

THE IOLA Register

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Friday, March 31, 2023

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Crest's Miller signs on with FSCC rodeo



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US Supreme Court won't review map

By JOHN HANNA
The Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — The U.S. Supreme Court won't review a congressional redistricting law enacted by the Republican-controlled Kansas Legislature that some voters and Democrats saw as political gerrymandering.

The nation's highest court said Monday without explanation that it won't hear an appeal of a Kansas Supreme Court ruling from May 2022 that upheld the redistricting law, which was challenged by 11 voters.

The appeal centered on the Kansas court's rejection of critics' claims that the new congressional map was racially gerrymandered. The Kansas court also ruled that the state constitution permits partisan gerrymandering.

The GOP map had appeared to hurt the chances of reelection last year for the only Democrat in the state's congressional delegation, U.S. Rep. Sharice Davids, in her Kansas City-area district. But Davids still won her race in November by 12 percentage points.

The law also moved the liberal northeastern Kansas city of Lawrence into a district with heavily Republican western Kansas.

The Legislature must redraw political boundaries at least once every 10 years to ensure that districts are as equal in population as possible. The Kansas Supreme Court split 4-3 on whether the state constitution allows partisan gerrymandering.



Alison Fees, from left, unloads all sorts of baggage during a scene with Monica Gayle Wright and Wayne Stephens as part of Iola Community Theatre's "Airport Encounters," which runs Friday through Sunday at the ICT Warehouse. REGISTER/RICHARD LUKEN

ICT ready for takeoff

By RICHARD LUKEN
The Iola Register

Ladies and gentlemen, we're now boarding for a destination filled with three straight days of laughs, poignancy and a few brilliant moments of absurdity.

The Iola Community Theatre takes its next production skyward, with "Airport Encounters" Friday and Saturday evenings at 7 o'clock and at 2 p.m. Sunday at the ICT Warehouse.

The ensemble cast under the guidance of co-directors Rhi Jordan and Paige Olson serves up 10 vignettes, all completely separate aside from their setting — an airport waiting area.

Their stories, with a min-



Judd Wiltse plays a therapy dog who nuzzles up to Jason Chandlee.

imal amount of props or set decoration, rely almost entirely on dialogue.

And with an assemblage of talented veterans and newcomers, "Airport Encounters" is ready for takeoff.

YOUR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

• "A Camel Might Step on Your Head" features River Hess and Morgan Lea. Lea is

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Airport tackles electrical upgrades

By VICKIE MOSS
The Iola Register

The cost of electrical improvements at Allen County Regional Airport will be significantly less than expected due to bids coming in below expectations.

Mitch Garner, Public Works director, told commissioners that bids were opened earlier this week to improve the electrical systems for the runway, including lighting, and a new Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS). Much of the work will be paid with grant money from the state and Federal Aviation Administration.

Engineers estimated the work would exceed \$1 million but a bid from Strukel Electric came in at \$766,350 for a savings of \$235,150. The prices for cable, conduits and other material have been highly volatile for the past three years, but came in well below the engineer's estimates, according to Garner, the Overland Park engineering firm leading the project.

The county is responsible for a 10% match, and already has paid about \$66,000 for the project, leaving just \$35,700 for the county's portion, according to Garner's estimates.

Girard-based Strukel was the only bidder for the project, though seven contrac-

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Kansas Senate defeats bill tying food stamps to child support

By TIM CARPENTER
Kansas Reflector

TOPEKA — Wichita Sen. Oletha Faust-Goudeau said enactment of a Kansas Senate bill written to deny federal food stamp benefits to non-custodial parents not making child support payments would lead to an increase in the number of children going hungry.

Faust-Goudeau, a Democrat, delivered an emotional speech on the Senate floor during debate on House Bill 2141, which would make Kansas the fourth state in the country to withhold Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program benefits from a parent who owed child support.

She expressed outrage the Legislature would contemplate withholding food as a tactic to extract cash from poor parents.

"The bill would sock it to them. We're going to deny them some measly food stamps. Find another way. Don't starve them to death," Faust-Goudeau said. "This



Sen. Oletha Faust-Goudeau, D-Wichita, said she was mystified a Kansas Senate committee endorsed a bill withholding food stamps from parents not making child support payments. The House-passed bill was rejected 20-20 by the Senate. (SHERMAN SMITH/KANSAS REFLECTOR)

bill would make it less likely that parents can support their children and more likely that children and their parents will go hungry. Reducing ac-

cess to food for Kansans who are already struggling financially is unnecessarily harsh and ineffective."

The Senate by the most nar-

row margin voted Wednesday to defeat the bill disqualifying noncustodial parents from food stamps if delin-

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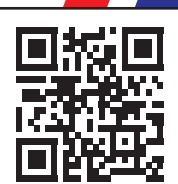
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Morgan Lea must deal with River Hess, hired by her ex-boyfriend to keep her from a trip to Africa in "A Camel Might Step on Your Head."

Play: Community theater just plane funny

Continued from A1

about to board a flight to Africa, keen on serving in the Peace Corps. However, she must first deal with River Hess, hired by her ex-boyfriend to persuade Lea to stay home and rekindle their relationship. Their banter is equal parts stirring and humorous.

- "Stuck" offers a touching look at Bumble Ard as Palmer, a long-time flier who has never actually flown anywhere. Instead, Palmer seeks out tickets for overbooked flights in order to recoup a hefty gift package by agreeing to give up a seat in exchange for cash.

Palmer's path crosses with Jenna Morris as Zoe, an airport employee who yearns to travel the world but never been able to afford a ticket.

Ard, a first-time performer with ICT, and Morris keep the audience enthralled as they realize their destinations never change, even though their intentions are vastly different.

- "Insurance" takes a rib-tickling look at Teagan Kern as Lauren, an insurance agent whose increasingly outrageous (and unique) policies cover everything from dealing with flight delays to crying babies. And if a passenger comes down with some exotic disease in the airport restroom facility, they could get quite a payout, she promises.

Kern matches wits with Alison Fees and Jacob Cooper. Cooper is a hoot as the easily excitable, if not naïve, potential customer. Fees, however, is a bit more cynical.

- "Going Home" tackles the age-old family dilemma — convincing a recently widowed and elderly mother to move in with her son and daughter-in-law.

Diana Dashnaw sparkles as Deb, the mother with an independent

streak who barely tolerates her son's overtures and is downright hostile to her daughter-in-law.

The real life husband-and-wife team of Ben and Sofie Alexander are her son and daughter-in-law. Sofie shines as she calmly tolerates her mother-in-law's insults; Ben is equal to the task as the well-intentioned and doting son.

- Your journey's route takes a delightful course adjustment straight for the funny bone with "Therapy Dog," featuring the always-memorable Judd Wiltse as Theo. He's an airport employee hired to portray an emotional support dog after the real animal was fired for biting a passenger. And he's good at it, too, garnering the affection of travelers like the aforementioned Morris and Katie Jo Knoblich, but much to the chagrin of Jason Chandlee, who can hardly believe his eyes.

Never one to back away from a challenge, Wiltse takes it upon himself to melt Chandlee's heart and his skepticism. As one of five ICT rookies in the ensemble, Chandlee excels at meeting Wiltse's outlandishness.

- Speaking of obscure support animals, "The Lizard" takes a hilarious look at Tiffany Hurlock, who insists upon traveling with her support lizard, discreetly hidden in a Chinese food takeout box. As fate would have it, Hurlock's lizard escapes, just as she and Lea bicker over who gets to introduce herself first to a cute fellow traveler in Justin Chandlee.

- "Twenty Million Miles" offers a unique twist on a seemingly perfect career — traveling to exotic destinations to pose as a tourist while surreptitiously rating resorts and airlines — vs. working at the same airport job

day in and day out. Dan Davis is the world-weary traveler; Catherine Dean is the even wearier homebody. Both are newcomers to the ICT stage; let's hope they bring their talents back for future productions.

- "My Cell Phone Says You're My Soulmate" says it all. Hess is in search of his, and an app on his phone points him in the direction of sisters Candice Grundy and Shelli Barnett, who are about to take flight. He must act fast to convince the understandably dubious Grundy and the rebellious Barnett, who is known for making spur-of-the-moment decisions that he is one (or is it the other's?) soulmate.

- In "Ninjas," Hurlock and Knoblich are former schoolmates headed home for a class reunion. It seems fate brought the pair together on the same flight — or was it something else? Hurlock and Knoblich offer a heartwarming look at the torment of an unrequited childhood crush, the years of regret that followed and the ninja-like lengths teens will go to obsess over an unwitting classmate.

- Your final stop comes with "Baggage," literally and metaphor-

ically.

Fees is uproarious as she attempts to board a plane with a carry-on suitcase exponentially larger than anything a sane traveler would use. See, her case is filled with more than clothing including pieces of her life from when she was happiest; the dress she wore with her ex; or the bowling ball her father used. (Oh and don't forget a toaster and flotation device). Newcomer Monica Gayle Wright and Wayne Stephens are the exasperated baggage handlers who try to convince Fees that sometimes it's best to let things go.

DIRECTORS Jordan and Olson keep the stories (and flights) on schedule, and the passengers (and audience happy). A special round of applause goes to Jordan, who assumed even more preflight responsibilities when her copilot missed time due to illness.

And last but not least, young Piper Jordan is your flight attendant, offering greetings and well wishes to the ICT audience throughout the show.

Tickets/boarding passes sell for \$10 for adults and \$5 for children, and are available at the door.

We hope you enjoy your flight.

Experts see economic problems in struggle over debt limit, cuts

By JENNIFER SHUTT
Kansas Reflector

WASHINGTON — Experts told the U.S. House Budget Committee on Wednesday the country's economic outlook is problematic, as a fierce debate over the nation's budget remains front and center.

House Republicans, led by Speaker Kevin McCarthy of California, have repeatedly rejected raising the debt limit unless President Joe Biden agrees to a series of spending cuts. Biden is adamant that the two issues of raising the debt limit and setting future spending levels should move forward on separate tracks.

He's also repeatedly called on House Republicans to release their budget resolution, a tax and spending blueprint that would show how the party proposes balancing the budget during the next decade.

The House GOP has yet to do that or set a timeline for when it will.

During Wednesday's hearing in the House Budget Committee, Pennsylvania Democratic Rep. Brendan Boyle, ranking member on the panel, acknowledged that Congress needs to restructure federal taxes and government funding moving forward.

"We agree — our nation does face long-term fiscal challenges. Our population, like most in the Western world, is aging. So health care, Social Security, and Medicare costs are rising," Boyle said, before adding that increasing inequality and disruptions caused by climate change are all part of the picture.

"And yes, deficits and debt are projected, especially in the next decade, to reach levels that simply none of us would be comfortable with," he said. "So we're seeing a similar picture and we do have very different ideas to where solutions lie."

The men who testified before the panel had drastically different approaches for how much the federal government

should tax its citizens and how much it should spend.

Scott Hodge, president emeritus and senior policy adviser at the Tax Foundation, urged U.S. lawmakers to eliminate "failing businesses enterprises," such as the Tennessee Valley Authority, Amtrak, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the U.S. Postal Service.

"These and many more federal assets should be sold off and the proceeds used to pay down the national debt," said Hodge, who was one of the Republican Party's witnesses.

Hodge called on Congress to "make hard choices," saying that if a "a company or industry cannot survive without taxpayer assistance, it should not be allowed to survive."

Lawmakers must, Hodge said, make structural changes to entitlement programs, like Social Security and Medicare.

"These programs are bankrupt now and are getting worse," Hodge said. "No member of this body is in a position to criticize the management of Silicon Valley Bank for failing to foresee the crisis in their balance sheet when the financial crisis in Social Security and Medicare have been known and getting worse for years."

Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, agreed the country faces "significant long-term fiscal challenges" though he called for Congress to address it through "both tax increases and government spending restraint."

Zandi also urged Congress to address the nation's debt limit quickly and without fanfare, saying the impact of a default on the federal government and the economy would be problematic. The nation hit the debt limit in January and began a process known as extraordinary measures, in which the U.S. Treasury Department uses accounting measures to avoid defaulting on the debt.

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