

Another tort claim revealed

By RAY COONEY
The Commercial Review

Another tort claim involving the City of Portland came to light during Monday's Portland City Council meeting.

Council member Mike Aker brought up the claim during the council comments portion of the meeting.

The claim names the City of Portland, the office of the clerk-treasurer of Portland, clerk-treasurer Lori Phillips and Portland City Council members Dave Golden, Ron May and Aker.

The claim seeks up to the statutory limit of \$700,000 per claimant in compensatory damages, unspecified punitive damages and injunction relief including training for city officials, systemic reforms for the

Police chief, investigator seeking \$700,000 in complaint against city, clerk and council members

city to prevent future abuses and court orders prohibiting "further disclosure or misuse of confidential information."

(A tort claim is a formal notice that alleges personal injury or property damage and seeks compensation. Under Indiana law, a written notice of tort claim must be filed before suing a government entity.)

The claim is the latest in a series of six that are now active that name the City of Portland, its police department, an elected official or an employee. (Two other claims have since been resolved.)

In the 28-page document, Mock and Hopkins allege a long list of violations, including:

- That Phillips sent written communications to city council members containing false allegations against Mock, Hopkins and others within the police department; repeatedly released protected confidential information, including to The Commercial Review; deleted police email accounts without proper authority; and opened mail addressed to the police department or officers. She is also accused of harassment and intimidation
- Conflict of interest and ethical violations by city attorney Wes Schemenaur, arguing his roles as city attorney, county attorney, prosecutor and an attorney in private practice led to those violations. It also alleges that he disregarded procedure regarding a 2024 com-

plaint Mock made against Phillips.

•That Aker, who is Phillips' father, and Golden were involved in an email exchange that amounted to a "coordinated campaign of misinformation, defamation and retaliatory conduct."

•Prejudgment and bias by May, who the claim says acknowledged his intent to vote against any requests presented by the chief of police, and Golden, because he has publicly complimented Phillips' work during council meetings.

The claim is dated Sept. 5 and is signed by Mock and Hopkins. No legal representation is indicated in the document. It was delivered by certified mail to the entities and individuals named.

See Tort page 2



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Homecoming candidates

Jay County High School will celebrate homecoming with a parade from Jay County Fairgrounds to East Jay Elementary School beginning at 5 p.m. Friday with the football game to follow at 7:30 p.m. at Harold E. Schutz Memorial Stadium. Pictured are the candidates for homecoming king and queen. Front row are king candidates Noah Walter, Dominic Steveson, Nick Laux, Carter Fugiett, Drew Muhlenkamp, Lincoln Clamme and Matthew Fisher. Back row are queen candidates Finley Hatzell, Lilly Johnson, Faith Faulkner, Elizabeth Barnett, Paisley Fugiett, Lauren Fisher and Emma Hatzell. The king and queen will be crowned at halftime of the football game.

Council, clerk, mayor at odds again

Budget and tort claims are subjects of another heated meeting

By RAY COONEY
The Commercial Review

In what has become more of the rule than the exception, a Portland City Council meeting turned into a heated airing of grievances.

Council members, the clerk-treasurer and the mayor were at odds again Monday night, with the 2026 budget as the first subject of contention. The second was another new tort claim, this one filed by Portland Police Chief Dustin Mock and investigator Jeff Hopkins against six defendants.

Council member Mike Aker brought up the tort claim issue, asking why Mayor Jeff Westlake is not among the defendants named. (See related story for details of the claim.)

"Yeah, why wasn't I named?" asked Westlake in response. "Nothing that I had to do with it."

Aker turned the question to Mock.

"I asserted my constitutional right by issuing a tort claim notice," Mock said. "This is ridiculous. I'm glad it's being recorded because you're making my job easier."

Aker noted the claim filed against himself, fellow council members Ron May and Dave Golden, the City of Portland, clerk-treasurer Lori Phillips (his daughter) and the office of the clerk-treasurer. (The claim was delivered to several others, though they are not named as defendants.)

"We have been elected to do a job. I fear that Mock and Hopkins seem to think that they can rally together and pressure elected officers to do their bidding. ..."

He noted the \$700,000 per claimant in compensatory damages requested in the claim.

See Odds page 2

Plans shared for vote centers

By BAILEY CLINE
The Commercial Review

Vote centers are in Jay County's future.

Depending on how the primary goes next year, election board officials may adjust that plan.

Jay County Election Board shared details Monday at a public hearing about its plan to begin using vote centers in 2026.

Vote centers serve as an alternative to traditional precinct-based voting in which voters are assigned a polling location in their area. They allow registered voters to cast a ballot at any

No opposition voiced to new election procedure during hearing

county polling location on Election Day.

Plans are for Jay County to use two vote center locations for Election Day — Jay Community Center, 115 E. Water St., Portland, and West Jay Community Center, 125

Hoover St., Dunkirk. (Currently, the county has eight polling locations for its 18 precincts.)

For the 2026 primary election, early voting — it starts 28 days before Election Day — will be offered at the courthouse audito-

rium, 120 W. Main St., Portland. West Jay Community Center is also listed as a suggested satellite vote center for early voting the two Saturdays prior to the election.

Registered voters may choose any of those locations within designated time frames to cast their ballots.

Former Portland mayor Randy Geesaman asked if election board members had heard feedback from Redkey or Pennville residents regarding the plan, which doesn't offer a polling location in either town.

See Centers page 5

Jay Schools show enrollment increase

By RAY COONEY
The Commercial Review

Enrollment is up.

Superintendent Jeremy Gulley reported to Jay School Board on Monday that enrollment in Jay School Corporation has increased for the 2025-26 school year.

The board also passed the 2026 budget and reviewed state test scores.

Gulley told the board that the school corporation's enrollment is 2,898,

Student total went up by 77; Gulley credits virtual academy

which is up by 77 students over 2024-25. (He noted that the official "count day" that affects state per-student funding is Oct. 1.)

"I thought that was a piece of good news," he said. "Unusual."

The only other times enrollment has gone up in the past dozen years

were in 2019-20 and 2023-24.

In those cases, the increases amounted to 10 students and three students, respectively.

Gulley attributed the increase to the implementation of the Jay Virtual Academy pilot program this year. There are currently 53 students enrolled in the virtual academy, which is for junior high and high school students. Of that

total, 28 are students who were already enrolled in Jay Schools.

The other 25 are either new students (eight) or students who are returning to the corporation (17).

"I think it's a good thing," said Gulley. "We'll learn a lot in the pilot. ... We're just trying to take good care of the young people that are in our county ..."

See Increase page 5

Deaths	Weather	In review	Coming up
Margaret McBride, 94, rural Portland Tillman Smith, 84, Greenfield Details on page 2.	The high temperature reached 87 degrees Monday in Jay County. The low was 57. The forecast calls for a low in the upper 50s tonight. Expect sunny skies with a high in the upper 80s Thursday. Highs are projected to stay in the 80s through the weekend. See page 2 for an extended outlook.	Indiana Military Vehicle Preservation Association will host its annual Salute to the Troops Rally and Swap Meet from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday at Jay County Fairgrounds. It will be held in conjunction with an open house at Museum of the Soldier.	Thursday — Results from the JCHS volleyball match against Adams Central. Friday — Coverage of next week's Portland Board of Aviation meeting. Saturday — Photos from Jay County High School's homecoming festivities.



Obituaries

Margaret McBride
Dec. 8, 1930-Sept. 13, 2025

Margaret Rose McBride, age 94, a resident of rural Portland, passed away on Saturday, Sept. 13, 2025 at her home.

Margaret was born Dec. 8, 1930, in Bryant, Indiana, the daughter of Verl and Nellie (Butcher) Miller. She graduated from Bryant High School in 1948 and earned an associate's degree from Ball State University.

Margaret worked for Jay County REMC for 25 years. She was a member of Trinity Arch

Bridge Church in Portland where she was active in many committees. Other memberships include Emmaus, Stephen Ministry, Alpha Club, Portland Morning Optimist Club, Methodist Women, Hospital Prime Time, Bryant Senior Citizens and John Jay.

Margaret found joy in gardening, flowers and bird watching.

Margaret married Myron

McBride on Sept. 9, 1950, and he passed away on June 6, 2007.

Survivors include:

Her children — Doug McBride (wife: Nancy), Ossian, Indiana, Greg McBride (wife: Judy), Waverly, Alabama, Steve McBride, Portland, Indiana, Brentley McBride (wife: Terry), Indianapolis, and Mike McBride, Portland, Indiana

One brother — Bill Miller, Ossian, Indiana

Six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren

She was preceded in death by her husband, Myron

McBride; her twin sister, Maude Jean Miller; and a grandson, Matthew McBride.

Visitation will be held on Thursday from 3 to 7 p.m. at Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home in Portland. Funeral services will be held on Friday at 11 a.m. at the funeral home with visitation one hour prior to the service. Pastor Dan Vore will officiate and burial will follow at Gravel Hill Cemetery, west of Bryant.

Memorials may be directed to Trinity Arch Bridge Church or Museum of the Soldier.

Livestream of the service will be available at williamson-spencer.com.





Tillman E. Smith, Greenfield, Oct. 3, 1940-Sept. 12, 2025. Services will be at 1 p.m. Friday at Downing & Glancy Funeral Home, 100 N. Washington St., Geneva.

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The Commercial Review publishes death notices for those with a connection to our coverage area free of charge. They include the name, city, birth/death date and time/date/location of services.

There is a charge for obituaries, which are accepted only from funeral homes or mortuaries.

CR almanac

Thursday 9/18	Friday 9/19	Saturday 9/20	Sunday 9/21	Monday 9/22
 86/54 Sunny skies are on the horizon for Thursday when the high may hit the upper 80s.	 88/58 Another day of sun is in the forecast for Friday when the low may hit 58 at night.	 85/61 Saturday's weather looks like a slight chance of rain under partly cloudy skies.	 84/62 There's a slight chance of showers early Sunday with 10 to 15 mph winds.	 83/62 Monday has a chance of rain and thunderstorms. The high may hit the low 80s.

Lotteries

Powerball Monday 14-15-32-42-49 Power Ball: 1 Power Play: 2 Estimated jackpot: \$81 million	Daily Four: 7-9-5-8 Quick Draw: 2-4-6-8-18-19-20-23-27-36-37-38-43-44-48-62-64-71-72-75 Cash 5: 7-11-12-27-39 Estimated jackpot: \$115,000
Mega Millions Estimated jackpot: \$400 million	Ohio Monday Midday Pick 3: 2-6-9 Pick 4: 3-2-7-8 Pick 5: 1-6-9-9-5 Evening Pick 3: 2-9-5 Pick 4: 7-7-6-1 Pick 5: 2-5-4-3-1 Rolling Cash: 3-13-15-31-32 Estimated jackpot: \$120,000
Hoosier Monday Midday Daily Three: 1-0-5 Daily Four: 0-3-4-8 Quick Draw: 2-3-4-6-17-19-32-37-38-39-49-51-54-57-58-61-62-65-66-73 Evening Daily Three: 3-7-6	

Markets

Cooper Farms Fort Recovery Corn.....4.15 Oct. corn4.10 Dec. corn4.25	Dec. beans10.43 Wheat 4.81
POET Biorefining Portland Corn.....4.19 Oct./Nov. corn4.09 Dec. corn4.29	ADM Montpelier Corn.....3.99 Late Sept. corn3.95 Beans10.03 Oct. beans10.03 Wheat4.76
The Andersons Richland Township Corn4.05 Oct. corn4.02 Beans10.05	Heartland St. Anthony Corn.....4.10 Oct. corn4.00 Beans9.85 Oct. beans9.85 Wheat4.61

Today in history

In 1787, the final draft of the Constitution was signed by members of the Constitutional Convention. Its details had been secretly debated for four months. The Constitution would replace the Articles of Confederation.

In 1849, Harriet Tubman escaped from the plantation where she was enslaved. She would later help other escaped slaves to freedom via the Underground Railroad.

In 1862, Union and Confederate armies clashed at the Battle of Antietam at the Miller farm cornfield in Maryland. It was the bloodiest day in American history, with more than 23,000 killed, wounded or missing in action. Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee

started his retreat across the Potomac River the next day.

In 2003, Portland Board of Aviation agreed to move forward with a \$350,000 improvement plan that included extending the taxiway, adding a rotary beacon and installing lighted ground signs.

In 2011, the first Occupy Wall Street protest was held.

In 2021, Quinn Faulkner thwarted any hope of a Bluffton comeback as the Jay County High School senior broke up a pass on fourth down and then ran for a 38-yard score. His big plays on both sides of the ball capped a 40-27 Patriot football victory.

—The CR

Citizen's calendar

Today 4 p.m. — Portland Board of Aviation, airport, 661 W. 100 North.	ty Solid Waste Management District, 5948 W. Indiana 67, Portland. 7 p.m. — Dunkirk City Council, city building, 131 S. Main St.
Monday 9 a.m. — Jay County Commissioners, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland. 3:45 p.m. — Jay Coun-	Tuesday 6 p.m. — Redkey Town Council, cabin, Morgan Park, 50 Mooney St.

Odds ...

Continued from page 1

“It is so unfair to the taxpayers,” Aker continued. “When will this end?”

Westlake agreed with Aker's sentiment that the infighting amongst city employees and elected officials needs to stop.

“Why do we have to do this to each other?” he asked.

“We shouldn't have to,” he continued. “We ought to be able to be adults about these things and not going after each other for anything. It's time we start working together ...”

He said he is tired of his police department “being kicked.”

Westlake said he will continue to defend Mock and the police department. He added that all involved need to stop acting like children.

Council member Ashley Hilfiker retorted, saying that as mayor part of his job is to make sure the city government is cohesive and works together. Instead, she accused him of fueling most of the fires. She asked him to do some self-reflection.

Westlake and Hilfiker also disagreed as to whether the mayor treats the city council with respect.

Council member Ron May concurred with Hilfiker, saying council members shouldn't have to worry about their comments resulting in lawsuits against them.

The tort claim was the second point of contention of the evening after the mayor, council members and Phillips were at odds about the proposed 2026 budget again.

During the public hearing, former two-term mayor Randy Geesaman (Westlake beat him in the 2023 general election) said it's important to make tough decisions. He added that he was happy to see that the proposed budget of \$10.24 million for 2026 is down from the 2025 total of \$10.61 million. He encouraged all involved to be conservative with the 2026 budget and adjust in future years if the financial situation is better than some project.

Westlake questioned projections for tight financial times, saying he has been involved in discussions that

indicate revenue will go up slightly in the next two years and that the area of concern is in 2028. He also said he feels belt-tightening, if it is needed, should be happening across the board, mentioning the proposed 68 acre development project on the city's west side as compared to new public safety radios. He suggested that if the city's budget could not accommodate Mock's request for two new police vehicles in 2026, perhaps one could be purchased.

Phillips responded, noting cuts in the motor vehicle highway, highway department and clerk-treasurer funds.

May asked about a projected budget deficit of \$631,000 for 2026 and whether there are other areas that could be cut. Phillips said she feels all reasonable cuts have been made. She also noted that the city's year-end balance has regularly gone up because of budget surpluses, leaving a balance that can absorb the projected deficit next year.

See Odds page 5



Cupcake contest

Gage Reynolds, 9, shoves a confection in his mouth while competing in a cupcake eating contest Saturday evening during the Jay County Cancer Society's Cruise, Car Show and Carnival at Jay County Fairgrounds.

The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Felony arrests

Battery

A Portland man was arrested Sunday for battery and other charges.

Raider D. Newton, 27, 600 S. Meridian St., was preliminarily charged with a Level 6 felony for battery, a Class A misdemeanor for resisting law enforcement and a Class A misdemeanor for invasion of privacy.

He was being held on a \$4,500 bond in Jay County Jail.

Capsule Reports

Fell asleep

An Ohio man fell asleep while driving along Indiana 67, causing the car he was driving to go off the road about 11 p.m. Sunday.

Logan Gates, 20, was driving a 2016 Ford Escape north on the highway near its intersection with Indiana 26 when he fell asleep at the wheel. He told police he woke up after driving off the north side of the road. The car he was driving went into a ditch and a corn field before going back on the road.

The vehicle was towed, with damage estimated between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

Increase ...

Continued from page 1

Board members Ron Laux, Donna Geesaman, Marcie Vormohr, Chip Phillips, Aaron Clark, Chad Towell and Jon Eads also approved the 2026 budget at \$42.65 million with no additional discussion. It is up 2.8% from 2025.

The budget includes \$23.9 million in the education fund, \$11.64 million in the operations fund, \$7 million in the debt service fund and \$20,000 in the rainy day fund.

Also approved Monday were the capital projects plan, which includes \$458,000 in roof replacement projects in 2026, \$330,000 in metal siding work in 2027 and \$415,000 in roof replacement work in 2028, and the bus replacement plan, which calls for four new buses in each of the next four years.

Towell asked about the process of seeking bids for buses. Business manager Shannon Current noted that Kerlin Bus Sales & Leasing has a procurement process for the vehicles.

Assistant superintendent Trent Paxson reviewed IREAD (a reading proficiency test for third graders) and ILEARN (a math and English test given at the elementary and junior high levels) scores from the 2024-25 school year with the board.

For Jay Schools, 88.3% of third graders passed the IREAD test, down slightly from 88.8% the previous year but still above the state average of 86.5%.

For ILEARN, Jay School

Corporation was slightly above the state passage rate for math (42.9% compared to 42.1%) but below the state average for English (37.2% compared to 40.6%).

Paxson said he's pleased to see the IREAD numbers continuing to outpace the state but acknowledged the need to see higher scores on the ILEARN test.

Geesaman, a retired elementary school teacher, said she feels the school corporation's adoption of the science of reading will yield positive results. Paxson agreed, noting that the corporation employs two reading coaches.

Regarding students who do not pass the IREAD test, Geesaman asked about continued interventions at the junior high and high school levels.

Gulley noted an Indiana Department of Education release from last week indicating the department will review vendors specializing in reading interventions for sixth through eighth grade students. Schools would have the option to opt-in to partner with such vendors. The document says priorities will be evidence-based programs that align with the science of reading and are listed in the National Center for Intensive Intervention or the What Works Clearinghouse.

“I'm strongly interested in opting in,” said Gulley. In other business, the board:

- During the Patriot Pride moment, honored East Jay

Elementary School fifth graders who took part in the Care & Share program in partnership with The Portland Foundation. The students worked to raise money through a pie-in-the-face fundraiser, bringing in \$762. The foundation also provided \$100 to each of the six classes. Together, the students donated \$1,362 to Jay County Cancer Society.

- Approved the following: the hiring of three instructional assistants and a second-shift custodian; leaves of absence for Redkey Elementary School speech/language pathologist Allie Homan and third grade teacher Sadie Schulze; extracurricular assignments including Tom Leonhard as assistant boys wrestling coach and Kelly Strausburg as assistant swim coach; contracts with Anointed Hands for sign language interpreter to the deaf and hard of hearing and Ball State University for a psychologist intern; a facility lease agreement with Jay Community Center; and updates to policies covering topics including dress code, curriculum development and safety standards.
- Accepted a Title II grant of \$163,401.49 and a Title IV grant of \$77,005.11.
- Accepted donations of \$1,000 from Patriot Fitness for the junior-senior high show choirs and from DNA Family Farms for the Patriot soccer program. Also accepted a donation of 25 teacher support boxes from Kids in Need Foundation.

SERVICES

Wednesday

Muhlenkamp. Robert: Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church, 403 Sharpsburg Road, Fort Recovery.

Thursday

Smith. Judith: 11 a.m., Walker & Glancy Funeral Home, 109 W.Windsor St., Montpelier.

Friday

McBride. Margaret: 11 a.m., Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home, 208 N. Commerce St., Portland.

Smith. Tillman: 1 p.m., Downing & Glancy Funeral Home, 100 Washington St., Geneva.

Service listings provided by

PROGRESSIVE DEL TORO OFFICE PRODUCTS
120 N. Meridian St.
Portland, Indiana 47371
(260) 726-9201
progressiveofficeproducts.com

Show selection has been set

Jay County Civic Theatre approved its show selection committee's recommendations for its three-year show plan during Thursday's meeting.

The show selection committee's plan lays out JCCT's schedule through December 2028. Shows planned for the remainder of its 2025-26 season are Legally Blonde this month, Annie in December and 1776 in June 2026. (The 2026-27 season schedule will be announced in January.)

While future shows cannot be announced until rights are secured, part of the show selection committee's plan is

to make the Christmas 2028 production an audience choice. A public poll to select that show will be posted during the first half of 2027.

The board also:

- Announced its lineup of directors for 2027, which will be its 50th anniversary. Set to direct shows as part of the celebration year are Jennifer McGraw, Jason McGraw, Bev Wolford, Greg Ashley and Ray Cooney.
- Heard updates that JCCT's finance committee will meet Thursday, Sept. 11, and its education and youth committee will meet Sunday, Sept. 14. Both will present reports to

the board at its October meeting.

- Discussed additional ways to promote Jay County Civic Theatre through its website and social media.
- Decided against moving forward with a proposed bylaw change that would have allowed for proxy voting at its annual meeting.

The next Jay County Civic Theatre regular board meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 8, in the board room at Arts Place.

The next Jay County Civic Theatre production is "Legally Blonde" on Sept. 25, 26, 27 and 28.

Concerns crop up about meal

DEAR ABBY: My niece recently received her doctorate, and I have been invited to a celebration. A small bakery will be catering the meal. I have celiac disease, which means I have dietary restrictions (no wheat) that my family is aware of because another niece also has celiac. The bakery is small and is located in a small rural community. I tried looking up their menu online without success.

How do I handle this? I inquired and was told they will have a baked potato on the menu. Should I bring my own food to the celebration? Should I not attend or attend and have only the baked potato? I like baked potatoes, but I would probably need more to eat than that. Should I bring up my dietary restrictions prior to the celebration or drive the four-hour round trip in silence? — RESTRICTED IN OHIO

DEAR RESTRICTED: It

Dear Abby



says in the Bible, "Seek and ye shall find." Because the bakery doesn't have an online presence doesn't mean it doesn't have a telephone. Use it, tell them about your dietary needs and ask if you can be accommodated beyond a baked potato. You may be pleasantly surprised, especially since you aren't the only relative who has dietary restrictions.

However, if the answer is no, bring something along you CAN eat and consume it near the end of your four-hour drive rather than suffer in silence.

Sorority news

Zeta Alpha chapter of Delta Theta Tau sorority met Sept. 11. The members attending were Sharon Hammers, Nancy Garinger, Lois Nauman, Mary Miller, Jackie McCollum, Connie Louck, Bonnie Seward, Susan

Louck, Linda Lowe and Sue Ann McLaughlin. A thank you note was received from our scholarship recipient. We discussed selling apple dumplings and turned in our orders to be delivered in October.

We will help host the province convention with Dunkirk's chapter. Hostesses Connie Louck and Bonnie Seward served delicious treats. Mary Miller was the Lucky Lady and Nancy Garinger took home the Pot of Gold.

Community Calendar

Notices will appear in Community Calendar as space is available. To submit an item, email news@thecr.com.

Today
WEDNESDAY MORNING BREAKFAST CLUB — Will meet at 8 a.m. in the east room of Richards Restaurant. All women are invited to attend. Includes activities and devotional time.

PING PONG — Will be played from 11 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays at West Jay Community Center.

PORTLAND ROTARY CLUB — Will meet at noon each Wednesday in the cafe at John Jay Center for Learning, 101 S. Meridian St., Portland.

COMMUNITY REINFORCEMENT AND FAMILY TRAINING — A non-confrontational, evidence-based intervention for helping families affected by addiction meets at 4 p.m. each Wednesday in the IU Health Jay Outpatient Behavioral Health Center, Entrance C, 510 W. Votaw St., Portland.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP — New Beginnings, a support group for friends and families of alcoholics, will meet at 6:30 p.m. each Wednesday in the Zion Lutheran Church, 218 E. High St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 726-8229.

A BETTER LIFE – BRIANNA'S HOPE — A faith-based recovery group for all kinds of addictions, will meet from 6:30 to 8 p.m. each Wednesday at Redkey United Methodist

Church, 122 W. Main St. Come early for a meal. For more information, call Pastor Randy Davis at (765) 369-2085.

Thursday
STITCH AND CHATTER QUILT CLUB — Meets from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month at Jay Community Center. Show and tell is at 1 p.m. The club is open to all ages and is for anyone who wants to sew. Bring unfinished projects and a sewing machine. For more information, call Nan Weesner (260) 766-9334.

CELEBRATE RECOVERY — A 12-step Christian recovery program meets at 10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. each Thursday at A Second Chance At Life Ministries, 228 S. Meridian St. in Portland. For more information, call Brenda Eads at (260) 726-9625 or Dave Keen at (260) 251-8792.

SMART RECOVERY — A group for those struggling with addiction that focuses on motivation, coping with cravings, managing thoughts, feelings and behavior, and living a balanced life meets at 11 a.m. each Thursday in the IU Health Jay Outpatient Behavioral Health Center, Entrance C, 510 W. Votaw St., Portland.

EN AVANT CLUB — Meets at 1 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR SUICIDE GRIEF — Meets from 1 to 2:30 p.m. the third Thursday of each month. The support group serves to help indi-

viduals who have lost a loved one to suicide. To register, contact Stephanie Patterson at (260) 251-3259.

ORGAN TRANSPLANT SUPPORT GROUP — Will meet at 3 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month in the IU Health Blackford main conference room.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY HEALTH JAY HOSPITAL OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP — Will meet at 6 p.m. the third Thursday of each month in Indiana University Health Jay Hospital Conference Room B. The group is for ostomy and intestinal diversion patients and their friends and family to offer mutual support and learn about the latest products and information.

PORTLAND LIONS CLUB — Will meet at 6:30 p.m. the third Thursday of the month at Portland Lions Civic Center, 307 W. 100 North.

FORGET-ME-NOT — A support group for parents, friends and relatives who have lost a baby through miscarriage, birth or illness will meet from 7 to 9 p.m. at St. Vincent Randolph Hospital, Winchester, in community room 1.

Friday
DUNKIRK HISTORICAL MUSEUM — Is open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the third Friday and Saturday of each month at Webster Depot, 132 W. Railroad St.

PAST RECOVERY SERVICES — Peer Addiction Support Team recovery support group meets at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. each Friday at the Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition office at 100 N. Meridian St., Portland. To learn more information, please call (260) 251-3259.

CINCINNATUS LEAGUE — Will hold its next meeting at noon Friday, Sept. 19, at Harmony Cafe in Portland.

Saturday
ALCOHOLICS ANONY-

MOUS — Will meet at 10 a.m. at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, 218 E. High St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 251-3336 or (260) 729-7000.

DUNKIRK HISTORICAL MUSEUM — Is open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the third Friday and Saturday of each month at Webster Depot, 132 W. Railroad St.

MUSEUM OF THE SOLDIER — Is open from noon to 5 p.m. the first and third Saturday and Sunday of the month. It is located at 510 E. Arch St., Portland. The website is museumofthesoldier.com.

Sunday
A BETTER LIFE – BRIANNA'S HOPE — A faith-based recovery group for all kinds of addictions, will meet from 5 to 6:30 p.m. each Sunday at Fellowship Baptist Church, 289 S. 200 West, Portland. Come early for a meal. For more information, call (260) 766-2006.

Monday
PORTLAND BREAKFAST OPTIMISTS — Will meet at 7 a.m. for breakfast at Richards Restaurant.

PING PONG — Will be played from 9 a.m. to noon each Monday at Jay Community Center.

EUCHRE — Will be played starting at 1 p.m. each Monday at West Jay Community Center, 125 Hoover St., Dunkirk.

TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY (TOPS) — Will meet for weigh-in at 4:30 p.m., with the meeting at 5 p.m., at Trinity United Methodist Church, 323 S. Meridian St., Portland. New members welcome. For more information, call (260) 726-5924.

THE LIFE CENTER — Free pregnancy testing with ongoing support during and after pregnancy, as well as help with the needs of the family. The center is located at 1209 S. Shank St.,

Portland. Hours are 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call (260) 726-8636. Walk-ins accepted.

BREAD OF LIFE COMMUNITY FAMILY MEAL — Will be served from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at Asbury United Methodist Church, 204 E. Arch St. in Portland. Everyone is welcome.

PORTLAND EVENING OPTIMIST CLUB — Will meet at 6 p.m. the second and fourth Monday of each month at Richards

Restaurant.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS — Will meet at 6:30 p.m. each Monday at A Second Chance At Life Ministries, 228 S. Meridian St. in Portland. For more information, call Brenda Eads at (260) 726-9625 or Dave Keen at (260) 251-8792.

Tuesday
JAY COUNTY PASTORS AND CHAPLAINS — Meet at 8 a.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at Richards Restaurant.

BEFORE**AFTER!**

CRACKED OR BOWING WALLS
SETTLING FOUNDATIONS
BASEMENT WATERPROOFING
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Sudoku

					9			
	5		6	4				
	2				8		1	3
5		1			4			
			5	2				
	3			7				9
		2		8	3		7	
			9					
		4		6		8		

Level: Intermediate

Tuesday's Solution

6	4	2	5	7	1	9	3	8
8	7	9	3	2	4	5	6	1
1	5	3	6	9	8	7	2	4
5	3	6	4	8	9	1	7	2
7	9	8	1	6	2	3	4	5
4	2	1	7	3	5	6	8	9
3	8	5	2	1	7	4	9	6
9	1	7	8	4	6	2	5	3
2	6	4	9	5	3	8	1	7

The objective is to fill a nine-by nine grid so that each column, each row, and each of the nine three-by-three boxes (also called blocks or regions) contains the digits from 1 to 9 only one time each.

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The Commercial Review

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Art is about inspiration, insight

Editor's note: This column is being reprinted from Sept. 15, 2010. Jack was an art lover: He wrote about the walls of his home that were running out of space for new pieces. A plein air event is now held in his honor. No matter how you define art, take a moment to appreciate it

By JACK RONALD
The Commercial Review

What is art? OK, OK, that's a way-too-heavy question to launch a column in a small town Indiana newspaper. But I've got to admit it has been on my mind for the past couple of months.

It all started, as such things do these days, with noodling around on the Internet. (Hey, if Google has all the answers, it's only appropriate that the 'Net provides some questions.) I was goofing around on eBay, doing some random searches in hopes of finding a few things of interest. I'd already tried "Portland

Back in the Saddle



Ind.," and "Jay County," and "Antrim NH," and a couple of others that sometimes provide something amusing to look at. Then I plugged in the name of an Indiana artist, one of the prominent names from the first half of the last century. And what popped up provoked that question: What is art?

That's because, when I typed in "T.C. Steele" or "William Merritt Chase," I was offered an opportunity to buy a masterpiece. Or, rather, multiple masterpieces. Enterprising Chinese companies have set up Web sites that will

provide you with a painted-on-order "original reproduction" of paintings by dozens of American and European artists.

Always wished you could afford a John Singer Sargent for the front hall? No problem. Ever wished you could have your own Monet? Just click the right buttons and let PayPal do the rest.

Now, art lovers in the West are used to reproductions. There are museum prints and posters by the thousands. And they're viewed — not surprisingly — as something far less than the original. They're knock-offs, pumped out by printing presses routinely.

But this was something different. This was a hand-painted copy, and there's no question that the person wielding the paintbrush had tremendous skill. And your choices were as wide and as varied as you could imagine. As I understand it, they'll even send you digital images of the work in

progress so you can approve before you agree to foot the bill.

My reaction to this phenomenon could not have been more ambivalent. Part of me was snobbish about the idea of buying a reproduction. I'm not sure why. Artists have done copies of the works of others for centuries as a way of honing their skills. And part of me wanted to place an order.

The idea of owning T.C. Steele's rowing boatsman or Sargent's "Madame X" was beguiling. A little wacky, but beguiling. The net result has been to wonder about that whole question at the start of this column.

If a copy is just as beautiful as the original and if the technical skills involved are just as great, by what degree is the copy less a work of art than the original?

I found myself thinking back to a moment in China more than 20 years ago. A representative of

the Chinese government had shown us a lovely clay bust of a young woman. I found myself wanting to take the thing home, but then he pointed out that the state-run factory could churn out thousands of identical pieces a month.

And suddenly I didn't want it. It was just as beautiful as it had been an instant before, but the moment it became a manufactured product instead of the fruit of the inspiration of an individual, its value was diminished. Art was inherent in the moment of creation.

But technical skills that can replicate the same work are strangely sterile, devoid of inspiration and insight.

Does that make sense? I honestly do not know, but it's the best I can do, having raised a profound question on a September afternoon in a small town newspaper.

RFK's vision for CDC is alarming

Bloomberg Opinion
Tribune News Service

Susan Monarez's 28-day tenure as the nation's top public-health official was doomed from the start. Her boss, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., wanted her to do two things: champion his dubious anti-vaccine agenda and uphold "gold-standard science" at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Recognizing the conflict, Monarez chose the latter and was fired last month.

Monarez's departure from the CDC highlights a dilemma that any successor will face: Under Kennedy, no serious scientist can hold the job. The risk this vacuum of expertise could pose to Americans' health and safety is significant.

Kennedy has been a vaccine skeptic and conspiracy theorist for decades. Public frustration with pandemic-era mask and vaccine mandates helped catapult him to popularity and may have led to his appointment as health secretary. Although the White House gave Kennedy permission to "go wild" on health, lawmakers were given assurances that he wouldn't do much to change vaccine policy.

So much for that. Since assuming his post, Kennedy has taken steps to restrict availability of the COVID-19 shot, which he once falsely called "the deadliest vaccine ever made." He also purged the panel of experts that offers recommendations about vaccine use, cut critical vaccine research, and plans to publish a report "within a month" that aims to identify the heretofore elusive causes of autism, which he strongly suggests is caused by vaccines. (There's no evidence to support this.)

In a hearing last week, Kennedy defended these measures as a "once-in-a-generation" effort to remake the CDC and restore "gold-standard science." They're nothing of the sort. Rather, the secretary appears intent on clearing room for more pliable subordinates, including his handpicked vaccine panel. Monarez says Kennedy asked her to preapprove this group's recommendations, which are due later this month.

Guest Editorial

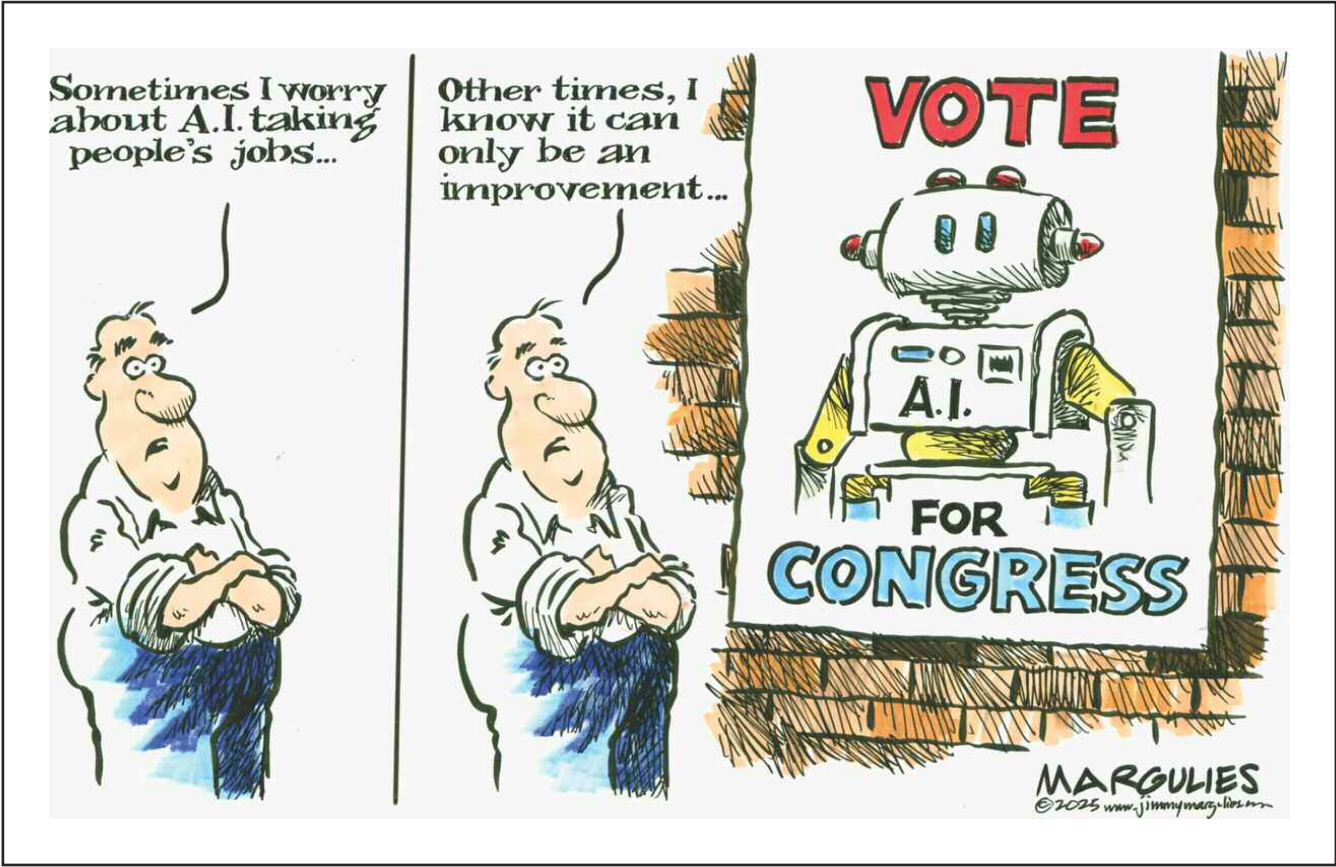
When she refused, she was given the choice to resign or lose her job. Kennedy refutes this account.

It's unclear whether Monarez was terminated legally. An acting director nonetheless already has been named: a close Kennedy aide and former biotech investor who has been known to peddle vaccine misinformation.

Monarez's departure itself isn't a crisis. More troubling is the exodus of top-level experts behind her — to say nothing of the hundreds of staff who've already been let go. A carousel of amateurish acting directors would only make things worse.

The prospect of a CDC hollowed of expertise should alarm lawmakers. When an outbreak hits, seasoned leaders are needed to work across agencies, coordinate with state and local health officials, field calls from governors and foreign ministries of health, and communicate with the public. Staffing the agency with inexperienced loyalists will waste time and resources, increase the chances of costly mistakes, and put American lives at risk.

Almost a dozen Democratic senators have demanded Kennedy's resignation, while influential Republicans including Bill Cassidy and Lisa Murkowski have called for oversight of Monarez's firing. An investigation is likely in order. Although lawmakers pressed Kennedy to explain his actions in last week's hearing, they failed to set a deadline for filling Monarez's role with a qualified replacement. It isn't too late: Concerns that the secretary might keep the job open — granting himself more authority in the interim — are mounting. The countless public-health threats that the CDC regularly contains are invisible to most Americans. Lawmakers ought to know better.



Stop the language of hate

By JONATHAN ZIMMERMAN
Chicago Tribune
Tribune News Service

You're deploying hateful language! You're encouraging political violence!

Now, please excuse me while I do the same thing.

Welcome to the new American berserk, to borrow Philip Roth's memorable phrase. We're going crazy by denouncing violent rhetoric by others, even as we engage in it ourselves.

Witness President Donald Trump's statement after conservative activist Charlie Kirk was assassinated on Wednesday. "It's long past time for all Americans and the media to confront the fact that violence and murder are the tragic consequence of demonizing those with whom you disagree day after day, year after year, in the most hateful and despicable way possible," Trump said.

Then he went on to blame the "radical left" for Kirk's murder, as well as for the attempt last year made on Trump's life in Butler, Pennsylvania. Never mind that the Butler shooter was a registered Republican and that Kirk's murderer hasn't been conclusively identified. (Law enforcement officials took a suspect into custody on Friday, but we don't know his politics.)

In other words: Trump demonizes people he disagrees with, in the most hateful and despicable way.

And he's been doing it for years, of course. He calls his opponents scum, lowlifes, animals, losers and hundreds of other slurs.

He urged supporters at a Trump rally to "knock the crap" out of hecklers. He praised a GOP congressman who body-slammed a reporter.

Other Republicans — including Kirk — have promoted the "great replacement theory," which warns that white Americans are being overrun by nonwhite people and immigrants. That's what reportedly moti-

Jonathan Zimmerman



vated a white man to kill 10 African Americans at a Buffalo, New York, grocery store in 2022. Likewise, the man who killed 23 people in 2019 at an El Paso, Texas, Walmart — which served mostly Hispanic customers — said he was "defending my country from cultural and ethnic replacement."

Does that mean Kirk and other GOP replacement theorists were responsible for these murderous assaults? Of course not. But surely demonizing immigrants and racial minorities — day after day, year after year — makes violence against them more likely to occur.

So does calling Trump a Nazi or a fascist, as some people on the left are wont to do. Fascists don't believe in democracy; they can only be dislodged with violence. And according to a survey earlier this year by Robert Pape, America's leading authority on political violence, 39% of Democrats agreed that removing Trump from office by force is justifiable.

So we shouldn't be surprised when some people actually take up arms against him or his allies. Consider the man arrested in 2022 for attempting to kill Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh out of fear that the court would overrule Roe v. Wade (which it did, a few weeks later). And let's not forget the 2017 shooting of Republican House Majority Whip Steve Scalise, by a man who was upset about Trump's victory the previous year. "It's time to destroy Trump & co.," the shooter posted on social media.

You might argue that Trump has

exhibited authoritarian behavior, and you might be right. But calling him a fascist or Nazi isn't an argument; it's a slur, just like the insults that Trump tosses around. And for some listeners, it will be an invitation to violence. Investigators reportedly found "hey fascist! catch" engraved on a casing recovered with the rifle they suspect was used to kill Kirk.

We need to end this madness, right now, or more people will die. That doesn't mean creating new laws or restrictions around speech, which could be used by Trump — or anyone else in power — to muzzle voices and ideas they don't like.

Instead, we need to raise our own voices against violent rhetoric of every kind. And, most of all, we need to refrain from engaging in it ourselves. We're demonizing the other side, day after day, in a hateful and despicable way. We must stop. All of us.

That's why I was glad to see Republican U.S. Sen. Markwayne Mullin and Democratic U.S. Rep. Josh Gottheimer on TV after the Kirk assassination, pleading with Americans to stop hating on each other. "It's all of our faults, right?" Mullin said. "If you stir a fire, coals are going to come out of it. If you pour gasoline on a fire, it's going to explode."

Gottheimer agreed. "What we need to do is take the temperature down," he urged. "We have to get back to actually talking to one another."

The choice is ours, dear Americans. We can continue to pour gasoline on a fire, which will spark more tragic violence like Kirk suffered. Or we can take the temperature down, and get back to talking.

What do you want to do?

Zimmerman teaches education and history at the University of Pennsylvania and serves on the advisory board of the Albert Lepage Center for History in the Public Interest.

The Commercial Review



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"Were it left for me to decide whether we should have government without newspapers or newspapers without government I should not hesitate to prefer the latter."

—Thomas Jefferson

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Stahl floats facilities upgrades

By BAILEY CLINE
The Commercial Review

Fort Recovery Local Schools may be upgrading its football and track facilities.

Superintendent Tony Stahl shared goals and a proposal from architectural firm Garmann Miller for renovations to Barrenbrugge Athletic Park during Fort Recovery School Board’s meeting Monday.

Stahl explained the project, which would be done in collaboration with community stakeholders such as Fort Recovery Athletic Boosters, could be split into three phases. The first phase could involve removing the current ticket booth on the northeast side of the field and building a new facility on the north side of the concessions and restroom building. It could include space for referees and other general storage.

The second phase could involve relocating the visitors’ locker room to the northeast corner where the current ticket booth sits and expanding the existing locker rooms to add a student training and medical facility as well as additional storage.

The last phase could involve

Early proposal for projects includes new ticket booth, expanded locker room facilities

other projects, such as replacing lights or resurfacing the track.

High school principal Ryan Steinbrunner pointed to a need for additional space for coaches and the athletic trainer, as well as a desire to separate teams’ locker rooms to avoid potential conflict. Middle school principal Holly Gann — she previously served as athletics director — also noted the need for referees to have their own space.

Garmann Miller’s proposal to conduct a feasibility study is estimated at \$15,000, along with an additional \$9,600 for a construction site survey. Its services could include preliminary site and building designs, creating a probable cost budget and sketching renderings.

Stahl noted he wasn’t looking for a decision Monday but wanted to share details about the project with school board.

Connor Rammel of Fort Recovery Athletic Boosters explained that having a feasibility study done was helpful amid building the LeFevre Family Baseball and Softball Complex. He noted the group supports the project.

“I think we established at a Booster meeting that we’d like the school to kind of take the ball and run with it, and we’ll support in whatever we can monetarily,” he said.

School board member Sean Kahlig asked how much the upgrades will cost, with Stahl explaining those figures haven’t been determined yet.

Steinbrunner noted the proj-

ect doesn’t have to be completed in the order of the phases listed Monday. He thanked Fort Recovery Athletic Boosters for their support.

“With the support of the Boosters and sharing that vision, I think that these (goals) are all obtainable here in the coming years,” he said.

Also, Stahl noted Ohio School Report Card results were announced Monday, with Fort Recovery Local Schools rated as a five-star district for the second year in a row. Schools are measured based on their performance across the following components: achievement, progress, gap closing, early literacy and graduation.

Stahl said he plans to share more data surrounding the achievement at school board’s meeting in October or November.

In other news, school board members Greg LeFevre, Mitch Fullenkamp, Nick Wehrkamp, Don Wendel and Kahlig:

- Accepted a \$146,589 bid from Cardinal Bus Sales and Services for an 84-passenger Blue Bird bus.

- Heard Village of Fort Recovery representatives Aaron

Rengers and Randy Diller will return to share updates on progress toward a Community Reinvestment Area at school board’s October meeting.

- Were informed treasurer Deanna Knapke will give her five-year financial forecast a month ahead of the normal timeline, with the board to hold a work session at 6 p.m. Oct. 13 and its regular meeting to follow.

- Approved athletic contracts with the following for the current school year: girls bowling coach Doug Stone, boys bowling coach Jim Sheppard, swim coach Abby Timmerman and softball coach Alyssa Lewis.

- Accepted Brian Hemmelgarn as volunteer wrestling coach and Reece Grieshop as volunteer wrestling assistant coach.

- Hired Christy Kaiser as a van driver retroactive to Aug. 29, Judy Fortener and Esther Heitkamp as substitutes retroactive to Aug. 19 and Leak Koesters as a non-teaching employee for the current school year.

- OK’d FFA members to attend National FFA Convention from Oct. 28 through Oct. 31 in Indianapolis.

Odds ...

Continued from page 1

Hilfiker asked Westlake specifically what he does not like about the budget. A back-and-forth argument between Westlake and Phillips regarding development of the budget followed.

“It should be a team,” said Geesaman when Westlake turned the question to him.

The council ultimately made no modifications to the proposed budget. A vote to adopt the budget is slated for the Oct. 6 council meeting.

In other business, the council:

- On first reading, approved an update to the city’s right-of-way ordinance to offer the option of a bond to ensure that any damage to streets is properly repaired. The ordinance, as passed earlier this year, required a \$500 permit fee each time a street is cut. The change came after a request from Ohio Valley Gas. The change will need to be approved on second reading before going into effect.

- Approved the following: changes to the city’s handbook to reflect updates to state law regarding ghost employment and parental rights, as well as to reflect changes the council previously approved to the city’s sick time donation policy.

- Heard Goldsworthy ask about the status of the T.J.’s Bicycle & Moped Sales, 311 N. Meridian St., Portland. A truck drove into the northwest corner of the building last year, causing significant damage. Goldsworthy said a resident expressed concern about the structure. The mayor said he talked to property owner Tim Miller last week and that the building is on the radar of Jay/Portland Building and Planning director John Hemmelgarn.

- Heard Westlake note various events that occurred over the week-end, including the Chainsaw Carving Invitational, harness racing and Jay County Cancer Society Cruise, Car Show and Carnival, all at Jay County Fairgrounds. He noted that the Indiana Military Vehicle Preservation Association’s Show and Swap Meet will be at the fairgrounds on Friday and Saturday.

- Received a reminder from Goldsworthy that the Jay County High School homecoming parade is at 5 p.m. Friday evening. The parade will start at Jay County Fairgrounds and end at East Jay Elementary School.

Tracking the claims

Claimant	Who is named?	Allegations
Brad Clayton	The City of Portland and Lori Phillips	That his private Family Medical Leave Act information was illegally made public on multiple occasions, including by phone and to Portland Board of Works.
Patrick Long	The City of Portland, Portland Police Department, Dustin Mock and Jeff Hopkins	Attempts of coercion and threats regarding an Indiana State Police investigation, disregarding department policy and interfering with a job application.
Kyle Denney	The City of Portland, Mayor Jeff Westlake, Jay County Probation Office and Ashley Reynolds	That the mayor published statements including allegations of misconduct against him in relation to Westlake visiting the scene of a police response.
Lori Phillips	The City of Portland, Portland Police Department, Dustin Mock and Jeff Hopkins	“Torment, harassmt and defamation,” including being threatened repeatedly. Illegal review and distribution of recordings of her in a city exercise room.
Brad Clayton	The City of Portland	Being berated by wastewater department superintendent Brad Dues, and city officials, including the mayor, spreading misinformation about him.
Dustin Mock and Jeff Hopkins	The City of Portland, clerk-treasurer Lori Phillips and her office, and council members Ron May, Mike Aker and Dave Golden	A wide range of issues including false allegations by Phillips, ethical violations by city attorney Wes Schemenaur and ongoing bias from council members.

Claim ...

Continued from page 1

Of the other active tort claims, one has advanced to court with Phillips suing the city, the police department, Mock and Hopkins. In that case, Special Judge Douglas Mawhorr granted Phillips’s motion for a joint case management order, which establishes a shared timeline for pretrial pro-

ceedings leading to a trial. He gave the parties involved 30 days to submit their proposals.

On Friday, attorney Katlyn M. Christman Clark Johnson & Knight, Merrillville, filed a motion Friday to dismiss Portland clerk-treasurer Lori Phillips’ lawsuit against the police department, Portland

Police Chief Dustin Mock and investigator Jeff Hopkins, arguing that they cannot be sued. (The City of Portland is also named in the suit.)

In her lawsuit, Phillips alleges that she has been the focus of “torment, harassment and defamation” by the city’s police department.

Portland wastewater department employee Brad Clayton filed two claims, alleging that his Family Medical Leave Act information was illegally made public and that he was berated by wastewater department superintendent Brad Dues and that city representatives, including mayor Jeff Westlake,

spread information about him and his job.

Former Portland police officer Patrick Long alleges various incidents of harassment and other issues, and former Portland police officer Kyle Denney alleges that Westlake made statements that included allegations of misconduct against him.

Centers ...

Continued from page 1

Jay County clerk Missy Elliott said she received a phone call from one Pennville resident who was concerned the change will take away from Pennville voters.

“While the Pennville Lions’ building that we currently use is a wonderful facility, it is not handicapped accessible,” said Elliott. “Redkey, we’re having the same issue trying to find a location that is handicap accessible, number one, and number two, that meets the requirements — you have to have two paved spots for voting, and we have not been able to find those yet.”

Elliott explained the election board is open to adding more vote center locations if needed and if suitable locations can be found. She mentioned the next presidential election as an example, pointing to its higher voter turnout, and said the board may choose to add more locations for 2028.

“I also want to point out that just because we say we’re going to have two locations doesn’t

mean that’s the way it’s going to stay always,” she said. “We are open to adding more locations based on voter feedback, voter turnout and the election.”

The county owns 55 voting machines. Plans are to utilize more machines at both vote centers, which vote center study committee members noted may help speed up the process.

Rob Weaver of WPGW Radio asked if all counties surrounding Jay have already moved to vote centers. Elliott confirmed Adams, Blackford, Randolph and Wells counties already utilize them, with Delaware County currently looking into the polling method. (Two-thirds of Indiana counties use vote centers, said Elliott.)

Responding to a question on whether she thinks the change will deter folks from voting, Elliott pointed to early voter turnout. In the 2024 general election, she noted, 4,073 voters participated in early voting, while 3,874 voters cast their ballots on Election Day. She said she doesn’t foresee a drop in participa-

tion as a result of the shift to vote centers.

“It’s hard to gauge,” she added. “That’s why we welcome the public feedback.”

Local resident Sara Darby, who served on the vote center study committee, pointed to various instances of residents showing up to the wrong location to vote. Dunkirk Police Chief Dane Mumbower, who also served on the study committee, recalled folks who would show up shortly before the polls close only to learn they are at the wrong location.

With the ability for any Jay County registered voter to cast their ballot at any vote center, that problem would be eliminated.

Former Jay County clerk Jane Ann Runyon voiced support for vote centers.

The plan presented Monday serves as a draft, said Elliott. Per state law, the election board must hold a public comment period for 30 days to allow input on the vote center plan before finalizing it. Once public com-

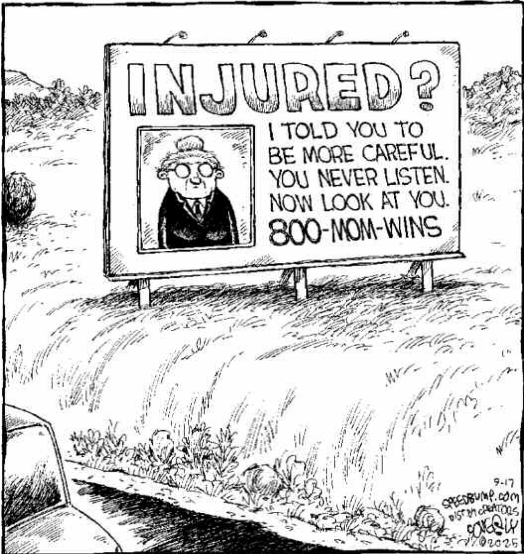
ments have been implemented to the plan, the election board must vote unanimously to adopt it at a public meeting, which is slated for Oct. 16. The plan is then filed with Indiana Election Division.

Elliott said she’s planning to alert registered voters with a notice in the mail, as well as adding a notice to residents’ tax bills and displaying signs at former polling locations on Election Day directing voters to the new centers.

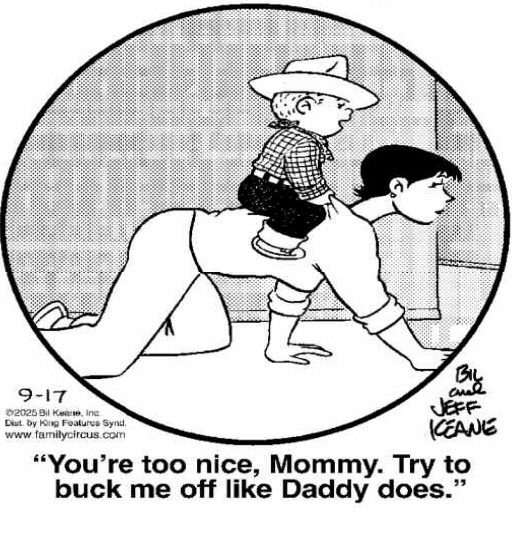
Once the plan is enacted, election board members may make amendments as needed. Answering a question from The Commercial Review, Elliott said she would be happy to alert media about amendments as they are made in the future. She pointed out the clerk’s office and election board aren’t required to give notice to voters but decided to do so.

“I’m choosing to do so because I feel like that’s my due diligence to let everyone know about the change as well as I can,” Elliott said.

SPEED BUMP Dave Coverly



THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



Peanuts



Rose is Rose



Agnes



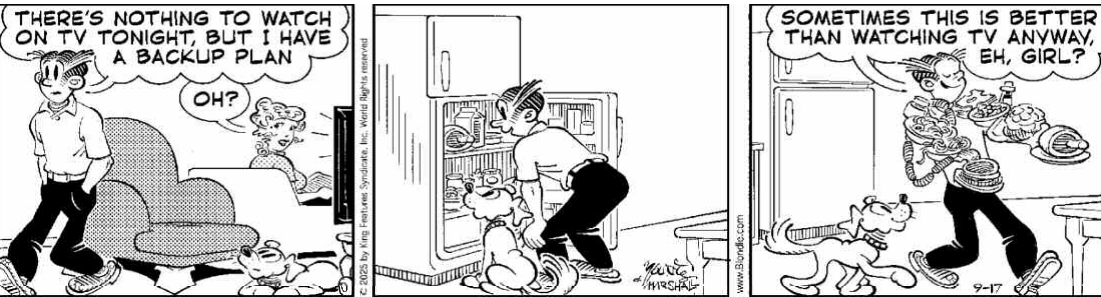
Hi and Lois



Between Friends



Blondie



Snuffy Smith



Beetle Bailey



Contract Bridge By Steve Becker

High-level thinking

East dealer.

Both sides vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ A 10 6
♥ 10 7 2
♦ A 5 4 3
♣ K 10 8

WEST
♠ 8 7 4
♥ K Q J
♦ 10 7 6 2
♣ 9 5 3

EAST
♠ K 5 2
♥ 8 5 4 3
♦ Q J 9
♣ Q 7 4

SOUTH
♠ Q J 9 3
♥ A 9 6
♦ K 8
♣ A J 6 2

The bidding:
East 1 NT Pass West 3 NT
Opening lead — king of hearts.

Point count is often just as helpful during the play as it is during the bidding. Take this case where East made an intelligent use of point count to defeat three notrump.

West led the K-Q-J of hearts. East playing the 4-3-8 in that order. Declarer won the third heart with the ace, led the queen of spades and finessed. East took the king and returned a spade, intentionally not cashing his last heart. He was try-

ing to convince declarer that West had the missing five of hearts.

South had eight sure tricks at this point and had to decide which way to take the two-way club finesse for his ninth trick. Convinced by East's play that West had the missing heart, he won the spade return with the jack and led a club to the ten. This approach would have assured the contract, even if the finesse lost, had West held the 13th heart.

But when East showed up with the queen of clubs and the missing heart, South went down one. True, he might have gone down anyway had East cashed his heart earlier, but East's subtle defense virtually guaranteed South would misguess the club finesse.

East's play was well-founded. He knew, after West had shown up with the K-Q-J of hearts, that South had every missing honor card for his 15- to 17-point one-trump opening. West had six points, dummy 11 and East eight to account for 25 points, leaving South with exactly 15 points, which had to include the A-J of clubs.

Luring declarer into taking the club finesse the wrong way involved high-level thinking by East — and it paid off very well indeed.

Tomorrow: The philosophical approach.
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9-17

CRYPTOQUIP

QVAM KIGOAIMHOF RARPAIW

VGZA ON EIAWW KNI ZGIHNJW

KNIRGS AZAMOW, WVNJSE OVAF

QAGI PIN OHAW?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF PEOPLE SEE ANY RAIN HITTING THE GROUND OR A BATHTUB GETTING FILLED, THEY WITNESS WETNESS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals M

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Egyptian deity
5 Prune
8 Besides that
12 "Scram!"
13 Hot temper
14 Little, at La Scala
15 Like some menial jobs
17 Novelist Hunter
18 Anticipate
19 Chirps
21 River blockers
24 Night school subj.
25 Buddies
28 Sicilian spouter
30 Little rascal
33 Khan title
34 From Athens
35 Service charge
36 Buddhist sect
37 Ogler's look
38 Euro fraction

39 "Despicable Me" character
41 Capital of Italia
43 Burning
46 Do penance
50 Rich soil
51 Car buyer's protection
54 Teen's woe
55 "See ya!"
56 Between jobs
57 Auto-graph
58 — Lingus
59 Unpaid TV ads (Abbr.)
DOWN
1 "La — Bonita"

2 Broadway offering
3 Hawk-eyes' home
4 Three-dimensional shapes
5 Actress Tyler
6 Raw mineral
7 Hide
8 Tools for duels
9 Romantic goings-on
10 "Be gone!"
11 Eternities
16 LAX info
20 Feeble
22 Simple
23 Take the wheel

25 La —, Bolivia
26 Census stat
27 Chinese virtuoso pianist
29 Octavia's spouse
31 Gents
32 Favorite
34 Morose
38 Tabby's temptation
40 Asian noodles
42 Chair-man of China
43 "Sad to say..."
44 Central points
45 "Prometheus" actor Idris
47 Early auto-maker
48 "The Lion King" lioness
49 Flock females
52 Needle hole
53 Sea, to Ravel

Solution time: 23 mins.



Buccs ...

Continued from page 8
“He got the dub. Leave it at that,” Gardner-Johnson said when asked about his interactions with Mayfield throughout the night. “Great player, great competitor. He won the game for his team. Congrats to him and on to the next.”

The two have had a war of words before. When Gardner-Johnson played for the Lions in 2023, he tried to compliment Tampa Bay’s receivers before facing the Bucs in the playoffs, but he said, “If you give that Tampa group a good quarterback, that’s a great group.” He also mentioned Russell Gage as one of the

‘That’s what you want. You want the opportunity to close the game out. Felt good about it all the way through. Get to fourth and 10, that’s an opportunity for us to close it out right there. Baker is a tough, tough player, man. He found a way. Found a way to scramble and break out and keep their drive going. That was tough.’

— Azeez Al-Shaair, Houston Texans linebacker

team’s pass-catchers when Gage had missed the entire season with an injury.

“He’s a good player, but yeah ...,” Mayfield said at the time, “just got to do a little bit more film study.”

Monday night was much more than just Mayfield vs. one player on the Texans defense.

Azeez Al-Shaair felt pretty good about where he and his Texans teammates

stood when Mayfield got the ball in his hands for one last time. Nick Chubb has just given the Texans their first lead of the second half at 19-14 and Mayfield was going to have to go 80 yards

in 2:10 to pull off the win.

“That’s what you want. You want the opportunity to close the game out,” the Texans linebacker said. “Felt good about it all the way through. Get to fourth

and 10, that’s an opportunity for us to close it out right there. Baker is a tough, tough player, man. He found a way. Found a way to scramble and break out and keep their drive going. That was tough.”

In the game-winning 80-yard drive, Mayfield completed 7-of-9 passes for 63 yards and rushed for 15 more. The final two yards came from a handoff to Rachaad White, who scored with nine seconds left.

“Competitive quarterback, can do everything,” Pitre said of Mayfield. “Definitely extends plays and I’ll leave it at that.”

Sports on tap

Local schedule

Thursday
Jay County — Boys soccer vs. Bellmont – 5 p.m.; Boys tennis at Winchester – 5 p.m.; Girls soccer at Southern Wells – 5:30 p.m.; Volleyball at Connersville – 6 p.m.; JV boys soccer vs. Bellmont – 6:30 p.m.
Fort Recovery — Girls golf at Fort Loramie – 4 p.m.; Boys golf at Newton – 4:30 p.m.; Volleyball vs. Coldwater – 5:30 p.m.; Middle school volleyball at Coldwater – 5 p.m.; Middle school football vs. St. John’s – 5:30 p.m.

TV schedule

Today
6 a.m. — Track and Field: World Athletics

Championship (USA)
1:15 p.m. — MLB: Cincinnati Reds at St. Louis Cardinals (FDSN Indiana)
6:40 p.m. — MLB: Cleveland Guardians at Detroit Tigers (FS1)
7 p.m. — College volleyball: Pitt at Penn State (BTN)
8 p.m. — WNBA: Phoenix Mercury at New York Liberty (ESPN)
10 p.m. — WNBA: Minnesota Lynx at Golden State Valkyries (ESPN)

Thursday
6 a.m. — Track and Field: World Athletics Championship (USA)
7:15 p.m. — MLB: Chicago Cubs at Cincinnati Reds (FOX)

7:30 p.m. — College football: Rice at Charlotte (ESPN)
8:15 p.m. — NFL: Miami Dolphins at Buffalo Bills (ABC)

Local notes

Tryouts set
The Jay County Winter Swim Club will host new swimmer tryouts at the high school swimming pool on Sept. 25 at 5:30 p.m.
A parent meeting for swimmers will also be held on Sept. 29 6:30 p.m. in the pool area.

Cooper to host
Cooper Farms will host its 18th Annual Turkey Trot 5K benefitting EverHeart Hospice on Nov. 1. The race will begin at Cooper Farms Turkey Har-

vesting Plant at 1 Cooper Farms Drive, St. Henry, OH. Registration is at 9 a.m. with the race beginning at 10 a.m.

There will be age groups from 9-and-younger to 60-and-older. Awards will be handed out to the top female and male from each age group.
Refreshments and a to-go turkey meal will be provided for all runners.
For more information on registering, visit speedyfeet.com and search “Cooper Farms Turkey Trot 5K” or email Tonya Huber at tonyah@cooperfarms.com.

Pull announced
The Monroe Lions will host its annual Truck/Tractor Pull on Sept. 20 at the Swiss Heritage Village pulling track.
The event is set to begin at 6:30. Admission costs \$10 for those 12 and older and free for all 11

and younger.
Raffle tickets will be on sale, while concessions are also available.

Chamber to host
Jay County Chamber of Commerce will host its golf outing on Sept. 19 at 9 a.m.
Participation costs \$250 per team with lunch included. A \$20 team mulligan golf ball can be purchased as well.
Sponsorships can be purchased as well. A lunch sponsorship will cost \$500, while a gold sponsorship will go for \$450. Hole sponsorships cost \$100 for members and \$150 for non-members.
The deadline to register is Sept. 12. For more info, call (260) 726-4481 or email amanda@jay-countychamber.com.

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90 SALE CALENDAR

LAND AUCTION
MONDAY OCTOBER 13TH, 2025
TIME 5:00 P.M.
LOCATED: 1 Mile North of New Mt Pleasant on Como Rd, Portland, IN
REAL ESTATE
95.67 Acres In Section 16, Jefferson Twp, Jay County Indiana. Practically all tillable with Frontage on Como Rd. Property does have a Windmill, Lease and Payment will stay with the Farm. Wooded area not Included. Taxes to be prorated day of Closing. Possession upon Harvest of 2025 Crops. Drive by's are Welcome or Phone Auctioneers for More Information. Auction Held On-Site.
OWNERS: Denney Family Properties, LLC

90 SALE CALENDAR

Note: Check Auctionsoft and AuctionZip for more photos.
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AUCTIONEERS
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Lic. #AU10500168
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Pete D. Shawver
Lic. #AU19700040
260-726-5587

LAND AUCTION
MONDAY OCTOBER 20TH, 2025
TIME 5:00 P.M.
LOCATED: CR 200 S AND CR 300 E. PORTLAND, IN
REAL ESTATE
74 +/- Acres in Section 35, Wayne Twp, Jay County Indiana with 67 Acres Tillable, balance being Wooded and Road Frontage. Farm has Frontage on CR's 200 S and 300 E.
Typography: Level. Possession: Upon Closing or Harvest of 2025 Crops. Taxes: To be Prorated the Day of Closing. Very Desirable Farm in a Great Location. Drive by's are Welcome or Phone Auctioneers for More Information. Auction Held On-Site.
OWNER: Gary D and Kimbra L Weesner
Note: Check Auctionsoft and AuctionZip for more photos.
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Pete D. Shawver
Lic. #AU19700040
260-726-5587

PUBLIC AUCTION
Located: 103 S Washington Street, Montpelier IN
Saturday Morning SEPTEMBER 27, 2025 10:00 A.M.
REAL ESTATE
1 story home built in 1950 with 3 bedrooms, 2 full bathrooms and 1478 square feet of living area. Home has a gas forced air furnace, central air, gas fireplace, gas water heater, and a detached 1 car garage. For more information or a private showing contact Loy Real Estate, Kim Loy Broker 260-726-2700 or Gary Loy Auctioneer 260-726-5160
HOUSEHOLD GOODS - OLD & COLLECTORS ITEMS - GUNS
3 pc. Queen size bedroom suit with Sleep Number mattress; Whirlpool refrigerator; Smith Bros. 3 cushion sofa; (2) leather recliners; Longaberger baskets; McCoy owl cookie jar; Diamond Arms 12ga single shot; Stevens 22 lever action single shot octagon barrel; baseball gloves; canning jars; Coke bottles; and many other items not listed.
TRAILER - TOOLS
2 wheel 5' x 6' trailer; Troy Bilt 24i snowblower; Viper Earthquake

90 SALE CALENDAR

roto tiller; Craftsman router; McCulloch Power Mack 320 chain saw; ; buzz saw blade; 2 man saw; levels; oil cans; pry bars; pliers; screwdrivers; and other items not listed.
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Travis Theurer AU11200131
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Kaden Khayyata AU12400069

PUBLIC AUCTION
Located: Under cover in the Industrial Building at the Jay County Fairgrounds, 806 W Votaw St., Portland, IN
Thursday Afternoon SEPTEMBER 18, 2025 5:00 P.M.
HOUSEHOLD GOODS- OLD & COLLECTORS ITEMS
Berne 2 cushion sofa; Berne 3 cushion sofa; 3 pc. full size bedroom suit with 4 drawer dresser and 4 drawer bookshelf; GE upright freezer; GE upright refrigerator; Avanti dorm size refrigerator; (2) Lazy Boy rocker/recliner; 1/24 SCALE DIE CAST CARS: LARGE SELECTION TO INCLUDE Dale Earnhardt, Michael Waltrip, Dale Jarrett, Dale Earnhardt Jr., and Jamie McMurray to name a few; Hummel figurines; Jim Davis paperweight; Nativty blow molds; and other items not listed.
GARDEN TRACTOR- TOOLS
Allis Chalmere 712 garden tractor with snow thrower and roto tiller; Sears Craftsman 12i band saw; Black & Decker Deluxe Power-Shop radial arm saw; Craftsman 12i wood lathe; Craftsman 10i table saw; hand saws; furniture clamps; vise grips; and many other items not listed.
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PUBLIC AUCTION
Located: Under cover in the Industrial Building at the Jay County Fairgrounds, 806 W Votaw St., Portland, IN
Wednesday Afternoon SEPTEMBER 24, 2025 5:00 P.M.
HOUSEHOLD GOODS- OLD & COLLECTORS ITEMS
Oak table with 2 extra boards and 6 chairs, VERY NICE; Oak flat-door cupboard, VERY NICE; gun cabinet; vanity with bench; wood rocker; Oak coffee table; jewelry; jewelry boxes; hunting knives; pocket knives; swords; spurs; pickle jar; parlor lamp; belt buckles; large set of Gone With The Wind plates; over 5 large totes

90 SALE CALENDAR

of Hot Wheels, accordion;Sears 8 track AM/FM vehicle player; FM radio converter; Cobra CB; and other items not listed.
SUV-BOAT & TRAILER- TOOLS
2020 Chevrolet Equinox with 67,000 miles, VIN # 3GNAXEJEV1LS630513 ; 14' Starcraft boat with 19hp Evinrude motor, cover, fish finder and includes a 14' Texas Royal trailer; Brute 7000 watt generator; Snapper riding lawn mower with 28i cut; Century battery charger; Craftsman sockets; Black & Decker circular saw; air impact; air rachet; tarps; and other items not listed.
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PUBLIC AUCTION
Located: Jay County Fairgrounds Women's Building Monday evening
OCTOBER 6, 2025 at 6:00 P.M.
REAL ESTATE
Parcel is located on 50 E just south of 200 S. Property consists of 8.48 acres of woods and has a driveway that runs from 50E back to the woods. This would be a good recreational site. 20% nonrefundable deposit day of sale with balance due at closing. Owner will provide Owners Title Insurance and General Warranty Deed. Buyer will assume taxes due and payable in May 2026 and thereafter. Any statements made day of sale take precedence over previously written or oral matter. Owner confirmation day of sale.
For more information contact Loy Real Estate 260-726-2700 or Gary Loy Auctioneer 260-726-5160.
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PUBLIC AUCTION
SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 20th, 2025
TIME 9:00 A.M.
LOCATED: 2641 E 1100 S. Montpelier IN.
TRACTORS - CRAWLER
1968 JD 4020 D. w/ Quad-shift, Front weights, 4900 hours. 1967 JD 2510 w/ Front weights, 6800 hours. Case 1030 Tractor w/ 3600 hours. New Holland GT-122A Lawn Tractor w/ deck and blade.Wheelhorse 14HP

90 SALE CALENDAR

Garden Tractor. JD 450-B Crawler Loader. TRUCKS-MOTORCYCLES-FARM EQUIPMENT
. 1968 Chevy C50 Single Axel Dump Truck. 2000 Chevy S10 ZR2 4x4 93,000 Miles. 1985 Chevy C30 Utility Truck w/ Boom Lift and Snow Plow. 2021 Harley Davidson 1200 Model 48 w/ 2300 Miles. 2009 Kawasaki KLX 250 S Dirt Bike w/ 708 Miles. JD 55-A 3 Bottom Plow. Oliver 565 4 Bottom Plow. JD 7' Cycle Bar Mower. JD 4 Row Cultivator. New Idea 2 Row wide Picker. . JD 24T Square Baler. Kelly 18i Backhoe Bucket. 30 Ton Hyd Press. Lincoln 225 Welder. . Merry Mac Shredder Chipper. Rabbit Cages.
TOYS-ANTIQUES
JD, Oliver, Massey Ferguson, AC, Massey Harris Toy Tractors. . (2) 110 lb Anvils w/ Stands. Corn Sheller. Misc Slate. (4) Steel Wheels. Radio Flyer Wagon.
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PUBLIC AUCTION
SATURDAY SEPT. 27TH, 2025
TIME 10:00 A.M.
LOCATED: 1499 N 100 W. PORTLAND, IN
RTV-TRACTOR-MOWERS - MOTOR HOME- GOLF CART.
Kubota BX2680 4WD Tractor w/ LA 344 Loader 29.3 Hours. Ferris 61i 27HP Zero Turn Commercial Mower w/ Suspension 2020 Hours. 2004 Condor Motor Home w/ 2 Slide Outs, Built-in Generator, Sleeps 4, 20,875 Miles. 2022 EZ-GO Gas Lifted Golf Cart w/ Rear Seat, Street Legal. Paddle Boat. Flat Bottom Boat Trailer.
GUN -CROSSBOW
Savage 30.6 Model 110E Bolt Action. H&R Model 923 22 Cal 9 Shot Revolver. North Midlen Co. Black Powder Pistol. Ten Point XR-40 Crossbow w/ Scope and Crank. Gun Sight Stand. Small Combination and Gun Safe.
ANTIQUES-HOUSEHOLD -MISC
Authentic Signed Paintings Including West Point Painting. 6 pc Cherry California King Size Bedroom Suite Including Blanket Chest. 5 pc California King Walnut Bedroom Suite. Leather Power Love Seat and Chair. GE Washer and Dryer. Gaming Table. Golf Clubs. Pop-up Canopy. Cornhole Game. (8) 8'

90 SALE CALENDAR

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Tribe girls golf beat Russia 208-220 on Monday, see roundup below

Jay County girls soccer faces SWHS for first time, see Sports on tap

Sports

Cousins beat brothers

Dirksens beat Nortons to lift Jay County over Bruins

By ANDREW BALKO
The Commercial Review
A pair of cousins had to face a pair of brothers at the No. 1 and 2 singles. Both Nortons would need to pull out wins if the Bruins were going to go home happy, but just one Dirksen needed to be victorious to give the Patriots the match.

In the end, the cousins won out. The Jay County High School boys tennis team came up just short of a sweep of the Blackford Bruins, instead beating them 4-1 on Monday.

Jay County (9-4) had an advantage prior to the match starting as Blackford had to forfeit both the No. 1 and 2 doubles positions, due to a lack of depth on the roster. Despite the free 2-0 lead, the Patriots didn't play to their potential, leaving the door open for Blackford to take a point and 23 total games.

"It's a W," said JCHS coach Donald Gillespie. "We're not happy with it, but it's a W."

With the lead, the match was boiling down to which Dirksen cousin can beat which Norton brother first.

Paul Dirksen won that battle as he took down Trenton Norton 6-1, 6-2.

The Bruin didn't go down without a fight though as he forced deuce six times in the final game. As the advantage swung back and forth, Trenton Norton sat with match point before Paul Dirksen regained control. The JCHS freshman had to run up on a ball before softly hitting it in front of the Bruin to bounce twice. Paul Dirksen had match point off a forehand that went into the net, but had a slip up on the next return to bring it back to deuce. Paul Dirksen then closed off the match as Norton hit a backhand long and an under-



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Henry Dirksen hits a backhand during the Jay County High School boys tennis No. 2 singles match against Blackford on Monday. Dirksen beat Owen Norton 6-4, 6-4 to help the Patriots win the match 4-1.

handed shot sailed off to the right.

"He played pretty well," Gillespie said. "If you asked him, his serves were not good. Tonight, he could not hit a first serve worth

anything and sometimes that's just the way (it goes). We've had a pretty big stretch last week. We played five matches in six days and this week's not much different."

While Paul Dirksen's point won the match, Henry Dirksen was right behind. The cousin, also a freshman, beat Owen Norton 6-4, 6-4 in the No. 2 singles match.

They traded games in the first

set before Henry Dirksen pulled out the win. While the Patriot felt he could have played better, he found it effective to keep Owen Norton moving side-to-side and aiming for his backhand when possible.

"My backhands were feeling pretty good and I was just trying to keep him moving back and forth and keep him deep," Henry Dirksen said. "I could tell definitely his backhands weren't the greatest, so whenever I had the chance I tried to hit it towards his backhand."

Henry Dirksen ran out to a 5-2 lead in the second set, but saw it slip away a little as Owen Norton pulled within a game.

The freshman successfully slammed the door with the 10th game. He went up 30-0 as a pair of his forehands put Owen Norton in a tough spot, hitting backhands long and wide left.

Henry Dirksen's own backhand sailed long and then a ball snuck under his racket five feet from the net to even the game at 30-30. He then got Owen Norton back to his backhand, which flew toward the fence on the right before finishing the match with his own forehand that landed in on the line on the right side of the court.

"I was just being aggressive and not letting him get another game," Henry Dirksen said.

Jay County's sole loss came from Clark Wellman at the No. 3 singles. Wellman developed a 5-1 lead in the first set that slowly slipped away, but he managed to hold on to win 7-5. Hunter Huffman then took control, winning the second set 6-4 before taking the super tiebreaker 10-8.

"If you ask the boys that played tonight, I'm sure they're not overly thrilled," Gillespie said. "It's a W, so we'll take it and we'll move on and try to get better."

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FR golf rolls Raiders

BRADFORD, Ohio — The Tribe has already put together a solid resume. With each passing day, they build it up more and more.

Fort Recovery High School's girls golf team took down the Russia Raiders 208-220 at Stillwater Valley Golf Club on Monday.

Olivia Knapke led the Indians (11-1) by shooting a 48 that earned her match medalist honors. Mallory Evers finished just one stroke behind Knapke with a 49.

Evvier Briner provided the third score for Fort Recovery with a 54, while both Georgia Wenning and Cora Pearson carded 57s to round out the team score.

Layla Armstrong's 63 didn't affect the team's final.

The junior varsity also won 239-274 with Emily Boeckman's 53 leading the way.

Local Roundup

Fort falls

CONVOY, Ohio — The Fort Recovery High School volleyball team fell to the Crestview Knights 19-25, 25-22, 25-20, 25-14 on Monday.

Cameron Muhlenkamp led with 11 kills, while Bridget Homan had eight. Both Brynn Willmann and Alexis Grisez put down five balls each as well.

Fort Recovery (3-6) dropped eight aces in as well, including three from Willmann.

Kayden Ranly had all 23 of the Indians' assists.

Defensively, Grisez patrolled the net, blocking three shots, while Willmann, Homan and Kenna Dues all sent two shots back. Dues also defended

the back line well with 13 digs, while Muhlenkamp added 11.

JH takes two

MUNCIE — The Jay County Junior High School volleyball teams swept Muncie Southside on Monday.

The eighth grade team took care of business in two sets, winning 25-18, 25-11.

The Patriots scored 40% of their points on 20 aces. Bella Barnett led with nine aces, while both Harper Kunkle and Cadly Harper dropped four balls in. Brenna Weitzel led with five kills.

The seventh graders dropped the first set, but bounced back to win 23-25, 25-23, 25-14.

Jay County had 24 aces in the younger match, with Kendall Farr, Charlotte Muhlenkamp and Adalee Rigby all contributing five.

Gretchen Petro led the offense with three kills.

Mayfield, Buccs get best of Texans in win

By MATT YOUNG

Houston Chronicle
Tribune News Service

Baker Mayfield and C.J. Gardner-Johnson have had plenty of run-ins over the years, but the Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback has bragging rights over his defensive nemesis at the moment.

Mayfield converted a huge fourth-and-long run in Tampa Bay's two-minute drill, beating the Houston Texans safety to the first-down marker, which allowed him to engineer a game-winning drive that beat the Texans 20-19 Monday night at NRG Stadium.

"Me and my buddy Chauncey (Gardner-Johnson) in the open field," Mayfield said with a little bit of a head shake.

By the time Mayfield got to Gardner-Johnson on the fourth-down play, he'd already basically gotten the first down, but it was everything that transpired before that moment that made the former Lake Travis High School star's night special.

Trailing 19-14 and facing a 4th-and-10 from his own 32 with 1:24 remaining, May-

field saw pressure with the Texans bringing Jalen Pitre on a safety blitz. Mayfield stepped up in the pocket, but Texans linebacker Henry To'oTo'o was there on a delayed rush up the middle. Mayfield avoided the linebacker's arm tackle, opening up lots of room for him to sprint for the first down. When Gardner-Johnson left his man to try to close on Mayfield, the quarterback made a small cut before diving over the top of the tackle for a 15-yard gain.

"Fortunately, I was able to get out of that (rush) and get through," Mayfield said. "Seeing green grass and fourth down, two-minute drive trying to do anything it takes to get a chance to win."

It actually was Mayfield's second interaction with Gardner-Johnson on the night. After an earlier fourth quarter scramble, Mayfield was on the ground holding his knee when the Texans safety approached him. Mayfield immediately jumped up to celebrate a first down and got in Gardner-Johnson's face.