, the city recorded 19. Two years later, that figure nearly doubled to 37. In the first two months of 2023, there have been six reported.

Nonfatal shootings also dropped in the past four years. In 2019, law enforcement tracked 121. In 2022, that decreased to 80, according to data from Illinois State Police. This year, there have been 14 nonfatal shootings.

New Police Chief Cantrell Patterson said the extra manpower from state police has led to more routine patrolling — and that's helped carjackings, auto thefts and home burglaries all drop "pretty significantly."

"We've got a real good working partnership with the Illinois State Police," Patterson said.

Clearance rates — what police refer to as solving crime — have improved over the past couple of years. While the rate in East St. Louis reached a peak of 50% in 2019, it trailed off slightly over the next three years.

Homicide cases can take years to solve, meaning the most recent data will only increase over time, according to a spokeswoman for Illinois State Police.

Regardless, these trends are interesting for criminology experts, including Paige Vaughn, an assistant professor at Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alaba-

ma, who worked as an intern with East St. Louis police from 2016 to 2018 during graduate school.

"East St. Louis has kind of always been pushed to the side," Vaughn said.

Crime, as a whole, has fallen since the pandemic, according to research from Vaughn's Ph.D. adviser, Richard Rosenfeld, a University of Missouri-St. Louis criminology professor. The fact that East St. Louis crime dropped since the pandemic may not be unique, she said.

However, crime increased at the national level during the start of the pandemic, Rosenfeld's research found. The steady homicide and nonfatal shooting figures in East St. Louis from 2019 and 2020 could suggest a positive trend, Vaughn said.

"It's just interesting that they didn't have an increase," she said.

Former Police Chief Michael Hubbard, who retired in 2018 just before the public safety group started, has also been watching from outside the department. He still lives in town and said he expects the trends to continue.

"I believe the statistics for the next two years will be even lower than where they are right now," he said.

'CANNOT DO THIS WITHOUT THE PUBLIC'

When state police are dispatched to the scene of a violent crime, fire or car accident, the school district's Wraparound Wellness Center is called within 15 minutes if a student is involved. If a student commits a crime, is the victim or simply witnesses what happened, the police are trained to call the school district, said Tiffany Gholson, the center's director.

"In real time, we're supporting our youth or their families in the midst of any traumatic event," she said.

The school's social workers, nurses and staff will continue their support afterward, Gholson said.

Before the center started in 2020, the school's social workers observed children not ready to learn because they'd been involved in or had seen traumatic events. Now, because state police communicate with Gholson, the school knows why and can address healing far sooner.

"We say it's a marriage — a throuple — when you include the Community Lifeline and the work that they help us do," Gholson said.

The Lifeline provides a similar service but is mainly intended for the city's adults. It started as a faith organization connected to New Life Community Church to take care of the social needs of the community, said Wyvetta Granger, the organization's executive director.

"It's about trying to bring places of healing for the whole man," she said.

Since the public safety group started in 2020, the school district has helped more than 100 students, and Granger's organization has helped 200 community members.

Beyond responding to violent crime through grief counseling, Granger said her organization tries to be proactive. They offer training about de-escalation and first aid.

Another underlying goal for Granger has been improving the community's trust with law enforcement and vice versa.

Previously, she's observed skepticism of police among East St. Louisans because they didn't have a strong track record solving violent crime.

What's more, Granger said, state or city police

Obituaries

Gerald "Jerry" Ray Lawrence October 31, 1950 - March 15, 2023



O'Fallon, Illinois - Gerald "Jerry" Ray Lawrence, 72, of O'Fallon, passed away in his home, March 15, 2023 surrounded by his family. He was born October 31, 1950 in Detroit, Michigan, the son of Rudie Maurice and Doris Mae (Brown) Lawrence and Doris Mae (Brown) Lawrence. Jerry was a veteran of the United States Marine Corps. He married Joyce Barnes and they spent 51 loving years together. Jerry spent his career as a mechanic for Greyhound Bus Co, retiring in 2018 after 47 dedicated years. He was a life member of the O'Fallon Sports Club. He was also a member of the O'Fallon Boosters and the International Association of Machinists District 9 Local 777. Jerry enjoyed being a Boy Scout Leader for troop 35 and coaching little league for O'Fallon and Fairview Heights. In his spare time, Jerry had a passion for fishing and hunting. He will be

dearly missed by all who knew and loved him.

Survivors left to cherish his memory include his loving wife, Joyce J. Lawrence; son, Steven (Blynda) Lawrence; daughter, Jennifer (Aaron) Schultz; grandchildren, Evan and Ellie Lawrence and Madison Burkett; sister-in-law, Dana (Russ Chavez) Bargiel; brother-in-law, James (Genevieve) Barnes; niece and nephews, Christine (Justin) Kuehnel, Hunter Kuehnel and Connor Kuehnel. Jerry is preceded in death by his parents, Rudie Maurice and Doris Mae (Brown) Lawrence and In-laws, Audy Lewis and Marie (Fowler) Barnes.

Special thank you to Lisa Jones with Addus Home Care who helped take care of Jerry for a year. Jerry and her had many many laughs and built a beautiful friendship that we will always remember! Thank you Lisa.

A memorial service to celebrate Jerry's life will be held on Friday, March 24, 2023 at 12:00pm in Lake View Funeral Home, 5000 N. Illinois St., Fairview Heights, IL 62208 with visitation from 10:00am until time of service. Inurnment to follow in Lake View Memorial Gardens. Memorial contributions can be made to the Alzheimer's Association or Shriners Children's Hospital.

Darrell Ray Purlee June 19, 1988 - February 25, 2023



Trenton, Illinois - Darrell Ray Purlee, age 34, of Trenton, passed away Saturday, February 25, 2023 at his residence.

He was born June 19, 1988 in Omaha, NE, a son of Françoise Lynell Purlee of Ramsey and Jack Ray (friend, Gayle) Pinkstaff, Jr. of Belleville.

In addition to his parents, Darrell is survived by his daughter, Skylar Ann Purlee of New Baden; fiancée, Lynn Lent and her sons, Tristan and Ryder Lent all of Belleville; sister, Cheyenne Pinkstaff of Trenton; grandmother, Betty Pinkstaff of Trenton; step-mother, Penny (Dan) Zimmermann of Lebanon; uncles and aunts, Robert G. (Shelby) Taylor of Kingston, AL, T. Rena (John) Schulz of Wataga, IL, and Lynda M. (Kirk) Webb of Andalusia, AL; cousins; and Skylar's mother, Torrie.

Darrell was preceded in death by his brother, Kenneth Lynn Purlee; grandfather, Jack Pinkstaff, Sr.; step-father, Darrell Gene Herre; and maternal grandparents, Ger-

ald and Charlotte Purlee.

Darrell graduated from Lebanon High School and continued his education at Southwestern Illinois College in Belleville. He studied to become an EMT, firefighter, and also earned his CDL for truck driving. He was employed with ACE Grease Services in Millstadt as a truck driver. Darrell was raised and baptized in Baptist Faith of Oak Grove Baptist Church in Dozier, AL, and was a member of St. Paul United Church of Christ in Lebanon and former member of Lebanon Emerald Mound Fire Department. Darrell had an interest for big trucks, especially Peterbilt's, and Harley Davidson motorcycles; he admired history of the Vikings; he enjoyed fishing, hunting, boating, and drawing; but most of all, he loved spending time with his daughter, Skylar.

Memorial Service will be Saturday, March 25, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. at St. Paul United Church of Christ in Lebanon with Pastor Todd Bean officiating.

In lieu of flowers, plants, and other gifts, memorials may be made to an education fund for Skylar Ann Purlee (checks payable to Penny Zimmermann) and will be received at the visitation or by mail, Moss Funeral Home, 1025 S. Main St. Trenton, IL 62293, who is serving the family.

Expressions of sympathy can be sent to the family at www.mossfuneralhome.com