

# Project Graduation



**Brielee Kelsey, left, shows her cheetah-like reflexes early Saturday morning at Project Graduation in a game of Hit Me against Rachel Bell. Brielee was quick to point out she won 98-88, showing her superior coordination. Rachel was not impressed. "I let her win," she said. Project Graduation is an all-night party held at McMinnville Civic Center that begins Friday night and extends into Saturday morning.**

James Clark photo

# Middle school student opens fire in classroom

**NOBLESVILLE, IND. (AP)**

— An Indiana middle school student armed with two handguns opened fire inside his science classroom, authorities said, wounding a classmate and a teacher whose swift intervention was credited with saving lives.

The shooter, who had asked to be dismissed from the class before returning with the guns, was arrested "extremely quickly" after the incident around 9 a.m. Friday at Noblesville West Middle School, police Chief Kevin Jowitt said. Authorities didn't release his name or say whether he had been in trouble before but indicated he likely acted alone.

The family of the injured student released a statement late Friday saying she was in critical but stable condition and doing well at Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis.

"Our daughter, Ella Whistler, was involved in a horrific shooting today at her school. We will spend the next days and weeks processing what happened and why," the Whistler family statement said.

Seventh-grader Ethan Stonebraker said the shoot-

er was acting suspiciously when he walked into the room while the class was taking a test. He said science teacher, 29-year-old Jason Seaman, likely averted a catastrophe.

"Our science teacher immediately ran at him, swatted a gun out of his hand and tackled him to the ground," Stonebraker said. "If it weren't for him, more of us would have been injured for sure."

Stonebraker told ABC News that Seaman threw a basketball at the shooter and ran toward the bullets as screaming students sought cover behind a table.

He said he also knew the suspected gunman, whom he described as "a nice kid most of the times" and said he often joked with the classmates.

The attack comes a week after an attack at a high school in Santa Fe, Texas, that killed eight students and two teachers, and months after the school attack that killed 17 people in Parkland, Florida. The Florida attack inspired students from that school and others throughout the country to call for more restrictions on access to guns.

# Supreme court ruling incoming on baker's refusal to make LGBT cake

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — A flood of lawsuits over LGBT rights is making its way through courts and will continue, no matter the outcome in the Supreme Court's highly anticipated decision in the case of a Colorado baker who would not create a wedding cake for a same-sex couple.

Courts are engaged in two broad types of cases on this issue, weighing whether sex discrimination laws apply to LGBT people and also whether businesses can assert religious objections to avoid complying with anti-discrimination measures in serving customers, hiring

and firing employees, providing health care and placing children with foster or adoptive parents.

The outcome of baker Jack Phillips' fight at the Supreme Court could indicate how willing the justices are to carve out exceptions to anti-discrimination laws; that's something the court has refused to do in the areas of race and sex.

The result was hard to predict based on arguments in December. But however the justices rule, it won't be their last word on the topic.

Religious conservatives have gotten a big boost from the Trump adminis-

tration, which has taken a more restrictive view of LGBT rights and intervened on their side in several cases, including Phillips'.

"There is a constellation of hugely significant cases that are likely to be heard by the court in the near future and those are going to significantly shape the legal landscape going forward," said Shannon Minter, legal director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights.

Several legal disputes are pending over wedding services, similar to the Phillips case. Video producers, graphic artists and florists are among business owners who say they oppose same-sex marriage on religious grounds and don't want to participate in same-sex weddings. They live in the 21 states that have anti-discrimination laws that specifically include gay and lesbian people.

In California and Texas, courts are dealing with lawsuits over the refusal of hospitals, citing religious beliefs, to perform hysterectomies on people transitioning from female to male. In Michigan, the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit against the state's practice of allowing faith-based child placement agencies to reject same-sex couples.



**The steady use of Pepper Branch Park is creating a parking problem with vehicles obstructing river access during peak times.**

# City considers \$50 fine for cars blocking water access

BY **LISA HOBBS**  
Reporter for the Southern Standard  
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

Pepper Branch Park is known for its water access and has become a popular destination for individuals wishing to drift the Barren Fork River.

The increased use of the park has created an issue between water access and vehicle parking with people complaining they are having

a difficult time accessing the water with their kayaks and canoes due to parked vehicles along the area used for water access.

McMinnville Vice Mayor Ben Newman brought the complaint to the attention of Board of Mayor and Aldermen members Tuesday night. He suggested an ordinance that would designate a loading and unloading zone and a fine of \$50 for motorists who park for more than a short time in that zone.

"I'd like to create an ordinance dealing with parking in the loading and unloading areas at Pepper Branch," said Newman. "I've had a lot of people complaining about people parking down there where people can't turn around. Not at the top, but at the bottom. They can't get down there and turn around. People are parking in areas where they can't get to the water, drop

boats off and get out." Newman did mention "a business" that expressed to him that they are having a difficult time pulling into the area, dropping off kayaks or canoes, and getting back out due to the number of parked vehicles.

Newman continued, "We need to have signage that tells where parking is and signage that says where loading and unloading is. I would like to propose a \$50 fine for people who are blocking those areas. Not just a ticket, but a citation. If it's just a ticket, people may or may not pay that. It's not really a deterrent. If it's a citation, people might have to come to court and that would be more of a deterrent for people parking down there."

Legal counsel will generate an ordinance for Parks and Recreation Committee consideration.

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