

The Commercial Review

Fence upgrades OK'd

By RAY COONEY
The Commercial Review

Baseball and softball fields are set to get upgrades. The Portland Park Board approved funding to help pay for replacing and upgrading fences at the baseball and softball fields at Weiler-Wilson Park.

Board president Brian Ison explained that fences have been on the list of needs for the parks system but did not fit into the 2025 budget. Parks manager Ronnie Reynolds noted bent and broken poles as well as other problems that could cause safety issues for those using the fields. He said he feels the work needs to be done.

Matt Ransom, president of Portland Junior League, agreed with Reynolds' assessment, noting holes in some fences and rusty poles. He told the park

Park board will cover \$7,500, with Portland Junior League to handle remaining project costs

board that the organization agreed to pay up to half of the about \$10,500 in proposed fencing work.

Noting that junior league has other field improvements it is looking to fund and that the organization brings in tourism dollars to the community via its tournaments, Ison proposed that the park board contribute \$7,500 toward the project.

His fellow park board members agreed, with Jennifer

Weitzel, Kyle Carpenter and Emily Goodrich joining him in voting in favor of the funding. (Board member Michael Brewster was absent from the meeting.)

The board also briefly discussed projects and needs for 2026. Ison asked parks manager Ronnie Reynolds to get quotes for potential purchases, such as new umbrellas, related to Portland Water Park.

See **Fence** page 2



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Portland Park Board approved \$7,500 Tuesday toward fence replacement and improvements for the baseball and softball diamonds at Weiler-Wilson Park. Pictured is a section of fence that is no longer properly connected, one of several safety issues mentioned during Tuesday's meeting.



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Hauling off

City of Portland crews work to clear snow Wednesday morning at the intersection of Main and Commerce streets in Portland. Snow piled up in the downtown area from Monday night's storm was loaded into trucks and hauled to Weiler-Wilson Park. There was a chance of snow Wednesday night, with minimal accumulation expected.

Israel, Lebanon involved in talks

Discussions focus on tensions about ceasefire

By DANA KHRAICHE
Bloomberg News
Tribune News Service

Lebanon and Israel sent negotiators to join a rare summit to address tensions surrounding last year's ceasefire with Hezbollah, following fears that the militant group is attempting to rearm.

The Lebanese president named former ambassador to the U.S. Simon Karam as head of the country's delegation, while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said he instructed a representative to attend the talks overseen by the U.S.-led committee supervising the truce.

The Wednesday negotiations follow weeks of escalating Israeli strikes on Hezbollah targets in Lebanon, culminating in last month's assassination of the Iran-backed militia's chief of staff in Beirut's southern suburbs. That raised fears of another fully-fledged Israeli military campaign after 2024's fierce conflict, which officially ended a year ago with a U.S. and France-mediated truce agreement.

While the agenda of the meeting hasn't been made public, the meeting could set a precedent for direct talks between Lebanon and Israel, which are technically at a state of war.

The Israel-Hezbollah truce established a so-called Cessation of Hostilities Implementation Mechanism, which has met regularly in the southern Lebanese town of Naqurah to follow up with both sides on the implementation of the deal.

Under the terms, Lebanon agreed to prevent attacks on Israel, dismantle Hezbollah's infrastructure and work toward deploying state troops in the south of the country.

Newborn pilot program launched

By CASEY SMITH
Indiana Capital Chronicle
indianacapitalchronicle.com

Indiana will begin allowing some state employees to bring their infants to work under a pilot program announced Tuesday by Gov. Mike Braun and detailed in a newly issued policy.

The move comes months after Braun's administration ended hybrid schedules for most state workers and rescinded thousands of remote-work agreements as part of a broader return-to-office directive that requires employees to report in-person unless granted narrow exceptions.

The "Family First Workplace" initiative has already launched for staff in the governor's office, the Indiana Department of Health and the State Personnel

Initiative allows state employees to bring newborns to the office

Department, according to Braun's announcement.

The governor said the effort is part of Indiana's commitment "to strengthening families, supporting parents in the workforce, and promoting healthy early childhood development."

"Indiana is going to lead the nation in pro-family policy. The parental bonding that happens in the first months of a child's life are irreplaceable, and our new

Family First Workplace pilot program helps parents stay connected to their newborns while continuing their careers," Braun said in the news release. "Indiana is building a culture that puts families first."

The governor's announcement followed an executive order issued earlier this year that expanded paid childbirth leave and parental leave, as well as paid leave for state employees

who experience a stillbirth or infant loss.

The new, four-page policy officially took effect Dec. 2 and aims to "provide a framework for a pilot program that will allow parents to bring their infants to the workplace where operational needs and the environment make such opportunities feasible, safe, and effective without impeding productivity," according to the document.

The policy states that time spent with parents in the first six months of a child's life "is important to their health and wellbeing, and that having opportunities to have their infants nearby can generate higher morale, increase job satisfaction, and motivate higher productivity in employees who are new parents."

See **Newborn** page 2

In review	Weather	In review	Coming up
A Cookies and Cocoa with Santa event is scheduled for 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Dec. 6, at The Life Center of Jay County, 1209 S. Shank St., Portland. The event will include a cookie walk fundraiser.	Jay County had a high temperature of 29 degrees Tuesday. The low was 19. Tonight's low will dip to 3. Expect mostly sunny skies Friday with a high in the upper 20s. See page 2 for an extended outlook.	The Santa House in the east 100 block of Main Street in Portland will be open from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 6. It will be available to the public to visit with Santa, take pictures and share their holiday wishes. The house will also be open from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 12.	Friday — Coverage of this week's joint county commissioners and council meeting. Saturday — Results from the JCHS boys basketball team's game against Woodlan. Tuesday — Details from Monday's Jay County Commissioners meeting.



Felony court news

Domestic battery
Two Portland residents were sentenced to serve time for domestic battery.

Andrew R. Busz, 40, 204 E. Water St., Portland, pleaded guilty in Jay Superior Court to two counts of domestic battery, a Level 6 felony and a Class A misdemeanor. He was sentenced to one year in Jay County Jail with all but 120 days suspended and given 74 days

credit for time served. Busz was placed on probation for 245 days, fined \$1, assessed \$189 in court costs and ordered to pay a \$50 domestic violence prevention and treatment fee.

Lucas W. Wittkamp, 45, Portland, pleaded guilty in Jay Superior Court to domestic battery, a Level 6 felony. He was sentenced to 910 days in Indiana Department of Correction with 390 days suspended and

given 520 days credit for time served. He was fined \$25 and charged \$569 in court costs and filing fees. As part of his plea agreement, two counts of domestic battery, both Level 6 felonies, were dismissed.






Methamphetamine
An Ohio woman was sentenced to jail for possession of methamphetamine.

Rachel N. Yates, 37, 281 6th

St., Barberton, Ohio, pleaded guilty in Jay Superior Court to possession of methamphetamine, a Level 6 felony. She was sentenced to 545 days in Jay County Jail with all but 180 days suspended and given 180 days credit for time served. Yates was fined \$1, assessed \$189 in court costs and ordered to pay a \$200 drug abuse, prosecution, interdiction and correction fee.

She was also ordered to submit to an evaluation within 30 days for substance abuse counseling. Yates was placed on probation for one year.

As part of her plea agreement, a Level 6 felony for maintaining a common nuisance, a Class A misdemeanor for possession of marijuana and a Class C misdemeanor for possession of paraphernalia were dismissed.

CR almanac				
Friday 12/5	Saturday 12/6	Sunday 12/7	Monday 12/8	Tuesday 12/9
 32/24 <small>Friday's forecast shows mostly sunny skies with temperatures hovering around freezing.</small>	 33/26 <small>Mostly cloudy skies on Saturday, when the temperature may peak at 33 degrees.</small>	 33/20 <small>Sunday weather looks like cloudy skies with a slight chance of rain.</small>	 27/21 <small>Mostly sunny, with the low decreasing to around 21 degrees late.</small>	 34/28 <small>Tuesday's weather looks like mostly cloudy skies with a slight chance of rain.</small>

Lotteries	
Powerball Estimated jackpot: \$775 million	Daily Three: 2-1-6 Daily Four: 7-2-8-3 Quick Draw: 1-2-14-16-22-30-32-37-38-47-49-52-53-57-62-64-68-70-72-77
Mega Millions 17-25-26-53-60 Mega Ball: 16 Estimated jackpot: \$50 million	Ohio Tuesday Midday Pick 3: 5-4-6 Pick 4: 5-9-4-0 Pick 5: 2-9-1-1-9 Evening Pick 3: 5-7-0 Pick 4: 8-4-4-1 Pick 5: 5-9-1-4-4 Rolling Cash: 5-19-20-24-30 Estimated jackpot: \$163,000
Hoosier Tuesday Midday Daily Three: 2-3-1 Daily Four: 9-9-2-5 Quick Draw: 10-12-16-19-24-25-26-31-34-36-47-52-56-61-65-66-68-78-79-80 Evening	

Markets	
Cooper Farms Fort Recovery Corn.....4.67 Jan. corn4.58 Feb. corn4.60	Jan. beans11.15 Wheat 4.93
POET Biorefining Portland Corn.....4.63 Jan. corn4.55 Feb. corn4.50	ADM Montpelier Corn.....4.41 Jan. corn4.41 Beans11.13 Jan. beans11.16 Wheat5.04
The Andersons Richland Township Corn4.50 Jan. corn4.50 Beans11.12	Heartland St. Anthony Corn.....4.50 Jan. corn4.50 Beans10.83 Jan. beans10.88 Wheat4.84

Today in history

In 1791, “The Observer” was first published in Britain. It’s considered the oldest Sunday newspaper in the world to date.

In 1783, general George Washington said goodbye to his officers of the victorious Continental Army at Fraunces Tavern in lower Manhattan, New York City.

In 1816, James Monroe of Virginia was elected the fifth president of the United States, beginning the “Era of Good Feelings.”

In 1844, James Knox Polk was elected as the 11th president of the United States.

In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson set sail for France to attend the Paris Peace Conference,

becoming the first sitting U.S. president to travel to Europe.

In 1942, the United States enacted nationwide gasoline rationing as part of its World War II conservation efforts.

In 2015, Fort Recovery High School’s football team won its first state title, defeating the Mogadore Wildcats 33-14. Quarterback Caleb Martin picked apart the Wildcat defense to the tune of 385 yards. “Ever since our first workout in early May we knew this was the goal from the start,” said Martin. “Our goal was to get here and once we did we were going to be good enough to win the game ... that’s what we did.”

— The CR

Citizen’s calendar	
Today 5:15 p.m. — Portland Board of Works, fire station, 1616 N. Meridian St. 5:30 p.m. — Portland Plan Commission, Community Resource Center, 118 S. Meridian St., Portland.	6 p.m. — Jay County Country Living Advisory Board, living facility, 1194 E. 200 North, 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. 4 p.m. — Jay County Public Library Board of Trustees, community room, library, 315 N. Ship St., Portland.	Tuesday 5:30 p.m. — Portland Board of Zoning Appeals, Community Resource Center, 118 S. Meridian St., Portland. 6 p.m. — Ridgeville Town Council, fire department, 302 N. Walnut St.

Fence ...

Continued from page 1

Referring to a list of potential projects, he also asked fellow board members to let him know if there are other items that need to be considered.

In other business, the board:

- Heard an update from Reynolds, who said all parks have been winterized. He added that a new water

line has been installed to the restrooms at Haynes Park and that trees (a cypress, Japanese maple and sycamore) donated by Plant, Hoe and Hope Garden Club have been planted at Hudson Family Park.

- Approved the purchase of two mowers from K&L Tractor of Fort Recovery for \$8,000. K&L had the second-highest among three quotes,

but quoted a mower with more horsepower and a wider deck.

- Reviewed its meeting schedule for 2026. The board plans to continue to meet at 5:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month, with the exception of May and November, during which meetings will be held on the second Tuesday to avoid conflicts with election days.

Newborn ...

Continued from page 1

But the document emphasizes that participation in the program “is a privilege, not a right,” and it’s only available to employees once an agency establishes its own formal program.

SPD defines eligible state workers as full-time employees of the governor’s office, IDOH, SPD and any other agencies later authorized to participate in the pilot program by Braun’s office. Participants must be employed by the state at the time the infant is born.

An “infant” is specifically described in the policy as “the biological or adoptive child of an eligible employee who is between four weeks and six months of age, and who is not yet able to crawl or walk without assistance.”

Children can only be in tow for up to six months. An infant becomes ineligible at the end of the calendar week in which they turn six months old — or when they become mobile — “whichever occurs first,” per the policy.

Before bringing an infant to work, an employee must submit a written request at least 10 business days in advance and complete a series of documents, including a participation agreement and waiver, a pediatrician clearance form, and a supervisor sign-off confirming the details of participation.

Signatures are also required from coworkers who agree to serve as “alternate care providers” — defined in the policy as fellow employees “who ha(ve) expressly agreed to step

in to care for the Infant for not more than one-hour per workday if the eligible employee must attend to duties that cannot be effectively performed if the infant becomes disruptive at that time.”

Alternate providers are prohibited from providing care more than a total of one hour per workday, and supervisors cannot assign subordinates to serve in that role.

The policy does not make clear how many coworkers must agree to help, however.

Participating employees must also “maintain productivity,” including meeting quality, quantity, and timeliness” performance standards; keep the infant’s area clean and sanitary; ensure the child has all required vaccinations; and remove the

infant if management deems the child disruptive.

Agency management is responsible for determining if a child is disruptive. In such instances, employees “will use appropriate leave for the remainder of the workday.”

Agencies must determine which workplace locations are safe and appropriate.

Infants have to remain in the employee’s regular work station or designated infant-care areas unless being taken to a lactation or diaper-changing space.

Employees are additionally prohibited from placing their Infant in state vehicles and taking their Infant with them while traveling for conferences, inspections audits or other field work.

Capsule Reports

Pole hit
A Ridgeville man lost control of his vehicle and crashed into a utility pole in Portland about 9:30 a.m. Monday.

Shawn D. Staver, 21, was driving his 2004 Pontiac Vibe west on Lafayette Street when he lost traction on a patch of ice. His car slid into a pole registered to Indiana Michigan Power.

Damage is estimated between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

Sign struck
A Portland man swerved off Indiana 67 and hit a road sign about 6:15 p.m. Monday.

Anthony Owens, 31, was driving a 2018 Dodge Durango west on the highway. He told police he attempted to pass multiple vehicles and had to

swerve off the road to avoid a collision with oncoming traffic. His vehicle went into a ditch on the side of the road, and the driver’s side of his vehicle struck a sign.

Damage is estimated between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

Lost control
A Redkey teen crashed the car she was driving along Indiana 1 after losing control about 10:45 p.m. Monday.

Gracie Wilburn, 17, was driving a 2013 Hyundai Elantra south on the highway when she lost control. She told police she went off the road, driving into a ditch and striking a telephone pole.

The pole is registered to American Electric Power. The vehicle Wilburn was driving was towed, with damage

estimated between \$10,000 and \$25,000.

Tree hit
A Ridgeville woman’s car left U.S. 27 and struck a tree about 5 a.m. Tuesday.

Hannah M. Patterson, 35, was driving a 2005 Chevrolet Trailblazer north on the highway when her car left the road and went into a ditch east of the highway. The car began sliding sideways before hitting a tree in the yard at 7631 S. U.S. 27, Portland. The tree uprooted as a result of the impact.

According to data from the county’s geographic information system, the property is owned by Link James David and Sarah Ewing. Patterson’s vehicle was towed, with damage estimated between \$2,500 and \$5,000.

Talks ...

Continued from page 1

The pact also stipulated that Israel would withdraw its forces “in a phased manner” from southern villages it still occupies.

Lebanon has deployed hundreds of army personnel to the border region, confiscated arms and seized dozens of tunnels dug by Hezbollah to facilitate the movement of its militants and store arsenal. Israel says it’s acting too slowly, and has struck Hezbollah assets and military figures hundreds of times over the duration of the truce.

SERVICES	
Friday, Dec. 5 Anderson , Robert: 2 p.m., Redkey Faith Ministries, 9811 Indiana 67, Redkey.	
Saturday, Dec. 6 DeBolt , Miriam: 11 a.m., Klaehn, Fahl & Melton Funeral Home, 6424 Winchester Road, Fort Wayne.	
Service listings provided by PROGRESSIVE DEL TORO OFFICE PRODUCTS 120 N. Meridian St. Portland, Indiana 47371 (260) 726-9201 progressiveofficeproducts.com	

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Support is available for chronic conditions

By RANDA STAUGLER

Many people deal with and have to manage chronic conditions such as diabetes, high blood sugar and heart failure and some people have multiple conditions. Managing these conditions can be complicated and confusing, but there is help available. An ambulatory pharmacist can assist by collaborating with healthcare providers to offer medication review, education, and more all centered around the patients’ needs.

What is an ambulatory pharmacist?

An ambulatory pharmacist is a pharmacist who works in an outpatient care setting, such as a doctor’s office, and work with



Your Health Matters

the physicians, advanced practice providers and nurse practitioners to provide specialized clinical care.

What services are provided by an ambulatory pharmacist?

The main service offered by an ambulatory pharmacist includes helping patients manage chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood sugar, high blood pressure, heart fail-

ure, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and high cholesterol. The pharmacists will make sure medications are up to date, go through suggested screenings and ensure needs are met at home.

If a medication review is needed, an ambulatory pharmacist can help with that as well. They can review medications, explain side effects and answer any questions about the medications being taken.

An ambulatory pharmacist can also assist with managing and testing for blood thinners such as warfarin. They can also do annual wellness visits for those enrolled in Medicare.

Is there an ambulatory pharmacist available locally?

There is an ambulatory pharmacist available at IU Health Jay who cares for all patients from the local provider offices. If someone would like to meet with the ambulatory pharmacist, they should contact their healthcare provider to see if a referral is appropriate. For additional questions or to schedule a medication review or Medicare annual wellness visit, call (260) 726-8822.

How can someone dispose of expired or unused medications?

There are drug take-back programs throughout communities which allow for anonymous, safe dis-

posal of medications. By providing a safe disposal location, these sites remove potentially dangerous medications from the community that could be harmful, especially for children, elderly, and pets, if left unattended or in an unsecured area.

What should be done before dropping off your medications?

Drug take-back programs are designed to be anonymous to help reduce stigma and make those disposing medications feel more comfortable. While it is not necessary, many people prefer to remove all personal information from medication bottles before dropping them off at a disposal site. For additional

safety, it is preferred that all needles be removed from the medications before bringing them to a take-back bin and then dispose of needles in a proper sharps container.

Where are medication take-back boxes located locally?

There are medication take-back bins located in the IU Health Jay hospital lobby and the IU Health Blackford retail pharmacy lobby along with other local sites. Additional locations can be found by searching the Indiana Department of Health website at in.gov.

Randa Staugler is an ambulatory pharmacist at IU Health Jay.

Brother’s argumentative behavior alienates family

DEAR ABBY: I have a brother who is very opinionated and in my face any time I don’t agree with him. It doesn’t matter what the subject is; he thinks he’s the only one who knows anything about it. He is not educated, but he thinks he’s smarter than everyone else, even educated people.

He won’t let me get a word in while he’s yelling and screaming in my face. He resorts to name-calling, telling me I’m wrong and calling me stupid. Later, he sends emails and texts trying to prove to me why I am wrong. I think he is abusive and has a mental disorder. He has accomplished nothing in his life.

My husband and I have careers. If I try to remain quiet around my brother, he starts aggravating me to get a reaction. He has alienated my fami-



Dear Abby

ly. No one wants to be around him. What’s the best way to shut him down to make whatever time we have to spend together more civil? — SMART SIS IN MISSISSIPPI

DEAR SIS: No magic formula will shut down your abusive, immature and possibly mentally ill brother. Accept the fact that you can’t change him, and save your sanity by avoiding him as often as possible.

DEAR ABBY: I recently asked a friend to cat-sit while I

was out of town for a few days. We agreed she would stop by daily to feed my kitty, refresh her water and spend a little time with her.

When I returned, I noticed several signs that she hadn’t been coming by every day — food bowls untouched, litter box fuller than it should’ve been, and a very lonely (and vocal) cat.

I haven’t confronted my friend yet, but I’m hurt and disappointed. I trusted her with my pet’s care. I would have made other arrangements had I known she couldn’t commit.

I don’t want to jump to conclusions, but I also feel I can’t just brush this off. How do I approach this conversation without blowing it out of proportion or damaging the friendship, while still address-

ing that this wasn’t OK? — CAT LADY IN MICHIGAN

DEAR CAT LADY: One can only wonder what else this friend is irresponsible about. However, I do not endorse “taking her to the woodshed.” In the future, when you plan to travel, make other arrangements for the care of your cat. This person was less than purrfect.

DEAR ABBY: I have always wanted to do some exotic travel. I’m retired now, but my wife has medical issues. She can still drive, shop, etc., but international travel would be too much for her.

I don’t mind traveling alone, and I have saved up enough with such trips in mind. I don’t want to be selfish, but I want to see parts of the world I have

yet to see. What’s fair? — FUTURE TRAVELER IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR TRAVELER: Fortunately, your wife is still somewhat independent and could manage in your absence. What is “fair” would be for you to discuss this with her and negotiate an agreement that’s acceptable to both of you. If your wife would like to travel a bit, perhaps you could split your savings between short domestic excursions with her and solo trips abroad.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips.

Contact Dear Abby at Dear-Abby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Community Calendar

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

Today

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.

JAY COUNTY CANCER SUPPORT GROUP — Will meet from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. the first Thursday of the month at Jay County Cancer Society’s office, 227 N. Meridian St., Portland. Open discussion for cancer patients, survivors, family members or anyone interested in helping with the group. For more information, contact Linda Metzger at (260) 726-1844.

PORTLAND LIONS CLUB — Will meet the first Thursday of the month at Portland Lions Civic Center, 307 W. 100 North. The meal will be served at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting will begin at 7 p.m.

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

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.

SOFT SHOULDERS — A support group for anyone suffering from memory loss, will meet at 10:30 a.m. the first Friday of each month in the Fireplace Room at Edelweiss Place at Swiss Village in Berne. For more information, call (260) 589-3173.

Saturday

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS — 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.

ROAD RIDERS FOR JESUS — Will meet at 10 a.m. on the first Saturday of each month in the West Walnut Church of Christ fellowship hall, 204 W. Walnut St., Portland. (Please enter from the door facing the alley on the north side of the building.) For more information, call (260) 726-8463.

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 BREAK-

FAST 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. To learn more information, please call (260) 726-5924.

Sudoku

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

Level: Intermediate

Wednesday’s Solution

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

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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As Ronald Reagan famously noted, if you subsidize something, you'll get more of it. But when it comes to higher education, that's only half the story.

For decades, America's education establishment pushed most students toward attending college. This year, The New York Times described the phrase "college for all" as "an American rallying cry." It reported, "The goal inspired a generation of educators, offered a north star to students and united political figures from George W. Bush to Bernie Sanders."

Pushing college attendance seems like a logical move. The Bureau of Labor Statis-

Guest Editorial

tics reported that, in 2024, college graduates had a lower unemployment rate than those with only a high school diploma. Those with a bachelor's degree had median weekly earnings of more than \$1,500 compared with less than \$1,000 for high school graduates.

Via massive subsidies, the federal government has encouraged students to pursue a college degree. It spends around

\$30 billion annually on Pell Grants. It also provides student loans with more generous terms than those available in the open market. In 2024, the Department of Education spent more than \$160 billion on federal student aid.

These efforts have certainly led to more students starting college. In 1965, colleges enrolled fewer than 6 million high school graduates. Today, it's more than 19 million. That's a substantial increase, even after adjusting for population growth.

For some students, college has opened up a world of opportunities. But for many, the pipeline to college has resulted in debt,

not degrees. Around 40 percent of college students don't graduate within six years. In 2024, Pew Research found that borrowers who didn't complete their bachelor's degree had median debt levels of between \$10,000 and \$14,999. In 2023, 25 percent of them had at least \$25,000 in debt.

One problem is that many students graduate high school without foundational academic skills. Their time in college is spent taking remedial courses, which makes completing the whole endeavor much harder.

But there's also a flawed assumption at work. Obtaining a respectable career with strong earning potential doesn't

require a college degree. Ford Motor CEO Jim Farley recently said that his company can't fill 5,000 mechanic jobs. Those positions pay \$120,000 a year. And that's just one company.

This is stunning until you think about it. Many high schools have cut shop classes. The federal government has pushed too many students toward college. Some in society look down on people who go into the trades.

That's a major mistake. And if the country wants a functional society — literally — this needs to change. America needs more vocational schools and a greater appreciation of those who work with their hands.



Challenging economy is poised to worsen

By MICHAEL J. HICKS

Few American families made it through Thanksgiving without noticing the cost of their classic American meal. The return of higher prices will be marked as the single worst unforced error in the annals of American economic policy, and it is only going to worsen.

President Trump took office on a pledge to cut prices — an aggressive promise that went far past simply reducing inflation. In his first three months in office, inflation dropped from 3% in January to 2.3% in April. That is a remarkable achievement for the Federal Reserve. It is also one that any politician would want to claim for his own, as Trump did.

Then came Liberation Day on April 2, and prices reversed course. Over each of the following five months prices rose at an accelerating rate. Today, the Consumer Price Index is at an all-time high, and the year-over-year change in prices is higher than it was when Trump won reelection last year.

All of this is due to tariffs, and Trump along with his enablers in Congress are solely and completely responsible.

We only have public data through September, which means we haven't yet seen the full picture of price increases.

Michael J. Hicks



But anyone who has done some shopping over the past couple weeks has certainly seen the wave that is coming.

We've thus far been spared the full effect of tariffs for several reasons. First, Trump reacted frequently to stock declines when new tariffs were announced. He delayed or reduced tariffs — earning those decisions the acronym TACO (Trump Always Chickens Out), to describe his policy vacillations.

The several hundred changes to tariffs that have occurred since the start of the year permitted many American firms to accelerate purchases of non-tariffed items. Here in Indiana, firms imported nearly five months of additional intermediate products for their assembly lines and stores.

Consumers also rushed to buy pre-tariffed goods, buoying consumption. That pre-tariff rush is over and the stockpiles are most-

ly exhausted. The inevitable higher prices are just now appearing on shelves of grocers, as well as other retailers and online marketplaces.

What this means is that all the price increases we've seen so far since April are merely the preview of the holiday season and 2026. So, if Thanksgiving dinner included some complaints about higher prices, you should expect a double serving by Christmas and even more pain by Easter.

Americans are aware, which is why Trump's polls on economic issues are now hovering below those of former presidents Jimmy Carter and Joe Biden. It seems certain to worsen.

I wish I could end there, but the economy is also slowing.

As with price changes, much of the economic slowdown has been masked by growth in only two places. First, household consumption has remained strong. Part of this is likely due to families buying goods before tariffs hit. But another part is due to the unexpectedly strong growth in stock markets that boosted incomes for older, wealthier Americans.

That strong stock market has been driven almost exclusively by just a handful of artificial intelligence firms, whose investment in data centers, power

plants and other AI infrastructure accounts for more than half of U.S. growth so far in 2025.

This growth has kept job numbers from falling further than we've seen. Still, the unemployment rate is now the highest it has been in four years. The AI boom hasn't prevented employment declines in other key sectors.

Across the goods-producing sectors — manufacturing and mining — employment is down 72,000 jobs since Liberation Day. The sector that provides temporary employment to manufacturing is down 97,000 since April. That level of job loss has only happened during a recession.

Help wanted ads for manufacturing workers have plummeted almost 40% since April, and are now closing in on their June 2020 level — at the height of COVID-19. The first nine months of the Trump presidency have seen factory job openings plummet by more than 100,000 positions. That is already stunningly worse than the performance during Biden's presidency, which saw total factory job openings rise by 48,000.

It is important to make clear that presidents typically have much more modest effects on the economy than is commonly believed. Inflation is caused by

an excess supply of money, and external shocks like wars or financial bubbles tend to dominate downturns.

Faster growth is mostly due to unexpected productivity shocks like widespread computing or some other technology.

Presidents are plagued by luck, either good or bad. Ronald Reagan's morning in America was largely due to the Fed ending inflation. Bill Clinton took office just as the economy began a long growth spurt that would've happened with or without him (or Congress). Both Bushes ended their presidencies in recessions they had no hand in causing.

The Trump tariffs are perhaps the most notable exception to this pattern.

This period will someday be described as the most bizarre departure from economic common sense that we have yet experienced. The only remaining question is how long Americans will tolerate it.

.....

Hicks is the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research and the George and Frances Ball distinguished professor of economics in the Miller College of Business at Ball State University. Email him at mhicks@bsu.edu.

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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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phone number, services and
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All services are Sunday,
unless otherwise indicated.

**Asbury United
Methodist**
204 E. Arch St., Portland
Josh Arthur
(260) 726-8464
Services: 9:30 a.m., 11
a.m.
asburyministries.org

**Bellefountain
United Methodist**
440 S. 600 East
Pamela Freeman
Services: 9 a.m.

Bluff Point Friends
80 E. 650 South
Services: 10 a.m.
Sunday school: 9:30 a.m.

Boundary St. Paul
Corner of Treaty Line
Road and county road 300
East
Ava Gannon
(260) 726-2373
Services: 9:30 a.m.

Bryant Wesleyan
209 S. Hendricks St.
Paul VanCise
(260) 997-6231
Services: 10:30 a.m., 6
p.m.
bryantwesleyanchurch.com

**Calvary United
Methodist**
301 N. Main St., Dunkirk
Susan Durovey-Antrim
(765) 499-0368
Services: 10:30 a.m.
susan.duroveyantrim@in.unc.org

Christ Chapel
2535 Wabash Road, Fort
Recovery
(419) 733-1469
christchapelfr.com

**Church of
the Living God
(Miracle Missions)**
8472 S. 800 East, Union
City
Services: 10:30 a.m.
Sunday school: 9:30 a.m.

**Church of God
of Prophecy**
797 N. Creagor Ave., Por-
tland
Nanette Weesner
(260) 766-9334
Services: 10 a.m., 6 p.m.
nanybell@yahoo.com

**Church of the
Brethren**
Floral and Chicago
avenues, Portland
Kevin McClung
(260) 729-7295
Services: 10 a.m.

**Church of
the Living God**
South Broad Street,
Dunkirk
Services: 7 p.m., 7 p.m.
Friday

Collett Nazarene
450 South, 1 mile west of
U.S. 27
Billy Stanton
(260) 251-2403
Services: 10:30 a.m., 6
p.m.

Cornerstone Baptist
211 E. Main St., Portland
Wayne Ward
(260) 726-7714
Services: 10 a.m.

**Cornerstone Church of
Pennville**
190 W. Main St., Pennville
Jack Houck
(260) 729-2164
Services: 10:30 a.m.

Dunkirk Nazarene
226 E. Center St.,
Dunkirk
Tom Fett
(765) 768-6199
Services: 10:30 a.m., 6
p.m.

Evangelical Methodist
930 W. Main St., Portland
Steve Arnold
(260) 251-0970
Services: 10:20 a.m., 6
p.m.

**Fairview United
Methodist/Jay County**
2875 E. 200 South
Pamela Freeman
Lay leader: Beth Stephen
(260) 726-9184
Services: 10:15 a.m.

Faith Community
9560 W. 200 South,
Dunkirk
Mark Acree
(260) 251-0987
Services: 10 a.m.

Family Worship Center
200 E. Elder St., Portland
Ronald Willis
(260) 726-4844
Services: 11 a.m., 6:30
p.m. Wednesday
[thefamilyworshipcen-
ter.org](http://thefamilyworshipcenter.org)

Fellowship Baptist
289 S. 200 West
Hugh Kelly
(260) 726-8873
Services: 9 a.m., 11 a.m.
Sunday school: 10 a.m.
[pastorkelly@fbc-port-
land.com](mailto:pastorkelly@fbc-port-land.com)

First Church of Christ
1049 Union City Road,
Fort Recovery
David J. Nicholson
(419) 375-2860
Services: 10:30 a.m.
fccftrecovery.org

**First Community
Baptist**
341 S. Meridian St., Red-
key
Everett Bilbrey Jr.
Sunday school: 9:30 a.m.
Services: 10:30 a.m. and 6
p.m.; 7 p.m. Wednesday

First Free Will Baptist
12369 W. 600 South,
Dunkirk
Sunday school: 10 a.m.
Services: 10:50 a.m., 6
p.m., 6 p.m. Wednesday

First Presbyterian
402 N. Ship St., Portland
Rev. M. Rex Espiritu
(260) 726-8462
Services: 9:30 a.m.
Sunday school: 10:15 a.m.
firstpcportland.org

**Fort Recovery Church
of the Nazarene**
401 E. Boundary St., Fort
Recovery
(419) 375-4680
Services: 10:30 a.m.
Kids vision and teen
ministries: 6 p.m. Wendes-
day
frnaz@frontier.com

**Fort Recovery
United Methodist**
309 E. Boundary St., Fort
Recovery
Rev. Carol McKay
(304) 617-0101
Services: 9 a.m.

**Full Gospel
Lighthouse Tabernacle**
468 E. Washington St.,
Dunkirk
Robert Thomas
(765) 348-4620
Services: 6:30 p.m., 6:30
p.m. Thursday

**Geneva First
United Methodist**
100 W. Line St., Geneva
Barry McCune
(260) 368-7655
Services: 9:30 a.m.

Geneva Nazarene
225 Decatur St., Geneva
(260) 525-8609
Services: 10 a.m., 6 p.m.
Sunday school: 9 a.m.
Prayer meeting: 6 p.m.
Wednesday

Gilead Church
County road 650 North,
one-quarter mile east of
Balbec
Services: 10:30 a.m.

**Hickory Grove
Church of the
Brethren**
Indiana 1 and Indiana 26
Earl Doll
(260) 731-4477
Services: 10:30 a.m.

**High Street
United Methodist**
435 High St., Geneva
Rev. Joseph Hampton
(260) 368-7233
Services: 9 a.m.

Holy Trinity Catholic
7321 E. Indiana 67,
Bryant
Fr. Peter Logsdon
Fr. Martin Sandhage
Services: 8 a.m., 4:30 p.m.
Saturday

**Hopewell of
Life Ministries**
County road 200 South, 2
miles east of Indiana 1
Rev. Ruth Funk
(260) 251-8581
Services: 10:30 a.m., 6
p.m.

**Immaculate
Conception Catholic**
506 E. Walnut St., Port-
land
Fr. Peter Logsdon
Fr. Martin Sandhage
(260) 726-7055
Services: 5:30 p.m. Satur-
day, 10:30 a.m. Sunday

Kingsley Full Gospel
4030 S. 700 East, Dunkirk
Stuart Phillips
Services: 9:30 a.m. and 6
p.m., 7 p.m. Wednesday

**Mary Help
of Christians**
403 Sharpshburg Road,
Fort Recovery
Rev. Alexander Witt
(419) 375-4153
Services: 4:30 p.m. Satur-
day, 9 a.m.

**Mount Tabor
Community Church**
216 W. Pleasant St.,
Dunkirk
Scott McClain
(765) 768-7273
Services: 9:30 a.m.

**Mount Zion
United Methodist**
County roads 600 East
and 200 North
Rev. Darrell Borders
(260) 726-4786
Services: 9 a.m.

**New Beginnings
Holiness Church
of Blaine**
4017 W. 200 South
Randy Smith
(260) 251-2406
Services: 10 a.m., 6 p.m.
nbholiness.com

**New Covenant
Fellowship**
1238 W. 450 South
Chuck Myers
(260) 251-0063
Services: 10:30 a.m.

New Life Ministries
415 S. Helen St., Portland
Dr. Kay Fairchild
(260) 223-2961
Services: 4 p.m.
drkayfairchild.com

**New Mt. Pleasant
United Methodist**
5905 S. Como Road
Neil Butcher
(765) 499-7838
Services: 9 a.m.

**Noble Congregational
Christian**
1964 N. 800 East
Aaron Huey
Services: 10:30 a.m.

**Oak Grove
United Methodist**
829 S. Indiana 1
Neil Butcher
(765) 760-9085
Services: 10:45 a.m.

Pleasant Hill
9945 N. 800 East, Union
City
Bruce Bryan
(765) 964-3664
Services: 9 a.m., 6 p.m.
mypleasanthillchurch.org

**Portland Church of
Christ**
1217 W. Votaw St., Port-
land
Bob Graham
(260) 726-7777
Bible class: 9:15 a.m.
Services: 10:20 a.m.
Bible School: 6 p.m. Wed-
nesday
portlandcoc.com

**Portland First
Church of Nazarene**
920 S. Shank St., Portland
Steve Cecil
(260) 726-8040
Services: 10:45 a.m.

Portland Friends
226 E. Main St., Portland
Herb Hummel
(260) 202-9732
Services: 10 a.m.
Sunday school: 9 a.m.

**Praise Chapel
Church of God**
4527 E. 1000 North (Jay-
Randolph county line)
Rev. Josh Canfield
(765) 584-7045
Services: 10:30 a.m.

Redeemer Lutheran
Malin and Elm streets,
Bryant
(260) 997-6787
Services: 9:30 a.m.

**Redkey Faith
Ministries**
9811 W. Indiana 67, south-
west of Redkey
Rev. Craig and Robin
Cotherman
(765) 369-2920
Services: 10 a.m.
RedkeyFaith.org

**Redkey First
Christian**
Union and Malin streets
Jeff Hammers
(765) 468-6172
Services: 10:30 a.m.
Sunday school: 9:30 a.m.

**Redkey United
Methodist**
122 W. Main St.
Lori McIntosh
(765) 369-2085
Services: 10:30 a.m.

**Redkey Church
of the Nazarene**
801 W. High St.
Fred Stevens
(765) 369-2676
redkeynaz.org
Services: 10:30 a.m., 6
p.m., 6:30 p.m. Wednesday

River of Life
722 W. Main St., Portland
Susan Hathaway
(260) 729-1095
Services: 10:30 a.m.

The ROCK
1605 N. Meridian St., Por-
tland
Matt Ransom
(260) 726-7474
Services: 10 a.m.
matt@therockjc.org

**Salamonia
Church of Christ**
3900 S. 600 East
Bruce Phillips
(260) 335-2017
Services: 9 a.m.

**Second Chance
at Life Ministries**
228 S. Meridian St., Port-
land
Dave Keen (260) 251-8792
Mike Eads (260) 703-0733
Services: 10:30 a.m.

St. Joseph Catholic
1689 St. Joe Road, Fort
Recovery
Rev. Alexander Witt
Services: 7:30 a.m. Sun-
day

St. Mary's Catholic
346 S. Broad St., Dunkirk
Rev. Kevin Hurley
Services: 5 p.m. Saturday,
5:30 p.m. Thursday

St. Paul Catholic
517 Meiring Road, Fort
Recovery
Rev. Alexander Witt
Services: 11 a.m. Sunday

St. Peter Catholic
1477 Philothea Road, Fort
Recovery
Rev. Alexander Witt
Services: 9 a.m. Sunday

Sugar Grove Nazarene
3984 N. 550 West, Portland
Pastor Mike Heckman
(615) 517-1017
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
Services: 10:30 a.m.
Bible study: 6 p.m. Wed-
nesday

Sugar Grove Church
County roads 600 South
and 1150 West, Dunkirk
Scott McClain
Services: 9 a.m.

Temple Baptist
17920 Indiana 167,
Dunkirk
John Elam
(765) 768-7708
Sunday school: 10 a.m.
Services: 11 a.m. and 2
p.m., 7 p.m. Wednesday
7pillarsdirector@gmail.com
templebaptistin.com

**The Church
at Westchester**
4487 E. 400 North
(260) 726-6311
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
Services: 10:35 a.m.
churchatwestchester.org

Trinity Lutheran
301 N. Wayne St., Fort
Recovery
Ron McCallum
(419) 375-4498
Services: 9 a.m. (contem-
porary service, fourth Sun-
day)

**Trinity ArchBridge
Church**
323 S. Meridian St., Por-
tland
Dan Vore
(260) 726-8391
Sunday school: 9 a.m.
Services: 10:15 a.m.
portlandtrinity.com

Union Chapel
6200 N. 375 West, Bryant
Interim Pastor Chris
Kruchkow
(260) 849-0687
Services: 10:20 a.m., 6
p.m.

**Union Chapel Church
of the Nazarene**
County road 900 North
(Jay-Wells county line)
Fred Stevens
Services: 10:30 a.m., 6
p.m.

Walnut Corner
County roads 200 North
and 500 West
Steve Rogers
(260) 251-1113
Services: 10:30 a.m.
Sunday school: 9:30 a.m.

**West Walnut
Church of Christ**
204 W. Walnut St., Port-
land
Gil Alicea
(260) 726-4691
Services: 10 a.m.
[christ.org](http://westwalnutchurchof-
christ.org)

**Zion Evangelical
Lutheran Church**
Ron McCallum
218 E. High St., Portland
(260) 726-8832
[zionlutheranportland@gm
ail.com](mailto:zionlutheranportland@gm
ail.com)
Services: 10:30 a.m.

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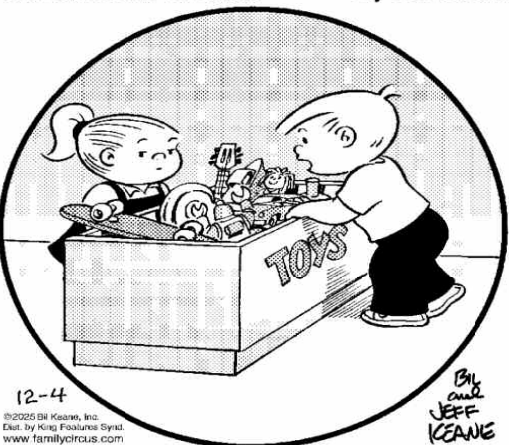
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By Bil Keane



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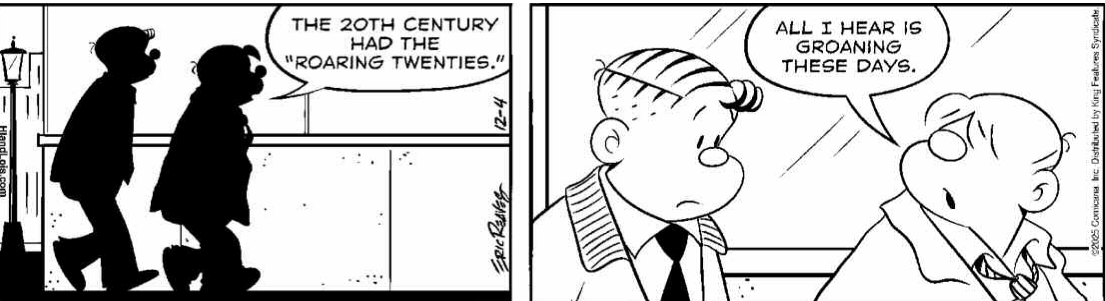
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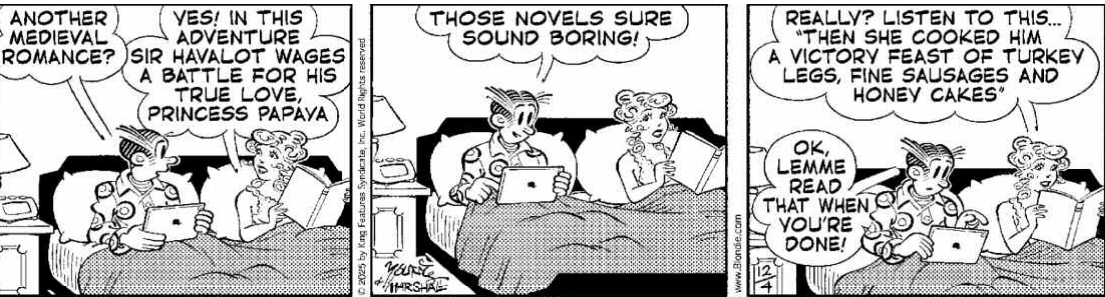
Hi and Lois



Between Friends



Blondie



Snuffy Smith



Beetle Bailey



Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

A case of self-delusion

East dealer.
East-West vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ 8 5 4
♥ 9 3
♦ A Q J 9 3
♣ A K 5 4

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

EAST
♠ K 10 9 7
♥ 6 4 2
♦ 8 6 5 2
♣ 10 8

SOUTH
♠ A 6 3
♥ A J 5
♦ A 10 7
♣ Q J 7 6

The bidding:
East 1 NT Pass
South 1 NT Pass
West 3 NT
North 3 NT

Opening lead — king of hearts.

Some plays are so well-known that when the opportunity to use one of them arises, there is a tendency to make the play automatically, without pause for thought. This is a somewhat dangerous practice, since what is right on most occasions might easily be wrong on a particular deal.

Take this case where West led the king of hearts against three notrump. Recognizing the chance for a "Bath Coup," declarer allowed West's king to hold the trick, hoping West would continue with a heart into the A-J. Unfortunately,

this was a case where the cure proved worse than the disease.

Warned against a heart continuation by partner's discouraging deuce, West switched to the spade queen. South ducked, but when West continued with the jack, covered by East with the king, declarer was well on his way to irreversible defeat. If he ducked the king, East would return a heart through the A-J, while if he won the trick, the defenders would finish with three spades, a heart and the diamond king for down one.

South should have realized that ducking the heart king in this case was wrong for two reasons. First, West was very likely to shift to a spade; second, South was in a position to guarantee a minimum of nine tricks if he took the first trick with the ace. He would then cross to dummy with a club and lead the diamond queen.

If East had the king and did not cover, the finesse could be repeated to yield at least three diamond tricks. And if the finesse lost to West, declarer, with the J-5 of hearts serving as a stopper, would have nine ironclad tricks consisting of three diamonds, four clubs and the two major-suit aces.

All of which goes to prove once again that a little knowledge can sometimes be a dangerous thing.

Tomorrow: Bidding quiz.
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12-4

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P Q N C R Q S I E H S W K V N E E
G K S G E K P Q S N D K E K N D W M W F
N E E N X S I C R C M W F M W F

M W R K V C R ? X K K R C I H K W C R .
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN CHICKENS OR TURKEYS PLAY A BATTING GAME, I PRESUME THEY MUST HIT A LOT OF FOWL BALLS.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals C

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Dog tags, e.g.
4 Stuffing herb
8 Track-and-field gold medalist
12 Sine — non
13 — Bator
14 Hand lotion ingredient
15 Levee items
17 Jazz legend
18 New England catch
19 Book makers?
21 Jacuzzi
24 Rock producer
25 Japanese sash
26 Nosh
28 Rapper
32 Lake bird
34 "Rah!"
36 "Toodle-oo!"
37 Leary of "Rescue Me"

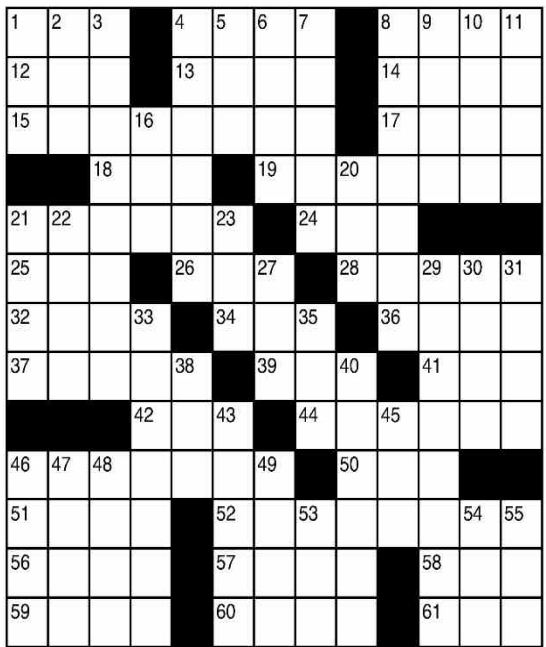
DOWN
1 Mensa measures
2 "Don't Start Now" singer
3 Approve
4 Tone down
5 — carte infatuated
7 Follow
8 Redeem one's chips
9 Sax range
10 Katy Perry hit song
11 Camera part
16 Speck

61 Pen tip
20 Stick with a kick
21 Contain
22 Bas-soon's kin
23 Howl at the moon
27 Bar bill
29 Adherent
30 Fermi's bit
31 Prop for Dr. House
33 Fools
35 Candied veggie
38 "— who?"
40 Short-ened, say
43 Spanish snacks
45 Before
46 Swiss-born painter
47 Raised ridge
48 Athletic shoe brand
49 Bern's river
53 GPS suggestion
54 "— was saying ..."
55 Catch red-handed

Solution time: 24 mins.

BTW CALL SEAT
TRA EDIE HELD
BIC LAVACAKES
SPOUT FAN
KING RIOTS
LAKECOMO ACHE
ILE SEAMS TEE
PETA LINECOOK
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Yesterday's answer 12-4



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Why is basketball legend Michael Jordan suing NASCAR?

By BRENDAN SANDERS
Midland Daily News, Mich.
Tribune News Service

Monday, NASCAR and Michael Jordan began a heavy-weight showdown in court that may shape motorsports in America for years to come. But why?

NASCAR is the premier motorsport organization in the United States of America, and arguably the largest motorsport on the planet outside of Formula 1, but its dominance is being challenged, and not by a rival motorsport, but by one of the most influential athletes in the world, Michael Jordan.

Jordan is a co-owner of 23XI Racing, a race team that competes in the NASCAR Cup series with drivers Darrell (Bubba) Wallace Jr. and Tyler Reddick. The team is co-owned by three-time Daytona 500 champion and 60-time race winner Denny Hamlin. Since 2024, while the team

raced in the Cup Series, they have been preparing to battle NASCAR in court this week for acting as a monopoly.

According to previous reporting by FOX Sports motorsports insider Bob Pockrass, they argue that since NASCAR owns the series and the majority of the tracks while also requiring the teams to purchase parts and pieces for their cars from a NASCAR-approved supplier, as well as prohibiting teams and tracks from participating in other racing (primarily stock-car racing) series without NASCAR's approval, that they violate antitrust law by controlling the market where premier stock-car racing teams can compete.

All of this comes after a contentious argument in 2024 over the sport's charter system. The charter system is a revenue-sharing model that is similar to a

franchise in other professional sports.

According to AP News reporter Jenna Fryer, although charters can be sold and leased, the charters have contractually binding terms, expiration dates and can be revoked by NASCAR. The teams fought with NASCAR throughout 2024, negotiating the latest agreement, with teams wanting full-time charters while NASCAR didn't, alongside other stipulations.

Ultimately, NASCAR gave teams an ultimatum to sign the last agreement by September 6, 2024 or risk losing their charter.

While several teams disagreed with NASCAR's ultimatum, the majority of the teams signed the agreement. The only two who did not were 23XI Racing and Front Row Motorsports, owned by Bob Jenkins. Pockrass reported that these teams viewed the new 2025 charter agreement as

unfair when it comes to revenue distribution to the teams in combination with the restrictions.

NASCAR co-defendant Jim France, the CEO who is part of NASCAR's founding family, claims it has done nothing wrong and the teams' dissatisfaction stems over a business dispute during negotiations for what is known as the franchise-like "charter system."

According to Jeff Gluck and Jordan Bianchi at The Athletic, the judge in the case, Kenneth D. Bell, has already ruled NASCAR has a monopoly over its market, which is defined as "premier" stock car racing. Now, in a trial that is expected to last more than two weeks, a six-person jury will decide whether NASCAR abused that power in a way that violated antitrust laws.

Now there are a multitude of scenarios that can play out as this trial continues. Gluck and

Bianchi noted that if the teams lose this case, they will likely go out of business as they will be operating as unchartered teams, which would significantly decrease how much money they can make. Charter teams get revenue guarantees, as well as assured starting spots in races, which open teams do not. The article notes that in a declaration, 23XI co-owner Curtis Polk estimated the organization would lose \$24 million in revenue if the team's cars did not have charters.

If NASCAR loses, the sport of stock car racing and motor racing in the United States could fundamentally change. Bianchi and Gluck went on to write that Bell has already telegraphed that in order to provide a remedy for an antitrust violation, he could force NASCAR to sell its race-tracks or dismantle the existing charter system.



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Big man drive

Jay County High School's Cole Forthofer drives the lane during a 56-53 victory over Richmond on Monday. Forthofer had a team-high 14 points to help JCHS secure its first win of the season after falling to South Side in the opener.

Former Reds pitcher will find it easy to hate NYY

By PETER SBLENDORIO
New York Daily News
Tribune News Service

It didn't take long for Sonny Gray to reintroduce himself to the Yankees-Red Sox rivalry.

Speaking for the first time since he was traded to Boston last week, Gray came with fighting words about the Yankees, with whom he famously struggled during a two-year tenure from 2017-18.

"What did factor into my decision to come to Boston [is that] it feels good to me to go to a place now where, you know what, it's easy to hate the Yankees, right?" Gray, 36, said Tuesday during an introductory Zoom call.

"It's easy to go out and have that rivalry and go into it with full force, full steam ahead. I like the challenge."

The Yankees envisioned Gray as a frontline starter when they acquired him from the Oakland A's before the 2017 trade deadline.

But Gray went just 15-16 with 4.51 ERA over 41 appearances, including 34 starts, during his 1 1/2 seasons with the Yankees, including a 4.90 ERA in 2018.

After being traded to the Cincinnati Reds before the 2019 season, Gray told The Athletic the Yankees had wanted him to throw his slider more often, rather than his bread-and-butter curveball.

Gray has largely excelled in the seven years since leaving the Yankees, pitching to a 3.51 ERA from 2019-25 with the Reds, Minnesota Twins and St. Louis Cardinals. He was the runner-up for the 2023 American

Sonny Gray pitched for Cincinnati from 2019 until 2021

League Cy Young Award with the Twins.

"New York, it just wasn't a good situation for me," Gray said Tuesday. "It wasn't a great setup for me and my family. I never wanted to go there in the first place. ... It just didn't really work for who I am."

At his introductory press conference at Yankee Stadium in 2018, Gray said he "couldn't be happier to be here today."

And while that sentiment did not last, Gray said Tuesday that he did "appreciate my time there."

"I've been a better baseball player, husband, everything from having that experience and going through that," said Gray, who was 14-8 with a 4.28 ERA with St. Louis last season.

"I just feel like I learned so much after going through that. When I immediately left, I was just like, you know what? I just wasn't myself."

Gray is the latest pitcher to add fire to the Yankees-Red Sox rivalry.

The Yankees are set to face the Red Sox in Boston from April 21-23, and then host their century-old rival from June 5-7 in the Bronx.

Sports on tap

Local schedule

Today

Jay County — Swim vs. Anderson — 6 p.m.; Girls wrestling vs. Hamilton Southeastern — 6:30 p.m.; Junior high boys basketball at Woodlan — 6 p.m.; Junior high girls basketball vs. Woodlan — 6 p.m.

Fort Recovery — Girls basketball vs. St. Henry — 6 p.m.; Middle school boys basketball vs. St. Henry — 5 p.m.; Middle school girls basketball at St. Henry — 5 p.m.

TV schedule

Today

12 p.m. — PGA Tour Champions: World Champions Cup (ESPN)
3 p.m. — Premier League soccer: Manchester United at West Ham United (USA)

Friday

Jay County — Boys basketball vs. Woodlan — 6 p.m.; JV boys wrestling at Blackford — 5:45 p.m.; Freshman boys basketball vs. Woodlan — 6 p.m.

5 p.m. — Women's college basketball: Florida at Virginia Tech (ESPN2)
7 p.m. — Women's college basketball: North Carolina at Texas (ESPN2); South Carolina at Louisville (ESPN)
7 p.m. — NHL: St. Louis Blues at Boston Bruins (FSDN Indiana)
7:30 p.m. — College hockey: Minnesota at Ohio State (BTN)
8:15 p.m. — NFL: Dallas Cowboys at Detroit Lions (FOX)
9 p.m. — Women's college basketball: Notre

Dame at Ole Miss (ESPN2); LSU at Duke (ESPN)

Friday

4:30 a.m. — Formula 1: Abu Dhabi Grand Prix (ESPN2)
12 p.m. — FIFA World Cup 2026: Group Stage Draw (FOX)
12 p.m. — PGA Tour Champions: World Champions Cup (ESPN)
6 p.m. — College hockey: Minnesota at Ohio State (BTN)
7 p.m. — College football: Troy at James

Madison (ESPN)
7 p.m. — College basketball: Gonzaga at Kentucky (ESPN2)
7:30 p.m. — College basketball: Cincinnati at Xavier (TNT)
8 p.m. — College football: UNLV at Boise State (FOX); North Texas at Tulane (ABC)
8 p.m. — NBA: Indiana Pacers at Chicago Bulls (FSDN Indiana)

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Who will replace Brian Hartline for Ohio State in final?

By STEFAN KRAJISNIK
cleveland.com
Tribune News Service

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio State coach Ryan Day is preparing his team for the Big Ten Championship Game this week, and the College Football Playoff is on the horizon.

While all that takes place, he'll also be in the hunt for a new offensive coordinator.

Brian Hartline is reportedly set to become South Florida's next head coach, though he will coach OSU through the postseason. He'll leave behind play-calling duties as well as his role as the Buckeyes' receivers coach.

Who will replace Hartline? Here's an early list of names to consider.

Chip Kelly, former Ohio State offensive coordinator

The first time Day handed over play-calling duties, he hired Chip Kelly as offensive coordinator ahead of the 2024 season. It worked out.

Kelly led an offense that ranked 14th nationally in yards per play (6.85). With quarterback Will Howard under center, the Buckeyes won their ninth national title in program history.

Kelly left after one season to serve as the Raiders offensive coordinator. However, he was fired after a Nov. 23 loss against the Browns.

Keenan Bailey, Ohio State tight ends coach/co-offensive coordinator

Keenan Bailey has been at Ohio State since 2019. He worked as a quality con-

trol coach before being promoted to tight ends coach in 2023.

This year, after Hartline was promoted to offensive coordinator, Bailey earned a co-OC title.

Tyler Bowen, Ohio State offensive line coach

Ohio State hired Tyler Bowen in the off-season to replace Justin Frye as offensive line coach.

While he's only been working with Day for one season, Bowen has experience as a play-caller. He previously served as Virginia Tech's offensive coordinator (2022-24) before coming to Columbus.

Bowen also has a connection to Urban Meyer. He served as the Jaguars' tight ends coach while Meyer was the head coach (2021).

Jerry Neuheisel, former UCLA interim offensive coordinator

Jerry Neuheisel was one of college football's best stories this season. The former UCLA quarterback (2012-15) has been serving as a coach for the program since 2018.

He served as interim offensive coordinator this year and helped lead the Bruins to wins against Penn State, Michigan State and Maryland.

Joe Moorhead, Akron head coach

Joe Moorhead has been serving as Akron's head coach since 2022, but some of his best success in the profession has come as an offensive coordinator.

Moorhead served as Oregon's OC from 2020-21 after a two-year stint as Mississippi State's head coach. In 2021, he led the Ducks to a 35-28 win at Ohio Stadium.



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Phillips' push-shot

Jay County High School's Aiden Phillips pushes up a shot from the middle of the lane during the Patriots' 56-53 victory over Richmond on Monday. Phillips had all eight of his points in the first half, while Cole Forthofer had 10 of his 14 as the frontcourt powered the first half and the backcourt fueled the second.

Purdue crushed Rutgers in B1G opener

By BRIAN FONESCA
nj.com
Tribune News Service

The last time No. 1 Purdue walked into Jersey Mike's Arena, Rutgers pulled off the biggest upset in program history, a result so monumental that it wiped off an awful start to the season and propelled the Scarlet Knights to a second consecutive NCAA Tournament appearance.

They weren't able to recapture the magic on Tuesday.

The Scarlet Knights scrapped with the Boilermakers for stretches before falling 81-65 in their Big Ten opener. It marked the third double-digit loss in nine games for Rutgers (5-4, 0-1), and considering it has No. 3 Michigan up next and six other games against teams currently in the top 30 on Ken-Pom, the blowouts could start piling up.

Purdue (8-0, 1-0) led for the final 36 minutes and 48 seconds, taking a lead as large as 25 points as Rutgers could not keep up with their high-powered offense led by All-American candidates Braden Smith (16 points on 5-of-11 shooting, eight assists) and Trey Kaufman-Renn (19 points on 7-of-11 shooting, 13 rebounds). The Scarlet

Kaufman-Renn led Boilermakers with 19 points

Knights reduced the deficit to a respectable margin by outscoring Purdue 36-27 in the final 16 minutes.

Head coach Steve Pikiell's team got crushed on the boards, giving up 11 offensive rebounds on 31 missed shots (35.5%) for 13 second-chance points. It shot 46.7% at the rim (7-of-15), going 2-of-3 on dunks and 5-of-12 on layups, making five of its last six after missing its first six. It shot 47.1% on threes (8-of-17), but allowed the top-ranked visitors to go 10-of-26 (38.5%) from beyond the arc.

The Scarlet Knights were led by freshman Harun Zrno (13 points on 5-of-8 shooting, 3-of-5 on threes) and star sophomore Dylan Grant (13 points on 5-of-10 shooting), though 11 of his points came in the final nine minutes.

Rutgers got off to a hot start, hit-

ting its first two shots to take an early 6-2 lead. Then the hosts missed six consecutive field goal attempts, allowing Purdue to take the advantage for good with an 18-3 run.

The Scarlet Knights clawed back with a 10-0 spurt, cutting their deficit to 1 point with 7:37 remaining in the first half. Then they missed another six shots in a row as the Boilermakers closed the half out on a 20-8 run.

They turned a comfortable lead into a blowout within the first five minutes of the second half, outscoring Rutgers 16-6 after scoring on seven of its first eight possessions after the break. The Boilermakers built their lead as high as 25 points before taking its foot off the gas, with the Scarlet Knights closing the gap to a more respectable margin.

It doesn't get any easier for Rutgers, which travels to Ann Arbor on Saturday to face arguably the hottest team in the country. The Wolverines are 7-0, lead KenPom's efficiency rankings by almost three points per 100 possessions (2.64) and are coming off of a championship at the Players Era Festival, where they defeated San Diego State, Auburn and Gonzaga by a combined 110 points.

Michael Badgley released by Colts

By KORY WOODS
mlive.com
Tribune News Service

Just under two months after making his NFL season debut, Michael Badgley is back on the free-agent market.

The Indianapolis Colts announced the release of the 30-year-old kicker after signing him to a third stint with the franchise in October. In seven games this season, Badgley made 10 of his 11 field-goal attempts — including a 53-yarder, the second-longest of his career — and went 18 of 21 on extra-point tries.

One of those missed PATs came during the Colts' 20-16 loss to the Houston Texans, a miscue that forced Indianapolis to need a touchdown instead of a game-tying field goal.

The Colts initially signed Badgley after kicker Spencer Schrader suffered a season-ending ACL and MCL injury.

Following Badgley's release, the Colts signed former New Orleans Saints kicker Blake Grupe to their practice squad.

Before returning to Indianapolis, Badgley spent his previous two NFL seasons (2022 and 2023) with the Lions. In 16 games with Detroit, he made 24 of 28 field goals and 46 of 48 extra-point attempts.

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