

COVID

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athletes, such as football players, and performing artists such as band members are to be tested at least three weeks in advance of the opening of their school year when some activities, including high school football, begin in the second week of July, thus not allowing the required three week advance.

Earlier in the month the Indiana State Board of Health declined to issue guidelines for the reopening of schools, but said the decisions would be left to local health departments in Indiana's 92 counties, leaving open the possibility of a variety of enforcement and standards across public schools in the state.

"How many other coun-



Dr. David Moore speaking at Grant County Health Board meeting. **Photo by Ed Breen**

ties are doing this?" Mississinewa Supt. Tab McKenzie asked the board, telling them that his district already has a plan that includes masks and social distancing at all levels.

"What are the other 91

counties doing," he asked, "and who is going to enforce this?"

Dr. Barbara Ihrke, who heads the nursing training program at Indiana Wesleyan University and is president of the health

board, acknowledged that "we are feeling the burden" passed on to the counties by the state.

Board member Dr. Phillip Renfro, who made the motions to adopt the requirements said he also shared frustration with the state's procedures but "we have thus far been reactive rather and pro-active on these issues."

Superintendent Brett Garrett of the Eastbrook School Corp., told the board he had concerns about liability and management.

"There are EEOC rules on things like this. Who handles the liability?" Garrett asked. "I do not see how this plan is feasible."

"I would challenge the

requirement," said the superintendent of the eastern Grant County school district.

Dr. Moore, who drafted the four proposals that were presented to the board, told the superintendents that "with the staff requirement we are trying to determine who does or does not have a communicable disease." He argued that that was central to the job of the health officer.

He and the board members quizzed the educators on their plans for reopening the schools.

"What are the consequences for students who do not wear masks," a board member asked and was told that "we have parents in our school districts

who believe that this response is out of proportion to the health threat. "

Superintendent McKenzie said he believed his plan at Mississinewa, including the plan for athletics "follows the recommendations of all the state agencies." His plan does not include mandatory testing.

Dr. Renfro, a Marion physician, said he understood the concerns, but said "state law gives the county health officer the authority to act if he sees deterioration of the public health."

The board adopted the requirements proposed by Dr. Moore, but adjourned without addressing the enforcement issues.

Remember what Independence Day means

By Linda Wilk

Independence Day this year I believe will be like no other.

As with so many other celebrations this summer, the corona virus has stolen us of the local Fourth of July parades and in many places across Indiana, community displays of fireworks.

Even where city fire-

works are being shown, social distancing is expected and there is no live music to go along with the sky illumination celebrations.

A far cry from my childhood memories of Independence Day celebrations.

In our small town, Fourth of July was celebrated with a neighborhood brunch in the orchard at the end of our cul-de-sac. No matter when the Fourth of July of-

ficially was celebrated, the nearest Saturday to the Fourth included the annual neighborhood brunch.

Our neighbor who owned the orchard coordinated the breakfast, inviting everyone to gather bringing each families' favorite dish to pass. It was a chance for young and old to gather, play and have conversation.

It also kicked off the fireworks celebration, offi-

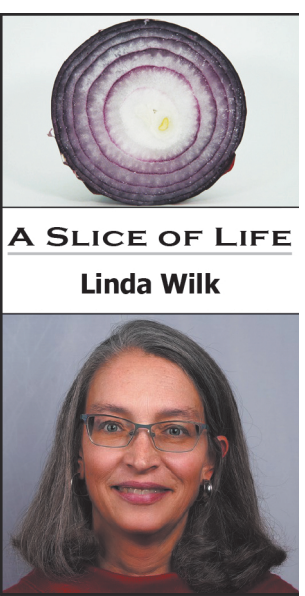
cially permitting the lighting of bottle rockets, fountains and other pyrotechnics.

For our family, we tended to limit how much fireworks we shot off as money was always a consideration. It seemed there were plenty of other neighbors who were more than happy to purchase large numbers of fountains and other illumination devices for all to enjoy.

There was also caution expected when sparklers were lit, as my dad would remind us of the scar, he still bore from the sparkler that burned his foot after a spark found its way into his shoe. A life lesson on scarcity also shared as he told how he was wearing a hand me down pair of shoes that had a hole in the top of this shoe.

On the Fourth of July we traditionally loaded up in our car and headed to the 4-H grandstand where the community display of fireworks took place complete with patriotic music.

It was also a time when the child in my dad came out as during the years our celebration was extended to visits to my grandparents' farm, where aunts, uncles and cousins also came to celebrate. It was not uncommon to go into a near by pasture and watch as the adults took empty coffee cans to see how high an M80 firecracker could cause the can to soar into the sky.



ence would be marked for years to come with guns and bonfires and illuminations. It has also been said that since the first July 4 fireworks display happened in the middle of the Revolutionary war, some historians believe they were supposed to be a morale booster.

Back then firing of cannons and guns were commonplace as the mode of celebration, however, with the war's end and an increasing concern for public safety, firearms were phased out of the celebrations and replaced almost entirely by the fireworks.

The thought behind encouraging fireworks also was to draw citizens together to public celebrations, perceived as safer as opposed to more dangerous private fireworks shows.

For our family, this year, there will be no fireworks purchased or lit. The purchase of fireworks just has never really made sense to me, believing there are better ways to spend money than those few seconds of lights or noise.

In whatever way each of you chose to celebrate the Fourth of July this weekend, I would encourage you to stay safe, stay well, and remember the importance of why we celebrate –

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There were also high-powered bottle rockets shot out of glass soda bottles and other projectile tested.

A different time as I am pretty sure M80s and some bottle rockets are no longer legally allowed.

So, how long has fireworks been a part of our history and why?

I did a quick google search and learned the earliest forms of such pyrotechnics can be traced to around 2,000 years ago in China.

It was said that in 200 BC people roasted bamboo stalks until they would turn black and sizzle and the air inside the hollow stalks would explode. "Baozhu" is a Mandarin word for firecracker that translates directly to "exploding bamboo"

It was John Adams who said he hoped the anniversary of independ-

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Have a safe and Happy Fourth of July!

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