

Commission voices support

By RAY COONEY
The Commercial Review

The status of a proposed commercial and housing development project is in flux.

After one local governmental board voted last week for development to be halted, another voted Tuesday to express support.

Portland Redevelopment Commission voted Tuesday to support proceeding with the project, which calls for housing and commercial development on 68 acres of county-owned land on the city's west side.

The county has spearheaded the project, with the county council and commissioners having allocated \$1.24 million in federal funding through Jay County Redevelopment Commission to

First phase of the proposed 68-acre development is in limbo

cover a portion of the cost. Portland City Council committed \$400,000, contingent on a match from the county's redevelopment commission that has not yet been made. The city's redevelopment commission currently has no financial stake in the project.

Tuesday's vote from the city's redevelopment commission followed a vote last week by Jay County Council to instruct urban

design, planning, and landscape architecture firm Rundell, Ernst-berger and Associates to cease work on the project.

The council discussion involved the county's remaining \$1.24 million in coronavirus relief dollars through the federal American Rescue Plan Act. Those funds are allocated to the 68-acre development project through Jay County Redevelop-

ment Commission. (Federal guidelines stated that the funds had to be committed by the end of 2024 and spent by the end of 2026.) Council members said that following a conversation with financial consulting firm Baker Tilly, they believe the funds could be shifted to another county project. The purchase of a new radio system for first responders was discussed as a potential option.

Redirecting the American Rescue Plan Act dollars would require action from the county redevelopment commission, which meets Thursday, and county commissioners, who meet Monday, in addition to the council.

CWC Latitudes consultant Ed Curtin expressed concern to the Portland Redevelopment Com-

mission on Tuesday that halting the project would be negative to Portland because, if completed, housing development would increase the city's tax base. He asked if city officials had been consulted.

"It's kind of a big decision that affects the city as well," he said.

He suggested that if the redevelopment commission is supportive of the project, its members should voice that support in an effort to get city and county officials on the same page.

Portland Redevelopment Commission members Rusty Inman, Reda Theurer-Miller, Joe Johnston and Mike Simons voted in support of the project. Dave Teeter was absent from the meeting.

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Lilly for Lilly



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Jay County High School senior Lilly Johnson grins while talking with Jeff Overholser of WPGW radio after she was announced Tuesday as The Portland Foundation's 2026 Lilly Endowment Community Scholar. The scholarship covers tuition for four years at any Indiana college or university. Johnson plans to attend Purdue University.

Johnson selected for scholarship

By RAY COONEY
The Commercial Review

Government class typically doesn't hold much excitement for Lilly Johnson.

Tuesday afternoon was different.

First, school secretary Amber Brandon slipped into the back of the room.

Then, Johnson saw her dad, Ryan, coming through the door. She eventually deduced what was happening.

"I don't know, I was just like, 'This isn't real right now,'" she said. "I don't think the crying set in yet. I'm still, like, freaking out."

Johnson received news worth freaking out about as she was announced as The Portland Foundation's 2026 Lilly Endowment Community Scholar.

The scholarship covers full tuition and fees to any Indiana college or university for four years. It also includes a \$900 annual stipend for books and equipment.

Johnson was selected from a field of 23 applicants from Jay County Junior-Senior High School.

"It's weird, because I feel like every single one of us is so deserving," Johnson said, referencing fellow finalists Faith Faulkner, Nick Laux, Jacey Cooke and Kenzie Tobe. "For instance, Faith, me and Kenzie, we're all class officers, we're all on student council, we're all in everything. Like, we're equivalent. It's weird to think that I (was chosen). I feel like we're all on the same playing field. ... We're all so active and so dedicated to the things that we're in

and the community. I just feel so grateful ..."

In order to be eligible for the scholarship, a student must have a grade point average of 3.5 or higher. Students are evaluated on criteria including academic excellence, school and community activities, the response to an essay question and whether they are a first-generation college student.

Five finalists were selected to go through an interview and write an impromptu essay. The field was then narrowed further with the foundation submitting the finalists' information to Independent Colleges of Indiana for selection of the winner.

"When they come in for an interview, I feel like across the board they have kind of the same scores because they all do so well," said Krista Muhlenkamp,

a board member for The Portland Foundation. "I would say Lilly ... was very much herself. I think some kids can get a little nervous ... She was very much herself."

Johnson proved that point, interjecting to explain that when she entered the interview room she said, "Hi guys, how are you?"

It got no response.

"And I was like, 'Oh, can I not ask the questions here?'" she continued. "And then they chuckled."

Johnson is ranked 13th in the JCHS Class of 2026 with a 4.1 grade point average. She is president of student council as well as a class officer, vice president of Jay County FFA, a dance captain for the school's show choirs and a member of the National Honor Society.

See **Lilly** page 2

Redkey records major water losses

Town looks at options for identifying leaks in its system

By BAILEY CLINE
The Commercial Review

REDKEY — The town lost approximately 12 million gallons of water this year.

Locations of the problem areas have yet to be determined.

Redkey Town Council discussed seeking proposals Tuesday to conduct studies on the town's water and wastewater systems and find leaks. Council members also approved a contract with consulting firm Baker Tilly to conduct a water rate study on the town's water and wastewater utilities.

Utility worker Seth Fugitt noted Indiana Department of Environmental Management conducted an inspection at the water department in July, issuing a list of items needing to be corrected moving forward. The state agency also cited Redkey for recording more than a 25% water loss.

The 12 million gallons lost comes to approximately \$113,224 in lost revenue.

"That would pay everybody's water bill for a month and a half," said council member "Water-mellon" Jim Phillips.

Redkey reported a 40% water loss starting in 2023, noted utility worker Ted Kolodka. Town officials had hoped new water meters would help to eliminate a majority of that loss, but it hasn't seemed to resolve the issue. Council president Brenda Beaty recalled some of the old meters had been leaking.

"This isn't a new meter problem, this is a leak in the main somewhere," council member Byron Daugherty said. "This is not a residential issue, there's no way — every house in Redkey could run their water wide open for a month and not accumulate that much water loss. This is serious stuff here."

See **Water** page 2

Support ...

Continued from page 1

Cecil Penland of Rundell, Ernstberger and Associates and Curtin also explained that the cost of the first phase of the project is now estimated at \$2.65 million, which is down from previous estimates.

The first phase of the project involves installing utilities.

The road and additional utilities would follow in later phases of an overall project estimated at more than \$25 million. The ultimate vision for the project includes commercial space along Votaw Street (Indiana 26/67), 210 multi-family housing units, 76 single-family homes and 53 town-homes/duplexes.

Curtin said that if the remaining funds from the American Rescue Plan Act and \$1.21 million through the state's Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI) 2.0 are

used for the project, the remaining amount needed would be \$162,309. Penland and Curtin explained after the meeting that the reduction in cost of the project has come mostly because of a change in work related to a wastewater lift station.

Previous estimates left a gap of about \$750,000. Portland City Council had committed \$400,000 to help cover that gap, contingent on Jay County Redevelopment Commission contributing the other \$400,000. Jay County Commissioners voted 2-1 against making such a funding request to the county redevelopment commission.

Also Tuesday, the redevelopment commission extended a lease with The Graphic Printing Company, parent company of The Commercial Review, for the Hood Building for an additional two years. The company sold the build-

ing to the redevelopment commission in late 2023 for potential development. At that time, the company and the redevelopment commission signed a two-year lease with an option for an additional two years, if needed.

Curtin explained to the council that an environmental test for vinyl chloride is needed before the potential developer will proceed with the project. The redevelopment commission hired Environmental Forensics to handle the testing at a cost of \$6,850.

Plans for the building call for development of apartments on the second, third and fourth floors, with The Graphic Printing Company to continue to operate out of the first floor and basement.

Curtin said negotiations with the developer are nearly complete and that he is hopeful an agreement can be reached in early 2026.

In other business, the commission:

- Approved a \$15,200 contract with consulting firm Synthesis Incorporated to evaluate, develop a concept and estimate a construction cost for the building at 105 W. Main St. The redevelopment commission is considering purchasing the building from Smutstock Entertainment and rehabilitating it for commercial use. Dave Smuts and Treaver Schmit had planned to develop a music performance venue in the building, but those plans are no longer moving forward.
- Approved the financial report, which showed a cash balance of \$910,817.65. Portland clerk-treasurer Lori Phillips noted that since the report was distributed, the commission has received its annual tax draw of \$172,409, which brings the balance to \$1.08 million.

CR almanac

Friday 12/19	Saturday 12/20	Sunday 12/21	Monday 12/22	Tuesday 12/23
22/20	45/25	32/21	39/33	47/32
Back to chilly temperatures Friday when partly cloudy skies and wind are expected.	Saturday's weather looks like cloudy skies with a low temperature in the upper 20s.	Sunny skies on Sunday when the high may reach around the freezing point.	Monday's forecast shows mostly cloudy skies with a high around 39.	Tuesday's forecast shows morning showers with a high around 47.

Lotteries

Powerball Estimated jackpot: \$1.25 billion	Daily Three: 1-1-2 Daily Four: 6-0-9-9 Quick Draw: 10-12-13-17-20-21-32-33-35-38-40-41-43-49-51-63-66-75-79-80
Mega Millions 20-24-46-59-65 Mega Ball: 7 Estimated jackpot: \$90 million	Ohio Tuesday Midday Pick 3: 8-6-0 Pick 4: 9-3-5-3 Pick 5: 7-0-6-2-1 Evening Pick 3: 8-2-4 Pick 4: 7-7-7-4 Pick 5: 9-4-8-4-0 Rolling Cash: 2-9-13-27-36 Estimated jackpot: \$100,000
Hoosier Tuesday Midday Daily Three: 3-8-8 Daily Four: 3-0-3-2 Quick Draw: 2-5-12-13-16-19-28-31-32-35-38-39-49-56-57-60-65-70-74-79 Evening	

Markets

Cooper Farms Fort Recovery Corn.....4.58 Jan. corn4.56 Feb. corn4.56	Jan. beans10.59 Wheat 4.66
POET Biorefining Portland Corn.....4.56 Jan. corn4.48 Feb. corn4.43	ADM Montpelier Corn.....4.38 Jan. corn4.38 Beans10.59 Jan. beans10.59 Wheat4.81
The Andersons Richland Township Corn4.43 Jan. corn4.43 Beans10.56	Heartland St. Anthony Corn.....4.53 Jan. corn4.48 Beans10.26 Jan. beans10.31 Wheat4.56

Today in history

In 1917, United States Congress passed the 18th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, authorizing the prohibition of alcohol. The amendment was sent to the states for ratification. A little more than three years later, the amendment went into effect. Prohibition lasted 13 years until the 21st amendment was ratified in 1933.

In 1966, “How the Grinch Stole Christmas!” aired for the first time. The cartoon TV special adapted from Dr. Seuss’ children’s book

became classic movie for the holidays.

In 2017, David Teeple of Pennville died in a vehicle collision north of Portland. Teeple, 60, had been driving east on county road 300 North approaching the intersection with U.S. 27. According to a Jay County Sheriff’s Office report, Teeple failed to stop at the stop sign at the intersection. His car collided with a commercial truck, driven by 54-year-old Patrick McGriffen of Dunedin, Florida, traveling south on U.S. 27.

— The CR

Citizen’s calendar

Thursday 4:30 p.m. — Jay County Redevelopment Commission executive session, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland. 5 p.m. — Jay County Redevelopment Commission, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland. 6 p.m. — Jay County Board of Zoning Appeals, Community	Resource Center, 118 S. Meridian St., Portland. Monday 9 a.m. — Jay County Commissioners, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland. 3:45 p.m. — Jay County Solid Waste Management District, 5948 W. Indiana 67, Portland. 7 p.m. — Dunkirk City Council, city building, 131 S. Main St.
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Water ...

Continued from page 1

Beaty clarified that the leak is likely underground in Redkey somewhere. Multiple leaks are also a possibility.

Fugiett and Kolodka reached out to Ground Penetrating Radar Systems (GPRS) on Monday to discuss possible actions. The company proposed three options — a feasibility study of “concern” areas, a leak study of the entire town (approximately 9.5 miles of piping underground) or a leak study along with a map of the underground system.

Fugiett said the company is working on formal estimates.

Civitas Strategies government adviser director Pete Olson suggested the town start a request for proposals process for the work and seek quotes from other companies as well.

Relatedly, council approved a contract with Baker Tilly for a water rate study, with the cost not to exceed \$22,000. Kolodka explained the study needs to be completed to meet requirements set by Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission as well as fulfill loan agreements for the town’s water tower and wastewater plant. He noted plans for Environmental Protection Agency to send a team to Redkey in January, saying the group will map the wastewater plant and help utility workers put together an asset management plan, the latter of which is also required by Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission.

Also Monday, Fugiett noted Indiana Department of Environmental Management cited the department for an issue with a part on a generator, which would cost \$4,235 to replace. Fugiett said the town can avoid the cost by manually cycling the machine weekly.

Fugiett also told council his department refurbished an existing salt spreader for \$220, saving the town an estimated \$3,000 by not purchasing one new.

Lilly ...

Continued from page 2

She also plays for the tennis team.

Outside of school, she is a 10-year member of 4-H who won the large animal supreme showmanship competition during the 2025 Jay County Fair.

The daughter of Ryan and Kelly Johnson, her personality showed through again as she turned part of her interview into a commercial for The General Store, where she works.

Johnson plans to attend Purdue University, which she said she chose because she feels it has a similar vibe and sense of community her home in Jay County.

She’s intentionally undecided on a career path, saying she wants to explore her options and opportunities without limits.

“I think that I’m passionate about almost everything that I’m involved with,” she said. “I love to help others. ... And I love to lead people. I’ve got a lot of leadership roles and that’s taught me a lot of valuable characteristics.”

She mentioned the medical field, education, business and management all as possibilities.

“I just feel like I’ve got so many options,” she continued. “The sky’s the limit, is what they say ... You can literally be anything when you grow up. And I don’t want to limit myself by going to Purdue and focusing on one thing right now and then regretting it ... So I want to go there with an open mind, get the experiences, meet the people, build the relationships, and then boom.”

SERVICES

Friday, Dec. 19

Schwartz, Irene: 9 a.m., Schwartz residence, 998 W. 850 South, Geneva.

Stigleman, Sarah: 6 p.m., MJS Mortuaries, 109 S. Meridian St., Redkey.

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Council approved the following ordinances:

- A park fine ordinance that sets Morgan Park’s hours from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. and allows the town to fine those in the park after the posted hours. Fines would be given in \$50 increments, with the cost not to exceed \$500. The ordinance aims to address loiterers and vandalism problems.
- A municipal utilities account administration ordinance to “promote sound administration, protect customer rights, and maintain the financial integrity of the town’s utility system.” It lists requirements for residents and businesses to maintain utility accounts with the clerk-treasurer’s office and lays out guidelines for new accounts, account transfers, discontinuances of service, deceased account holders, charges and billing, delinquency and enforcement, among other items.
- It also amended the town’s ordinance addressing abandoned vehicles, trash, garbage, rubbish, weeds, debris, rank vegetation and public nuisances in Redkey.
- The ordinance gives town officials the right to task employees with abating violations.
- Also, resident Bill Hall noted applications for Redkey’s Hometown Heroes Project are available at Redkey Town Hall, Redkey Junktion, Redkey Post Office and Citadel Supply, as well as Jay County Chamber of Commerce in Portland. Residents wishing to recognize a veteran relative with a banner may fill out an application. The cost is a one-time fee of \$45.
- In other business, council:
- Approved the salary ordinance for next year with no raises incorporated. Phillips dissented.
- Discussed amending the town’s ordinance regarding water adjusters. Resident Lee Funkhouser explained he discovered a leak on

his property over the weekend, and with the cold temperatures the town hasn’t been able to access his water pit. Beaty noted the issue wasn’t a fault of Funkhouser’s or the town, and she suggested amending the ordinance to allow for some adjustments on a case-by-case basis.

- OK’d allocating two weeks of pay, or approximately \$1,600, to reserve officer Matthew Heflin to help fill a potential gap in Redkey Police Department while officer Jonathan Filameno is attending Indiana Law Enforcement Academy and marshal Alex Heath is on paternity leave. Beaty dissented, pointing to the amount of paperwork it will require for a short amount of time.
- Decided not to approve amendments to a service contract with Redkey Fire Department incorporating 3% raises for firefighters (approximately \$800). Life dissented.
- Heard from resident Roger Clay that he no longer wishes to look into details regarding his property next to the Redkey Junior League’s field in Morgan Park. (Council voted in October to pay \$250 toward a survey on the land.) Clay expressed concerns in July about liabilities in the event a player were to get injured on his property. He voiced frustration Tuesday with the way the situation has developed, questioning why he hasn’t received the town’s payment toward the survey. Town attorney Maura Hoff said per state law the town isn’t allowed to make a payment without an invoice. Clay advised folks to “just stay off my property.”
- Re-elected Beaty as president and elected Daugherty as vice president for next year.
- OK’d spending up to \$1,450 on new flashing stop signs at the intersection of Main and Harrison streets.
- Recognized Bill and Mary Hall for their volunteer efforts across town.

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Outstanding member

Dan Kreig, Portland Evening Optimist Club member, was recently awarded the Optimist International President's Citation. This award is presented by the current Optimist International President to an outstanding club member who expresses the true spirit and essence of Optimism in their club and community. Pictured from left are past Portland Evening Optimist Club president Bobby Ruiz and Dan Kreig.

Camper guest gets too cozy

DEAR ABBY: My 58-year-old husband recently shared a bed in our camper with a 21-year-old family friend. The friend is female. This happened in my absence. He thinks of her as a "daughter," and although I'm not concerned about anything inappropriate happening between them, I still feel it was inappropriate. I expressed my feelings to him and said I didn't want it to happen again, but it did. He still thinks it's perfectly fine, but I do not. What are your thoughts? — INAPPROPRIATE IN THE EAST

DEAR INAPPROPRIATE: My thought is that it's unusual and inappropriate for a 21-year-old woman to share a bed with your husband (more than once!) in light of the fact that you objected.

I can't help but wonder why no other sleeping arrangement was possible, and what her parents (who, I assume, are friends) think about the arrangement. Perhaps it's time you had a chat with the young woman about this. You may find it enlightening.

.....

DEAR ABBY: A family member — a woman in her 60s — almost certainly has narcissis-

Dear Abby



tic personality disorder. She has caused problems in the family, so much so that some have quit their jobs, sold their homes and moved out of town to get away from her dysfunction. This woman blames others, never apologizes for anything and doesn't seem to think she has a problem.

Having burned all her bridges, she is now moving out of state. However, she still has ties to the family business. We want her to get the treatment she needs, and we want peace and order restored in our family. How do families in a similar situation accomplish this? — SURVIVING IN KENTUCKY

DEAR SURVIVING: I can tell you how some people in your situation manage. Recognizing that they cannot change the behavior of the disruptive family member, they seek family therapy to learn how to handle their contacts with her. I hope it helps for you.

Community Calendar

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

Thursday

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

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

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

Votaw St., Portland.

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

UNDERSTANDING YOUR SUICIDE GRIEF — Meets from 1 to 2:30 p.m. the third Thursday of each month. The support group serves to help individuals who have lost a loved one to suicide. To register, contact Stephanie Patterson at (260) 251-3259.

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

MISSISSINIEWA CHAPTER OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION — Will meet at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 18, at the Jay County Historical Society. The Community Volunteer of 2025 will be announced. Any questions, please contact Kathy Selman at (260) 251-1694 or Sue Sommers at (260) 726-2678.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY HEALTH JAY HOSPITAL OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP — Will meet at 6 p.m. the third Thursday of each month in Indiana University Health Jay Hospital Conference Room B. The group is for

ostomy and intestinal diversion patients and their friends and family to offer mutual support and learn about the latest products and information.

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

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

Friday

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

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

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.

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

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

Sunday

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

Monday

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

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

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



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

THE LIFE CENTER — Free pregnancy testing with ongoing support during and after pregnancy, as well as help with the needs of the family. The center is located at 1209 S. Shank St., Portland. Hours are 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call (260) 726-8636. Walk-ins accepted.

BREAD OF LIFE COMMUNITY FAMILY MEAL

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

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



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

Level: Intermediate

Wednesday's Solution

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

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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You could field a 16-inch softball league with the celebrities who've threatened to leave the U.S. if their presidential pick wasn't elected in recent years.

What's more striking today is that it isn't only the Hollywood set floating the idea of relocating. Increasing numbers of ordinary Americans — especially younger women — say they're thinking about moving abroad, not because of a single election outcome but because they doubt the country's direction, economic prospects and social climate.

That shift should worry all of us.

For the second year, about 1 in 5 Americans indicated they'd like to move abroad permanently if given the option, according to Gallup. What their

Guest Editorial

data uncovered is that this spiking trend is being driven primarily by younger women, between the ages of 15 and 44.

Among that group, a stunning 40% said they'd leave the U.S., compared with just 10% a decade ago. These aren't people who've actually left, of course — but their interest itself is telling. Gallup notes the same phenomenon isn't playing out in other advanced economies.

This isn't about hypothetical moving plans. It's about a generation of women questioning whether the United States is a

place that values them, keeps them safe or offers a future worth building. If young women stop believing the country is on their side, that undermines everything from civic cohesion to the nation's economic and demographic future.

Gallup noted the first dramatic upward shift in young women's dissatisfaction in 2016, during the last stages of Barack Obama's presidency and ahead of President Donald Trump's first term. A desire to flee is not escalating among Gen X and boomers. Just 14% of women 45 and older and 8% of men who are 45 and older would leave. And just 19% of younger men would seek their fortunes elsewhere.

This misalignment of worldviews between younger men and younger women also is causing much-observed tensions in the dating pool, driven by a mismatch of values and core beliefs. Yet even married women and women with children are expressing a growing desire to leave.

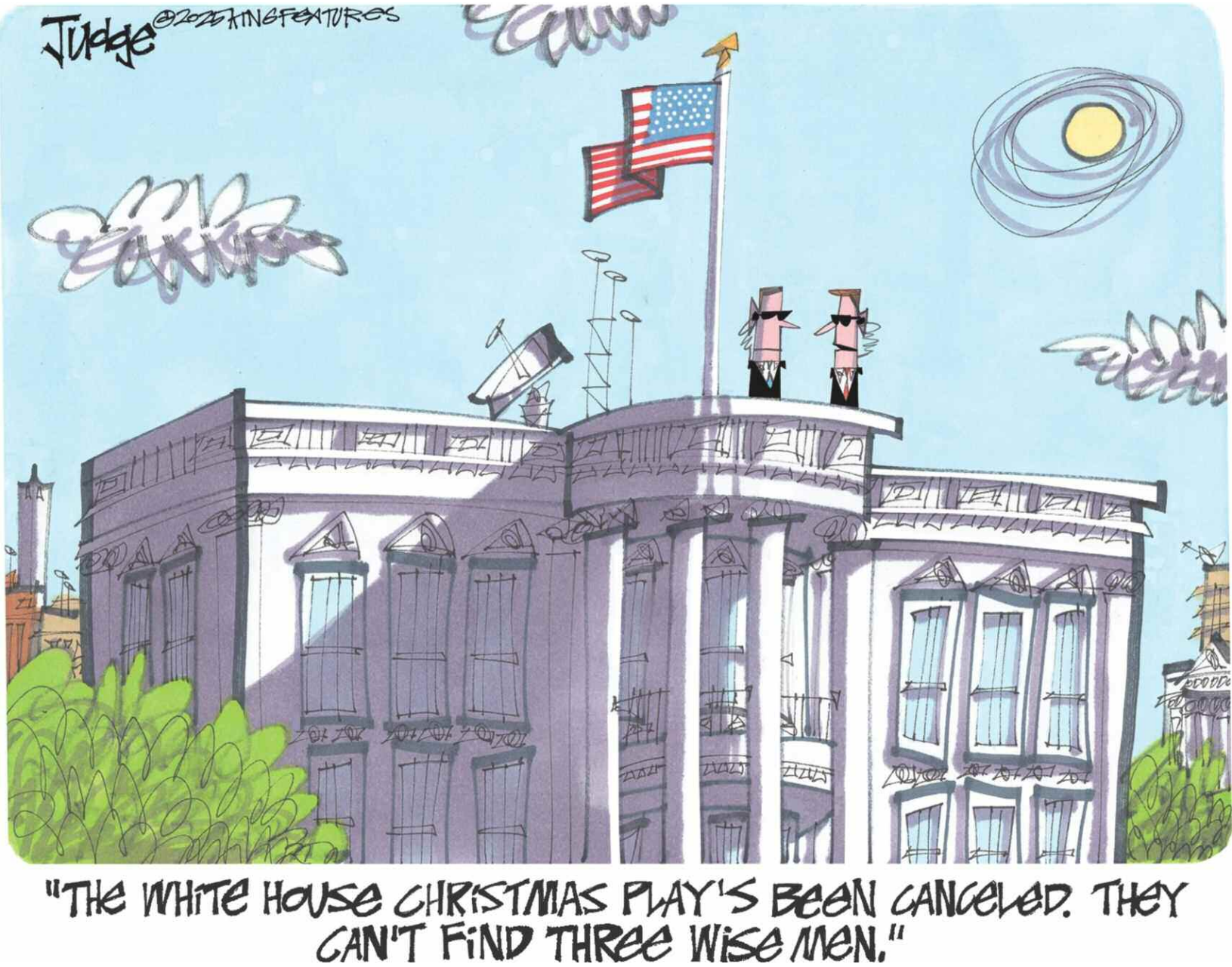
Numbers like these may seem like outliers, but they're often warning signs of fixable problems.

Gallup offers some insight into what's driving these results, and notes that as this trend has emerged, young women's faith in institutions has fallen sharply. Over the past 10 years, young women's confidence in the courts has dropped from 55% to 32%, a shift Gallup speculates may be tied to the Supreme Court's 2022 decision to overturn *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. Politics undoubtedly plays a part, and it's worth noting that 59% of

younger women identify as or lean Democrat, compared with just 39% of younger men.

Even if few of these disgruntled women ultimately leave, and no doubt few of them will, that's not the real danger. We're creeping uncomfortably close to half of young women reporting they'd prefer to build their future somewhere else, and the message is unmistakable: American institutions are failing at persuading its next generation of women that this is a place where they will thrive.

A nation that wants stronger families, a more stable workforce and a healthier democracy can't afford a future built on resignation or escape. Our challenge now isn't to dismiss these findings as fantasy, but to make this a country young women still want to call home.



Benefits of cuts are unlikely to materialize

By MICHAEL J. HICKS

American economics departments don't teach Karl Marx or Arthur Laffer for the same reason: their economic theories were wrong. Yet Laffer's discredited ideas are now driving Indiana's tax policy.

Marx is most famous for two sets of writings. The first was a political treatise predicting the working classes of affluent nations would overthrow their governments, seize the means of production and build a new society (the dictatorship of the proletariat), after which the state would "wither away."

His second work was a three-volume series on the flow of financial capital, which is useful for six or seven of the more than 1,700 pages he wrote. Marx predicted the expansion of monopoly would leave a single firm owning all the means of production.

Marx's economic predictions were spectacular failures. But his political predictions in "The Communist Manifesto" were even worse.

Few thoughtful adults need reminding of communism's

Michael J. Hicks



toll. Perhaps 100 million people died under communist governments, making it the most destructive ideology in history. It has been pure evil.

Economics classes mention Marx in two settings. First, we teach the history of ideas of our discipline, so we may learn these points in one of those classes, as I did. Second, we usually use the letter 'K' to denote productive capital rather than financial capital. And that's it.

Laffer is no Marx. His early work with Nobel Laureate Eugene Fama was rigorous and respected, but that's not what made him famous.

In 1974, when the top tax rate was 70%, Laffer argued that cutting taxes would boost growth so much that revenues

would actually increase. This prediction, called the Laffer Curve, has never materialized. Despite tens of thousands of tax changes since then, the evidence is clear: Tax cuts reduce revenue, tax increases raise it.

Now, Laffer's theories are nowhere near as dangerous as Marx's "Communist Manifesto." Cutting taxes in a stable democratic republic or American state hasn't led to a dangerous revolution. But, it also has never spurred significant economic growth or caused tax revenues to replace those lost from the tax cuts.

If you are using Laffer's theories to justify a tax cut, you are on the same intellectual footing as a Marxist arguing that Communism will cause the "government to wither away."

I write about this because the tax cuts that passed through Indiana's legislature this year were heavily inspired by Laffer. Laffer, and co-author Stephen Moore, heavily influenced Project 2025, the blueprint for President Donald Trump's economic policies. So,

over the coming year, we have the opportunity to see firsthand if Laffer is right.

If Laffer is right, the next two or three years should see a resurgent economy in Indiana, growth exceeding anything we've seen in the past several decades, thousands of new businesses, hundreds of billions of dollars in net investment and tens of thousands of jobs.

I hope his predictions are right and am eager to write a column admitting I was wrong. But, since Senate Enrolled Act 1 — the Laffer-inspired bill — passed, Indiana has lost 3,500 factory jobs and new business starts are down 19%.

Yes, I know there are other daft economic policies hitting Indiana pretty hard. These might offset some of the putative benefits of deep tax cuts. But, as any economist would tell you, the big benefit of tax cuts should happen right away as new residents and business-flock to Indiana to take advantage of the lower tax bill.

The negative effects — more crowded classrooms, higher

income taxes, worsening public infrastructure — will take a few years to materialize.

If we don't see benefits soon, it is fair to conclude that we won't ever see them.

I write about this not because I expect Marx or Laffer to be influential economic forces in the future.

In a half-century, Laffer and Marx will be no more than footnotes in economic textbooks.

Now, to be fair, I won't be well remembered. I will be forgotten because, like many others, my economic work is largely correct, and others will improve upon it in the normal course of research.

Laffer and Marx will be remembered for being woefully and repeatedly wrong with their predictions.

.....

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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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., Portland
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
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-portland.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., Redkey
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. Wednesday
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., Portland
Fr. Peter Logsdon
Fr. Martin Sandhage
(260) 726-7055
Services: 5:30 p.m. Saturday, 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 Sharpshurg Road, Fort Recovery
Rev. Alexander Witt
(419) 375-4153
Services: 4:30 p.m. Saturday, 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., Portland
Bob Graham
(260) 726-7777
Bible class: 9:15 a.m.
Services: 10:20 a.m.
Bible School: 6 p.m. Wednesday
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, southwest 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., Portland
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., Portland
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. Sunday

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. Wednesday

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. (contemporary service, fourth Sunday)

Trinity ArchBridge Church
323 S. Meridian St., Portland
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., Portland
Gil Alicea
(260) 726-4691
Services: 10 a.m.
westwalnutchurchof-christ.org

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

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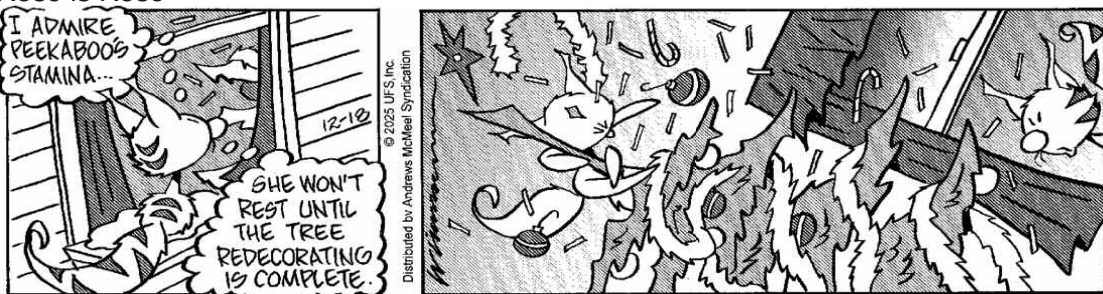
THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



Peanuts



Rose is Rose



Agnes



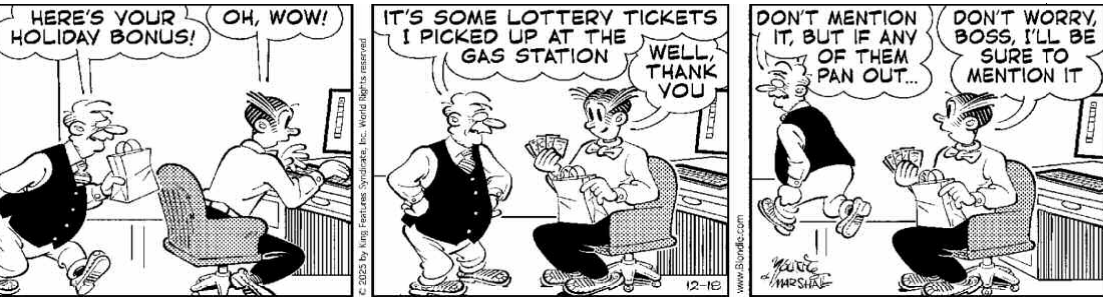
Hi and Lois



Between Friends



Blondie



Snuffy Smith



Beetle Bailey



Contract Bridge By Steve Becker

The art of artifice

South dealer.
Both sides vulnerable.

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

The bidding:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♣ Pass
3 ♠ Pass 3 ♠ Pass
4 ♠

Opening lead — king of hearts.
There are times when a defender must absolutely falsecard. The chief purpose of this tactic is to create an impression in declarer's mind that the cards are divided differently than they actually are. Though the falsecard might not always succeed, it is much better than the alternative, which leaves declarer no choice but to find the winning line of play.
Consider this deal where the defenders started by taking three heart tricks. East winning the third

with the queen. East then exited with a club to dummy's queen.
Declarer had to score the rest of the tricks to make his contract. With the K-10-7-5-3 of trump missing, South knew his prospects were not very good. However, although he didn't know it yet, he was about to encounter great success when he led a low trump from dummy toward his A-Q. And had East followed suit with the ten, which seems normal, declarer would have coasted home after finessing the queen.
But East threw a monkey wrench into the works by playing the king on the first spade! South won with the ace and, on the natural assumption that East had started with the singleton king, returned a low trump, finessed dummy's nine and went down one.
It is hard to fault South for failing to guess the actual trump position, since most declarers probably would have fallen into the same trap. But observe that South could not have gone wrong if East had woodenly followed to the first trump lead with the ten.
East's play thus qualifies as a mandatory falsecard, since it could do no harm and might do some good. It is surely better to have some chance than to have no chance at all.

Tomorrow: Double-dummy problem.
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12-18

CRYPTOQUIP

U J B NBNP AGRRW LRRTA CE
NR XMAGRT CE CGR GEAWUCBV,
AGEMVT AEHRNETP JUXAC

ZBVV B VBHN-MVBLZR?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN A LARGE GROUP OF PIGS GET TOGETHER FOR A PARTY, THEY USUALLY END UP GOING HOG-WILD.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: N equals B

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ACROSS | 37 Allows | 2 Body lotion | 20 British ref. work |
| 1 En-grossed | 38 Leaves | 40 Accomplish | 22 Luxury car brand |
| 5 Bloke | 41 Garden statuette | 3 Lima's land | 23 Guthrie of folk |
| 9 Com-poser Rorem | 43 "— | 4 Block-dropping computer game | 24 Garten of the Food Network |
| 12 Peter Fonda role | Nights" (Mark Wahlberg film) | 5 Egyptian Christian | 25 Actor Cage, to friends |
| 13 Theater award | 47 Like sashimi | 6 "Veep" ailer | 26 Ultimate degree |
| 14 Roof ornament | 48 Gift giver's warning | 7 Have the flu | 27 Created bed |
| 15 Santa's home | 51 "Hail!" | 8 Facial treatments | 29 Camp |
| 17 Asian holiday | 52 Fashion's Cassini | 9 Post-discount cost | 30 Bradley and Asner |
| 18 Painter Georges | 53 Awestruck article | 10 Slender weapon | 35 Candied veggie |
| 19 Actress/singer Jennifer | 55 Tosses in boxes | 11 Bubble-head | 37 Behold |
| 21 Freudian concept | DOWN | 16 Pos-sessed | 39 Salami choice |
| 22 Type of beam | 1 Operates | | 40 Female rabbit |
| 24 Hostels | | | 41 Diploma recipient |
| 27 De-bussy's "La —" | | | 42 Cathedral area |
| 28 Vegas cubes | | | 43 Pleads |
| 31 Little louse | | | 44 Leslie Caron role |
| 32 Rocker Rose | | | 45 Privy to |
| 33 Hake's relative | | | 46 Flan ingredi-ents |
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FIFA establishes new World Cup ticket tier

By ANTHONY SOLORZANO
Los Angeles Times
Tribune News Service

LOS ANGELES — FIFA announced an affordable admission pricing tier for every nation that’s qualified for the 2026 World Cup co-hosted by the U.S., Canada and Mexico. The supporter entry tier will make tickets available at a fixed price of \$60 for every match, including the final, for each nation’s participating members associations.

The new tier comes after supporters’ groups from Europe called out FIFA on the dynamic pricing of tickets, which changes the value based on the popularity of the teams playing in each match.

“In total, 50% of each PMA allocation will fall within the most affordable range, namely supporter value tier (40%) and the supporter entry tier (10%),” FIFA said in a statement on Tuesday. “The remaining allocation is split evenly between the supporter standard tier and the supporter premier tier.”

New \$60 priced tickets are a response to fan outrage

FIFA will also waive the administrative fees for fans who secure participating member association tickets, but their teams do not advance and they seek refunds.

Ticket sales were rolled out by FIFA in phases, with a third of the tournament’s inventory claimed during the first two phases. The third phase started on Dec. 11 and will go through to Jan. 13. During this period, fans have the opportunity to allocate tickets for a match based on a random selection draw.

Before the new tier was introduced, the cheapest ticket for

the World Cup final in MetLife Stadium in New Jersey would cost fans more than \$4,000. The high prices raised concerns among European supporters.

“The prices set for the 2026 World Cup are scandalous, a step too far for many supporters who passionately and loyally follow their national sides at home and abroad,” the FSA, an organization of supporters for England and Wales, said in a statement posted on its website on Dec. 12. “Everything we feared about the direction in which FIFA wants to take the game was confirmed — Gianni Infantino only sees supporter

loyalty as something to be exploited for profit.”

FIFA previously stated it adopted the variable pricing because it was common practice for major North America sporting events.

“What FIFA is doing is adapting to the domestic market,” a FIFA official said in the conference call. “It’s a reality in the U.S. and Canada that events are being priced as per the demand that is coming in for that event.”

A FIFA official told reporters before the first tickets went on sale that world soccer’s governing body expects to make more than \$3 billion from hospitality and tickets sales and is confident the tournament will break the all-time World Cup attendance record set in 1994, the last time the men’s competition was held in the U.S.

That 1994 World Cup featured just 24 teams and 52 matches. The 2026 tournament will be twice as large, with 48 teams and 104 games.

FIFA said it received 20 mil-

lion requests during the random selection draw sales.

SoFi Stadium will host eight matches, beginning with the U.S. opener against Paraguay on June 12. The Americans will finish group play in Inglewood on June 25, playing the winner of a March playoff involving Slovakia, Kosovo, Turkey and Romania. Two Group G matches — Iran versus New Zealand on June 15 and Iran-Belgium on June 21 — also will be played in SoFi, sandwiched around a Group B match between Switzerland and the winner of another European playoff, this one featuring Wales, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy and Northern Ireland.

The teams for the three knockout-stage games to be played at SoFi Stadium — round-of-32 games on June 28 and July 2 and a quarterfinal on July 10 — haven’t been determined, but the possibilities include Mexico, South Korea, Canada, Spain, Austria and Algeria.

Box score				
Blackford Bruins at Jay County Patriots				
Girls varsity summary				
Blackford (4-6)				
	FG-FGA	FT-FTA	PTS	
McCammon	1-4	0-0	2	
Leas	2-13	1-1	5	
Sargent	0-1	0-0	0	
Hedge	4-19	0-0	10	
Murphy	0-6	0-0	0	
Trissel	0-0	0-0	0	
Slusher	0-4	1-2	1	
Heflin	0-1	1-2	1	
Totals	7-48	3-5	19	
	.146	.600		
Def. Rebound percentage: .286				
Jay County (4-3)				
	FG-FGA	FT-FTA	PTS	
KSchwtrmn	8-10	2-3	19	
Newton	1-5	0-0	3	
HSchwtrmn	4-8	4-4	13	
Brunswick	1-3	2-4	4	
Dirksen	0-1	0-0	0	
Lekue Magro	0-0	0-0	0	
May	4-4	3-4	11	
McAbee	0-0	0-0	0	
Peters	2-7	2-4	6	
Kaigler	0-0	0-0	0	
Totals	20-38	13-19	56	
	.526	.684		
Def. Rebound percentage: .725				
Score by quarters:				
Blackford	4	3	4	8 — 19
Jay Co.	22	18	14	2 — 56
3-point shooting: Blackford 2-27 (Hedge 2-15, McCammon 0-1, Slusher 0-2, Murphy 0-3, Leas 0-6). Jay County 3-6 (KSchwierman 1-1, HSchwierman 1-1, Newton 1-4).				
Rebounds: Blackford 17 (Team 5, Leas 3, Sargent 2, Trissel 2, Heflin 2, McCammon, Hedge, Slusher). Jay County 44 (KSchwierman 10, HSchwierman 6, Peters 6, Newton 5, Lekue Magro 5, May 5, Dirksen 4, Team 2, Kaigler).				
Assists: Blackford 5 (Leas 2, Murphy 2, Hedge). Jay County 6 (KSchwierman 2, Newton 2, HSchwierman, Brunswick).				
Blocks: Blackford 1 (Slusher). Jay County 5 (KSchwierman 2, HSchwierman 2, Newton).				
Personal fouls: Blackford 11 (Hedge 3, Heflin 3, Slusher 2, McCammon, Sargent, Murphy). Jay County 12 (Brunswick 3, HSchwierman 2, Dirksen 2, KSchwierman, Newton, May, Peters, Kaigler).				
Turnovers: Blackford 19. Jay County 24.				

Kayah Kaigler of the Jay County girls basketball team turns toward the hoop to begin a shot attempt during Tuesday’s 37-point win over the Blackford Bruins. The Patriots dominated the Bruins in the first half, forcing 12 turnovers and running up a 40-7 advantage with 26 points in transition.



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

High ...

Continued from page 8

Blackford finished with just seven made field goals, including three in the fourth quarter after McIntire started pulling her starters.

The defense also directly led to points for the Patriots either off of turnovers for easy leakouts or by pushing the pace after securing a defensive rebound. JCHS ended with 18 points (32.1%) off of turnovers, and another 14 (25%) by just pushing the ball for 32 (57.1%) points in transition.

Karsyn Schwieterman benefitted from the fast pace the most, scoring 15 of her game-high 19 points in transition.

“We were just being the aggressor,” McIntire said. “We thought coming in that we could definitely pressure them and get offense out of our defense and honestly that’s our strength.”

While a majority of the Patriots’ points came in transition, they also hit the offensive glass hard. Jay County grabbed 15 offensive rebounds, leading to 15 second-chance points, including five for Charlee Peters and four for Karsyn Schwieterman and Natalie May, the latter of which scored a career-high 11 points.

“I think with having me and Charlee crashing and having all of our guards follow their shot, we got in there,” May said. “We were tough and put the ball right back up and that’s where a lot of our points come from.”

Sports on tap

Local schedule

Today
Jay County — Girls basketball vs. New Castle (no JV) — 6:30 p.m.; Freshman boys basketball at Muncie Central — 6 p.m.; Junior high boys basketball at Southern Wells — 5:30 p.m.; Junior high girls basketball vs. Southern Wells — 6 p.m.
Fort Recovery — Girls basketball vs. Parkway (no JV) — 6 p.m.

Friday
Jay County — Girls wrestling at Findlay — 12 p.m.; Boys basketball vs. Delta — 6 p.m.
Fort Recovery — Boys basketball at Parkway — 6 p.m.

TV schedule

Today
6:30 p.m. — College volleyball Semifinal: Texas A&M vs. Pitt (ESPN)

7 p.m. — NBA: New York Knicks at Indiana Pacers (FDSN Indiana)
7 p.m. — Women’s college basketball: South Carolina at South Florida (ESPN2)
8:15 p.m. — NFL: Los Angeles Rams at Seattle Seahawks (FOX)
9 p.m. — College football Xbox Bowl: Missouri State at Arkansas State (ESPN2)
9 p.m. — College volleyball Semifinal: Wisconsin vs. Kentucky (ESPN)

9 p.m. — NHL: Seattle Kraken at Calgary Flames (NBC)

Friday
11 a.m. — College football Myrtle Beach Bowl: Kennesaw State vs. Western Michigan (ESPN)
2:30 p.m. — College football Gasparilla Bowl: Memphis vs. N.C. State (ESPN)
6:30 p.m. — College basketball: Seton Hall at Providence (FS1)

8 p.m. — College Football Playoff first round: Alabama at Oklahoma (ESPN)
8 p.m. — College basketball: Wisconsin vs. Villanova (FOX)
9:30 p.m. — College basketball: Abilene Christian at BYU (TNT)
10 p.m. — College basketball: Cal Poly at UCLA (BTN)

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Sports

High pressure

Patriots use defense to create offense in 37-point win over Blackford

By ANDREW BALKO

The Commercial Review
Olivia Murphy has helped the Bruins improve from the struggles of the 2024-25 season. The Patriots didn't overlook the freshman guard but rather cut the head of the snake off and nullified the Bruins' offense and fueled their own.
The Jay County High School girls basketball team held Olivia Murphy scoreless as its defense created offense on Tuesday afternoon for a 56-19 victory over the Blackford Bruins.
"I felt like, for the most part, especially in the first half, that we played to our level and our potential," said JCHS coach Sherri McIntire. "Obviously in the fourth quarter, that wasn't the case but we had people in there that are not getting a ton of varsity minutes, but it's good to see those kids get to play."
The Patriots (4-3) had to play well at the start of the game to allow McIntire to empty her bench early in the fourth quarter. They couldn't have played much better in the first quarter, scoring the first 12 points and entering the quarter break up 22-4.
Jay County quelled the Bruins' offense by containing Olivia Murphy. It started with Hallie Schwieterman guarding the BHS freshman, working to deny the ball, force passes and pick her pocket when the

chance arose. After forcing turnovers on the three of four possessions, Blackford (4-6) was forced to have Carley Leas play point guard, while Olivia Murphy stepped off the ball.
After Hallie Schwieterman picked up her second foul with just under two minutes to go in the first quarter, Karsyn Schwieterman and Claudia Dirksen took over the responsibility of guarding Murphy and continued to limit her.
"We practice our defense a lot," Karsyn Schwieterman said. "Hallie is always a great defender and (we) picked up after her."
They didn't let up in the second quarter either, outscoring the Bruins 18-3 in the second period.
In total, the Patriots forced Blackford to turn the ball over 12 times in the first half and 19 throughout the game.
Jay County deployed a mix of defensive strategies to create havoc including a full-court press, a 1-3-1 trapping zone and a man-to-man defense with high ball pressure.
"We knew it was going to come so we had that press break in for them," said BHS coach Aaron Murphy. "We had a hard time getting under that screen and sealing it. We wanted to come back to the ball and get it. ... They're a super athletic and physical team, which has been our kryptonite."
See **High** page 7



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Jay County High School foreign exchange student Araitz Lekue Magro drives past Blackford's Kaylor Hedge during Tuesday's 56-19 victory. Lekue Magro ripped down five rebounds to contribute to a 44-17 advantage for the Patriots on the glass.

Seven Patriots pinned Knights in win

OSSIAN — The Patriots continue to pick up wins on the mat.
The Class 2A No. 10 Jay County High School boys wrestling team picked up its 11th win of the season Tuesday by taking down the Norwell Knights 53-23.
The Patriots (11-4) won seven of the 11 contested matches, all via pin.
Sylas Wenk got the ball rolling for Jay County by getting Maddox Affolder on his back 39 seconds into the 120-pound match.
JCHS rattled off three more victories with Alexander Rivers, Cooper Glassford and Jason Landers pinning Knights in the 126, 132 and 138 weight classes.
The Patriots also got victories from Miles Jones (150), Bryan Fields (175) and No. 16 Alan Ortiz (285).

Local Roundup

Jay County also got 12 points from forfeits in the 106- and 113-pound weight classes.
JC takes three
FORT WAYNE — Jay County's girls wrestling team took three of four contested matches to beat the South Side Archers 54-12 on Tuesday.
Madison Gage, No. 10 Amara Crawford and Alexis Tipton all picked up victories via pin, while Jay County's sole loss came from Reagan Mannah.
Outside of the contested matches, the Patriots (6-2) had to forfeit one weight class,

while Kenady Lyons, No. 6 Katie Rowles, Chloe Torres, Alayna Willoughby, Maleah Parsons and Kelly Jones all secured six points with SSHS forfeits.
JCHS will travel to Findlay, Ohio on Friday for a two-day tournament.
Tankers fall
MUNCIE — The Patriots finally hit a roadblock as both Jay County swim teams fell to the Delta Eagles on Tuesday.
The JCHS boys kept things close with six victories but still fell 94-81, while the girls took a 119-67 defeat.
Grady Warvel had the strongest day for the Patriots (2-3) with wins in the 200-yard individual medley (2 minutes, 14.66 seconds) and the 100 backstroke (1:02.31).
Cooper Glentzer and Peyton Yowell claimed the other indi-

vidual wins for the Patriot boys by swimming times of 56.72 in the 100 butterfly and 55.42 in the 100 freestyle, respectively. JCHS also claimed the 200 freestyle relay (1:38.61) and the 400 freestyle relay (3:34.66).
Having to swim against five Eagles that made state appearances last season, the Jay County girls (4-1) only managed to win one event. That first-place finish came from Elly Byrum as her time of 1:20.27 claimed the 100 breaststroke.
Smith leads
BERNE — The Fort Recovery swim team hosted St. Henry, Minster and Botkins at South Adams' pool on Tuesday.
The FRHS girls team's depth helped rack up 77 points, while the boys finished with 34.
Caleb Smith had a pair of

strong swims in the 100-yard backstroke (1 minute, 5.37 seconds) and 200 individual medley (2:23.06) to claim first in both events.
The only other individual victory came from Carson Fullenkamp in the 100 butterfly with a time of 1:06.74.
The girls' only first-place finish came from the 200 freestyle relay team consisting of Autumn Leuthold, Scarlett Hiser, Claire Wenning and Emily Boeckman. They combined for a time of 2:11.67.
Fort Recovery had two tankers finish as the runner-up in an event. Leuthold placed second in the 100 breaststroke in 1:23.81, while Fullenkamp's 1:16.05 in the 100 breaststroke came up just short.
FRHS also earned third place in four events, including a pair of relays for the girls team.

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