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# The News-Sentinel

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Fort Wayne, Indiana

## 2 people in 'critical' after overnight shootings

Shootings on East State and downtown happened less than 3 hours apart.

By **BOB CAYLOR**  
bcaylor@news-sentinel.com

A man and a woman are reported in critical condition this morning after separate shootings in Fort Wayne overnight.

In the first shooting, reported

at 12:32 a.m., Fort Wayne Police were dispatched to the 2300 block of East State Boulevard to investigate reports of gunshots. While police were still en route to check on the gunshots, a woman was dropped off at the Parkview Hospital Randallia emergency room. She was listed in critical condition and was transferred to another hospital, where she remains in critical condition.

Police said initial accounts indi-

cate that the woman was an occupant in a vehicle at the intersection of East State and Carew Street when gunshots were fired and she was hit. It is not clear if the female was the intended target or simply a bystander, police said this morning.

In the second shooting, reported at 2:51 a.m., off-duty officers were working security on West Columbia Street, when they were notified of gunshots in the north-south al-

ley off 200 Pearl Street. As officers searched the area, they were told that a man had been dropped off at a local hospital suffering from gunshot wounds, and that he was in critical condition. He was transferred to another hospital, where he remains in critical condition, police said.

At Pearl Street, detectives are searching the area, trying to locate any witnesses and to confirm that the shooting took place there.

There are several businesses in the area, so investigators will be seeking video surveillance. Crime-scene units are searching the scene for any evidence.

Similarly, investigation continues at the scene of the State Boulevard shooting. Shell casings were located in the intersection, so detectives and crime scene units are trying to determine if those casings are related to the shooting there early this morning.

## OPEN HOUSE HELD TODAY AT HISTORIC MANSION



By Lisa M. Esquivel-Long of The News-Sentinel

Owner Joe Leksich speaks with a guest outside the Fairfield-Nestel Mansion Saturday during an open house at the property. Leksich, who has owned the mansion for one and a half years, says his goal for the property this summer was to work on the outside and put in windows. Leksich hopes to hold off a demolition order for the house and wants to hold off on paying \$9,500 owed in property taxes unless the demo order is rescinded.

## Campaign under way to save historic Fairfield-Nestel Mansion

By **LISA M. ESQUIVEL LONG**  
lesquivel@news-sentinel.com

The owner of the historic Fairfield-Nestel Mansion is leading a public campaign and held an open house today to save the house from demolition next month.

A Save The Fairfield-Nestel Go Fund Me campaign at [www.gofundme.com/Nest-TheNestel](http://www.gofundme.com/Nest-TheNestel) is trying to raise \$20,000 that the site says will be used by Joe Leksich's Joe Real Estate Renovations to pay real estate taxes, legal fees, and upgrades to the

house's exterior to bring it up to city code.

Once the house at 815 W. Creighton Ave. is sold, all donations raised will be given to NeighborLink, which helps those in need with home-repair projects.

The home, which was

built about 1868 and is its own historic district, is sound structurally, Jill McDevitt, executive director of local historic preservation organization ARCH, told The News-Sentinel earlier

See **MANSION**, Page 3A

## Underwood brothers plead guilty to July 2015 homicide

Witness said the victim was fatally shot after a scuffle on Lillie Street.

By **SHERYL KRIEG**  
skrieg@news-sentinel.com

Brothers charged with the robbery and murder of a man in July 2015 have pleaded guilty in Allen Superior Court.

Shakidi Underwood, 19, and Kamari Underwood, 18, pleaded guilty Thursday to newly filed charges of voluntary manslaughter, a Level 2 felony, for their role in the shooting death of Melvin Palmer on July 9, 2015 in the 4000 block of Lillie Street.

According to terms of the plea agreement, if Allen Superior Court Judge Fran Gull accepts it at sentencing July 21, both would be sentenced to 15 years apiece in prison and then three years on probation, with the first



S. Underwood



K. Underwood

year of probation served on home detention. Charges of murder, felony robbery, firearm used in the commission of a crime and criminal gang enhancement

also would be dismissed at sentencing.

Fort Wayne Police responded July 9, 2015 to a vehicle "trying to take out an ambulance" in the area

See **HOMICIDE**, Page 3A

## Fund would limit proposed tax hike to alleys, sidewalks and riverfront projects

Bill would block use of tax increase to fund other projects, such as arena.

By **KEVIN LEININGER**  
kleininger@news-sentinel.com

Along with the first of two public hearings on a proposed income tax increase, City Council Tuesday is expected to consider a bill that would limit use of the additional funds to their previously stated purposes: sidewalks, alleys and riverfront development.

The 0.15 percent increase would generate about \$9.6 million per year for Fort Wayne another \$3.8 million that would be shared by Allen County and other municipalities. If council passes the increase — another public hearing and vote are scheduled for July 11 — the bill to be introduced Tuesday would create a separate

fund that would hold the extra cash and any interest for its specified uses. That's important, supporters say, so the public knows they money won't be spent on a downtown arena or other projects.

As previously promised, the proposed bill would create an Economic Development Allocation Nonreverting Fund "to be maintained separate and apart from all other funds of the city. Moneys in the fund shall never revert to the city general fund." Money not spent on the riverfront, alleys or sidewalks "are subject to appropriation by council," the bill states. No such agreement would bind other governments

See **TAX**, Page 3A

## Some people will tolerate anything these days — except Christianity

**NS COMMENTARY**



A column by **KEVIN LEININGER**

**WHEN THE LOCAL** General Motors plant hoisted a rainbow gay-pride flag five years ago to demonstrate its

commitment to diversity and inclusion, a spokes-

woman assured me the same opportunity would not be offered to Christians or members of other religious groups despite the company's support for a cause at odds with many of its own employees' faith.

The progressive vision of diversity has not become more inclusive since 2012 but it has at least evolved. The debate has moved from the bedroom, to the bathroom, to the baseball field.

The St. Louis Cardinals have quietly hosted "Chris-

tian Day" for nearly 30 years and will do so again July 30. But the once-innocuous event has suddenly become controversial, and not just because featured speaker and former Cardinal Lance Berkman hit most of his 366 home runs for the rival Houston Astros.

"Hopefully, in the future, (the Cardinals) will reconsider giving a platform to someone who thinks tolerance is a bad thing," said Tyler Dunnington, a former

Cardinals minor-league pitcher who quit baseball after continuous exposure to anti-gay slurs and threats.

To be clear, threatening to kill people because they are gay is no less despicable than, say, threatening to decapitate Donald Trump because you disagree with his politics. But Berkman has not been accused of threatening anyone; he has been branded "divisive"

See **LEININGER**, Page 3A

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**Lights & Sirens**  
Why were the police in your neighborhood? Find out with our Lights & Sirens database in the Local section.

7-DAY FORECAST, 12S

TONIGHT: Partly cloudy skies with a low of 54.  
**Sunset at 9:17 p.m.**

**SUN:** Mostly sunny  
**HIGH 72 || LOW 54**

**MON:** Mostly sunny  
**HIGH 70 || LOW 51**