Christian-focused day of prayer at courthouse draws criticism from community

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Students discuss school safety after accidental shooting in BTSU parking lot

Mary Ross
Reporter

For undergraduate students at BGSU, school shootings in the U.S. continue to impact the way students think and feel toward school, sometimes resulting in activist efforts.

The idea of possible threats was put into the students’ heads last week when a BGSU student accidentally shot himself on school property.

This fear is also due to the rise in school shootings after Columbine, an event that set the stage for many acts of school violence that have occurred throughout the lives of undergraduate students.

Although security tightened after Columbine and subsequent shootings and studies have proven schools are more safe now than they have ever been, students still feel unsafe going to school. Freshman Matt Kaufman elaborated on this.

“Getting your hands on assault weaponry, or any gun for that matter, is easier now than ever. Background checks are basically ineffective, and the drastic rise in school shootings has proven time and time again that these guns are all too easy to sneak inside under the noses of the authorities. To top it off, no legislation seems to be in motion to remedy this dilemma, making schools a much scarier and more dangerous place than they were two decades ago,” Kaufman said.

In contrast, freshman Chris Chandler believes schools are more safe, but not as safe as they could be.

“I think they are definitely safer, but they are not where they need to be. Most schools practice scenarios of a school shooting but they aren’t ready for the real-life situation because most students don’t know how to evacuate if an evacuation is needed and they

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Columnist stresses need for global unity

Notre Dame, the beautiful and enchanting 13th-century cathedral, caught fire last week in France. It was a sad sight to see such a historic church burning down in a time where it is seemingly safe from horrors like a fire. Personally, I’ve admired the church, from its stain glass windows to its bell towers. The sight is captivating.

Disney’s 1996 “The Hunchback of Notre Dame,” inspired by Victor Hugo’s 1831 French Gothic “Notre Dame de Paris,” was one of the first encounters I had with the cathedral. Later, as I read about the late Middle-Ages when the church was built and the various historic periods the church went through, especially well-known wars like the French Revolution or World War II, it’s an absolute wonder.

There is a lot of horrific occurrences in the world that happen every day and it’s hard because the media can’t cover each bit of news it gets, which leaves much of us in the dark about what’s going on around the globe. The only platform we may be able to rely on for global, first-hand encounters is Twitter with the emergence of citizen journalism, but not all the sources of a photo or video are credible, or from a person unfamiliar to journalism overall. This leaves us, as the public, in a poor position to know what is occurring in the global community.

How can we focus on the local and national news, alongside giving attention to the international stage? I’m not entirely sure how to answer the question, but here’s what I advise.

When we hear news, we cannot simply look at our own communities and one side of the world, and not just the western side either. We have to look at both sides and what is happening in other areas of the world, even if it doesn’t seem relevant to you. We can’t just focus on one area, but bring attention to the other areas of the world when they face unfortunate circumstances like natural disasters, war and other tragedies.

It is not easy to think and process what is happening in the world, but we can’t ignore it, even if people’s hearts are heavy from the news. I mean, we can ignore the realities of the world all we want, but in the end, time still ticks on and the world will continue to turn. Sometimes though, ignoring the world can result in bitter consequences when there is no action.

Ultimately, it is up to each of us bring attention to the atrocities in the world.

Not solely when Notre Dame is burning, but when the third holy sight of the Islamic faith, Al-Aqsa Mosque, is burning too. Not solely when animals are being displaced, but indigenous peoples and their communities — which have been on North American soil for centuries — are being displaced too.

There’s a variety of scenarios to speak of, but the significant takeaway is to be aware and bring attention to what’s happening in the world.

If global experiences don’t personally affect you, remember that it affects others and it can cause a chain reaction. It may not affect you one moment but it can affect you in the next.
Columnist argues against Biden’s bid

Hayley Fournier
Guest Columnist
College Democrats President

The views expressed in this column are the reflection of my own views and perceptions as a political science student and are not reflective of all members of the BGSU College Democrats.

On April 25, Joe Biden announced his candidacy for president of the United States. Biden is often regarded as a hero in the Democratic Party; he started his Senate career in 1972 and has overseen much of the Democrat-led legislation over the past five decades.

He prides himself in the passing of the Violence Against Women Act and a federal assault-weapons ban. He served as vice president under our first African American president and the most progressive administration in modern American history.

Given the admiration young Democrats hold for Barack Obama, Joe Biden should be a shoo-in for the Democrats’ 2020 candidate, right? It’s not quite that simple.

Biden’s messy history regarding policy in the Senate and his clear lack of connection to the progressive ideals of younger Democrats are both reasons while I won’t be toting a “Biden 2020” sticker on my laptop any time soon. Although I don’t know the answer to who should lead the fight against Trump, I am absolutely sure Biden is not that candidate.

Biden’s troublesome policy begins with his history of opposing desegregation measures in the 1970s while he served as a senator from Delaware.

The proof lies in his voting record: in 1975, Biden voted to prevent the Department of Health, Education and Welfare from requiring public schools to provide information about their racial makeup to the government. This policy made it seemingly impossible for the government to withhold funding from schools that refused to desegregate.

If there’s no punishment for refusing to desegregate, what was stopping schools that still held racist values from keeping black and white students separate? Absolutely nothing.

Biden’s vote on this issue would have allowed schools to further stall the process of desegregation the United States. Luckily, this legislation failed to pass; however, Biden’s vote left a stain on his experience with racial equality.

Joe Biden’s legislative history on criminal justice is also a sign he is not the 2020 candidate Democrats should strive for. He played an influential role in crafting the 1994 crime bill, which created harsher sentencing for non-violent criminals, built an extensive number of prisons and expanded the death penalty.

These policies have resulted in unjust treatment of the black community; black Americans are incarcerated at a much higher rate in the United States, despite the fact that white Americans hold the highest percentage of violent crime offenses when compared to any other race or ethnicity.

Biden is so proud of the crime bill that he has often referred to it as the “1994 Biden Crime Bill.” He has been known to use this phrase as recently as 2015. Although he may have not known the repercussions that would occur at the time the bill was passed, his more recent pride in the bill shows his lack of regard for the millions of black lives that have been treated unjustly in our criminal justice system.

Biden’s legislation helped create a criminal justice system that is currently bursting at the seams; one in four of the world’s prisoners sit behind bars in the United States, yet the amount of crime has been on the decline of decades. These trends don’t match up — they are the result of poor legislation Biden was instrumental in passing.

You may be asking: why am I so fired up about Biden’s past? Isn’t it possible for politicians to change their views and make mistakes? Absolutely! Many Democrats have changed their minds over the past decade on issues such as gay marriage equality or their support for the war in Iraq.

However, Biden has done little to nothing to prove he is a candidate who will properly represent racial minorities in a just way. A Biden presidency would only represent the Democratic party of the 1990s: a party that catered to the moderates of the party and ignored minorities.

I have no problem with Democrats who hold moderate views, but when that moderation comes at the price of ignoring equality and justice for black Americans, women, Latinos, Native Americans, members of the LGBTQ community, etc., then those moderates no longer hold the same values I do.

As Democrats, we must hold our candidates accountable for their actions. It’s not enough to say: “Well, at least Biden’s better than Trump.” Of course he is, but the Democrats have a crowded pool of qualified candidates who are pushing for new, progressive policies that will push forward social justice in our country.

If we keep looking to the past and elevating candidates who represent outdated ideals, the Democratic party will set itself up for another loss.
School safety  
Continued from page 2

“School shootings are a reality in our lives. I don’t think people fully understand the magnitude of what these events entail. I think that generally people think they’re impervious to harm until they stare down the reality that a shooting could happen at their school,” Kaufman said.

Although Chandler felt the BGSU police reacted well to last week’s shooting situation, it doesn’t make the uncertainty of the situation disappear.

“Definitely without us being warned or told about it right away, it made people feel less safe here,” Chandler said. “But since the police used their best discretion and said the campus was not in any danger, I feel like they shouldn’t feel unsafe.”

Sophia DeBord had similar emotions to Chandler, but still feels safe here on campus. “I think we should have been made aware of the situation sooner, but I think other than the timing of how students found out, it was handled well,” DeBord said. “I still feel safe because of how quickly it was handled, and I think overall, others do as well.”

Although DeBord and Chandler still feel safe, students who fear possible cases of school shootings happening in the future are moved to activism. Kaufman discussed this in terms of students at his high school after experiencing a threat of a school shooting. “(This threat) drove them more towards activism. Lots of people started participating in marches and I know a couple of my friends organized a walkout,” Kaufman said.

Although school violence still creates unrest in the minds of students, schools are safer than they were twenty years ago.

For statistics and more information on school shootings in the United States, visit the National Center for Education Statistics website.
I went into “Avengers: Endgame” thinking it was going to be a decent movie, but worrying I wouldn’t really like how it finished off the original Avengers saga. I was so worried it would make the whole buildup feel pointless just to get to a movie that didn’t finish it off in a grand fashion.

However, after leaving the theater, I don’t think the saga could have ended in a better way. After 11 years of movies, “Avengers: Endgame” was the perfect end.

I also won’t be spoiling any of the movie, so that’s not something you need to worry about. However, I will start off with a negative of the film. The tone of the film didn’t really work at some points.

The film takes place after “Infinity War,” and for those who have seen that film, you know why “Endgame” should present its characters with a grimmer tone. And at some points in the story, there were jokes where I don’t think it felt right for a character to make a joke.

This has worked for other Marvel movies because their tone has consistently been light-hearted fun, but “Endgame” doesn’t really fit that mold. Because of that, I was kind of thrown out of the moment a couple of times.

Characters and character development were kind of hit or miss too. Chris Evans, who plays Steve Rogers, and Robert Downey Jr., who plays Tony Stark, were both amazing. They each had one of their best performances of their careers in Endgame. Chris Hemsworth, in the role of Thor, wasn’t bad, but it was what his character did in the movie that I didn’t like. I really wasn’t a fan of what they did to his character. I understand why they did it, but that doesn’t mean I have to like it. He didn’t feel like Thor in this movie to me, and he wasn’t what I wanted to see. The last of the main four Avengers is Mark Ruffalo, who plays Bruce Banner and the Hulk. His performance was good, I guess. There wasn’t necessarily anything wrong with it; it was just weird. I won’t say why, but it was just different.

Other than the main four, some other standout performances were Jeremy Renner as Clint Barton and Karen Gillan as Nebula. They are two minor characters in the grand scheme of the performances, but I loved their roles in the movie.

Also, the pacing was kind of all over the place. The start of the movie begins somewhere intensity-wise that the movie doesn’t get back to for a while, and I didn’t really like that.

After these three points, it’s time to get to the positives. I loved everything else about the movie and the story most of all.

There are a couple of easy-to-spot plot holes, but overall, it’s spectacular. The first act of it is great. I loved the way it started, and I didn’t expect any of it. Obviously, the first act is supposed to set up all of the characters and how they will be together in the movie, and “Endgame” does a great job of that.

It also does an amazing job building the world. After “Infinity War,” a lot happened in the world of the Avengers, and “Endgame” makes that world feel different. It feels like the world has been affected by the events of the previous movie, and that was cool.

The second act of the movie isn’t as action-packed, but it does have plenty of memorable moments. Even mentioning anything from this act gives away the whole crux of the movie, so I will just say that I loved everything the Russo brothers did with the second act. This was one of the most difficult parts of the movie to get right, not only in terms of pacing but also having it make sense for the viewers. For those who have seen the movie, you know what I mean. This act is also where a couple plot holes come into play, but it’s nothing too bad to knock the film a lot.

Lastly, and most importantly, the end of the film is, bar none, the best part in any of the Marvel films. It feels like the perfect culmination of everything that has happened since the beginning of the Marvel Cinematic Universe with the release of “Iron Man” in 2008.

There were a few scenes in the last act where I could say they were the best scenes in any superhero movie. I will remember the last act of “Endgame” for as long as I live.

I will always argue for the merits of the Battle of Helm’s Deep and the Battle of Minas Tirith from “The Lord of the Rings,” but the final battle in “Avengers: Endgame” is legitimately up there for me. I don’t know if it will be remembered for as long as those two battles are, but I think it should be.

Overall, this movie was not only everything I was hoping it would be, but much more. I have been watching the Marvel Cinematic Universe movies for half of my life, and the way this movie ends those 11 years could not have been better.

Yes, I know, the movies are not over. There are still more movies coming out. But this is different, and it felt different when I left the theater after the movie.

I didn’t just finish watching a movie; I finished watching an era. Nothing will ever be like what the last 11 years were like, and I don’t think the amount of patience and buildup to this conclusion will ever be topped.

The movies will continue, and new sagas will be built on this one, but I don’t think anything will ever beat the first.
Andrew Bailey
Pulse Reporter

It can be easy to get lost in the flurry of high profile television shows and triple-A blockbusters on screens today. Most people know about shows like “Game of Thrones” or “Stranger Things,” or the next big entry in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, but what about those that fly under the radar?

These are a few shows and movies you may not have heard of but are worth watching.

‘Love, Death & Robots’
Currently on: Netflix

“Love, Death & Robots” is an animated anthology series, with each episode telling its own story in anywhere from six to 17 minutes. With 18 episodes total, comedy, science fiction, interpersonal drama and many other genres are touched upon. As well as employing various genres, each episode has its own distinct, gorgeous art style. In a couple episodes, the animation is so realistic it would fit right into a “Starcraft cutscene.” Coming from the minds of acclaimed directors David Fincher and Tim Miller, the episodes strike a fine balance between poignant and humorous. If you enjoyed “Black Mirror,” another similar Netflix original, you’re bound to enjoy this shorter, animated anthology series as well.

‘A.P. Bio’
Currently on: Amazon Prime, Hulu, NBC

From creator and “Saturday Night Live” alum Mike O’Brien, “A.P. Bio” hits all the comedic high notes you would expect from his style of absurdist comedy. Starring Glenn Howerton of “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia” fame, the show tells the tale of a disgraced college professor using his status as an A.P. biology teacher to get revenge on his arch nemesis. The students are colorful and fascinating, complementing Howerton’s maniacal, scheming character in a stunning array of hilarious dialogue and situations. With more comedic geniuses like Patton Oswalt and Paula Pell in the supporting cast, this show is filled to the brim with laughs.

‘The Strangers: Prey at Night’
Currently on: Amazon Prime, Google Play, YouTube

A sequel to 2008’s horror hit, “The Strangers,” “The Strangers: Prey at Night” delivers the same paranoia-fueled scares of being attacked by creepy strangers in an isolated location. Directed by Johannes Roberts, who also directed “47 Meters Down,” “Prey at Night” features the acting talents of Christina Hendricks and Martin Henderson, as well as up-and-coming actors Bailee Madison and Lewis Pullman. If the strangers’ masks aren’t enough to have you covering your eyes, the agonizing terrors surely will.

‘The Cage Fighter’
Currently on: Amazon Prime, Hulu, YouTube

Cage fighting and boxing movies are nothing new, with “Creed II” and “Bleed for This” released in recent years. However, “The Cage Fighter” breaks from this mold with its personal and brutal depiction of Joe Carman’s return to MMA. The documentary follows his decision to get back in the cage, in spite of his family’s wishes. Along with his in-ring struggles, Carman’s worrying health and family issues give context to the cruciality of his decision. As the feature-length directorial debut of Jeff Unay, “The Cage Fighter” tugs at your heartstrings and then some.

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Softball wins last three out of four

Michael Hubler
Sports Reporter

The Falcon softball team swept the Raiders at Meserve Tuesday and then split a doubleheader with the Zips on Saturday. The Falcons had a better week hitting wise while pitching improved. This led to them having a better week on the diamond overall. Record wise, the Falcons improved to 20-28.

Tuesdays game against the Raiders ended with a 10-4 win. In the first, the Raiders struck early, taking a 2-0 lead. Although the Raiders maintained a 3-1 lead through the third, then held a 4-4 tie, the bats came alive for the Falcons in the bottom of the sixth. Six runs were scored with Sarah Gonzalez, Alex Sorgi, Kendyl Wheeler, Kellie Natham and Evelyn Loyola all batting in runs with doubles and singles. Meredith Miller was the winning pitcher, while Olivia Otani would suffer the loss for the Raiders.

Game two consisted of a 4-2 win for the Falcons. Early in the first, Alex scored on a wild pitch while Loyola batted in Payton Hamm for an early 2-0 lead. Furthermore, the Raiders would tag on two after the first, keeping the score 2-2 until the bottom of the sixth. Hamm singled to left batting in Alex with Natham lining out to center field with Taylor Blevins scoring. Brooke Parker would have the win for the Falcons, while Makenna Durieux would suffer the loss.

The first game against the Zips on Saturday focused mostly on pitching. The Zips scored one in the first, the Falcons would score a pair in the bottom half with Nikki Sorgi batting in Madi McCoy and Hamm. In the fifth, the Zips would tie the game making it 2-2 forcing extra innings. Eventually, the Falcons would score in the 10th inning with a McCoy single and Madeline Dyer scoring, winning 3-2. Miller was the winning pitcher, while Adrian Smith suffered the loss.

Saturday’s second game consisted of a 5-1 loss. In the first, the Falcons would score on a Payton Hamm groundout to second, advancing Alex to score the first run. Unfortunately, that was the only run for the Falcons while the Zips would score five runs in the third and fourth inning. Two of the runs for the Zips were scored with stolen bases, sending runners on third base home. Mikayla Newland of the Zips would receive the win, while Parker of the Falcons would suffer the loss.

The next time the Falcons take the field will be when they play a doubleheader at Meserve on Tuesday against Cleveland State. They will then finish on the road at Kent State before the MAC Tournament.

Baseball swept by Ball State Cardinals

Zane Miller
Sports Reporter

The Falcon baseball team was swept by the Ball State Cardinals, losing 4-2 on Friday, 3-2 on Saturday and 2-1 on Sunday.

“It was a heck of a college series,” Falcons head coach Danny Schmitz said. “All three games were close, we just didn’t have the ability to score more than two runs a game.”

Friday’s game saw the Falcons take the lead first as sophomore second baseman Dylan Dohanos added an RBI single in the third inning for a 1-0 lead. However, Ball State was quickly able to take the lead back in the bottom of the third with an RBI single by junior center fielder Aaron Simpson and a two-run home run from junior right fielder Ross Messina to take a 3-1 lead.

Ball State came back in the seventh to add another run with Simpson getting an RBI double. And while the Falcons were able to get the run back in the eighth, courtesy of an RBI fielder’s choice from senior shortstop Neil Lambert, it wouldn’t be enough as Ball State held on to win 4-2 to start off the series.

Ball State sophomore pitcher Drey Jameson picked up the win, going seven innings while allowing only one earned run on four hits and two walks, while Falcons sophomore pitcher Andrew Abrahamowicz took the loss as he went seven innings with four earned runs given up on 10 hits with no walks. Senior reliever Nick Floyd got the save for Ball State.

With Saturday’s game moved up from afternoon to morning due to weather, Ball State grabbed the momentum early with Messina getting an RBI single and senior second baseman William Baker also getting an RBI single to make it a 2-0 game in the first inning. However, the Falcons cut the lead in half with senior catcher Joe McGuinness drawing a walk with the bases loaded in the second inning. Both pitchers were able to hold off the offense for the middle portion of the game.

In the seventh, the Falcons were able to tie the game back up as senior designated hitter Brad Croy got an RBI sacrifice fly, but Ball State responded in the eighth with Messina hitting a solo homer to retake the lead. Ball State then was able to get out of a jam in the ninth inning as the Falcons had the bases loaded, but were unable to bring in a run as Ball State claimed the 3-2 win and the series victory.

“We’ve been in a ton of close games recently, and we’ve been a little bit snake-bitten not to have earned more bounces,” Schmitz said. “Our guys played incredibly hard again today against a really good team.”

Senior relief pitcher Brendan Burns got the win for Ball State, allowing no earned runs on two hits with no walks over two and two-thirds innings pitched, as Falcons reliever Jeremy Spezia took the loss as he went two innings, allowing one earned run on two hits and a walk.

Sunday’s game saw both teams go scoreless until the seventh inning when Ball State freshman third baseman Ryan Peltier had an RBI double and freshman shortstop Justin Conant added an RBI single.

The Falcons began a rally in the ninth inning, as senior second baseman Riley Minorik had an RBI sacrifice fly, but that would be all as Ball State held on to win 2-1, and earn the series sweep.

“We had opportunities, but we just couldn’t get that next big hit,” Schmitz said. “You’re not going to win many games scoring two or less runs a game.”

Ball State sophomore pitcher Kyle Nicolas took the win, going seven innings with no earned runs on three hits and three walks, while Falcons junior pitcher Chase Antle was hit with the loss as he went six innings with just one earned run on two hits and three walks. Senior reliever Nick Floyd picked up the save for Ball State.

The team will next play on Wednesday afternoon on the road against the Dayton Flyers, before playing on Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons at home against the Central Michigan Chippewas.
The 2019 NFL Draft was loaded with very talented and NFL ready players that had teams with high picks very excited about their options. There were many speculations as to who was going to be drafted number one overall because the top players were all so evenly talented. No one really knew who the Cardinals were going to take with the first pick, many predicted Kyler Murray, and that caused a lot of drama around the team due to them drafting quarterback Josh Rosen last year. Here is an overview of the top selections and what teams could have done differently with their picks.

The Cardinals had a very tough decision to make at number one. It is very difficult to pass on a talent like Kyler Murray or Nick Bosa. Even with the team drafting Josh Rosen last draft, the Cards still took Kyler Murray with the first pick in the 2019 NFL Draft. This may have come as a surprise to some, but I, and many analysts, had predicted them taking the Heisman winner. New head coach Kliff Kingsbury shows he had an immediate impact within the front office with them taking Murray. Kingsbury was not going to let Kyler Murray slip away from him again like he did when he was trying to recruit him to Texas Tech when he was the head coach there. The selection the Cards made almost immediately led to the team trading last year’s tenth overall pick to the Dolphins for their 2019 second round pick and a 2020 fifth rounder.

“Kingsbury was not going to let Kyler Murray slip away from him again like he did when he was trying to recruit him to Texas Tech when he was the head coach there.”

Max Lewton
Sports Reporter

With the Cardinals taking Kyler Murray, the 49ers took the next best player in the draft with Nick Bosa. This was a very obvious pick that any team should and would have made if they were in that position. Nick Bosa was an absolute beast when he was at Ohio State where he recorded 17.5 sacks, 29 tackles for loss and 77 total tackles in his three-year collegiate career. The 49ers have not been good since the Smith/Kaepernick era came to an end and they are looking to get back on track with this pick. With the addition of Bosa to an already stacked defensive line of DeForest Buckner and Dee Ford makes the 49ers defense very formidable.

The best pick, in my opinion, was the Cardinals taking Kyler Murray. This was a very obvious pick because the team lost their star defensive tackle Sheldon Richardson to free agency this offseason. Williams will be a solid replacement and may even end up being better than Richardson. Also, with the team hiring new defensive coordinator Gregg Williams the Jets will play a lot of 4-3 defense. Quinnen Williams will help bolster their run defense which allowed their opponents to average 126.3 yards per game.

The Raiders acquired a plethora of draft picks via trade this offseason and were trying to replace Khalil Mack and Bruce Irvin on their defensive line. I thought that they were going to take linebacker Josh Allen, but they ended up taking defensive end, Clelin Ferrell. The Raider fans on screen did not seem so happy about the selection that their team made, but it really was not a bad one. Ferrell was a big part of the national champion Clemson Tigers’ defense and will be a nice fit for the Raiders. The team came dead last in sacks last season and Ferrell was an elite pass rusher with Clemson. Replacing Khalil Mack is no easy task, but the Raiders ultimately made the right choice.

The worst selection that was made was definitely sixth overall when the Giants took the wrong quarterback in Daniel Jones. This was a huge reach, being the sixth-ranked quarterback in the draft, and he played at Duke where the only really good team he played against was Clemson. Dwayne Haskins should have been picked, but I guess the Giants wanted to take a quarterback that was the most similar to Eli Manning.

The best pick, in my opinion, was the Redskins picking Dwayne Haskins at fifteen. I am not sure how the former Ohio State stud fell all the way to fifteen, but the Redskins really lucked out. Haskins has great pocket presence and a very strong arm; he will be a great NFL quarterback. The team signed Case Keenum this offseason so I do not think he will start right away, which gives him more time to develop.

What surprised me was that Josh Allen fell to Jacksonville at seventh overall. Jacksonville did not necessarily need to draft another linebacker, but they took the best player available at the time, which is usually a good decision. Allen will make an immediate impact in the league and I think has the potential to be a Pro-Bowler in the near future. I also was surprised that Detroit selected tight end TJ Hockenson with the eighth pick. Hockenson is a big body and will probably be a solid tight end, but there were better options such as Ed Oliver and Devin Bush. This was a very Detroit pick to make as they continue on their quest of mediocrity.

The 2019 NFL Draft was very entertaining to watch this year and had some surprises. This draft class is very talented, and many will make immediate impacts with their new teams.
City prayer day contains Christian slant, divides community

Adam Gretzinger
City Editor

Bowling Green will host a National Day of Prayer celebration in front of the Wood County Courthouse this Thursday at noon, but the service will only offer Christian speakers and out-loud prayers.

Kristel Asmus, who has organized the event for the last 27 years, said the observance of the day would be Christian-oriented in an early December meeting with the Wood County Commissioners.

Asmus later clarified that members of other religions may attend the event but are not allowed to pray under the current rules.

She also said any religious group may hold a similar prayer event on the same day but added that other groups cannot hold such events at the same time and place in front of the courthouse.

“They can have their event, and I can have mine,” Asmus said.

Her stance is in line with that of the National Day of Prayer Task Force, a nonprofit organization with private funding that focuses on supporting the national event’s Christian participation.

“The Task Force represents a Judeo-Christian expression of the national observance, based on our understanding that this country was birthed in prayer and in reverence for the God of the Bible,” according to the NDP Task Force website. The task force also looks to “mobilize the Christian community to intercede for America’s leaders and its families.”

Ahmad Mehmood, a BGSU graduate with a master’s in engineering technology, said he and other members of the school’s Muslim Students Association were “very keen on responding” when word of the limitations first came out.

Mehmood, who comes from India, called the limitations “otherizing” and endowed with an undercurrent of Islamophobia. The statement comes from a place of ignorance, and the notion Muslims worship a “different God” is incorrect, Mehmood said.

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He said Islam’s recognition of “Jesus (peace be upon him) ... as an article of faith” and “Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) Covenant to Christians” — a message that tells Muslims to protect Christians — irrefutably connects it to Christianity.

The MSA holds and participates in events which look to foster dialogue between different religions, including a multifaith panel about climate change held in April. However, the group will not be hosting an event specifically to counter the National Day of Prayer. Instead, Mehmood says the group hopes to arrange a discussion with Asmus of Prayer. Instead, Mehmood says the group responded to Asmus’ decision with vitriolic notes, including one she said told her to “Go to Hell.”

Rev. Andrea Curry from Trinity issued a statement soon after Asmus’ decision last year that said the church would not participate in the event. The note argued participating would go against the religion’s identity as “a church of open hearts, open doors and open minds.”

Trinity also withdrew its role as a location option for the event in case of inclement weather, a role it has held in the past. One community member, Debi Clifford, has attempted to host an alternative celebration accepting all faiths on the same date, but no official announcement or confirmation has been made yet about that event. Other community members also sent requests for an alternative event to the city.

Asmus has received pushback herself for this stance, both from the Wood County Commissioners and from different community members. She said multiple letters asking for a replacement in her position have appeared alongside more vitriolic notes, including one she said told him “peace be upon him” after references to “Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) ... as an article of faith” — a message that tells Muslims to protect Christians — irrefutably connects it to Christianity.”

However, Mehmood added, so long as the MSA was part of the organizing committee for the breakfast this year, and Mehmood said it “broke some ice” in the community. However, Mehmood added, so long as people refuse to talk deeply about these issues, smaller acts of discrimination — like this prayer day celebration — are reflective of a “larger popular ideological undercurrent in our society which is based in hate and ignorance.”

Editor’s note: Ahmad Mehmood requested the insertion of the phrase “peace be upon him” after references to Muhammad and Jesus.