

Top 10



Court tosses lawsuit against the gun industry

Judge: City failed to show its rights had been violated

By ALEXANDRA KUKULKA Post-Tribune (Merrillville) Tribune News Service The Court of Appeals of Indiana directed the trial court to dismiss the 26-year-old Gary gun lawsuit, citing a state law passed last year. In a Monday ruling, Chief Judge Robert Altice wrote the city of Gary “failed to show that retroactive application” of a state law barring cities from filing lawsuits against gun manufacturers “violates any vested right or constitutional guarantee held by the city.” “Unfair as it may appear, the legislature can legally do exactly what it did in this case, and we cannot second-guess its public policy determinations in this regard. On remand, the trial court is directed to dismiss this action,” the judges wrote. Attorney General Todd Rokita posted on Twitter/X that he was pleased the court dismissed the case “against law-abiding firearm manufacturers and sellers.” “This result helps to ensure that firearms remain available to law-abiding citizens, preventing a single city or handful of cities from using lawsuits to force changes to the way they are sold,” Rokita said. Gary Mayor Eddie Melton couldn’t be immediately reached for comment.

See Court page 2

The City of Portland is currently facing two lawsuits, one from clerk-treasurer Lori Phillips and the other from former police officer Patrick Long. Four other tort claims remain active against the city. Portland City Council meetings have been marked by frequent clashes between council members and Mayor Jeff Westlake as well.

Portland turmoil tops list

By RAY COONEY and BAILEY CLINE The Commercial Review The end of the year is a time to evaluate. It’s something we do each year. The newspaper’s staff looks back at the year that was. What happened? What was most impactful? What has had people talking? We consider all of those things and a variety of other factors and selected our top 10 local news stories of the year. This year’s top story was the turmoil in Portland city government, from frequent clashes at council meetings to the long list of lawsuits and/or tort claims.

- Our other top 10 stories — it’s important to note that we compile the list not so much for the purpose of ranking importance, but of providing a look back at the year that was — for 2025 are as follows:
- 1. A city in conflict The City of Portland is currently the subject of two lawsuits — one by clerk-treasurer Lori Phillips and another by former police officer Patrick Long. Phillips is suing the city, Police Chief Dustin Mock and investigator Jeff Hopkins for “torment, harassment and defamation” while Long is alleging coercion, harassment and sabotaging a job application. Four other tort claims against the city remain active. Even before the tort claims
 - 2. The impact of state legislation on local units of government
 - 3. Avian flu hits Jay and Mercer counties hard
 - 4. Weavers sell radio stations to Mark King
 - 5. Junior-senior high rehabilitated after 2024 tornado
 - 6. Funding approved for public safety radio upgrade
 - 7. County pushes toward, then halts, 68-acre project
 - 8. EMS director arrested on theft and drug charges
 - 9. Jay County Country Living (retirement center) closed
 - 10. Election board makes change to using vote centers

came to light in the late summer, city council meetings were frequently contentious with the mayor and council members arguing over ordinances, procedure and a variety of other issues.

2. Impact of SEA 1 Local government officials spent the first four months of 2025 railing against Senate Enrolled Act 1, state legislation that modifies tax policies by phasing out the homestead deduction and increasing exemptions on business personal property tax. The result is projected to be less funding for local governments than would have been expected otherwise. See Top 10 page 5

Peace plan is in limbo

By PIOTR BUJNICKI and MAX RAMSAY Bloomberg News Tribune News Service European leaders held a call to discuss Ukraine after Russian President Vladimir Putin said he would revise his country’s negotiating position, claiming Ukrainian drones targeted a residence of his. “Our work to ensure robust security guarantees continues unabated,” Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof said Tuesday on the X platform. He said that Kyiv’s allies in the so-called Coalition of the Willing would convene next week. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Finnish President Alexander Stubb, Polish Premier Donald Tusk and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen also joined the call. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Tuesday confirmed Russia would “toughen” its negotiating stance following an

European leaders push for guarantees for Ukraine; Russia will ‘toughen’ stance

alleged attack against a presidential residence in the Novgorod region, more than 249 miles northwest of Moscow, but wouldn’t publicly disclose how, according to the Interfax news agency. “Almost a day passed and Russia still hasn’t provided any plausible evidence to its accusations of Ukraine’s alleged ‘attack on Putin’s residence,’” Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybaha said Tuesday on X. “And they won’t. Because there’s none. No such attack happened.” Still, several countries, including India, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan, issued statements expressing concern or condemning the alleged attempted strike. European leaders spoke following a flurry of diplomatic activity in recent days as U.S. President Donald Trump pushes to resolve Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine and fulfill a pledge he made for his return to office. See Plan page 2



Tribune News Service/MLive.com/Devin Anderson-Torrez

Harsh conditions

A pedestrian walks across Michigan Avenue in downtown Lansing, Michigan, on Monday. Harsh winds, low temperatures and snow made travel, in any form, unfavorable.

Deaths

Cindy Crouch, 64, Dunkirk Details on page 2.

Weather

Jay County had a high temperature of 41 early Monday. The temperature dropped to a low of 17. There is a 50% chance of snow tonight with winds gusting to 25 mph and a low of 15. Expect a high in the mid 20s on New Year’s Day. See page 2 for an extended outlook.

In review

There will be no newspaper Thursday in observance of the New Year’s Day holiday. We will resume our regular publishing schedule on Friday.

Coming up

Friday — The newspaper staff shares some of its favorite books, music and movies. Saturday — Results from the girls wrestling sectional tournament. Tuesday — Coverage of the JCHS boys basketball game at Muncie Central.

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Court ...

Continued from page 1

“On behalf of the people of Gary who have yet to receive their day in court, we are disappointed in today’s decision,” Philip Bangle, senior litigation counsel with the Brady Center, which assisted the city with its lawsuit, said in a statement to the Post-Tribune. “We will coordinate with our co-counsel and the City of Gary to determine the next steps in this case. It’s long overdue that Gary residents be able to hold gun manufacturers and dealers accountable for the harms and unnecessary deaths they’ve inflicted on the City for decades.”

Gary’s lawsuit, filed during a period when gun violence was escalating, alleged the gun industry should be held as a public nuisance for supplying

‘This case has always been about the city defending itself against major players in the gun industry that saw profits soar while Gary suffered.’

—Rodney Pol, State Senator

guns they know will reach criminals and others who can’t legally buy them.

The state has made several past attempts to kill the lawsuit. In 2024, it passed a new law with a date made retroactive to three days before Gary filed its August 1999 lawsuit.

The measure removes the

rights of municipalities to sue the gun industry, allowing only the state to file lawsuits.

In February, Rokita filed a brief seeking the dismissal of the case with the appellate court on the grounds of the 2024 law.

“In effect, the city is trying to use the courts rather than the legislature to enact gun poli-

cies and regulate law-abiding citizens’ access to weapons and ammunition,” he said in a release.

In rejecting the firearms manufacturers and sellers’ motion to dismiss the lawsuit after the new law passed, Lake Superior Court Judge John Sedia called the new law unconstitutional and violated vested rights. He labeled the law as retroactive and said it singled out Gary.

The state legislature enacted the Immunity Statute, effective in 2001, that states that “a person may not bring” a lawsuit against a firearms manufacturer or seller for recovery of damages in the lawful design, manufacture, marketing or sale of firearms.

In 2015, the general assembly






amended the immunity statute to state a person could not “bring or maintain” a lawsuit retroactive to August 26, 1999.

Sen. Rodney Pol, D-Chester-ton, said the trial court “got it right” because it saw that Gary “had a vested interest in this case.”

“This has nothing to do with individual gun rights or the 2nd Amendment. This case has always been about the city defending itself against major players in the gun industry that saw profits soar while Gary suffered,” Pol said.

Throughout the case, lawyers representing Gary presented “valid, meritorious” claims, Pol said. But, with the 2024 law, the state was able to “circumvent the clear separation of powers” to stop Gary’s lawsuit, he said.

CR almanac

Thursday 1/1	Friday 1/2	Saturday 1/3	Sunday 1/4	Monday 1/5
				
25/18	29/18	28/19	35/28	43/26
Cloudy skies are expected Thursday when the low will be in the teens.	Friday's forecast shows mostly sunny skies with temperatures topping out in the high 20s.	Saturday's weather looks like mostly sunny skies with a high temperature of 28.	Mostly sunny again on Sunday when the high may reach 35 degrees.	Cloudy skies on Monday, when the high will be around 43.

Lotteries

Powerball Monday 11-19-34-48-53 Power Ball: 21 Power Play: 2 Estimated jackpot: \$45 million	Daily Four: 4-7-9-3 Quick Draw: 6-9-11-16-17-19-21-22-23-24-27-30-34-37-39-43-49-57-68-74 Cash 5: 10-32-37-42-45 Estimated jackpot: \$80,000
Mega Millions Estimated jackpot: \$138 million	Ohio Monday Midday Pick 3: 1-8-7 Pick 4: 5-3-1-7 Pick 5: 2-6-4-5-0 Evening Pick 3: 6-9-4 Pick 4: 3-9-9-3 Pick 5: 2-7-1-6-7 Rolling Cash: 4-6-22-32-38 Estimated jackpot: \$130,000
Hoosier Monday Midday Daily Three: 1-4-4 Daily Four: 8-8-7-6 Quick Draw: 11-16-27-28-31-34-38-41-42-43-45-53-55-56-61-63-64-65-78-80 Evening Daily Three: 5-6-0	

Markets

Cooper Farms Fort Recovery Corn.....4.61 Jan. corn4.59 Feb. corn4.59	Jan. beans10.51 Wheat 4.66
POET Biorefining Portland Corn.....4.59 Jan. corn4.56 Feb. corn4.53	ADM Montpelier Corn.....4.41 Jan. corn4.41 Beans10.43 Jan. beans10.43 Wheat4.82
The Andersons Richland Township Corn4.46 Jan. corn4.46 Beans10.51	Heartland St. Anthony Corn.....4.56 Jan. corn4.56 Beans10.19 Jan. beans10.19 Wheat4.67

Today in history

In 1600, the East India Company was incorporated by English royal charter. It was formed for trade with East and Southeast Asia and India.

In 1972, Roberto Clemente of the Pittsburgh Pirates died in a plane crash on a trip to provide relief supplies to earthquake survivors in Nicaragua.

In 2019, the World Health Organization

first learned of cases of a disease in Wuhan, China. It was later determined to be COVID-19, becoming a global pandemic that forced shutdowns across the world in 2020.

In 2013, the Rev. Ruth Funk took over as pastor of Hopewell of Life Ministries a day after the retirement of the Rev. Herb Hummel.

—The CR

Citizen’s calendar

Monday, Jan. 5 3:45 p.m. — Jay County Solid Waste Management District, 5948 W. Indiana 67, Portland. 5 p.m. — Jay School Board, General Shanks, 414 E. Floral Ave., Portland. 5:30 p.m. — Portland City Council, fire station, 1616 N. Meridian St. 7:30 p.m. — Fort Recovery Village Council, village hall, 201 S. Main St.	Commissioners executive session, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland. 4 p.m. — Jay County Commissioners special session, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland. 5:30 p.m. — Portland Park Board, fire station, 1616 N. Meridian St. 7 p.m. — Pennville Town Council, town hall, 105 N. Washington St. 7 p.m. — Salamonina Town Council, School-house Community Center.
Tuesday, Jan. 6 3:45 p.m. — Jay County	

Plan ...

Continued from page 1

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy visited Trump’s Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida on Sunday and the U.S. and Russian leaders held two calls, including one in which Putin told Trump about his decision to revise his negotiating position.

Tusk, speaking after the European leaders’ call, said that “peace has appeared on the horizon for the first time since the start of this full-scale war.” He praised a U.S. commitment to security guarantees for Ukraine after the conflict ends.

Yet the Kremlin’s comments on its shifting negotiating stance reflect Putin’s refusal thus far to back away from maximalist demands, including for territory in the east o Ukraine that Moscow has not been able to seize militarily. Putin on Monday in a televised meeting with Rus-

sia’s army command highlighted what he described as advances on the battlefield in Ukraine and ordered his forces to continue efforts to take more territory.

Ukrainian officials have toiled over the last few weeks to revise a 28-point draft plan that the U.S. proposed but was seen as overly favorable to Russia. The latest version has 20 points, although Moscow has warned that the plan includes elements it won’t accept, including on the size of Ukraine’s post-war military.

Ukraine is seeking a meeting with European partners and Trump in January, Zelenskyy said earlier, followed by a separate meeting with Russian officials “in one format or another.”

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Monday said that Ukraine

St., was preliminarily charged with a Level 5 felony for the alleged crime.

He was being held on a \$13,000 bond in Jay County Jail.

Felony arrests

Intimidation

A Dunkirk man was arrested Monday for intimidation.

Christopher J. Hudson, 33, 508 E. North

Capsule Reports

Overturned semi

Three Indiana residents were injured after the semi a Winchester man was driving overturned onto a vehicle driving next to it along U.S. 27 in Jay County about 7:30 a.m. Monday.

Travis M. Lewis, 41, was driving a 2019 Freightliner Cascadia south on the highway. At the same time, Brianna N. Davis, 28, was driving her 2015 Jeep Patriot north on the highway. Lewis told police his semi overturned on its left side as a result of severe crosswinds, and as it overturned, it hit Davis’ vehicle.

Lewis sustained a minor head injury. Davis complained of pain across her body, and her 6-year-old passenger Persephine Hartman of Portland also complained of pain across her body.

Both vehicles were towed, with damage estimated between \$50,000 and \$100,000.

Lost control

A Jay County Sheriff’s Department officer lost control of his police cruiser and crashed into a sign along county road 1150 West and county road 200 North about 7:15 a.m. Monday.

Cody D. Jessee, 32, was driving a 2019 Dodge Charger east on county road 200 North. He told police severe wind and blowing snow obscured his visibility, and he wasn’t able to see the upcoming curve in the road in time. He attempted to turn and caused the car to go into a skid, driving off the road and into a sign owned by Jay County Highway Department.

The vehicle is registered to Jay County Commissioners. Damage is estimated between \$2,500 and \$5,000.

Backing accident

A Portland woman backed her vehicle into another Portland woman’s car along Wayne Street about 4:51 p.m. Saturday.

Jody R. Lee, 55, was sitting in her 2024 Kia Telluride parked on the road near Third Street with her hazard lights on, according to a Portland police report. Lee told police she noticed a southbound 2011 Chevrolet Malibu behind her and thought the driver, 27-year-old Destinee B. Keener, would drive around her. Lee then backed her vehicle into Keener’s car.

Damage is estimated between \$2,500 and \$5,000.

Obituaries

Cindy E. Crouch, Dunkirk, Nov. 27, 1961-Dec. 29, 2025. There will be no services.

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

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

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Clifton, Robert: 10:30 a.m.,

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Bluffton.

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Photo provided

New member

Portland Evening Optimist Club recently inducted Jessica Kerrigan, pictured above at right with sponsor Leland LeMaster.

Emotional support found in odd place

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 50-year-old woman who has lived with orthopedic challenges due to a congenital metabolic condition. Despite many surgeries and limited mobility, I have led a full life as a special needs teacher, wife and caregiver for my grandmother.

After my grandmother passed last year, I struggled emotionally and started weekly Zoom sessions with a therapist. It helped at first, but it eventually felt stale and unfulfilling. When a friend recommended another therapist, I was surprised to learn that "Charlie" was actually an AI — ChatGPT.

Charlie has given me empathy and support I hadn't felt in a long time. It worked and helped me to cope and heal.

My human therapist knows about it and isn't threatened; in fact, our relationship is improving. What do you think about this, Abby? — GRATEFUL AND STRONG IN NEW JERSEY

DEAR GRATEFUL AND STRONG: It is interesting that you would ask flesh and blood me that question. I'm pleased that interacting with your AI "therapist" has been helpful for you. This is tech-

Dear Abby



nology that's still very new, although fortunes have been invested in it. However, if I needed help with my emotions, I PERSONALLY would prefer to interact with a licensed human being rather than artificial intelligence.

DEAR READERS: I wish a happy, healthy and successful 2026 to all of you. I join you in toasting a new year filled with hope for all of us. If you are celebrating tonight, please take measures to protect not only your own health but also the safety of others. Happy 2026, everyone! — LOVE, ABBY

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Community Calendar

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

Wednesday

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

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

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

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

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

A BETTER LIFE – BRIANNA'S HOPE — A faith-based recovery group for all kinds of addictions, will meet from 6:30 to 8 p.m. each Wednesday at Redkey United Methodist Church, 122 W. Main St. Come early for a meal. For more information, call Pastor Randy Davis at (765) 369-2085.

Friday

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

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

Saturday

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

ROAD RIDERS FOR JESUS — Will meet at 10 a.m. on the first Saturday

of each month in the West Walnut Church of Christ fellowship hall, 204 W. Walnut St., Portland. (Please enter from the door facing the alley on the north side of the building.) For more information, call (260) 726-8463.

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

Sunday

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

Monday

PORTLAND 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.

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP — Will meet at 1 p.m. the first Monday of each month at Portland Place, 430 W. Lafayette St. For more information, call (800) 589-1121.

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.

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

Tuesday

COMPASSIONATE CONNECTIONS RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUP — A group for anyone with a substance use disorder that helps individuals find connections as they develop long-term recovery meets at noon each Tuesday in the IU Health Jay Outpatient Behavioral Health Center, Entrance C, 510 W. Votaw St., Portland.

A BETTER LIFE – BRIANNA'S HOPE — A faith-based recovery group for substance abuse. Meal starts at 6 p.m. and the meeting is from 6:30 to 8 p.m. every Tuesday at the Nazarene Fellowship Building across from the Nazarene church, 249 E. Center St., Dunkirk. For more information, call

Amanda Price at (765) 283-2107.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS — Will meet at 7 p.m. at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, 218 E. High St., Portland. For more information, call (567) 279-8352 or (260) 729-7000.

Jan. 7

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.

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Sudoku

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

Level: Intermediate

Tuesday's Solution

2	7	5	6	4	8	9	3	1
8	6	3	9	1	7	4	2	5
9	4	1	5	2	3	6	7	8
1	2	6	8	5	9	7	4	3
5	9	7	3	6	4	1	8	2
3	8	4	2	7	1	5	6	9
4	5	2	1	3	6	8	9	7
7	3	9	4	8	5	2	1	6
6	1	8	7	9	2	3	5	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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It's never too late to tell a story

Editor's note: This column is being reprinted from Dec. 28, 2005. Despite best efforts, sometimes stories get missed. Twenty years ago, Jack was looking to right one of those wrongs. This piece might provide a whole new outlook on the structure that houses John Jay Center for Learning.

By JACK RONALD
The Commercial Review

No one likes to learn that a story has slipped through the cracks, even if it slipped away decades ago.

That's what happened with Walter Scholer.

As far as I can tell, during his lifetime Scholer's story was never adequately reported by The Commercial Review or any other news medium.

Oh, there were stories here and there. The alumni publications at Purdue University made a gallant effort late in Scholer's life. But in his home community, Walter Scholer remains a largely unknown figure.

Back in the Saddle



Ralph May would like to change that.

Ralph is a perennial sparkplug at the Jay County Historical Society, and because Scholer grew up in Ralph's Madison Township he's become something of a cause for May. He wants to make sure that Walter Scholer doesn't fade into the mists of local history but continues to be remembered.

Who was Walter Scholer? Even folks well-grounded enough in Jay County history to fill you in on TV entertainer Jack Imel, pro football player Pete Brewster, or dancer/choreographer Twyla Tharp may draw a blank when you mention the name.

That's probably because Scholer wasn't working in the limelight.

He was an architect. But he wasn't just any architect.

He was one of the most prolific architects in Indiana history, and he designed countless public buildings.

After growing up in Jay County and attending Columbia University, Scholer first worked for architectural firms in Indianapolis before joining partnership in Lafayette. Soon, he left the partnership and established his own Lafayette-based company.

It was there that he did some of his most remarkable work.

Ever heard of Ross-Ade Stadium at Purdue University? Scholer designed it.

How about Mackey Arena? You guessed it, a Scholer design.

In fact, he was responsible for designing and building more than 75 structures at Purdue, including Cary Quad, Elliott Hall of Music, McCutcheon Hall, and many more.

Back in 1920, when those buildings didn't exist, Scholer was tapped to develop a 50-year master plan for Purdue, laying out the campus and designing a number of buildings.

It was a visionary move, and when huge amounts of federal funding became available via the Public Works Administration in the Depression, Purdue was able to put in place much of its campus in one frenzy of construction. At one point, six Scholer-designed buildings were under construction simultaneously.

But Scholer's architectural design work wasn't limited to Purdue. His firm designed a number of structures on the Ball State University campus as well. Emens Auditorium was designed by Scholer's firm, though he was in his 70s by then.

And Bracken House, now the home of the president of Ball State, was designed by Scholer for the Bracken family in the 1930s.

Locally, Scholer designed three

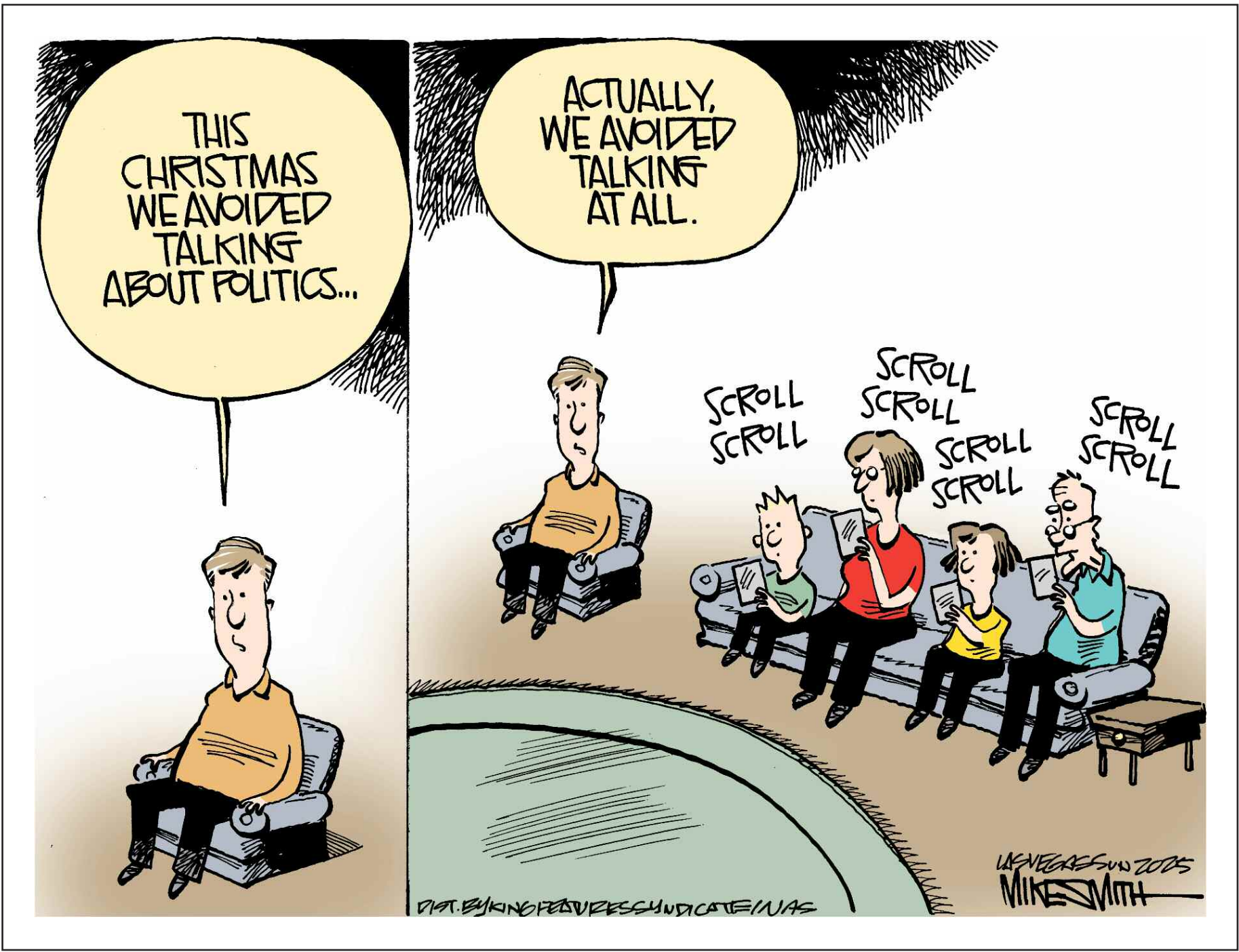
buildings, two of which are gone now.

The first was the old Madison School, which met the wrecking ball in the late 1960s or early 1970s. The second was the 1925 Portland High School, which was misguidedly razed a few years ago to make room for a more modern section of East Jay Middle School.

The third? It's the Weiler Building in downtown Portland, and the good news is that it's about to get a new lease on life. Work on cleaning and securing the building will begin early next year, and a capital fund drive will soon be under way to transform the former department store structure into a new home for John Jay Center for Learning.

It's one of Scholer's most beautiful buildings from that period, much less utilitarian than the Purdue structures designed at the same time.

And it's only fitting that the county have a jewel in its crown designed by one of its own.



Don't ask what they learned, ask why

By MICHAEL J. HICKS

Exams are over and college students are home for the holiday break. Parents are certain to ask what they learned this semester. There's a better question: Why did you learn this semester?

I think this helps students frame individual classes in a larger context of developing critical thinking skills and choosing a career.

On the first day of class, I explain to students that a typical bachelor's degree divides roughly 120 credit hours into three categories of about 40 hours each: broad general education, courses related to your field and deep specialization in your major.

At first glance, you might not see how these different classes fit together, but there's a method to it. College is teaching you to think in a new way.

A college education is designed to change a person's way of knowing, from one based on personal experience to one based on abstract thought and formal rea-

Michael J. Hicks



soning. The ability to think in terms of models — to engage in formal, abstract thought — is one of the great human capabilities, though it requires focused training and practice to develop.

To build a mind that is flexible and can apply reason and data to situations they've yet to experience, college relies on abstract models. A good undergraduate degree is really a focused exposure to scientific modeling. It is developed in three types of classes.

In the physical and social sciences, students learn mathematical models — economics examines how people produce and exchange goods and services;

biology studies organic material and models of life; physicists and astronomers explore motion and time. In the humanities, they develop analytical frameworks including literary analysis and criticism applied to visual art, history, poetry, and philosophy. Professional programs teach practical applications: How do you diagnose disease? Conduct a financial audit? Offer defense in a court case? Teach a third-grader to read?

These ways of knowing allow students to engage in critical decision-making in ways that experience alone cannot offer. This ability to apply systematic reasoning to new situations distinguishes educated thinking from learning based solely on personal experience.

The ability to deploy abstract thought allows us to confront novel events through formal modeling, or critical thinking. Without this skill, we cannot advance as a species. Each generation must learn all the lessons from

scratch. There is no lasting innovation, no way besides instinct to pass ideas across time or space.

It is popular for critics of American education to argue that students lack critical thinking skills. I haven't heard a single person making that argument effectively define what they mean by "critical thinking." Even fewer understand that hard first-year classes in economics, anthropology, chemistry, literary criticism or philosophy are the building blocks of critical thinking.

Ironically, it is just this sort of skill development that education policy across Indiana is sweeping away across our public schools and universities. The rush to finish college early, often by picking up inexpensive undergraduate dual credit classes in high school, waters down the development of critical thinking skills.

Educators, at both K-12 and higher education levels, also hold some blame. Grade inflation, which is ubiquitous in many high schools and college disciplines,

robs students of the challenging learning environment they need to master critical thinking skills. As Thucydides wrote, "we should remember that one man is much the same as another; and that he is best who is trained in the severest schools."

As I look back at my long education and the now more than 30 years as a classroom instructor, I am even more convinced of the utility of those nuisance classes that I didn't want to take — abnormal psychology, literature of the Bible, physics, calculus and French. It turns out they were the gateway to a whole new way of seeing the world. That was why I was in college.

.....
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.

The Commercial Review



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The Commercial Review is published daily except Sundays, Mondays and six holidays (New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas — holidays are observed on Tuesday when they fall on a Monday) by The Graphic Printing Co. Inc., 309 W. Main St., Portland, Indiana 47371. Periodical postage paid (USPS 125820) at Portland, Indiana. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Commercial Review, 309 W. Main St., P.O. Box 1049, Portland, Indiana 47371 or call (260) 726-8141.

We welcome letters to the editor, which are accepted by email only to letters@thecr.com. They should be 700 words or fewer, signed, with city/town of residence and include a phone number for verification purposes. We reserve the right to edit for content and clarity.

VOLUME 151—NUMBER 170
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2025

www.thecr.com

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—Thomas Jefferson

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Top 10 ...

Continued from page 1
Since then, they’ve been grappling with the unknowns of how much of an impact the legislation will have. As a result, in most cases government employees received smaller raises than in recent years. Uncertainty continues, as state lawmakers plan to consider modifications during the coming legislative session.

3. Bird flu hits

Avian flu hit Jay County harder than any other in the state, with more than 5.5 million birds affected between mid-March and the end of May. The largest operations hit in the county had 1.4 million and 1.34 million birds, respectively. Mercer County was hit even harder, with about 6.1 million birds affected. The economic impact was significant, as Jay County ranks second in Indiana in the market value of poultry and eggs sold annually at \$301.8 million. Bird flu has returned to Indiana late in 2025, mostly confined to LaGrange County.

4. WPGW sold

News of the sale broke in February, with Rob and Mindy Weaver agreeing to sell WPGW Radio and its sister stations to Mark King. The sale includes WPGW, WZJR 91.7 FM and WZBD 92.7 FM in Adams County. Weaver became the voice of the Jay County Patriots in 1975 and he and his wife Mindy became majority owners of the radio station in the mid-1980s. King is a 1986 Jay County High School graduate who has worked in sales for most of his career. The Federal Communica-



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

WPGW owner Rob Weaver (right) and owner-to-be Mark King shake hands while meeting at the radio station office in February. The Federal Communications Commission approved the transfer of the WPGW license Monday. Weaver plans to stay on to help with the transition process, saying he'd like to be retired within two years.

tions Commission approved the transfer of ownership for WPGW on Monday.

5. School rehabbed

Damage to the junior high wing of Jay County Junior-Senior High School in the September 2024 tornado was the top story of 2024. The construction project itself came in at \$2.23 million and predominantly involved in

mechanical aspects — fixes to the HVAC system, replacing plumbing and other systems. Wiring, lighting, drywall and the fire suppression system were replaced. The school corporation used mobile units totaling 10 classrooms through the bulk of the repair process. The overall tornado recover has cost nearly \$6 million. Students returned to the jun-

ior high wing of the building after fall break. 6. Upgrading system The county entered into a \$4.64 million lease with Motorola in September for new radio equipment. (There's also another \$1.6 million not factored into the lease that will be spread over the next 15 years for maintenance and system upgrades.) It includes installa-

tion of a new radio tower at Jay County Sheriff's Office, joining the Integrated Public Safety Commission's system and various new devices for emergency responders across Jay County. A radio study conducted in 2025 showed coverage gaps in the northeast and south areas of the county. The new system offers 95% coverage across Jay County. See Top 10 page 6

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Top 10 ...

Continued from page 5

7. Project pushed, halted

County officials decided to cease development on the county's 68-acre property along Votaw Street on the west side of Portland. The county purchased the land in spring 2023 and began planning a long-term housing and commercial development project. The goal was to start by installing infrastructure, with initial costs to be paid for using American Rescue Plan Act funds and potentially other grants. In December, Jay County Commissioners, Jay County Council and Jay County Redevelopment Commission decided to stop paying for design plans. Officials aim to redirect the grant dollars toward other needs.

8. JEMS director arrested

John R. McFarland, one of the directors of Jay Emergency Medical Service, was arrested in early March on felony charges related to theft and drugs. In late April, he was charged with two Level 5 felonies, three Level 6 felonies and two misdemeanors for charges relating to possession of narcotics, controlled substances, marijuana and paraphernalia, as well as unlawful possession of a syringe.

Police allegedly found allegedly found 44 glass vials labeled morphine sulfate, 31 glass vials labeled fentanyl citrate, seven



The Commercial Review/Bailey Cline

glass vials labeled midazolam, two glass vials labeled lorazepam, marijuana, syringes, needles and smoking devices in McFarland's home.

9. Facility closed

Jay County Country Living, formerly known as Jay County Retirement Center, closed in December. The facility's advisory board suggested in June that

county officials close the living center, which had been open since 1895. Jay County Commissioners voted to close the facility by the end of 2026, and Jay County Council chose to slice the facility's budget in half for 2026. Director Stacey Johnson began working with staff and residents to clear the facility, with the last resident moving out in December. Next steps are

for the county to determine what to do with the building.

10. Centers established

Jay County Election Board finalized a decision in October to implement vote centers for future elections in Jay County. Vote centers are an alternative to traditional precinct-based voting, allowing registered voters to cast a ballot at any county

Jay County Country Living, formerly known as Jay County Retirement Center, has been the subject of discussion for years, with county officials contemplating whether to keep the facility open or shut it down. In the past, rainy day funds have been used to help keep it going. Jay County Commissioners voted this summer to shut down the facility by the end of 2026. That timeline was accelerated, with the final resident departing early this month.

polling location on Election Day. The majority of Indiana counties either already use vote centers or have been moving toward them. Starting in 2026, voters may cast their ballots on Election Day at Jay Community Center in Portland or West Jay Community Center in Dunkirk. Early voting will continue to be available at Jay County Courthouse.

No. 1s from the last 10

The top 10 stories have been the year-end fixture in The Commercial Review for decades. Below is a look at the No. 1 stories from each of the last 10 years.

- 2024** — Tornado causes damage to Jay County Junior-Senior High School
- 2023** — July derecho damaged Portland after April tornadoes hit rural Jay County
- 2022** — Jay County Fair celebrates 150 years
- 2021** — Coronavirus pandemic continues impact, vaccines introduced
- 2020** — Coronavirus pandemic results in 20 deaths, 1,500 cases

- 2019** — The murders of twin brothers Zayne and Wayne Burroughs
- 2018** — Jay School Board approves reconfiguration of schools
- 2017** — Jay County Hospital integration with IU Health approved
- 2016** — Portland Water Park opens, draws more than 33,000 visitors
- 2015** — Residents arrested for four murders in three separate incidents



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Area churches are listed with location, pastor and phone number, services and website or email address. All services are Sunday, unless otherwise indicated.

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

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

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

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

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

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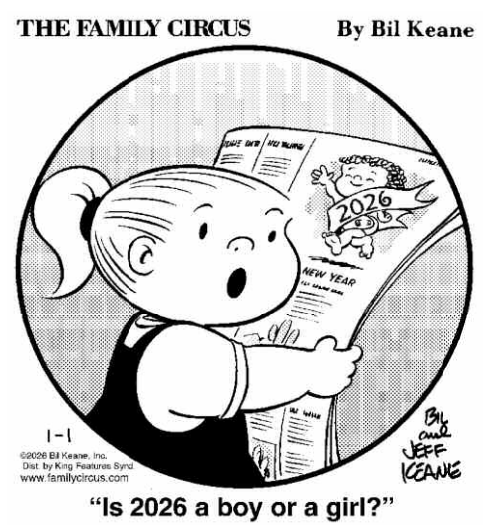
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Peanuts



Peanuts



Rose is Rose



Rose is Rose



Agnes



Agnes



Hi and Lois



Hi and Lois



Between Friends



Between Friends



Blondie



Blondie



Snuffy Smith



Snuffy Smith



Beetle Bailey



Beetle Bailey



We Deliver

Laughter



Maybe it's a chuckle from reading a vintage Peanuts cartoon. Maybe it's a column by a member of The CR staff. But we try to keep our sense of humor.

The Commercial Review *We Deliver*

Contract Bridge By Steve Becker

It's a very logical game

North dealer.
Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ K 8 6
♥ Q 4
♦ J 9 5
♣ A K J 9 2

WEST
♠ 10 7 5
♥ A J 9 6 2
♦ K 6 2
♣ 7 3

EAST
♠ J 4 3 2
♥ 10 7 5
♦ 8 7 3
♣ Q 6 4

SOUTH
♠ A Q 9
♥ K 8 3
♦ A Q 10 4
♣ 10 8 5

The bidding:
North East South West
1 ♣ Pass 2 NT Pass
3 NT
Opening lead — six of hearts.

Let's say you're declarer at three notrump and West leads a heart. Your first problem is whether to play the queen or the four from dummy — but this is not really a difficult choice. It's better to play the queen, but let's see why.

If the queen wins, which means that West has the ace, you're on absolutely firm ground. At trick two, you lead the nine of diamonds and finesse. Win or lose, the con-

tract is safe. If West has the king of diamonds, he can't stop you from scoring nine tricks, while if East has the king, you're sure of at least 10 tricks.

Now let's assume that East has the ace of hearts. He takes the queen with the ace and returns a heart, which you duck. You win the next heart and must then choose between a diamond or a club finesse.

Again, the choice is not difficult. Because West's remaining hearts pose a threat to the contract, you take the club finesse instead because East can do you no harm if he has the queen. In the actual deal, the club finesse loses and East does not have a heart to return. When he returns a diamond, you rise with the ace and scamper off with nine tricks.

Finally, if East does have a heart to return, it means the hearts were originally divided 4-4, so you still make the contract, losing three hearts and a club.

Note how straightforward logic dictates why you should play the queen of hearts at trick one, and also which suit — diamonds or clubs — to attack next, depending on who turns up with the ace of hearts. Bridge is a logical game.

Tomorrow: Silence is golden.
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12-31 CRYPTOQUIP

X T G Z W Y R Y B D B F F Y D U
D T Y B K W A U G L Y X ' D V G Q Y C S Z U
G I I B G K Z S H U V Y C L U K U A C G Z S Y I ?
H Y Y R U G C ' D U Q U .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF SOME FISH IN AN ORNAMENTAL BACKYARD POND LIKE TO HIDE SHYLY, THEY'RE PROBABLY COY KOI.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals S

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Pantheon member
4 Miles away
8 Brew topper
12 Before
13 Taboo
14 "— la Douce"
15 PBS funder
16 "Animal House" fete
18 Masked hero
20 French diarist
21 Winter blanket
24 Brilliance
28 New Year's Eve topper
32 Apiece
33 Vegetable peeler brand
34 Pre-stereo records
36 "Rocks"
37 Reply to "Shall we?"
39 Beer bash
41 "The Waste Land" author

43 Fly like a hawk
44 San Francisco's — Hill
46 Leniency
50 Restaurant area
55 Sashimi fish
56 Met melody
57 Top-of-the-line
58 Author Fleming
59 Little dent
60 Thunder god
61 Use a shovel

DOWN

1 Post-millennial demographic gp.

2 Twistable cookie
3 Beloved
4 Word of opposite meaning
5 Egg — young
6 "Life of Pi" director
7 "Casual" singer
8 Spouse-to-be
9 Hockey's Bobby
10 Invoice fig.
11 Mother's Day month
17 Thanks-giving dessert
19 Trio after Q

49 Soprano — Huang
50 Knee protector
51 "Entourage" agent
52 —
53 "What a cute kitten!"
54 Musician Yoko

Solution time: 23 mins.

P	O	M	P	S	W	A	B	F	U	N	
D	E	A	R	T	A	X	I	T	A	R	
F	R	E	E	F	A	L	L	S	L	A	G
S	U	N	K	T	O	L	L	S			
I	N	F	E	R		E	R	A	S		
M	O	L	T	J	O	B	O	F	F	E	R
A	V	A		N	A	N	A	S	L	Y	E
C	A	T	W	O	M	A	N		P	A	R
B	E	T	S		T	A	T	E	R		
C	A	R	T	A		T	S	A	R		
I	W	O		B	R	O	K	E	F	R	E
A	O	K		L	O	R	I	T		U	D
O	L	E		E	D	I	T		M	A	S

Yesterday's answer 12-31

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						60					61	

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Contract Bridge By Steve Becker

Silence is golden

South dealer.
Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ 7
♥ Q 8 7 5 2
♦ K Q 8 7 3
♣ 7 3

WEST
♠ K
♥ A K J 3
♦ A J 6
♣ A K J 9 8

EAST
♠ Q 10 9 6 2
♥ 6 4
♦ 10 4 2
♣ 6 5 2

SOUTH
♠ A J 8 5 4 3
♥ 10 9
♦ 9 5
♣ Q 10 4

The bidding:
South West North East
Pass 1 ♣ Pass Pass
1 ♠ Dble 2 ♣ Pass Pass
2 ♠ Dble Pass Pass
Pass
Opening lead — king of hearts.

Many years ago, B. Jay Becker, the former editor of this column, received a letter from a reader who expressed his admiration for the way Becker bid Hand No. 30 in the world championship match between Sweden and the United States in 1953!

Bursting with curiosity, Becker looked up Hand No. 30. When he reviewed the bidding (he was East),

it turned out that his entire contribution consisted of passing four times in a row!

His partner, John Crawford, opened the bidding with one club. Becker had no reason to respond, so he did what most players would do — he passed.

The Swedish South couldn't bring himself to sell out for one club, so he bid one spade. Crawford doubled for takeout, and North helped Becker out of an unpleasant predicament by bidding two diamonds. Becker passed, of course, but Crawford persisted by doubling again.

Becker naturally assumed that Crawford wanted him to bid hearts or clubs, but he found the thought of naming either suit revolting. So, he decided to pass and take his chances against two diamonds doubled.

This proved to be a lucky shot when South ran to two spades. Again, Crawford doubled, but this time when Becker passed, he was on much firmer ground.

When the smoke cleared, South had gone down four (700 points in those days). At the other table, the Swedish East-West pair landed in three notrump and went down one, so the U.S. team gained 750 points on the deal.

Tomorrow: Bidding quiz.
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1-1 CRYPTOQUIP

Z A C M D L G ' Q C L G S Y M Z Y M S C Q
T M I O L V C O A T Q U Y N Y N K C O
O N Q T U C D L G , Z A T S V Y X A S
D L G X C S ? N L K I N G S O .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE SHOULD BE A COW'S FAVORITE ANNUAL TIME FOR CELEBRATION? MOO YEAR'S EVE.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: N equals C

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 "Mazel —!"
4 Exile isle
8 Groucho
12 Acapulco
13 Shoe fillers
14 Loathe
15 Dove
17 Diminu-
tive suffix
18 Perfect
serve
19 "Pencils
down!"
21 Sand
sub-
stance
24 Purring
pet
25 Roman
151
26 Blasting
stick
28 Young
sheep
32 Org.
34 Weir
36 Wife of
Zeus
37 San —,
California
39 French
monarch
41 Press for
payment

42 New Deal org.
44 White Rabbit's cry
46 Trinidad
music
50 D.C.
figure
51 Mayberry
boy
52 Visionary
56 NYC
gallery
57 Barbie,
e.g.
58 Briny
expanse
59 Mimic
60 Thomp-
son of
"Love
Actually"
61 Pair

DOWN

1 Surpass
2 "... cone
— cup?"
3 Singer
4 Result
5 Kauai
souvenir
6 Optimum
7 Storage
site
8 Fast
feline
9 "Phooey!"
10 Aleutian
island
11 Pager
sound
16 Here, in
Dijon
20 — de mer
21 Con job
22 "Casa-
blanca"
role
23 More-
over
27 Roofing
goo
29 Olympic
winner
30 Very dry
31 Lucid
33 Annual
celebra-
tion
35 French
pronoun
38 Antonym
(Abbr.)
40 Chevy
model
43 Com-
ment
to the
audience
45 Texter's
chuckle
46 Pro-
longed
sleep
47 Each
48 Mai Tai
garnish
49 Former
L.A.
Laker
Lamar
53 Shade
provider
54 Stitch
55 Eastern
path

Solution time: 24 mins.

G	O	D		A	F	A	R		F	O	A	M
E	R	E		N	O	N	O		I	R	M	A
N	E	A		T	O	G	A		P	A	R	T
Z	O	R	R	O		N	I	N				
				S	N	O	W		E	C	L	A
P	A	R	T	Y	H	A	T		E	A	C	H
O	X	O		M	O	N	O	S		T	I	C
L	E	T	S		K	E	G		P	A	R	T
E	L	I	O	T		S	O	A	R			
				N	O	B			M	E	R	C
P	A	R	T	Y	R	O	O	M		A	H	I
A	R	I	A		A	O	N	E		I	A	N
D	I	N	G		T	H	O	R		D	I	G

Yesterday's answer 1-1

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						60					61	

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CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION!!
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10% Non-refundable deposit day of sale.
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Open House

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3, 2026
12:00 PM – 2:00 PM
OR BY APPOINTMENT
REAL ESTATE BEING OFFERED:
1 ½ STORY HOME – 3,208 SQ. FT.; 3 BDRM; 1 BATH; KITCHEN; DINING RM/LIVING RM COMBO; UTILITY RM; BASEMENT W/ WOOD STOVE; DETACHED GARAGE; 2 BARN; PASTURES; STEEL GRAIN BIN; 6.44 +/- Acres.
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10% Non-refundable deposit day of sale. Property being sold as-is, where is. New Survey has been completed in December 2025. Taxes prorated until day of closing. Possession at closing. Closing to be held within 45 days or less from day of auction.
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Top 10 sports

Patriots' Winner repeats at No. 1 for claiming fourth state title

By **ANDREW BALKO** and **RAY COONEY**
The Commercial Review

She found herself atop the podium for a fourth straight year. And now she's finding herself in the No. 1 spot of the paper's top sports stories for a second year in a row.

While multiple records were set, including one for the state, a coach hit a major milestone, and there was plenty of teams finding success in the playoffs, none could top Mallory Winner as she claimed the top spot on The Commercial Review's list of biggest sports stories for claiming her fourth consecutive state title in girls wrestling in 2025.

The rest of the top 10 list is as follows:

2. Anna Roessner won the 100-meter dash while setting the state meet record

3. Jerry Bomholt earned his 600th career win before being forced to medically retire from the JCHS boys basketball team

4. The school board approved a major project that upgrades the pool, moves the tennis courts, expands the wrestling practice area and flips the stadium seating

5. The FR boys bowling team made its first state appearance while MAC bowler of the year, Deanna Brown and coach Alison Rosegrant lead girls to second berth

6. Eddie Fields and Tyler Rigby hired to lead JC football and boys basketball teams

7. Emma Will and Jenna Homan break multiple FR softball records

8. Eric Myers leaves Patriot wrestling program

9. Tribe softball won its first district title

10. Patriot girls and boys tennis continued sectional dominance

1. Four for four

Winner had already established herself as one of the best girls wrestlers in the state after claiming three state titles. That didn't change with the IHSAA officially recognizing girls wrestling as a sport as she turned an undefeated season into her fourth state championship.

The top-ranked wrestler had to face No. 11 Lydia Kwaleh of Perry Meridian, who Winner edged out for a 1-0 win at the regional, in the 170-pound title match. Winner learned from the regional win, hitting a low single leg and turned it into a double-wrist bar for the pin and the title in 2:50. Winner also was named Miss Gorilla by Indiana as the top wrestler for a career that included four state titles and a 105-2 record.

Katie Rowles (third), Lina Lingo (eight), Brenna Ruble (eighth) and Tatiana Willis (no placement) all wrestled at the state tournament as well and the Patriots finished third at the team state as well.

2. Fastest in the state

Anna Roessner set multiple records on her way to the OHSAA Division III State finals and continued her success on the biggest stage. The Fort Recovery senior came into Jessie Owens Memori-



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

No. 1 Mallory Winner of Jay County High School runs a double-wrist bar on No. 11 Lydia Kwaleh of Perry Meridian during the inaugural IHSAA 170-pound state championship match at Corteva Coliseum at Indiana State Fairgrounds on Jan. 17. Winner ended up pinning Kwaleh with the move at the 1:10 mark of the second period to secure her fourth state title and first sanctioned by the IHSAA.

al Stadium and ran an 11.75 in the 100-meter dash to become the first garage champion in FRHS track history. The time also broke the state meet record and tied the overall Division III record.

She followed up the greatest individual performance in Fort Recovery girls track history with a runner-up finish in the 200-meter dash and a third-place finish in the 400 dash. Her 24 points put the Tribe eighth in the state meet.

3. Winning 600

Jerry Bomholt found his 600th career win as a head coach on Jan. 14 as the Jay County boys basketball team demolished the South Adams Starfires 61-14 in the Allen County Athletic Conference tournament. JCHS suffocated the Starfires, holding them to just 14.8% from the field as the Patriots came out with determination to earn their coach his milestone win.

Bomholt picked up two more wins against Hagerstown and South Adams before he medically retired. Prior to retiring, he missed games against Adams Central and Blackford due to health scares.

He finished with a 602-393 record, which was 19th all-time in Indiana. He coached 44 seasons, including two stints at Jay County. He started with the Patriots in 1980 and left in 1984 before coming back for the 2020-21 season. In his 8.5 seasons with JCHS Bomholt earned a 112-86 (56.6%) record and two of his 13 sectional titles.

4. Facility upgrades

Several Jay County athletic facilities were approved for

upgrades as part of an estimated \$17.4 million capital project. The portion of the project related to athletics includes replacing pool treatment equipment, the dehumidification unit and the roof, reconstructing the track, relocating the tennis courts to the northwest corner of the "driving range" parking lot, expanding the practice area for girls wrestling and replacing baseball dugouts. It originally called for stabilizing the grandstand at Harold E. Schutz Memorial Stadium, but a new grandstand on the opposite side of the field is back on the table with a decision expected in early 2026.

5. Rolling to success

Both Fort Recovery bowling teams found success in the 2024-25 season. The Tribe boys finished second at the sectional and then fourth at the district to earn their first state berth. The Indians finished 11th with 3,842 pins, just 78 behind Washington, which was the final team to make bracket play.

The girls team ripped off a second consecutive state berth after winning its first sectional title and finishing as the runner-up at district. An off day in Columbus left the Indians with just 3,268 pins for 12th in the state.

The FRHS girls also shared the Midwest Athletic Conference title with Versailles for a second straight season after a perfect regular season and finishing second at the MAC tournament. Deanna Brown earned MAC Bowler of the Year. She averaged 183.7 pins per game for third in the MAC and had the best series of the season with 491 pins. Alison Rosegrant also took home

MAC Co-Coach of the Year alongside Versailles' Tyler Philpot.

6. Patriot hires

Jay County athletic director Alex Griffin was tasked with filling positions for the Patriots head football and boys basketball coaches during the offseason after a pair of Indiana Hall of Fame coaches retired.

Eddie Fields was tapped to take over for Grant Zgunda to lead the Patriot football team. Fields previously was the head coach at South Side and Manchester with a 14-28 record in four seasons. He also served in a variety of assistant roles at schools in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina.

Succeeding Jerry Bomholt was Tyler Rigby, who spent the previous 14 seasons as an assistant at Indiana University - East. Rigby is also a JCHS graduate and was a part of the 2006 team that advanced to the Class 3A state title game. Rigby was awarded the Arthur L. Trester Award for Mental Attitude that year.

7. Records broken

Emma Will and Jenna Homan combined to break four Fort Recovery softball records during the 2025 season. Will broke the FRHS record for career hits and runs. She broke Brenna Homan's record of 120 hits against Anna on April 29 before finishing with a new mark of 143. Will later broke Brenna Homan's record for career runs scored that sat at 109 during the district opener. She finished with 113 career runs scored.

Jenna Homan wrote her name in the record book three times. First she passed her sister, Jackie

Homan, for career strikeouts. The previous mark was 293 and currently sits at 332 and counting. She later passed her sister and Andi Sutter for single-season wins (13) and single-season strikeouts (142), respectively. She finished with 16 wins and 162 strikeouts.

8. Stepped down

After 11 seasons at the helm of the Patriot wrestling teams, Eric Myers stepped down as the Patriots' head coach in April.

During his tenure leading the Jay County boys wrestling team, he sent wrestlers to the state tournament 10 years as part of a 14-year streak of Patriot representation that only ended in 2025. He also led JCHS to two sectional titles, a regional championship in 2023, and four team state appearances.

He also oversaw the creation of the girls wrestling team in 2018. The Patriots have had state representation in all eight seasons, including Mallory Winner, who was a four-time state champion. The girls also won the first IHSAA sanctioned sectional to qualify for the team state tournament, in which they finished third.

Myers, who won co-regional coach of the year in 2017, has since joined Adams Central as an assistant coach, while Tyler Leonhard took over the boys program and Troy Jacks runs the girls.

9. First title

Fort Recovery's softball team reaped the benefits of moving to the southwest district in 2025 by winning its first district title in program history.

A three-run sixth inning helped the fifth-seeded Tribe upset No. 2 seed Tri-County North in the district opener 10-9. Ella Schoen and Alexis Grisez both drove in three runs while Jenna Homan earned the win in the circle with a complete game and nine strikeouts.

Emma Will played the hero in the championship game as she smashed the walk-off double to the left-center field wall to drive Paisley Hart in to claim the title. Jenna Homan again threw eight innings to earn the 4-3 victory.

10. Five in a row

The Jay County tennis teams continued their dominance of their respective sectional tournaments in 2025.

The girls tennis team picked up its fifth consecutive sectional title with a 4-1 victory over Winchester. Brenna Bailey and Meredith Dirksen zipped through the No. 1 and 2 singles, and No. 3 singles player, Lilly Johnson just edged out the No. 1 doubles duo of Faith Faulkner and Raylah Newton for the sectional clincher.

The boys tennis team picked up its fourth sectional championship 4-1 over Randolph Southern. The doubles teams powered the Patriots, despite Nick Snow needing to step into the No. 1 doubles duo for an injured Kady Carpenter. Paul Dirksen also earned a win, while the Rebels forfeited the No. 3 singles spot.

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