

County ARPA options mulled

Monroe suggests shifting funds from 68 acres

By BAILEY CLINE
The Commercial Review
American Rescue Plan Act dollars may be able to be reallocated.
Commissioner Duane Monroe made a motion Monday to stop infrastructure planning on the county's 68 acres in Portland. Commissioners chose to table the issue until they can speak with their attorney.
In 2023, the county purchased 68 acres along Indiana 67 on the west side of Portland. The county also hired planning firm Rundell, Ernstberger and Associates on a \$395,000 contract to develop a plan for building infrastructure on the land.
Jay County Council and commissioners agreed in November 2024 to enter into an inter-local agreement with Jay County Redevelopment Commission for the remaining \$1.24 million in American Rescue Plan Act dollars. Those federal coronavirus relief dollars had to be allocated by the end of 2024. Per guidelines, they're also supposed to be spent by Dec. 31, 2026.

No bids were submitted in September for the infrastructure project. Plans had been to begin negotiating directly with vendors.
Monroe talked Monday about a recent meeting between county officials and consulting firm Baker Tilly in which they discussed whether they could reallocate the American Rescue Plan Act dollars. He mentioned the meeting was intended to reassure county attorney Wes Schemenaur, who was not present Monday, that the county wouldn't lose its federal funding if it were to be shifted to a different project.
See Options page 2

A holiday spin

Audrey Evans of the Jay County High School color guard spins a ribbon during the group's performance to the Sia song "Snowman" during Sunday's Christmas concert. The event included performances by the jazz and concert bands, the color guard and the show choirs. It concluded with a combined performance from the band and choir of "A Festive Christmas Celebration."



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

State, Lilly launch education push

By CASEY SMITH
Indiana Capital Chronicle
indianacapitalchronicle.com
Indiana officials on Thursday announced a nearly \$75 million public-private investment aimed at strengthening literacy, STEM education, summer learning and career pathways for Hoosier students.
The effort includes \$40 million from Lilly Endowment Inc. and \$35 million in state funding. Indiana Secretary of Education Katie Jenner described the initiative as

Joint effort is focused on literacy, STEM, career paths

one of the largest combined education commitments in state history.
"This funding will yield tremendous value for Hoosier students, educators, and families," Jenner

said in the announcement. "By aligning public dollars with funds from Lilly Endowment, we are better able to scale what works, address persistent challenges, and build the statewide infrastructure

our students deserve. This funding will help our efforts to ensure that every child — no matter their ZIP code — has access to the high-quality learning opportunities that set them up for future success."
Much of the investment targets literacy. Ten million dollars from the Lilly Endowment will expand the state's K-5 Literacy Cadre, a program state officials credit, in part, with helping drive recent improvements in third-grade I-READ scores.
See Education page 2



Photo provided

East celebration

Second grade students from East Elementary School perform during their annual Christmas program on Thursday. The Bloomfield Elementary program was moved to 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 18, after school was canceled on the original date.

Europe nears assets deal

By ALEX WICKHAM, ALBERTO NARDELLI and ELLEN MILLIGAN
Bloomberg News
Tribune News Service

European leaders are increasingly confident they will reach a deal to use frozen Russian assets before the end of the year following talks in London, even as a gulf remains between Europe and the U.S. on providing security guarantees for Kyiv.
Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his allies made "positive progress" to use immobilized Russian sovereign assets to back a €90 billion (\$105 billion) loan for Ukraine's reconstruction, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer's office said following the meeting on Monday. European leaders were now optimistic an agreement could be reached before Christmas, according to people familiar with the matter.

Loan would support reconstruction in Ukraine

Ukraine's allies are under growing pressure to find fresh sources of financing after U.S. President Donald Trump's administration largely stopped aid to the war-ravaged country. As peace talks between Washington, Moscow and Kyiv intensified in recent weeks, the U.S. has even suggested that it could use the money for post-war investments.
The European Union last week put forward a proposal to use the immobilized assets as it estimates Ukraine will need €135 billion over the

next two years to keep basic services running and to prop up its military.
But the EU has had to contend with opposition to the plan from within the bloc from several countries including Belgium, where most of the funds are held. The leaders will meet in Brussels on Dec. 18 to seek agreement.
"We are now quite close to finding a legally and politically sustainable solution," Finnish Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen told Bloomberg TV in an interview on Monday.
See Assets page 2

Weather

The temperature stayed below freezing throughout the day Monday, with a high of 26 degrees and a low of 16.
There is a chance of light snow tonight with a low in the lower 20s. Expect mostly cloudy skies Thursday with a high in the upper 20s.
See page 2 for an extended outlook.

In review

Second Harvest Food Bank will host tailgate food distributions.
They are scheduled for:
•Thursday, Dec. 11, at Muncie Mall, 3401 N. Granville Ave., Muncie
•Friday, Dec. 12, at Goodrich Park, 701 N. Union St., Winchester, and First Baptist Church, 709 S. Memorial Drive, New Castle

•Wednesday, Dec. 17, at Redkey Morgan Park, 102 W. Holmes Ave., Redkey
•Thursday, Dec. 18, at Blackford County Fairgrounds, 409 E. Park Ave., Hartford City
•Tuesday, Dec. 23, at Five Points Mall, 1129 N. Baldwin Ave., Muncie
All tailgates are scheduled for 10 a.m.

Coming up

Thursday — Results from the Jay County High School wrestling quad.
Friday — Details from this week's Jay County Council meeting.
Saturday — Xxxx.



Options ...

Continued from page 1

County auditor Emily Franks said Baker Tilly presented three options for Jay County, with the group selecting an option that would involve real-locating funds. She said the firm plans to review the county's obligations and suggest a viable solution.

Monroe said Schemenaur indicated that if the county wishes to terminate its planning with Rundell, Ernstberger and Associates, both commissioners and redevelopment commission would need to make a motion to that effect. He then made a motion to stop the work. His motion died for lack of a second.

Commissioners president Chad Aker said he would prefer to hear from Schemenaur on

the issue, with commissioner Doug Horn and Monroe agreeing. Monroe noted that the redevelopment commission could vote on the topic at its meeting Dec. 18 and commissioners could revisit the discussion at their next meeting.

Aker pointed to Senate Enrolled Act 1 and potential tax cuts in the near future.

"We could either sit back and say, 'Oh, we're going to have to start cutting everything, you know, we're at the state's mercy on this,' or we could be proactive on this and try to create growth, and this is the only way that we're getting more tax dollars in over top of this SEA 1, is by increasing your population and increasing your assessed value," he said.

He also pointed to the invest-

ment already made on the project.

"It's not just the county that needs the housing, it's nationwide that needs housing," he said.

In other business, commissioners:

- Heard a request from Dar-rick Plummer of Pennville Partners to help pay for drainage infrastructure needs on part of his new mobile home park. Commissioners suggested Plummer, county surveyor Brad Daniels and Schemenaur sit down to discuss the situation.
- OK'd highway superintendent Bob Howell to buy a \$143,768 Western Star 7X chassis from Fyda Freightliner of Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Approved extending Jay County Highway Department






workers' deadline for using compensation time to the end of March.

- OK'd paying \$10,031.10 to LEAP Managed IT for updates to wiring and equipment at the highway department.
- Tabled discussion on whether to purchase a new air compressor for the highway department.
- Discussed terminating a lease with the City of Portland for office space at Community Resource Center. The space had been used by community coordinator Darlesia Lee prior to the decision not to renew a contract with her employer, East Central Indiana Regional Planning District. Jay County Development Corporation plans to bring back its community developer/grant writer

role and the city has already approved a lease agreement for the office.

- Learned the county did not receive a Community Crossings grant for road paving work on county road 400 South.
- Heard a request from Howell to purchase three snow plows, pointing to a plow from 2012 and two plows from 2015 needing to be replaced. He estimated the snow plows to cost between \$10,000 and \$13,000 apiece. Commissioners asked Howell to return next meeting with quotes.
- Paid a \$157,200 claim to Millwright Solutions for exterior work at Jay County Courthouse.
- Learned a new mechanic started for the highway department Dec. 1.

CR almanac

Thursday 12/11	Friday 12/12	Saturday 12/13	Sunday 12/14	Monday 12/15
 28/21 Mostly cloudy skies are expected Thursday when the high may reach around 28 degrees.	 31/19 Friday's forecast shows a 44% chance of snow.	 23/10 Another day of snow with a 60% chance of precipitation.	 14/5 Mostly cloudy, when the temperature may dip to single digits.	 21/15 Monday's weather looks to be mostly cloudy with a low around 15.

Lotteries

Powerball Monday 8-32-52-56-64 Power Ball: 23 Power Play: 2 Estimated jackpot: \$930 million	Daily Four: 4-1-8-5 Quick Draw: 5-11-13-20-21-29-35-36-37-42-43-44-46-54-63-65-73-75-79-80 Cash 5: 11-14-15-17-39 Estimated jackpot: \$110,000
Mega Millions Estimated jackpot: \$60 million	Ohio Monday Midday Pick 3: 5-7-6 Pick 4: 0-2-3-1 Pick 5: 0-9-1-1-7 Evening Pick 3: 1-3-6 Pick 4: 3-2-1-0 Pick 5: 9-2-0-3-8 Rolling Cash: 4-13-21-25-27 Estimated jackpot: \$100,000
Hoosier Monday Midday Daily Three: 7-5-3 Daily Four: 8-3-7-4 Quick Draw: 1-4-11-17-27-41-49-52-53-55-58-61-65-66-67-68-71-72-77-78 Evening Daily Three: 4-3-3	

Markets

Cooper Farms Fort Recovery Corn.....4.69 Jan. corn4.62 Feb. corn4.64	Jan. beans10.80 Wheat 4.88
POET Biorefining Portland Corn.....4.65 Jan. corn4.57 Feb. corn4.52	ADM Montpelier Corn.....4.43 Jan. corn4.43 Beans10.77 Jan. beans10.80 Wheat5.03
The Andersons Richland Township Corn4.52 Jan. corn4.52 Beans10.77	Heartland St. Anthony Corn.....4.52 Jan. corn4.52 Beans10.47 Jan. beans10.52 Wheat4.78

Today in history

In 1041, Michael V Calaphates took over the Byzantine Empire after the death of Michael IV.

In 2003, Fort Recovery teachers reached an agreement with the school board that included a 3% pay increase and a new insurance plan.

In 2018, Jay School Board unanimously approved a plan to move all seventh and eighth graders to Jay County High School. Elementary school students would then shift to the middle school buildings, with Judge Haynes (Portland) and Westlawn (Dunkirk) elementary schools closing. General Shanks Elementary School was closed and the building converted to house the corporation's central office, preschool and special programs.

—The CR

Citizen's calendar

Wednesday 8 a.m. — Upper Wabash River Basin Commission, first floor small conference room, Wells County Public Library, 200 W. Washington St., Bluffton. 6 p.m. — Jay County Council, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland.	community Resource Center, 118 S. Meridian St., Portland.
Thursday 6 p.m. — Jay County Plan Commission, Com-	Friday 8 a.m. — Portland Redevelopment Commission executive session, Community Resource Center, 118 S. Meridian St., Portland. 9 a.m. — Portland Redevelopment Commission, Community Resource Center, 118 S. Meridian St., Portland.

Assets ...

Continued from page 1

"I think using the Russian central bank's assets for funding the survival of Ukraine is not only morally, but in so many other ways, also the right thing to do."

The London meeting between Starmer, Zelenskyy and leaders of France and Germany took place against a backdrop of concern in European governments that a U.S.-brokered peace initiative to end the conflict in Ukraine risked making too many concessions to Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

The leaders "aligned a shared position on the importance of security guarantees and reconstruction, and agreed on the next steps," Zelenskyy said on X. His remarks suggest the meeting failed to deliver a breakthrough on what is a key component of any peace settlement with Russia that Kyiv can accept.

Control over eastern regions of Ukraine as well as security guarantees from allies are among a number of "sensitive issues" that require further discussions, Zelenskyy told Bloomberg News earlier on Monday.

The London meeting was followed by a call with leaders from the EU, Finland, Norway, Italy, Denmark, Poland, Sweden, the Netherlands, NATO and a senior representative from Turkey. The British statement noted that national security advisers for

European governments would continue discussions in coming days.

"The leaders all agreed that now is a critical moment and that we must continue to ramp up support to Ukraine and economic pressure on Putin to bring an end to this barbaric war," Starmer's office said.

In the course of several frenetic weeks of negotiations, Ukraine has managed to water down an initial 28-point peace plan floated by the U.S., which appeared favorable to Russia by attempting to bar Kyiv from joining NATO and capping the size of its army. A new 20-point framework document has emerged, but there remains little clarity on how Moscow will be deterred from launching another attack in the future.

Trump said on Sunday he was "a little bit disappointed" in Zelenskyy, who he claimed hadn't yet read the proposal. Moscow, on the other hand, was "fine with it," Trump told reporters. Ukraine has been under growing U.S. pressure to agree to a deal.

Zelenskyy said he may send the latest draft version of the peace plan to Washington on Tuesday. Ukraine is looking for legally binding security guarantees from the U.S. that are approved by Congress, the president told reporters during his flight to Brussels late on Monday.

Trump has grown increasingly impatient with the lack of progress

in talks to end the war, which he had pledged to resolve within 24 hours of taking office. In doing so, he's repeatedly sounded sympathetic to Russia, the country that started the full-scale invasion of its smaller neighbor almost four years ago. Last week, a U.S. national security strategy document signed by Trump said European governments "hold unrealistic expectations for the war."

Ukraine's European allies have largely been shut out of the American-led diplomacy, prompting a series of senior European officials to visit Washington in the coming weeks to urge for unity on Ukraine. UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper, following a meeting with Secretary of State Marco Rubio, will give a speech to European diplomats in London on Tuesday calling on them to revive international collaboration to tackle the hybrid threats facing Western allies.

Trump has dispatched his special envoy, Steve Witkoff, and son-in-law Jared Kushner to work over the proposal in talks in Moscow, while Ukrainian officials have shuttled between Kyiv, Geneva and Florida.

Arriving in London for the talks with Starmer, Zelenskyy said his country needed unity among its main allies to secure a pact. But he also signaled that the talks with the U.S. have yet to yield agreement on Ukraine's Donbas, including the provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk.

Education ...

Continued from page 1

The new funding will support staffing for the Indiana Department of Education's Literacy Center; recruitment and training of instructional coaches; statewide professional development; and research and evaluation. The Lilly Endowment previously provided a \$60 million grant for similar literacy work in 2022.

Another \$5 million will go toward adolescent literacy through "outcomes-based contracting," allowing schools to partner with vendors that specialize in evidence-based reading interventions for grades 6-8.

The plan also includes \$1 million for a statewide STEM "Landscape Analysis" to assess strengths and gaps in STEM education and develop recommendations to improve Indiana's workforce pipeline, as well as \$500,000 for a career-advising study to evaluate existing practices and design updated tools to help students explore career options.

Summer Learning Labs, a statewide network focused on academic recovery and enrichment, will receive \$15 million to expand regional coordination, professional development, data systems and other supports during the next two years. Indiana Learns, the state's microgrant program for individualized tutoring and enrichment in reading and math, will additionally receive \$5 million in continued support.

SERVICES

Wednesday
Clevenger, Linda: 3 p.m.,
Dunkirk I.O.O.F. Cemetery.

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How to honor past, present relationships

By JANN BLACKSTONE
Tribune News Service

Q. My husband of nine years died in a car crash three years ago. I continued to spend the holidays with his parents each year. Last year his mother passed away so his father is all alone. My new fiancé doesn't think we should spend the holidays with my former father-in-law. I understand his point of view, but this man has been family for years. He's is 80 years old and all alone. What's good ex-etiquette?

A. First of all, I want to acknowledge the depth of your compassion and the complexities of your situation. Your loyalty to your former father-in-law is commendable, and it's understandable that you want to continue providing support to someone who's been a part of your life for so long.

As for your fiancé's point of view, that's under-

Ex-Etiquette



standable, as well. Blending families, especially after the death of a spouse, can be tricky. Your fiancé may feel that continuing to spend holidays with your former father-in-law is a reminder of your past, and that may bring up uncomfortable feelings for him.

So, what's good ex-etiquette?

It's perfectly acceptable to still care for and nurture relationships with people from your past, but the foundation of your relationship with your fiancé must also be nurtured. Start by having an honest conversation with

your fiancé about your reasons for wanting to continue spending time with your former father-in-law. Let him know that you are not choosing your past over your present. It's not about one relationship winning over another; it's about blending compassion, sensitivity and mutual respect.

How do you honor both relationships, the one you lost and the one you're building?

1. Create an All-Inclusive Plan

You don't have to choose between your fiancé and your former father-in-law. Instead, decide together how to make room for both. That might mean spending the main holiday with your fiancé and visiting your father-in-law earlier in the day or the day before or hosting a small holiday coffee gathering so your father-in-law is

included without dominating the entire celebration. This shows your fiancé that you're committed to your future together while still showing compassion toward someone who has essentially been family for years and is now alone.

2. Reframe It for Your Fiancé

Sometimes partners feel threatened because they don't understand the why behind the tradition. Explain it gently and clearly. You could say something like:

"I want you to know that my feelings for my late husband are not in competition with my life with you. My father-in-law is 80. He has lost both his son and his wife, and I'm one of the few people he has left. Spending a little time with him during the holidays is about compassion, not clinging to the past. And I want us to figure out

a way to do that together, so everyone feels respected — especially you."

3. Invite Your Fiancé Into the Decision-Making

Good Ex-etiquette Rule No. 10 is, "Look for the Compromise." Instead of telling him what you plan to do, bring him into the process. "How can we make this work, so you feel comfortable too? I want to find something that honors him but also honors us."

When people feel included rather than sidelined, resistance usually melts.

4. Set Boundaries That Reflect Your New Life

You're not the same person you were nine years ago — your traditions don't have to be, either.

5. Let Your Fiancé See the Human Side

Sometimes meeting the person changes everything. If he hasn't spent time with your former father-in-law, invite him along once — not to pressure him, but so he understands the bond. Often the fear of an idea is more powerful than the actual situation.

Remember, you're not choosing between your fiancé and your former father-in-law; you're simply being thoughtful about how to include both in a way that honors your past and supports your future. That's good ex-etiquette.

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Jann Blackstone is a child custody mediator and the author of "The Bonus Family Handbook: The Definitive Guide to Co-parenting and Creating Stronger Families. She can be reached at bonusfamilies.com or jann@bonusfamilies.com.

Wife thinks it's too late to leave narcissist

DEAR ABBY: I've been married to a narcissist for 28 years. He has gaslighted me for our entire 30 years together. He has had a "work wife" and a flirtation with the next-door neighbor hottie, and he paid for two sexy girls' dinners (and pies to go) because they happened to be in line in front of us.

After an argument, he even called the police on me. (An entire shift of sheriff officers surrounded our house.) I have developed severely negative emotions toward him, especially when he lies to me. We haven't had sex in a year. We get along fairly well in day-to-day activities, although it bothers me that I have to be chauffeured everywhere I go, including him waiting while I have my hair and nails done.

Dear Abby



I'm 67 and feel it is too late to start over. My psychologist can't understand why I don't leave. We aren't destitute, but we're not wealthy either. I don't know which way to turn. — HATING HIM IN MICHIGAN

DEAR HATING HIM: I find it interesting that as threatened as you feel about your husband's work relationship with his assistant, his flirtation with the hottie next door

and two strangers he tried to impress by paying for their takeout dinners (pies included), HE is so insecure that he must drive you everywhere you go outside the house.

While you think it may be too late for you to start over, you need to clearly define what starting over means to you. I can think of worse fates than freedom from an insecure, possessive, lying narcissist. You are under the care of a licensed psychotherapist. The logical "way to turn" would be in the direction your therapist is trying to guide you.

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DEAR ABBY: I am concerned about a dear friend who has a diagnosis of mild dementia. She

has no family here. Her closest relatives are four hours away, and she has minimal contact with them. She was widowed 40 years ago and hasn't dated. She always said she had no interest in that. She is deeply involved in our community and has a wide, varied circle of friends.

My concern is that while she has always been active in different events — the arts, music, adult ed classes — she is now VERY interested in men. She has spoken to me about her desire for a sexual relationship. She's 82. I am at a loss about what to tell her and worried about the consequences if she does find a man willing and able. I feel strongly that her desire is a personality change as a result of dementia. Any

advice would be appreciated. — DIFFERENT NOW IN IOWA

DEAR DIFFERENT: Your friend is well enough that she is active in your community. Talk further with your friend about this. She doesn't have to worry about a pregnancy, but STDs among seniors have more than doubled in the United States in the last decade. Syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia are all on the rise. Lack of knowledge and low condom use are driving these statistics.

Seniors have a right to a sex life if they wish, but they should be well informed before starting one. Urge your friend to speak with her gynecologist before starting any intimate relationship.

Community Calendar

Notices will appear in Community Calendar as space is available. To submit an item, email news@the-cr.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, evi-

dence-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.

PORTLAND EAGLES — Will meet at 6 p.m., on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at the Eagles' lodge, 320 N. Meridian St., Portland.

JAY COUNTY CIVIC THEATRE — Holds its regular meeting at 6:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the boardroom at Arts Place, 131 E. Walnut 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

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.

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.

JAY COUNTY TRAILS CLUB — Will meet at 6 p.m. the second Thursday of each month at Jay Community Center.

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.

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.

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.

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Sudoku

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

Level: Intermediate

Tuesday's Solution

6	8	1	3	7	5	2	4	9
7	2	9	1	4	8	3	5	6
3	4	5	6	2	9	8	7	1
8	7	4	9	5	2	1	6	3
2	9	3	7	1	6	5	8	4
5	1	6	4	8	3	7	9	2
1	3	7	8	9	4	6	2	5
9	6	2	5	3	7	4	1	8
4	5	8	2	6	1	9	3	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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GRAPHIC PRINTING
NEWSPAPERS

The Commercial Review

Christmas brings fond memories

Editor's note: This column is being reprinted from Dec. 9, 2015. Like Jack, we all have fond memories of Christmases past. As you're rushing around shopping, wrapping and attending holiday parties this year, take some time to remember those moments you've enjoyed over the years.

By JACK RONALD
The Commercial Review

There's something about toy stores at Christmastime. As a kid, I haunted places like G.C. Murphy — the dime store in Portland — and the Art Craft, especially on Saturday mornings. It's no exaggeration to say that a dedicated 10-year-old could recite a good chunk of either store's toy inventory by the middle of December. And it's safe to

Back in the Saddle



say that some items exerted an almost supernatural pull. The attraction often was not rational. Why, for instance, did I find myself wanting a plastic Howdy Doodie ukulele when I was about 7? And what dreams of show business made me covet a Jerry Mahoney ventriloquist's dummy? My favorite toy department in those days was in Fort Wayne at Wolf and Dessauer, an old line

department store that my mother liked. I'd split off from her at the earliest convenience to go to the fourth floor and browse through the toys. For years, I used to dream about that place. As an adult — first as a parent and now as a grandparent — I have two favorite toy stores. One is a crowded shop in Stratford, Ontario, crammed with more toys than you can imagine. It's called Family and Company, and it is a delight. One might even say it's magical. On Saturday mornings, young staff members do magic tricks for kids. If one of the tricks is purchased, the same staff members teach the lucky kid its secrets, all without letting the parents know how the trick works. (Our daughter Sally

bought a card trick years ago that her parents have never figured out.) The second is much more convenient than Family and Company. It's just down the road in Richmond, and on Saturday we made a pre-Christmas pilgrimage to check out its wonders. Actually, we weren't Christmas shopping. We'd already wrapped up our Christmas shopping for the grandchildren, but our youngest grandson has a birthday on Christmas Eve. (Appropriately enough, his name is Gabriel.) So Saturday's trip was just for the birthday boy. And Veach's didn't disappoint. Known officially these days as Veach's Toy Station, the store in downtown Richmond was sim-

ply Veach's for a couple of generations. I remember visiting its toy train department as a kid, and all of our daughters registered at the Veach's birthday castle for a gift when they were little. Today, it's even better. Though it used to be more of a variety store, the shop now concentrates solely on toys. Family-owned, it has a friendliness and ease that you'll never find at a shopping mall. It's hard to imagine a greater selection. We saw toys Saturday we didn't know existed, and — to tell the truth — the grandparents went a little bit overboard. But that's OK. It's never easy for a kid to have a birthday close to Christmas. That's our excuse, and we're sticking to it.

Threats shouldn't hold hungry hostage

New York Daily News
Tribune News Service
Is U.S. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins trying to starve people into submission?

It seems so and she is dead wrong to threaten to cut off federal SNAP funding to states that refuse to comply with her unreasonable demands to turn over sensitive program data, including New York. Gov. Kathy Hochul is correct in telling Rollins to get lost in asking: "Why is the Trump administration so hellbent on people going hungry?" USDA and Uncle Sam didn't have the authority to deny Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (what used to be called food stamps) during the shutdown and don't have the authority to do so now. As with many of the Trump administration's other efforts to strong-arm local, state and federal officials, it's couching this in the language of fraud, insinuating that the food benefits are being used by those who aren't eligible, though neither Rollins nor anyone else seems to want to bother to present any evidence for this, because that's sort of beyond the point.

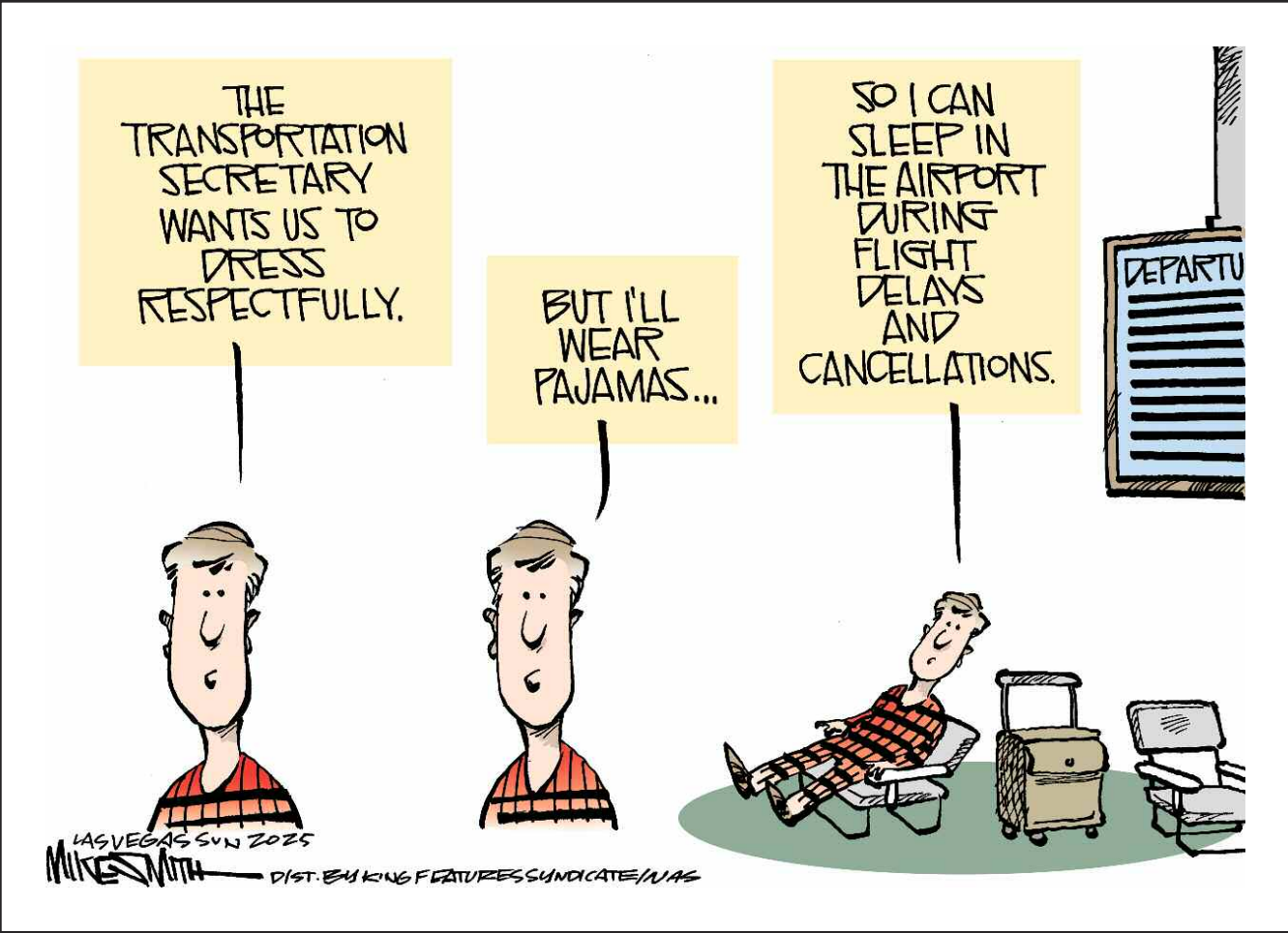
The idea of "fraud" has become the skeleton key for the Trump administration to push through all of its capricious preferences. If elections don't seem to be going how they want, it's due to rampant election fraud, never mind that investigation after investigation has failed to ever find significant numbers of such fraud in the United States. If judges are handing down rulings that block or limit the administration's priorities, these judges are acting improperly or in the pocket of special interests. If there is a public program that administration officials don't like for ideological reasons, well, surely it must be rife with fraud. As for SNAP, only U.S. citizens and lawfully present noncitizens such as permanent residents are eligible for the food benefits.

Trump and his enablers simply treat it as a given that anything that goes against their preferences or objectives must not be happening legitimately, or at the very least that their followers will believe their evidence-free claims. But there is no such fraud with SNAP. There never has been. If you go hunting, can you find isolated examples of people

Guest Opinion

As for SNAP, only U.S. citizens and lawfully present noncitizens such as permanent residents are eligible for the food benefits.

misusing benefits, or people who don't quite qualify getting access? Sure, such is the case with anything. When you have tens of millions of people participating in a program, it is simply inevitable that there will be some level of misuse. But there is no widespread and systematic fraud other than the fraud that Trump and his administration themselves are perpetrating on the American public, ignoring their oaths to defend the Constitution and safeguard the public interest and instead focusing on personal enrichment, the accumulation of power and the pursuit of unpopular ideological mandates. The residents of the 29 states that have reportedly already complied with the USDA directive should demand that their local leaders explain why they are so freely sharing this information with a federal administration that has no basis to demand it, no respect for privacy or due process or reality itself and which has been very willing to misuse official information to pursue its political enemies. States like ours that have refused to comply are doing their duty to their residents and should hold fast. We cannot be held hostage by the threat of federal funds being taken away every time that the White House wants to commandeer our local government. If the federal government intends to continue illegally withholding funds, they will ultimately lose in court.



What could possibly go wrong?

By MELINDA ROTH
Chicago Tribune
Tribune News Service
While everyone who pays attention to sports has been focused on games and front-page betting scandals, the NCAA quietly approved allowing student-athletes to bet on professional sports. What could possibly go wrong? Thankfully on Nov. 21, a day before sports betting was going to be permitted, two-thirds of Division I schools rescinded their approval. Over half a million student-athletes play college sports. This means over half a million students would have been eligible to bet without fear of sanction from their coaches, schools or even the governing body of college sports. Sports betting is a huge business in this country, with legalized sportsbooks operating in 39 states plus D.C. and Puerto Rico. Over \$150 billion was legally wagered in the U.S. in 2024. That is roughly the same size that Americans spend on the pet sector. Except in the pet sector, we are taking care of our loved ones. With sports betting, we are permitting our loved ones to engage in behavior that is leading to growing addictions and severe detrimental financial and emotional consequences. And now, we still may be unleashing this on those who thrive on the short-term thrill-seeking that sports betting provides. We also now have the prediction markets, which, while structured like financial derivative products, are also akin to sports betting. For those in states such as California and Texas that have not legalized sports betting yet or in states that have legalized sports betting but require the bettor to be at least 21 years old, there is the possibility for anyone who is 18 years old in any state to use the prediction markets. This marketplace now offers sports event contracts, which can look and

Melinda Roth



feel exactly like sports betting and are available to anyone with an account on financial platforms such as Robinhood and Kalshi and soon DraftKings, FanDuel, Polymarket and more. Changes in college sports allow players to profit from the use of their own name, image and likeness, known as NIL, as well as allowing Division I universities that opted into the House settlement to pay their student-athletes directly. Beyond scholarships for tuition, many student-athletes are therefore able to monetize their athletic performance. These earnings should be protected and invested in their future and not used to chase the typically losing proposition of sports betting. In fact, a recent study shows that for the states that have legal sports betting, every dollar a sports bettor uses to gamble displaces their investments by slightly more than \$2. As a hypothetical, someone who bets \$100 a week (or \$5,200 a year) would have, but for the sports betting costs, invested over \$10,400. Furthermore, sports betting is regressive and hurts those of lower-income levels more than those in the upper-income brackets. Studies have shown that those financially constrained households that engage in sports betting increase their credit card balances, reduce their credit card payments and increase bank account overdrafts. The data is stark for these financially constrained households as they are not substituting sports betting expenditures from other sources of entertainment but

instead taking on more debt to finance sports betting habits. Do we really want our student-athletes possibly developing gambling habits, a known addiction, and suffering the detrimental financial consequences of such an addiction while they are in school? The NCAA and possibly Congress or the administration should step in and clarify this further. No support system exists for student-athletes — and the support system for nonathlete people who bet on sports is weak and almost nonexistent, depending on the state. Moreover, college athletic programs are increasingly associated with professional athletes; for example, NBA star Stephen Curry was hired by his alma mater, Davidson College, as an assistant general manager for both men's and women's basketball. Such roles, as well as university alumni moving to the professional ranks or becoming draft-eligible, blend the lines between professional and collegiate sports and add possible integrity issues to sports betting. There have been a number of scandals not only in professional basketball and baseball in recent months, but also with numerous college athletes associated with gambling rings. Student-athletes work hard on the field and in the classroom too. The NCAA's rule change appeared to be shortsighted and adopted without any forethought of the negative consequences it will have for student-athletes. There has been little focus or news on this issue. The rule seemed to benefit mostly the sportsbooks, which already have more than enough customers. Thankfully, for now, at least two-thirds of the Division I schools have come to their senses and realized what a can of worms this would open. ***** Roth is a visiting associate professor at Washington and Lee University School of Law.

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—Thomas Jefferson

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New rules threaten access

SNAP changes require working, volunteering or studying

By **RENUKA RAYASAM,**
KATHERYN HOUGHTON
and **SAMANTHA LISS**
KFF Health News
Tribune News Service

Alejandro Santillan-Garcia is worried he's going to lose the aid that helps him buy food. The 20-year-old Austin resident qualified for federal food benefits last year because he aged out of the Texas foster care system, which he entered as an infant.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — commonly referred to as food stamps, or SNAP — helps feed 42 million low-income people in the United States. Now, because of changes included in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, to keep his food benefits Santillan-Garcia might soon have to prove to officials that he's working.

He said he lost his last job for taking time off to go to the doctor for recurrent stomach infections. He doesn't have a car and said he has applied to a grocery store, Walmart, Dollar General, "any place you can think of" that he could walk or ride his bike to.

"No job has hired me."

Under the new federal budget law, to be eligible for SNAP benefits, more people are required to show that they are working, volunteering, or studying. Those who don't file paperwork in time risk losing food aid for up to three years. States were initially instructed to start counting strikes against participants on Nov. 1, the same day that millions of people saw their SNAP benefits dry up because of the Trump administration's refusal to fund the program during the government shutdown. But federal officials backtracked partway through the month, instead giving states until December to enforce the new rules.

The new law further limits when states and counties with high unemployment can waive recipients from requirements. But a legal battle over that provision means that the deadline for people to comply with the new rules varies depending on where recipients live, even within a state in some cases.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture did not respond to a detailed list of questions about how the new rules around SNAP will be implemented, and the White House did not respond to a request for comment about whether the rules could kick off people who rely on the program. The law did extend exemptions to many Native Americans.

Still, states must comply with new rules or accrue penalties that could force them to pay a bigger share of the program's cost, which was about \$100 billion last year.

President Donald Trump signed the massive budget bill, along with the new SNAP rules, into law on July 4. States initially predicted they would need at least 12 months to implement such significant changes, said Chloe Green, an assistant director at the American Public Human Services Association who advises states on federal programs.

Under the law, "able-bodied" people subject to work requirements can lose access to bene-



Tribune News Service/KFF Health News/Callie Richmond

Alejandro Santillan-Garcia qualified for federal food benefits in 2024 because he aged out of the Texas foster care system. But because of new rules included in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, he will no longer automatically get food aid.

fits for three years if they go three months without documenting working hours.

Depending on when states implement the rules, many people could start being dropped from SNAP early next year, said Lauren Bauer, a fellow in economic studies at the Brookings Institution, a policy think tank. The changes are expected to knock at least 2.4 million people off SNAP within the next decade, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

"It's really hard to work if you are hungry," Bauer said.

Many adult SNAP recipients under 55 already needed to meet work requirements before the One Big Beautiful Bill Act became law. Now, for the first time, adults ages 55 to 64 and parents whose children are all 14 or older must document 80 hours of work or other qualifying activities per month. The new law also removes exemptions for veterans, homeless people, and former foster care youths, like Santillan-Garcia, that had been in place since 2023.

Republican policymakers said the new rules are part of a broader effort to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse in public assistance programs.

Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins said in November that in addition to the law, she will require millions to reapply for benefits to curb fraud, though she did not provide more details. Rollins told Newsmax that she wants to ensure that SNAP benefits are going only to those who "are

vulnerable" and "can't survive without it."

States are required to notify people that they are subject to changes to their SNAP benefits before they're cut off, Green said. Some states have announced the changes on websites or by mailing recipients, but many aren't giving enrollees much time to comply.

Anti-hunger advocates fear the changes, and confusion about them, will increase the number of people in the U.S. experiencing hunger. Food pantries have reported record numbers of people seeking help this year.

Even when adhering to the work rules, people often report challenges uploading documents and getting their benefits processed by overwhelmed state systems. In a survey of SNAP participants, about 1 in 8 adults reported having lost food benefits because they had problems filing their paperwork, according to the Urban Institute. Some enrollees have been dropped from aid as a result of state errors and staffing shortfalls.

Pat Scott, a community health worker for the Beaverhead Resource Assistance Center in rural Dillon, Montana, is the only person within at least an hour's drive who is helping people access public assistance, including seniors without reliable transportation. But the center is open only once a week, and Scott says she has seen people lose coverage because of problems with the state's online portal.

Jon Ebelt, a spokesperson with the Montana health department, said the state is always working to improve its programs. He added that while some of the rules have changed, a system is already in place for reporting work requirements.

In Missoula, Montana, Jill Bonny, head of the Poverello Center, said the homeless shelter's clients already struggle to apply for aid, because they often lose documentation amid the daily challenge of carrying everything they own. She said she's also worried the federal changes could push more older people into homelessness if they lose SNAP benefits and are forced to pick between paying rent or buying food.

In the U.S., people 50 or older are the fastest-growing group experiencing homelessness, according to federal data.

Sharon Cornu is the executive director at St. Mary's Center, which helps support homeless seniors in Oakland, California. She said the rule changes are sowing distrust. "This is not normal. We are not playing by the regular rules," Cornu said, referring to the federal changes. "This is punitive and mean-spirited."

In early November, a federal judge in Rhode Island ordered the Trump administration to deliver full SNAP payments during the government shutdown, which ended Nov. 12. That same judge sought to buffer some of the incoming work requirements. He ordered the government to respect

existing agreements that waive work requirements in some states and counties until each agreement is set to end. In total, 28 states and the District of Columbia had such exemptions, with different end dates.

Adding to the confusion, some states, including New Mexico, have waivers that mean people in different counties will be subject to the rules at different times.

If states don't accurately document SNAP enrollees' work status, they will be forced to pay later on, Green said. Under the new law, states must cover a portion of the food costs for the first time — and the amount depends on how accurately they calculate benefits.

During the government shutdown, when no one received SNAP benefits, Santillan-Garcia and his girlfriend relied on grocery gift cards they received from a nonprofit to prioritize feeding his girlfriend's baby. They went to a food pantry for themselves, even though many foods, including dairy, make Santillan-Garcia sick.

He's worried that he'll be in that position again in February when he must renew his benefits — without the exemption for former foster care youths. Texas officials have yet to inform him about what he will need to do to stay on SNAP.

Santillan-Garcia said he's praying that, if he is unable to find a job, he can figure out another way to ensure he qualifies for SNAP long-term.

"They'll probably take it away from me," he said.

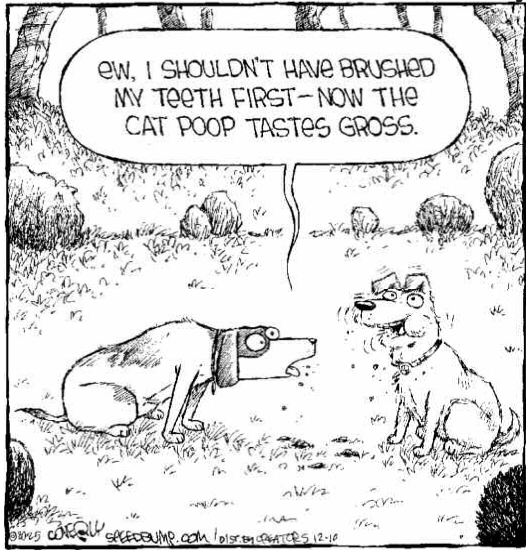


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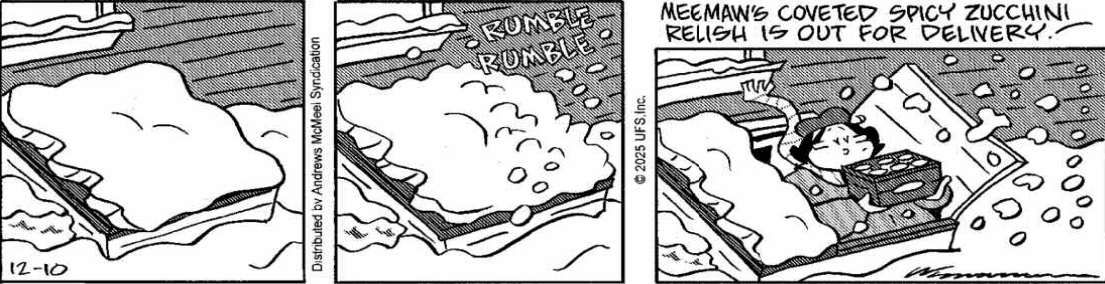
THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



Peanuts



Rose is Rose



Agnes



Hi and Lois



Between Friends



Blondie



Snuffy Smith



Beetle Bailey



Contract Bridge By Steve Becker

Picture bidding

South dealer.
Both sides vulnerable.

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

WEST			
♠	1 10 9 5 4		
♥	K 3 2		
♦	19 8 2		
♣	7		

EAST			
♠	K Q 6 3 2		
♥	10 9 8		
♦	10 4		
♣	4 2		

SOUTH			
♠	A		
♥	A Q 7		
♦	7 5 3		
♣	A K 9 8 6 5		

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
1 ♠	Pass	1 ♦	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	5 ♣	Pass
6 ♣			

Opening lead — jack of spades.

South's three-club rebid in today's deal announces a hand containing 16 to 18 points. It asks North to continue bidding unless his first response was a dead minimum (six or seven points). A four-club response by North would indicate a hand such as the one he has, less the ace of diamonds. North's five-club response described his additional values very precisely.

South's six-club bid is automatic. North is bound to have strong diamonds and club support for the two bids he has made, and South has excellent control of the unbid side suits.

Twelve tricks can be made by taking ordinary care. South has two potential heart losers. He can avoid one of them in three possible ways: the diamonds may break 3-3; the heart finesse may succeed; an end-play may be arranged.

After winning the opening spade lead, declarer should cash the Q-J of trump and then ruff dummy's remaining spade. Next, the A-K-Q of diamonds are taken, revealing that West started with four of them.

The six of diamonds is then led, on which South discards the seven of hearts. West wins but has no satisfactory exit. A heart return would be into declarer's A-Q, while a spade return allows declarer to trump in dummy as he discards the queen of hearts.

In general, a slam should be bid whenever there appears to be a better-than-even chance of fulfillment. It is in this area that a partnership's bidding skill is most severely tested.

The main question to be resolved in bidding a slam is whether the combined hands will offer a good chance to make at least 12 tricks. Bids devoted to finding out the number of aces held, such as Blackwood, all too often bypass this basic question.

Tomorrow: A giveaway plan.
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12-10

CRYPTOQUIP

VA O J L M N F J O L O X B C B A X N O
C M H M G X C A O G X C F D X K
M T O Q X C F M J B , H M Z M I B I T T M B O

CA O Z ' H I B O D M V - D I K X C M Q B ?
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOU'RE ACTIVELY SEEKING TO PURCHASE A MONGOOSE, MAKE SURE YOU PAY THE FAIR MEERKAT VALUE.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: T equals P

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS				37	Bartlett,	2	Slugger	22	French
1	Poet				for one		Moises		cheese
	Teasdale			38	Ooze	3	Falling-	23	Fragrant
5	"Terrific"			39	FDR		out		wood
8	Now, in				project	4	Lepre-	25	De-
	memos			41	Wander		chaun's		bussy's
12	Lena			43	Least	5	capers		"La —"
	of "The			46	Cartoon		neighbor	26	"Rocks"
	Reader"				genre	5	Ga.		Computer
13	Actress			50	Panache	6	Have the		programs
	Lucy			51	Senti-		flu	29	Octavia's
14	NYC				mental	7	Future		contents
	gallery			54	Grime		tulip	31	Tramcar
15	Sandlot			55	Bird	8	Tickle		mate
	game				(Pref.)	9	Tap-	32	Mom's
17	Sci-fi			56	Billions of		dance		relaxing
	fleet				years	10	style		refuges
18	Belly			57	Beholds		Cupid's	38	Had a
	button			58	Squealer	11	specialty		hunch
19	Casual			59	Crucial		Texas	40	Air
	eatery				time	16	Golfer		outlets
21	"Mad						Hogan	42	Cistern
	Money"			DOWN		20	"The —	43	Govt.
	network						of March"		agents
24	—			1	Mediocre			44	Author
	Moines								Wiesel
25	Yearn for							45	Despot
28	Thinker							47	Apple
	Des-								product
	cartes							48	—
30	Jump								Lisa"
33	Green							49	Online
	prefix								craft
34	Factions								shop
35	Gold, to							52	Lab
	Manuel								eggs
36	Ump							53	In shape

Solution time: 23 mins.

D	I	N	A		P	O	E		T	Y	N	E
E	C	O	L		A	D	A		H	E	A	R
B	U	B	B		L	I	E		R			
					U	A	L		T	O	I	L
S	T	A	M	P		O	O	P	S			
T	H	I	S		S	T	E	A	M	I	E	R
A	I	D			S	H	O	A	L		O	R
G	N	A	R		L	I	E	R		S	W	A
					E	O	N	S		C	H	A
N	U	T			M	E	G		A	L	E	
A	S	H	E		L	O	V	E	L	L	I	E
D	E	A	D		E	P	I		V	A	L	E
A	R	T			S	T	S		E	N	I	D

Yesterday's answer 12-10

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15				16					17			
18								19	20			
			21		22	23		24				
25	26	27			28		29		30	31	32	
33					34					35		
36					37				38			
			39	40			41		42			
43	44				45		46		47	48	49	
50					51	52	53					
54					55				56			
57					58				59			

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Hoosiers: Afterthought to contender

BY JIMMY WATKINS
cleveland.com
Tribune News Service

Indiana coach Curt Cignetti holds the Big Ten championship trophy over his head, and suddenly, his cutesy one-liners don't sound as funny.

"Google me," he once said to detractors who hadn't followed his career. No need now. Cignetti just won the Big Ten championship 13-10 against Ohio State. You know how good he is.

"Purdue sucks, but so does Michigan and Ohio State," he said during his first appearance as IU coach. He's beaten them all. He's won 24 games within his first two seasons, tying former Ohio State coach Urban Meyer (Google him) for the conference record.

And he's still got more to say.

"I think we're a year late," Cignetti told FOX during his confetti shower. "...You talk about changing the way people think, I got three and a half weeks to get this team humble and hungry for the playoffs."

They will be the top seed, and we will no longer be laughing, or even smiling, at their success. No, after Saturday's result, we must view the Hoosiers through the lens they just showed us.



That being: A serious threat to Ohio State's dominance.

Stop laughing. The joke was on the Buckeyes against Cignetti's cutie-pie program, which is proving every week that Cinderella can be a cruel mistress. The glass slipper doesn't fit anymore, and the glass ceiling on Indiana football sports a hole the size of Cignetti's fist.

The guy wins. Through manifestation or force of will, he wins. He makes ridiculous predictions, then he proves them right. Then they stop being ridiculous.

For the last 12 months, we've seen his team as a fun, uplifting turnaround story — and nothing more. The Hoosiers finished 11-2 last season after winning nine games combined their previous three, but they lost their only two ranked matchups (Ohio State and Notre Dame) by double digits. They relied too heavily on transfer portal additions

who lacked prestige. Ahead of this season, we didn't see the talent required to repeat IU's 2024 fantasy run.

Clearly, we didn't look close enough.

Because Cal transfer quarterback Fernando Mendoza ripped through Ohio State's four-star cornerback room with a bunch of former three-star (or lower) receivers on Saturday. Sophomore wideout Charlie Becker (six catches, 126 yards) boasted better stats than five-star standout Jeremiah Smith until Smith caught a meaningless Hail Mary at midfield as time expired.

And Indiana controlled the line of scrimmage with five sacks (three allowed) and 128 sack-adjusted rushing yards (87 allowed) despite another perceived talent disadvantage.

Just wait until Cignetti starts stacking recruiting star power:

"This win kind of shows everybody, why not?" Indiana linebacker Isaiah Jones said. "Why would you not want to come to Indiana? For any of the doubters out there, I think this kind of was the final nail in the coffin for any of the Indiana doubters, Curt Cignetti doubters, the Hoosier doubters. I think

this was the last thing that needed to be proved. And I think we did it."

They did it with the 72nd most talented roster in college football, per 247 sports (Ohio State's ranks third). And they did it against the defending national champions, who entered Saturday on a 16-game winning streak. Twenty-five games into Cignetti's tenure, Indiana just beat Day's Buckeyes, who many believe might be better than last year's title team.

And the Hoosiers are still just getting started.

I can already hear you laughing again. What do I mean, "getting started"? Didn't Indiana just win the conference title? Doesn't Cignetti already have a Heisman-caliber quarterback in Fernando Mendoza? Won't the Hoosiers enter the College Football Playoff ranked No. 1?

Yes, yes and yes, but they can still get better. Cignetti has not yet hit big on high school recruits. The Hoosiers signed the 32nd ranked prep class last week, up from 49th last year. Of course, they did so before winning the Big Ten.

Expect a bump. Cignetti alluded to one when asked about recruiting earlier this week. And his crystal ball bets usually hit.

"I'd like to think we're at the level of Ohio State in terms of recruiting, but we're not right now," Cignetti said. "Ohio State's in a league of their own for a lot of different reasons. And a big part of it is their tradition and their winning history and all the national championships they've won and the money that they've put into the program over a long, extended period of time.

"Are we closing that gap? Yeah, I think we're closing that gap. And what would a successful performance do on Saturday? Well, it would do a lot, a whole lot."

The future is now after Ohio State's loss on Saturday, and it looks exactly the way Cignetti once predicted. Shortly after accepting the IU job two years ago, he attended the Big Ten title game between Michigan and Iowa. He joined the FOX pregame broadcast for an interview. He dropped another one-liner:

"I figured I had to make this trip up here, since we'll be playing in this game next year," Cignetti said.

One year early, but we're not laughing anymore. We're cowering. Because the best team in college football is led by the two-time Big Ten Coach of the Year. And the best team in

college football — which, to be clear, is Indiana — will only add more talent.

If Mendoza's NIL valuation (\$2.6 million, seventh-highest of any sport) is any indication, the Hoosiers have money to spend. We already know their coach can both identify and develop talent. And we just watched him beat the defending national champs with (I repeat) the 72nd most talented roster in his sport.

At this point, the burden of proof falls on failure to show what Indiana football can't do. Because Cignetti just re-imagined his program's ceiling. And he's still got more to say.

"Time will tell," Cignetti said when asked how Saturday's win could affect IU's future. "It's hard to speculate. I think it gives us a lot more— it's another step we need to take as a program. It's a great win, obviously. And we're going to go in the playoffs as the No. 1 seed. And a lot of people probably thought that wasn't possible.

"But when you get the right people and you have a plan and they love one another and play for one another and they commit, anything's possible. And I think that's what you saw happen here."

Sports on tap

Local schedule

Thursday

Jay County — Swim at Norwell — 6 p.m.; Girls wrestling at New Haven — 6 p.m.; JV boys wrestling at New Haven — 6 p.m.; Junior high boys basketball at Bluffton — 5:30 p.m.; Girls basketball vs. Bluffton — 6 p.m.

Fort Recovery — Swim in Wayne Warrior Invite at Trotwood — 5:30 p.m.; Girls basketball at Marion Local — 6 p.m.; Middle school girls basketball vs. Mississinawa Valley — 5 p.m.

Saturday

Jay County — Boys wrestling hosts ACAC Duals — 9 a.m.; Girls wrestling at Northwestern Dreamcatcher — 10 a.m.; Boys basketball at New Castle — 6 p.m.

Fort Recovery — Girls bowling vs. Minster — 9 a.m.; Wrestling at Versailles — 9:30 a.m.; Boys bowling vs. Minster — 1 p.m.; Boys basketball vs. Bradford — 6 p.m.

Monday

Jay County — Swim at South Adams — 6 p.m.; Freshman boys basketball vs. St. Henry — 6 p.m.; Junior high boys basketball vs. Blackford — 6 p.m.; Junior high girls basketball at Northside — 6 p.m.

Fort Recovery — Girls basketball vs. Ansonia — 6 p.m.; Freshman boys basketball

at St. Henry — 6:30 p.m.; Middle school boys basketball vs. Parkway — 5 p.m.; Middle school girls basketball at Memorial — 5:30 p.m.

TV schedule

Today

4:30 p.m. — College basketball: Albany at Yale (ESPN)
7 p.m. — College basketball: Minnesota at Purdue (BTN); UMass Amherst at Boston College (ESPN)
7 p.m. — Women's College basketball: Iowa at Iowa State (ESPN)

7:30 p.m. — NHL: New York Rangers at Chicago Blackhawks (TNT)
9 p.m. — College basketball: Wisconsin at Nebraska (BTN)

10 p.m. — NHL: Los Angeles Kings at Seattle Kraken (TNT)

Thursday

1 p.m. — College volleyball: Creighton at Arizona State (ESPN2)
3:30 p.m. — College volleyball: Cal Poly at Kentucky (ESPN2)
7 p.m. — NHL: Vegas Golden Knights at Philadelphia Flyers (ESPN)
7 p.m. — College volleyball: Minnesota at Pittsburgh (ESPN2)

8 p.m. — NHL: St. Louis Blues at Nashville Predators (FDSN Indiana); Dallas Stars at Minnesota Wild (ABC)

8 p.m. — College basketball: Iowa at Iowa State (FS1)

9:30 p.m. — NHL: Florida Panthers at Colorado Avalanche (ESPN)

9:30 p.m. — College volleyball: Purdue at SMU (ESPN2)

Friday

11 a.m. — Euroleague basketball: FC Bayern Munchen at Dubai (FDSN Indiana)
12 p.m. — College volleyball: Indiana at Texas (ESPN)

1:30 p.m. — Euroleague basketball: Fenerbahce at Monaco (FDSN Indiana)

2:30 p.m. — College volleyball: Wisconsin at Stanford (ESPN)

6 p.m. — College soccer: Furman at Washington (ESPN)

7 p.m. — College basketball: Missouri State at Xavier (TRU)

7 p.m. — NBA: Indiana Pacers at Philadelphia 76ers (FDSN Indiana)

7 p.m. — College volleyball: Texas A&M at Louisville (ESPN2)

8 p.m. — College basketball: Texas at UConn (FOX)

8:30 p.m. — College soccer: NC State at St. Louis (ESPN)

9 p.m. — College football: Stephen F. Austin at Montana State (ESPN)

9:30 p.m. — College volleyball: Kansas at Nebraska (ESPN2)

Saturday

12 p.m. — College football: South Carolina State at Prairie View A&M (ABC); Villanova at Tarleton State (ESPN)

12 p.m. — Serie A soccer: Parma at Lazio (CBS)

12 p.m. — College basketball: Iona at St. John's (TNT); DePaul at Wichita State (ESPN); Arkansas at Texas Tech (ESPN2); Michigan State at Penn State (BTN)

12:30 p.m. — Premier League soccer: Burnley at Fulham (NBC)

12:30 p.m. — College basketball: Old Dominion at George Mason (USA)

1 p.m. — College basketball: Old Dominion at George Mason (USA)

1 p.m. — Horse racing: America's Day at the Races (FS1)

2 p.m. — College basketball: Jackson State at Northwestern (BTN); Providence at Butler (TNT); Cincinnati at Georgia (ESPN)

2:30 p.m. — College basketball: George Washington at Georgia (ESPN2)

3 p.m. — College football: Army at Navy (CBS)

3 p.m. — College basketball: Kansas State at Creighton (FOX)

3:30 p.m. — College basketball: Memphis at Louisville (ESPN)

3:30 p.m. — College football: South Dakota at Montana (ABC)

4 p.m. — College basketball: UC Davis at Oregon (BTN)

4 p.m. — Women's college basketball: Oklahoma at Oklahoma State (ESPN)

4:30 p.m. — College basketball: Pittsburgh at Villanova (TNT)

5:30 p.m. — College basketball: UConn at Southern Cal (FOX)

6 p.m. — College basketball: Southern Utah at Washington (BTN)

6 p.m. — Women's college basketball: Louisiana Tech at LSU (ESPN)

7 p.m. — College basketball: North Florida at Dayton (CBS); Arizona State at Santa Clara (TNT)

7:30 p.m. — College basketball: Indiana at Kentucky (ESPN)

8 p.m. — College football: Boise State vs. Washington (ABC)

8 p.m. — College basketball: Michigan at Maryland (FOX); San Francisco at St. Louis (FDSN Indiana); Rutgers at Seton Hall (FS1); Ohio State at West Virginia (ESPN)

9:30 p.m. — College basketball: Arizona at Alabama (ESPN)

10 p.m. — College basketball: Mississippi State at Utah (ESPN)

11:30 p.m. — College basketball: UCLA at Gonzaga (ESPN)

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40 NOTICES

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250 PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice

Summons – Service By Publication/Unknown Heirs and Devises of Marjorie E. Harris
State Of Indiana County Of Jay In The Jay Superior Court Cause No: 38D01-2507-MF-000016 U.S. Bank Trust National Association, Not In Its Individual Capacity But Solely As Owner Trustee For RCAF Acquisition Trust Plaintiff -vs- Unknown Heirs And Devises Of Marjorie E. Harris, Rhonda R Harris, Portfolio Recovery Associates, LLC, IMC Credit Services LLC Defendant(s) Notice Of Suit To the defendants above named, and any other person who may be concerned. You are notified that you have been sued in the Court above named. The nature of the suit against you is the foreclosure of a mortgage upon the property legally described as follows: Fifty-Five (55) feet off of and along the entire east side of the following: Beginning at a point on the north line of Floral Avenue in the city of Portland that is 350 feet east of the southwest corner of Lot 29 in Jackson's subdivision of the part of Out Lot 22 in Jackson and Reed's South Side Addition to the City of Portland, Indiana, and running thence north on a line parallel with the west line of said Lot 29, a distance of 173 feet more or less to the lands conveyed by corrected deed to Henry P. Garber (see deed record 38 page 17 of records in the Recorder's Office of Jay County, Indiana, for a description of same) thence east on and along the south line of same 100 feet; thence south on a line parallel with the west line of said Lot 29 a distance of 173 feet more or less to the north line of Floral Avenue; thence west to the place of beginning. Commonly known as: 538 East Floral Avenue, Portland, IN 47371 This summons by publication is specifically directed to the following defendant(s) whose whereabouts are unknown: Unknown Heirs and Devises of Marjorie E. Harris In addition, to the above-named defendants being served by this summons, there may be other defendants who have an interest in this lawsuit. An answer or other appropriate response in writing to the Complaint must be filed either by you or your attorney with the Clerk of the Court for Jay County at: Jay County Clerk 120 North Court Street #2 Portland, IN 47371 on or before the 9th day of January, 2026, (the same being thirty (30) days after the Third Notice of Suit), and if you fail to do so, a judgment may be entered against you for what the plaintiff has demanded. Phillip A. Norman, P.C. /s/ Benjamin Pliskie #30407-45 Attorney for Plaintiff Phillip A. Norman, P.C. 2110 Calumet Avenue Valparaiso, IN 46383 Telephone: 219-462-5104 25-00677 Attest: November 17, 2025 /s/ Melissa Elliott Clerk, Jay Superior Court CR 12-26,12-3,10-2025-HSPAXLP

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Public Notice
Notice is hereby given that Donnie D & Tonia K James has filed a petition asking the Town of Pennville to vacate and abandon a certain alley between Kentucky St and Illinois St. Meeting will be held on December 30, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at Town of Pennville hall. The year end meeting for the Town of Pennville will be held right after.

Town of Pennville
CR 12-10-2025-HSPAXLP

Public Notice

LEGAL NOTICE OF BIDS
Notice is hereby given that sealed bids will be received in the office of the Jay County Auditor, at the Courthouse in Portland, Indiana, 47371, Friday, January 09, 2026 until the hour of 4:00 PM local time for Item 1 to be delivered to the county in the amounts and at such time as ordered by the head of the department. Sealed bids will be opened at the Commissioner meeting on January 12, 2026 after 9:00 a.m. Bids are to be from January 12, 2026 through December 31, 2026.
Specifications are available in the Jay County Highway Dept, Portland, Indiana, 47371 for the following items:
1) Corrugated Metal Pipe
2) Aluminum Box Culverts
3) Precast Concrete Arch Structures and Boxes
4) All Steel Bridge Packages including Beam Span and Truss Structures
5) Bridge Decking products
6) Galvanized Steel Guardrail
7) High Density Polyethylene Culvert Pipe
8) Culvert Liner products
9) Slope Stabilization and Erosion Control and Stormwater products.
Successful Bidder must have a representative available to assist Owner in sizing and installation of structures and rehab materials for all items. Bidder must provide a professional engineer (PE) on products as noted.
Items 1 thru 9 shall be considered as a unit, with bid to be complete for all items and material to be delivered and unloaded as specified by the Owner.
Quote net prices only, no price escalation clauses
The delivery time and availability of materials are to be listed and considered as part of the bid.
All materials must meet all federal and state highway specifications with a design load capacity to meet AASHTO guidelines. Manufacturer's material certification sheets must accompany bid where appropriate.
All materials must be manufactured and fabricated in the United States of America.
Owner reserves the right to accept and or reject any and all bids. The Board of Commissioners reserve the right to reject any and/or all bids, or to accept the one(s) which, in their judgement will be in the best interest of Jay County, being the best and/or lowest response and responsible bidder for each line or class of materials by the order of the Board of Commissioners of Jay County, Indiana.
Emily Franks
Jay County Auditor
CR 12-3,10-2025-HSPAXLP

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New-look Indians keep on rolling

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The Tribe lost plenty of girls that made back-to-back state appearances. But what has returned and the new additions seem to be doing just fine.

The Fort Recovery High School girls bowling team took home the crown from the Division II Ohio High School State Invitational Kick-off Tournament at H.P. Lanes on Saturday.

FRHS totaled 2,494 pins in the qualifying round to enter bracket play as the No. 9 seed.

They faced Midwest Athletic Conference rival Versailles in the opening round, winning 442-401. Three strong games led the Indians past top seeded Memorial 527-491 before beating another

Local Roundup

MAC foe in Coldwater 493-446.

The Tribe got ahead of second-seeded Napoleon early with a game of 150 pins and followed it up with 140. A final game of 170 secured a 460-425 victory in the championship.

Deanna Brown had the second-best individual series of 592 pins to make the all-tournament team. She rolled the highest game of any girl with 235 pins.

Lilah Thien finished with a 464 series for 22nd

place while Jadyn Wyerick took 32nd with a 438.

Third at Western

RUSSIAVILLE — The Jay County High School boys wrestling team finished third at the Western Super Six duals on Saturday.

The Patriots (4-2) won its first three matches of the day. They beat Logansport 62-16 in the opener before stomping Carroll 62-12 in the second round. They just got past host Western 45-32 in the third round.

JCHS fell to eventual champion Harrison in the fourth round 61-15. It dropped the final match of the day 43-33 to Madison-Grant.

Corbin Lothridge was the only undefeated Patriot on the day. He pinned

Noah Shue of Western in the 113-pound match and later took down Liam Clouse of MGHS in the 106 bout in 32 seconds.

Finishing 4-1 on the day were Jason Landers (138 weight class) and Caleb Sibray (165). No. 17 Alan Ortiz went 3-1 in the 285 weight class, while Sylas Wenk did the same in the 120 matches.

Fell in first

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Fort Recovery's boys bowling team finished ninth at the Division II Ohio High School State Invitational Kick-off Tournament at H.P. Lanes on Saturday.

They tallied 2,939 pins to come out of the qualifying round in third place tied with Napoleon.

The tribe faltered in the

opening round of bracket play, falling 532-503 with games of 160, 173 and 170 pins to 14th seeded Bucyrus.

Anthony Roessner had the high series for the Tribe at 577, which placed 12th. He finished five pins behind Coldwater's Andrew Schulze for the final spot on the all-tournament team.

Gabe Acheson rolled the high game for the Tribe with 243 pins.

Rowles leads

KENDALLVILLE — The Jay County High School girls wrestling team earned 94 points to tie host East Noble for seventh place at the East Noble Girls Invitational on Saturday.

Out of the five varsity

wrestlers, No. 6 Katie Rowles was the only to win her bracket. She rolled through her first three opponents in the 100-pound bracket before pinning Annalise Sanches of New Haven in 1 minute, 9 seconds.

No. 8 Amara Crawford, Maleah Parsons and Madison Gage all claimed third in their respective brackets. All three girls lost to wrestlers ranked first or second with Crawford falling to No. 2 Laine Pepler in the 170 weight class, Parsons losing to No. 1 Naima Ghaffar in the 135 bracket and Gage getting defeated by No. 2 Rhaigyn Trenary in the 155 semifinal.

Kelly Jones also competed in the 140 weight class but did not place.

Eye on the ball

Cameron Muhlenkamp of the Fort Recovery High School girls basketball team fends off the Jay County Patriots' Hallie Schwieterman to gain possession during the Indians' 55-43 loss to the Patriots on Saturday. Muhlenkamp's defense was vital in holding Hallie's sister Karsyn to just four points on 1-for-11 shooting, but the elder Schwieterman picked up her sibling with a game-high 25 points, including 11 made free throws. Both teams return to action Thursday, with the Patriots taking on Bluffton at home and Fort Recovery traveling to Marion Local.



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Patriot JH sweeps night

All four Jay County junior high teams played Monday night, and each of the four squads emerged victorious.

The eighth grade girls played the closest contest of the evening, scraping out a 29-28 win over Selma Middle School. Every one of Kinze Homan's eight points and Arabella Link's six were needed in the victory.

The seventh grade girls had an easier time in their battle with Selma, playing stifling defense in a 29-6 triumph.

Haley Comer was the only player in the game to reach double-digit scoring, posting a game-high 10 points. She was followed by Gretchen Petro (nine points) and Makena Wellman (four points).

The Patriot boys found similar success, with both

Junior high Roundup

the seventh and eighth grade squads blowing out the Union City Indians.

The eighth graders used balanced scoring in their 43-6 win. Eli Homan, Finn Hemmelgarn and Abram Lee shared the team lead with six points each.

A total of 10 different players scored for Jay County.

The seventh grade boys put up the highest score of the evening in their 56-16 win over the Indians.

Sawyer Smitley tied Union City's team total with 16 points. Carson Pfeifer added nine.

Advertisement for the production of 'Annie' by Jay County Civic Theatre. It includes the title 'Annie', credits for Book by Thomas Meehan, Music by Charles Strouse, and Lyrics by Martin Charnin. It also lists showtimes (7 p.m. Dec. 4, 5, 6, 12 and 13, and 2 p.m. Dec. 14), ticket prices (\$12 for students and \$14 for adults), and a QR code for more information.

Advertisement for the Portland Veterinary Clinic. It features the headline 'They're in Good Hands Here' and lists services such as Vaccines & Preventive Care, Illness, Injury & Surgical Care, Flea & Heartworm Prevention, and Allergies & Nutrition. It also includes the clinic's hours (Mon - Fri. 8-5 p.m., call for appt on Saturday) and contact information (1407 Votaw St., Portland, 260-726-7370).