

Meals  
made easy!

strackandvantil.com

Strack & Van Til  
food market

Seafood Steamables

Ready in 6-7 Minutes!

Cooks in the Bag!

Made In-Store

Friday, March 1, 2024

WHERE YOUR STORY LIVES

nwi.com

# Jury deliberating in murder trial

Gary man allegedly killed victim then burned his body

**LIZZIE KABOSKI**  
lizzie.kaboski@nwi.com; 219-743-7690

CROWN POINT — A jury was still out late Thursday night after deliberating for approximately six hours in the trial of Gary man accused of killing a 39-year-old man and burning his body in a field in June 2022.



Burns

Kenneth Burns, 52, stood trial before Lake Criminal Court Judge Salvador Vasquez on a charge of murder. Over three days, jurors heard testimony from 13 witnesses, including law enforcement, a forensic pathologist, DNA specialist and two people who were upstairs in the home where victim Andre White was killed.

White's burned body was found June 8, 2022 in an area near the 4800 block of West 21st Avenue with gunshot wounds to the stomach and neck.

During closing arguments, Deputy Prosecutor Jacquelyn Altpeter said the physical evidence in the case supported witness testimony. Witness Vernon Reeves testified Tuesday that on the night of June 7, 2022, he and his girlfriend were in the upstairs area of a house on the 2600 block of West 17th Avenue in Gary while

Burns and White were talking downstairs.

After multiple popping sounds were heard, Burns called Reeves downstairs. Reeves said when he rushed down, he saw Burns holding a gun at his side and White slumped forward over a chair, bleeding. Reeves said when he asked Burns why he shot White, he said White was "talking too much" and "talking (expletive)." Reeves reached out to police a few days later and gave a formal interview.

"Andre White loses his life simply because he was talking (expletive) to the wrong person," Altpeter said.

The prosecution said video surveillance from a nearby business showed a Dodge Durango registered to Burns driving around 1:44 a.m. on June 8, 2022 down the street where White's body was later found. No other vehicles traveled on that road on that date and time. Gary police

Please see TRIAL, Page A5



PROVIDED

Molly Grace Dobin was born at 12:41 a.m. on Leap Day at Franciscan Health Crown Point.

# Leap Day babies born

Region hospitals welcome children with rarest birthday

**JOSEPH S. PETE**  
joseph.pete@nwi.com, 219-933-3316

Region hospitals welcomed babies Thursday with the rarest birthday — on Leap Day that happens only once every four years.

Leap Day babies, sometimes called leaplings or leapers, typically celebrate their birthdays on Feb. 28 or March 1 instead of on the bonus day that happens to adjust the calendar to the 365 days and six hours it takes the Earth to revolve once around the sun. Though some leaplings have been known to joke about finally being old enough to drive at the age of 64 or old enough to

drink at the age of 84, legally, the government declares that Leap Day babies are officially a year older every March 1st and they of course do not age at one-fourth the rate of everyone else.

Carly Dobin of DeMotte gave birth to her Leap Day daughter Molly Grace just after midnight Thursday morning in the brand new birthing center at the newly constructed Franciscan Health

Crown Point Hospital.

Little Molly Grace is not the first Leap Day baby in the family. Her great-grandfather also was born on Leap Day nearly a century earlier.

Dobin's late grandfather Martin Kinney, who died last February and would have turned 96 years old Thursday, also was a

Please see BABIES, Page A5

# NWS confirms tornado touchdown

90-mph twister hit just north of Gary airport on Tuesday

**BOB KASARDA**  
bob.kasarda@nwi.com, 219-548-4345

A tornado packing powerful winds of up to 90 mph has been confirmed by the National

Weather Service to have touched down late Tuesday just north of the Gary/Chicago International Airport.

The EF-1 tornado touched down about 9:15 p.m. Tuesday, said Zachary Yack, a meteorologist with the weather service's Chicago office. The tornado was on the ground for about three minutes, moving along Cline

Avenue just north of the Gary/Chicago International Airport before moving onto Lake Michigan, where it became a waterspout about 3 miles northwest of Gary, he said.

Yack said the storm had a maximum width of 75 yards and damaged trees and wooden utility poles, some of which were snapped by its winds. No injuries

were reported.

The tornado outbreak between Tuesday evening and early Wednesday came after a stretch of summerlike, sometimes record temperatures, producing nearly two dozen confirmed or suspected tornadoes in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio.

Please see TORNADO, Page A5

# Community Healthcare System rebranding

Powers Health name will take effect July 1

**JOSEPH S. PETE**  
joseph.pete@nwi.com, 219-933-3316

One of the Region's largest health care systems, which runs some of Northwest Indiana's largest and longest-running hospitals, is changing its name.

Community Healthcare System, which operates Community Hospital in Munster, St. Catherine Hospital in East Chicago, St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart and Community Stroke & Rehabilitation Center in Crown Point, is rebranding as Powers Health.

It operated for two decades under the Community Healthcare System banner.

The name change is effective July 1. The system is changing its name to honor Donald S. Powers, one of the developers who helped build Community Hospital in Munster.

The change is not the result of a merger or acquisition, Community stressed. It said in a public announcement Wednesday that it is seeking to distinguish itself from the many other health care systems with "Community" in their names, including the Community Health Network that operates 10 hospitals in central Indiana.

"We will continue to invest resources throughout Northwest Indiana by building new facilities and expanding services," said Donald Fesko, CEO of Community Foundation of Northwest Indiana, the parent company of Community Healthcare System. "With the support of some of the area's most talented medical professionals, we are proud to have earned numerous national accreditations and distinguished recognitions for high-quality care and innovative technology."

Donald Powers donated money and land to build the flagship Community Hospital, serving as president of the Community Foundation that later became known as Community Foundation of Northwest Indiana.

Please see HEALTH, Page A5

GET THE FULL BENEFITS OF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION!

Activate your digital account to get updated stories, videos, and hundreds of additional puzzles and comics. Visit [nwi.com/activate](https://nwi.com/activate) and download our app for the E-edition and breaking news on the go!

**Weather**  
Sun and clouds  
High 48 • Low 31  
FORECAST • A4

Inside	
Obituaries	A7 Sports C1
Business	A9 Advice C8
Features	B2 Comics/Puzzles C9

