

The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

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\$1

Finances are strong

School corporation sets year-end records again

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

Jay School Corporation finances continue a pattern of growth, setting new highs for year-end balances for the third consecutive year.

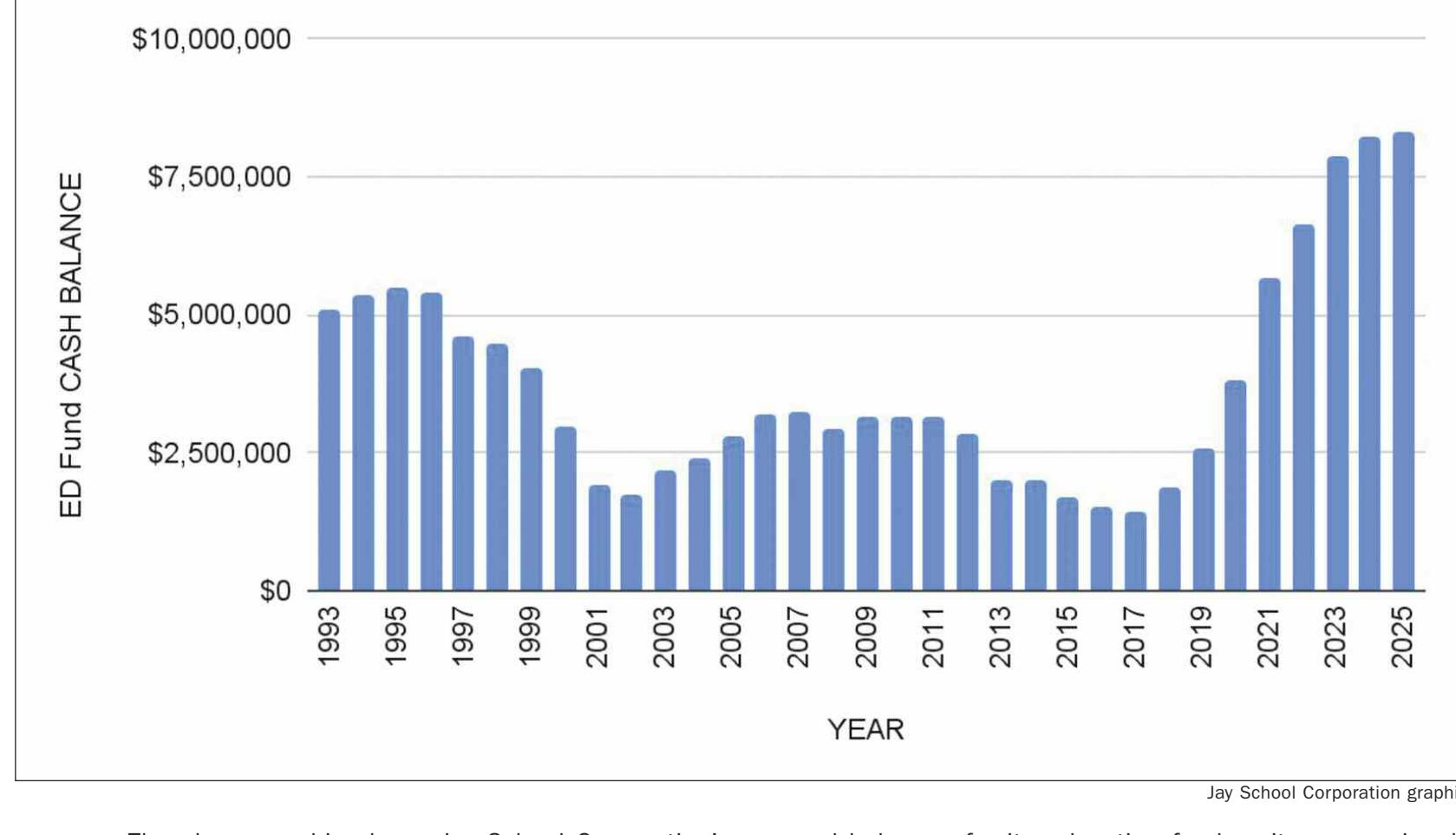
Leaders feel confident in the ability to weather potential challenges.

The Jay School Corporation Board of Finance met Monday following a brief meeting of Jay School Board, learning that the corporation's education and operation funds were both up slightly at the end of 2025.

"It's a very good report," said school board president Ron Laux. "It took all of the employees and all of the people involved to get us where we are. I can't say enough good about it."

Business manager Shannon Current told the board of finance, made up of school board members Donna Geesaman, Marcie Vormohr, Chip Phillips, Chad Towell, Aaron Clark, Jon Eads and Laux, that the education fund balance came in at \$8.32 million. The operation fund closed 2025 with a balance of \$7.62 million.

A slight deficit had been projected through much of 2025 for the education fund, but it finished with an increase from \$8.2 million at the close of 2024. The operation fund was up significantly from \$6.4 million.



Jay School Corporation graphic

The above graphic shows Jay School Corporation's year-end balances for its education fund — it was previously known as the general fund — for the last 30 years. The balance has grown from less than \$1.5 million at the end of 2017 to \$8.32 million as of Dec. 31. That mark set a record high for the third consecutive year.

Current noted that a portion of that increase is because about \$600,000 in projects that were planned to be paid for last year will instead be paid for in 2026.

The corporation's two major funds — the educa-

tion fund goes directly to the classroom while the operation fund covers "overhead" such as administration, buses, utilities, technology equipment and capital projects — continued a long-term pattern of

growth. The year-end balance for the education fund in 2017 came in at just under \$1.5 million while the operation fund balance has climbed from less than \$100,000 in 2015.

In both cases, the 2025 year-end balances were at

their highest mark in more than 30 years. Both have now set records for three consecutive years.

The rainy day fund came in at \$1.82 million. That is unchanged from the last two years, though Current proposed a

\$650,000 transfer from the operation fund to the rainy day fund that would move it to \$2.47 million.

The food service fund cash balance came in at \$960,597, up from \$823,153 at the close of 2024.

See **Finances** page 5

Ordinance about livestock advances

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

A new livestock ordinance is one step away from approval.

Portland City Council approved an ordinance on first reading Monday that would ban farm livestock in the city and set rules for owning chickens.

The council also heard from Fire Chief Mike Weitzel regarding plans to purchase a new truck, and members and the mayor were at odds again over the possibility of merging police dispatch with the county.

The livestock ordinance came up following a complaint from Portland resident Aaron Kuhn about being woken up early in the morning by a rooster that lives nearby. City attorney Wes Schemenauer present-

Legislation would set up rules for chickens, ban most other farm animals within city limits

ed the council with a draft ordinance late last year.

Council members Kent McClung, Michele Brewster, Matt Goldsworthy, Dave Golden, Mike Aker, Ashley Hilfiker and Ron May approved the ordinance unanimously on first reading without comment.

The ordinance would ban farm livestock, including but not limited to horses, cattle, swine, sheep, goats and fowl, from being kept within the city

limits. It makes an exception for chickens under the following rules:

- No roosters
- A limit of five chickens on any residential lot
- Chickens must not cause a nuisance in the form of noise, odor or damage
- Owners must provide a coop and run that has 12 square feet of space per chicken
- Coops and runs must have a "sight fence or shrub screen-

ing" at least 4 feet high if they are visible from a neighboring lot and be at least 15 feet from the property line

The ordinance calls for a \$100 fine for first violations and up to \$500 for additional violations.

It would need to be approved on second reading at the council's Jan. 19 meeting before going into effect.

Also Monday, May asked the mayor about the status of creat-

ing a committee to explore the possibility of merging the city's police dispatch with Jay County dispatch. The council has discussed the issue multiple times since May brought up the topic in September, saying then that such a change would make sense to be handled in conjunction with a countywide project to upgrade radio equipment for emergency responders.

Portland Mayor Jeff Westlake responded, saying he feels the city's board of works should be involved.

Hilfiker pushed back repeatedly on the issue of creating a committee. She said she feels the mayor is not coming to the issue with an open mind, at one point saying residents should be "upset that you don't want to keep us safe."

See **Livestock** page 2

Wendel, Thobe join council

By BAILEY CLINE

The Commercial Review

Fort Recovery Village Council has some new faces.

Village residents Amy Wendel and Shawn Thobe have joined the council. Wendel was sworn into office Monday prior to village council's regular meeting.

Fort Recovery officials opened applications late last year for the two open seats previously held by council members Cliff Wendel and Erik Fiely. The village interviewed Wendel, Thobe, Eric Albers and Jerry Byram in December, with the board ultimately selecting Wendel and Thobe.

Wendel has lived in Fort Recovery for nearly 18

years. She works as a business coordinator at Wabash Mutual Telephone and has been involved with Fort Recovery Chamber of Commerce and Fort Recovery Jubilee Committee.

She said she's looking forward to learning more about the community and how local government operates.

Thobe was absent from

the meeting but will be

sworn in at a later date. He

New members were sworn in at first meeting of 2026



The Commercial Review/Bailey Cline

Fort Recovery Mayor Dave Kaup (right) swears in Amy Wendel as a new member of Fort Recovery Village Council during Monday's meeting. Shawn Thobe and Wendel were chosen by the council to fill two seats that remained empty following November's general election.

Deaths

Lorna Snyder, 97, Indianapolis
Carl Cook, 85, Uniondale
Details on page 2.

Weather

The low temperature Monday was 32 degrees early in the day. The high climbed to 48.

Tonight's low will be in the mid 30s. The forecast calls for mostly cloudy skies Thursday with rain expected in the afternoon, winds gusting to 25 mph and a high in the upper 50s. See page 2 for an extended outlook.

In review

Arts Place has multiple exhibits — Proximity & (im) Permanence by Kate Homann and Come Back Patricia Whack by Jolynn Reigeluth — on display at its Jay County Campus. They will be open until Jan. 13 and Feb. 16, respectively. For more information, visit myartsplace.org.

Coming up

Thursday — Results from the Jay County girls basketball game against Concordia.

Friday — A look at bills that have been proposed by local legislators.

Saturday — Coverage of the JCHS girls basketball game against Bluffton.



Art workshops are available

Jay County Campus of Arts Place has a few workshops in the coming weeks.

Toddler art classes coordinated by Sheron McClung-Borders will be from 1 to 2 p.m. Fridays from Jan. 30 through March 6 at Arts Place. The cost is \$30.

A mead-making workshop taught by Leroy Brown and Stephanie Fields will be from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Feb. 17 at Arts Place. The cost is \$25.

Oil painting classes instructed by Scott Anderson will be from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays starting Feb. 24 through March 31 at Arts Place. The cost is \$85.

Taking Note

All students must be pre-registered.

Learning series

John Jay Center for Learning's next senior lunch and learn series is coming up this week.

Rusty Inman will share a presentation on maple syrup harvesting at 11:30 a.m. Thursday at the learning center. Reservations are \$5 for seniors 55 years old and older.

Couple's long relationship reaches a tipping point

Dear Abby



stuff going on, but where's the love? How do I talk to him about this? — STRANGER IN LOVE

DEAR STRANGER: Choose a time when you and your partner are calm and as stress-free as possible. Open the conversation by saying you don't think HE is happy and ask him why. Couples don't "not get around" to getting married. There are usually explanations for it. Those reasons should have been dealt with years ago.

Once he's done expressing what he thinks about your

relationship, it will be time to tell him how lonely, isolated and unhappy you have become. If you are both willing to work on making it better, you have a chance for a better future with him. However, if he runs true to form, then it is time to cut your losses before you starve to death from lack of affection, which is likely the reason for all of your emotional eating.

DEAR ABBY: My ex-girlfriend just can't get a clue. She continues trying to get me back and even goes so far as to stalk me. I blocked her phone number, but it has become exhausting. How do I tell her I don't love her anymore and really no longer even like her? I can't stand her, her family or her friends. She gaslit me for years. Our entire relationship was built on a lie. I'm so much happier without her in

my life, but she just won't go away. Any advice on how to deal with this crazy person would be great. — SO OVER HER IN FLORIDA

DEAR SO OVER HER: Continue to avoid your ex, and if you see her, do not acknowledge her. If she approaches you, tell her you are done and to leave you alone. Do not respond to her calls, emails or texts, and if she mails you anything, write "return to sender" on the package or envelope.

Tell your friends that she is stalking you and her behavior is creepy, and then continue dating and resume your social life. If she acts out or damages your property, report her to the authorities. The most effective way to get rid of her is to resume the life you had before you met her and don't look back.

DEAR ABBY: In the past, I always disliked my appearance. I have been obese most of my 70 years but am now within 20 pounds of my ideal weight. My problem is, I have met someone I like very much and could see spending the rest of my life with. However, she is obese, and it bothers me greatly. How can I effectively communicate my desire that she lose 30 to 50 pounds without being offensive? — FINALLY SLIM IN FLORIDA

DEAR FINALLY SLIM: Approaching someone and saying you want them to lose 30 to 50 pounds would be like touching the third rail. You can, however, as you get to know this person better, model your healthy lifestyle and encourage her by setting an example. If she picks up on it, she may be the lady for you.

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, evi-

dence-based intervention for helping families affected by addiction meets at 4 p.m. each Wednesday in the IU Health Jay Outpatient Behavioral Health Center, Entrance C, 510 W. Votaw St., Portland.

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 — BRITANNA'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 Brenda Eads at (260) 726-9625 or Dave Keen at (260) 251-8792.

Thursday

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

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

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 (260) 766-2006.

A BETTER LIFE — BRITANNA'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. For more information, call (260) 766-2006.

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.

CINCINNATUS LEAGUE — Will hold its next meeting at noon Friday, Jan. 9, at Harmony Cafe in Portland.

Saturday

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

Sunday

A BETTER LIFE — BRITANNA'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. 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.

JAY COUNTY DRUG PREVENTION COALITION — Will meet at noon the second Monday of each month at Jay County Campus of Arts Place, 131 E Walnut St., Portland.

Sudoku

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

Level: Intermediate

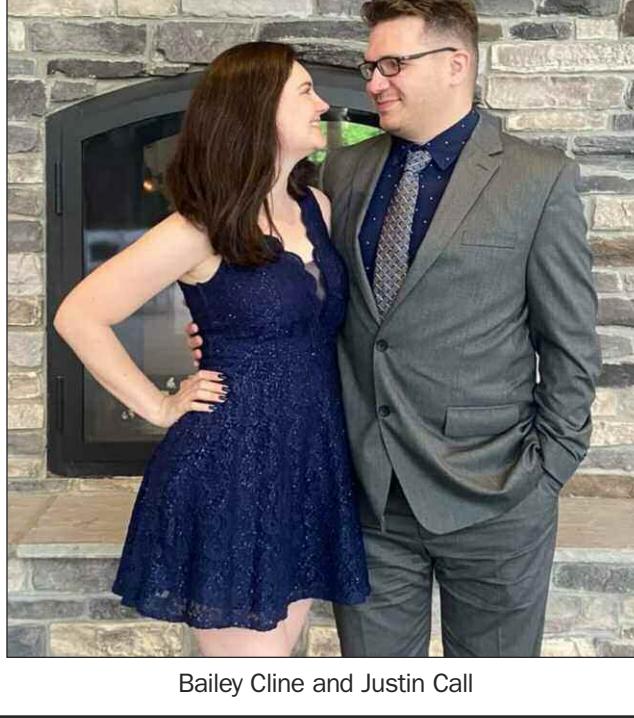
Tuesday's Solution

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.

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

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.

Engagement



Bailey Cline and Justin Call

Bailey Cline and Justin Call

Bailey Cline and Justin Call are planning a wedding for Saturday, Jan. 10.

Bailey is the daughter of Jeff and Renée Cline of Hartford City. Justin is the son of Jay Freeman and Marci Shaff, both of Hartford City.

The prospective bride is a reporter for The Graphic Printing Company. She earned a bachelor's degree in journalism and telecommunications from Ball State University and is a 2016 Blackford High School graduate. She is a member of the Portland Beta Theta chapter of the Tri Kappa sorority.

The prospective groom works as a moldsetter at Thermosafe in Portland. He graduated from Blackford High School in 2016 and studied computer science at Purdue University Fort Wayne.

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Weather wasn't worth the worry

Editor's note: This column is being reprinted from Jan. 5, 2011. Jack illustrates a good point. Being prepared is great. Worrying does no one any good.

By JACK RONALD

The Commercial Review

If good luck is measurable, we may have used up all of ours in the final week of 2010.

Early on the day after Christmas, the three of us — my wife Connie, our youngest daughter Sally, and I — set out for a visit with our other two daughters, their husbands, and — most importantly — our new grandchild in Boston.

I've traveled enough that I tend not to fret over things I can't control, but the other two members of our traveling unit started fussing about the weather forecasts Christmas night. A major storm

Back in the Saddle



was taking aim at the Atlantic seaboard. Would it hit us? Would it ground our flights? Would we get to Boston at all?

These questions weren't just academic. On another Christmas visit to the twins several years ago, we were delayed in getting home because of a similar storm. But I couldn't bring myself to get worried about it this time. The year had been a great one in terms of our immediate family, though it was clouded significant-

ly by the loss of a sister-in-law in a traffic accident last spring. And it had been a wonderful year for reuniting with old friends, both in person and via the Internet. Christmas had been rewarding, and I figured there was no point in worrying when I don't control the weather.

When we woke up Christmas morning, there'd been another dusting of snow, but the weather was better in the Midwest than in the Northeast. And the big storm was still in the forecasts. It was all a matter of when it would hit and where we would be when that happened.

As it turned out, luck was smiling on our travel arrangements. We flew out of Dayton on time and early in the day. Making a connection at Dulles in Washington, D.C., we found that the nor'easter was still in the forecast but the weather was still pretty good. By the time we took off, the storm was beginning to bear down on the large population centers along the Atlantic.

It made for a rocky flight, the kind where it's best to imagine it as if you were driving over a lousy stretch of bad asphalt, say Nebo Road in Delaware County before the most recent attempts at repair. But it also made for a quick flight. The tailwinds from the storm actually got us to Boston earlier than we'd expected. The storm essentially arrived when we did.

As we schlepped our carryons from the gate to where our son-in-law Josh was waiting for us, we checked out the flight informa-

tion signs. "Cancelled." "See Agent." "Weather Delay." Those were the dominant messages.

In fact, over the three-night, four-day visit, the last big blizzard of 2010 didn't pose much more than an inconvenience. It was noisy, with winds howling for hours. And it was sloppy. But it was mostly someone else's headache. We watched the endless news coverage of people stuck at airports — mostly in the New York area — and felt both fortunate and sympathetic.

Our trip back home later in the week went without a single hitch. So, which made more sense? Worrying? Or not worrying? Since neither one affected the outcome, I'm inclined to put my money on not worrying. At least as long as my luck holds out.



Lessons of history are forgotten again

By JOEL MATHIS

The Kansas City Star

Tribune News Service

Let's start with this: Nicolas Maduro isn't a good guy.

The Venezuelan leader — abducted from his country overnight by American forces on the orders of President Donald Trump, amidst shock and awe attacks all over Caracas — stole an election, jailed dissenters and oversaw the ruin of his country's economy. You would like to think Venezuela will be better off without him.

But.

Iraq's Saddam Hussein was a bad guy.

Libya's Moammar Gadhafi was a bad guy.

The United States toppled both of those dictators — through a full-scale invasion in the former case, less directly in the latter. You would have thought those countries would have been better off without their strongmen rulers.

That's not what happened. American meddling produced disastrous eras of deadly chaos in both countries. And American voters seemingly decided they had had their fill of foreign adventurism. Trump even claimed — falsely — that he opposed the invasion of Iraq from the start.

Adventurism? It was over.

"My proudest legacy will be that of a peacemaker and unifier," Trump said during his second inaugural address, less than

Joel Mathis



a year ago. "That's what I want to be: a peacemaker and a unifier."

Saturday morning, Trump seemed to forget those words, saying the U.S. would "run the country (of Venezuela) until such time as we can do a safe, proper and judicious transition." Trump spoke during a press conference from his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida.

Sen. Eric Schmitt of Missouri — one of Trump's most vigorous advocates in Congress — also previously backed away from strong-man tactics.

Under Trump, he said at a Politico conference in May, "the days of us looking into the souls of foreign leaders and deciding if you're a good person or a bad person and then trying to bomb the hell out of that country and the nation-build, those days are over."

And, well, so much for all of that.

"I watched it literally like I was watching a television show," Trump said Saturday morning on Fox News. "If you would have seen the speed, the violence — they say that, the speed, the violence, they use that term — it was

an amazing thing, an amazing job that these people did."

They took our oil rights'

There are three reasons to oppose the attack on Venezuela.

First, the rationale is hazy. Trump justified the recent deadly attacks on boats coming out of the country by citing fentanyl deaths in America. And Maduro will apparently stand trial on drug charges in America. But experts say the drug trade in Venezuela mainly involved shipping cocaine to Europe, not fentanyl to the United States.

Trump probably got a little closer to the heart of the matter when he complained about Venezuela's nationalization of its oil industry, to the disadvantage of American companies that had operated there.

"They took our oil rights — we had a lot of oil there," he told reporters last month. "As you know they threw our companies out, and we want it back."

Do Americans really want to start wars for overseas oil rights?

The second reason: The Constitution gives Congress — not the president — the exclusive power to declare war. That clearly didn't happen, and you can argue that provision in our country's founding documents has long been a dead letter thanks both to the power grabs of previous presidents and the long-term fecklessness of the legislative branch.

But it's worth noting that Pres-

ident George W. Bush sought and received authorizations for the use of military force before invading Afghanistan and Iraq. Trump — who so clearly disdains Bush — apparently decided he had the right to make that decision on his own.

That's not great news for American democracy, or our system of checks and balances.

Finally: We can't really know what the fallout will be at this moment. We do know America's wars

in Afghanistan and Iraq were deadlier than we expected, longer-lasting than we expected and produced a flood of refugees.

Even if the overnight operation in Venezuela proves to be a simple in-and-out operation by American forces, the act of forcefully removing the country's leader will of course be destabilizing. The United States in its recent history does not have a great record of restabilizing countries it has invaded, and Trump has not shown much patience for those kinds of tasks.

Venezuela is a lot closer to the United States than Iraq ever was. We are more likely to feel the consequences close at home.

Gunboat diplomacy is back

On Friday night, before the first reports of explosions in Venezuela, Schmitt went on Fox News to praise Trump's increasing pressure on Maduro as a raw expression of American power.

"The days of narco-terrorist thugs and tinpot third-world dictators down south pushing us around is over," Schmitt posted on X. "We are a superpower. This is our hemisphere. And we're going to start acting like it again."

That's silly: Maduro wasn't pushing us around. Taken together, though, Schmitt's then-and-now comments on Trumpist foreign policy amount to a pivot away from the United States' 21st century role as a "global cop" and back to ugly old-school 19th century "gunboat diplomacy" imperialism in which America gives itself the right to rule Latin America. "Our hemisphere," indeed.

Only that's not entirely true, either.

Trump bombed Nigeria on Christmas Day, supposedly on behalf of that country's persecuted Christians. This week he threatened military action against Iran's government for its crackdown on domestic protesters.

Maybe Mexico is next. Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum is "a good woman, but the cartels are running Mexico," Trump said Saturday morning on Fox News. He added: "Something's going to have to be done with Mexico."

There is no pivot. We're a global cop and also, again, an aspiring hemispheric hegemon. The lessons of American history? Ignored once more. Military adventurism is alive and well.

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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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Join ...

Continued from page 1
He noted both Thobe and Wendel's business backgrounds.

"(They're) very level-headed people," he said. "It takes time once you get involved in the village to understand everything that goes on ... they will speak their mind and give us their opinion on all the matters, and that's what we need."

Other changeover with the village includes plans for village administrator Randy Diller and fiscal officer Roberta Staugler to retire this year, with Aaron Rengers and Jennifer Schoonover slated to take over their positions.

"We've got fantastic people that we've filled their positions with, and hopefully everything transitions (well)," he added.

In other business Monday, council formally approved a resolution authorizing the village administrator to enter into an agreement not to exceed \$130,000 with engineering consulting firm Kleinfelder for work related to a new wastewater system plan.

Council discussed the topic in December, tentatively approving a contract with the company. Village administrator Randy Diller explained plans to move forward with final designs for a wastewater system with Lemna Environmental Technologies.

The new system would meet Ohio Environmental Protection Agency limits for phosphorus, ammonia and E. coli starting in 2028. Next steps include creating a 35% plan for final design work.

For years, the village has been looking into options for how to approach the new EPA limits. Village council moved toward a project last year with Lemna Environmental Technologies that utilizes the existing wastewater lagoons with mechanical aspects.

Plans call for a dual system with two separate locations and a building near the lagoons for testing.

Also Monday, council members Greg Schmitz, Scott Pearson, Luke Knapke, Al Post and Wendel, absent Thobe:

• Transferred \$109,687.08 from the general fund to the Ohio Department of Transportation grant construction fund. The amount serves as the village's share for a sidewalk project along Ohio 49 and Sharpsburg Road. It's 90% funded through a Systemic Safety Funding grant. Plans are to open bids Jan. 26 for the project. Construction will follow in the summertime to avoid school traffic.

• Approved increasing lot prices and updating rules for Fort Recovery cemeteries Spring Hill and Green Mound. A single grave lot is \$550, two grave lots are \$1,100 and four grave lots are \$2,200. Regarding rule changes, village administrator Aaron Rengers noted the cemeteries now require vaults for cremated remains that aren't placed in brass or stone urns.

• Discussed making changes to the village's sidewalk maintenance policy, which was last updated in 2021.

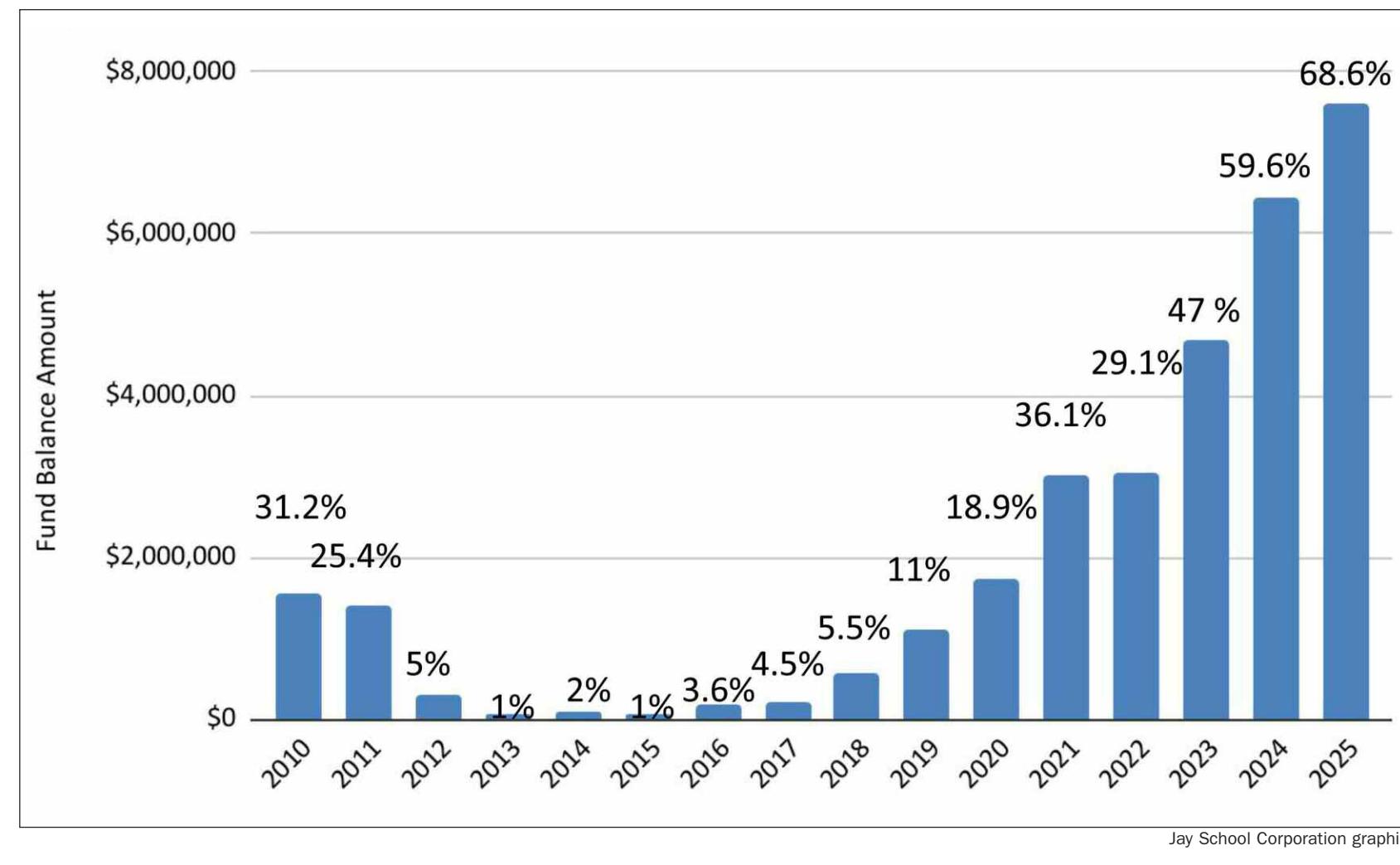
Felony arrests

Drug possession

Two Indiana women were arrested Monday for drug possession.

Briana F. Joseph, 21, Portland, was preliminarily charged with two Level 6 felonies for possession of cocaine or a narcotic drug and possession of methamphetamine, as well as a Class B misdemeanor for dealing marijuana. She was being held on a \$4,500 bond in Jay County Jail.

Leah J. Jackson, 36, 305 W. Horton St., Portland, was preliminarily charged with two Level 6 felonies for possession of methamphetamine and possession of cocaine or a narcotic drug, as well as a Class B misdemeanor for possession of marijuana and a Class C misdemeanor for possession of paraphernalia. She was released from Jay County Jail on a \$4,500 bond.



Jay School Corporation graphic

The above graphic from Jay School Corporation shows year-end cash balances in the operations fund over the last 15 years. It has climbed from near zero 10 years ago to \$7.62 million at the end of 2025.

Finances ...

Continued from page 1

Current pointed out the significant increases in cash balance since partnering with Chartwells for food service. It had hovered around zero for several years and was \$113,867 at the close of 2019. It has been above \$500,000 ever since, and funds were used to renovate the commons area to give it more of a feel of a food court. She pointed out that the corporation is required to keep three months of operating expenses, about \$660,800, on hand and that food service funds are otherwise used for improvements on the kitchen and cafeteria areas.

The report also noted that enrollment was up to 2,905 from 2,817 the previous year. The employee count was 418, which has been relatively steady over the last five years.

Current also shared an investment report that showed the school corporation earned

\$869,624.87 in interest in 2025. That was down by about \$84,000 from 2024 but still the second-highest over the last 15 years. The school corporation has made \$2.6 million in interest over the last three years.

Jay Schools superintendent Jeremy Gulley echoed Laux's thoughts about the status of the corporation's finances.

"The fiscal situation of Jay School Corporation is strong," he said. "It's secure. And prepared to meet the uncertainties and opportunities of the future."

Local government officials have expressed concern previously about the potential effects of 2025 Indiana Senate Enrolled Act 1, which makes a variety of changes to tax policy. Those changes are expected to result in the school corporation receiving less funding than under the previous system. Though uncertainty remains and lawmakers have indicated plans to make adjust-

ments to the law during this year's legislative session, a presentation in August from financial consulting firm Baker Tilly indicated that tax law changes will cost the school corporation more than \$500,000 annually.

In other business, the board of finance:

- Elected Laux as president and Vormohr as vice president.

- Appointed Current and Taylor as depositaries.

In other business, the board:

- Elected Laux as president, Geesaman as vice president and Vormohr as secretary.

- Approved the following: appointing Josh Atkinson of law firm Coldren, Frantz & Sprunger as school corporation attorney and Amy Matthews of Church, Church Hittle & Antrim as outside counsel, as needed; the appointment of Shannon Current as treasurer and Irene Taylor as deputy treasurer, and both as representatives in small

claims court.; authorized Trent Paxson, Current and Taylor as users of the school corporation's safe-deposit box; the hiring of driver education instructors Nichole Myers, Tim Millspaugh and Christine Addington; a leave of absence for East Jay Elementary School teacher Kayla Nietfeld; and appointing all board members to the school corporation's board of finance.

- Received conflict of interest statements to be updated and signed.

- Accepted the resignation of West Jay Elementary School sixth grade teacher Brooke Shoemaker.

- Heard Gulley appoint Geesaman, Phillips and Eads to the insurance committee.

- Heard Laux appoint himself, Geesaman and Towell to the negotiations committee, and Vormohr as the legislative liaison.

Briefings precede likely war powers vote

By JOHN M. DONNELLY

CQ-Roll Call
Tribune News Service

WASHINGTON — Congressional leaders, emerging Monday from a classified briefing on Venezuela, offered sharply contrasting takes on both the president's odds of overhauling that country's government and whether leaving Congress out of the decision to strike was constitutional.

The full House and Senate are expected to be briefed behind closed doors this week on the Jan. 3 operation that extracted Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro from Caracas and brought him to the United States.

Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., told reporters after Monday night's classified briefing for a select group of lawmakers that he expects all-members briefings to take place Wednesday.

Then, on Thursday, the Senate will vote on a war powers joint resolution by Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., that would bar U.S. military action in or on Venezuela without congressional authorization, a Kaine aide said.

Senators are also said to be considering another war powers measure that would cover new military actions that could take place in other nations — such as Cuba, Columbia, Mexico, Iran or Green-

land — all of which President Donald Trump suggested on Sunday could become targets for U.S. military action.

Votes in both chambers this past fall on a series of measures aimed at blocking U.S. military action in the Caribbean did not garner enough support to move forward.

The briefers on Monday were led by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Dan Caine and Attorney General Pamela Bondi.

Lawmakers in attendance included House and Senate leaders from both parties and the bipartisan leadership of the Armed Services, foreign affairs and Intelligence committees.

Not invited were leaders of the Judiciary committee, even though the administration has described the Maduro abduction as a law enforcement operation.

The chairman and ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Charles E. Grassley, R-Iowa, and Richard J. Durbin, D-Illinois, respectively, issued a statement Monday evening protesting their exclusion.

Maduro pleaded not guilty to drug and weapons charges in a New York courtroom on Monday.

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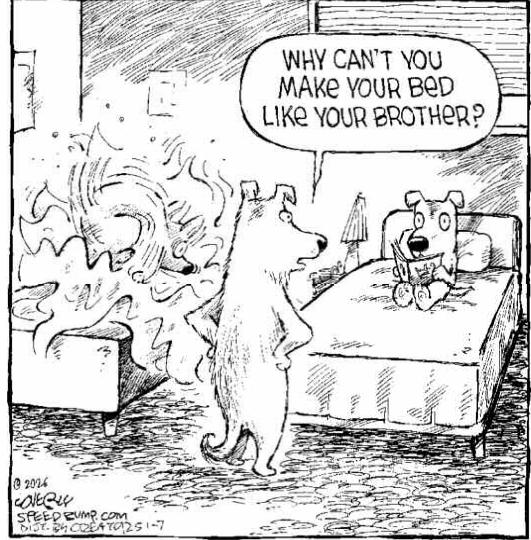
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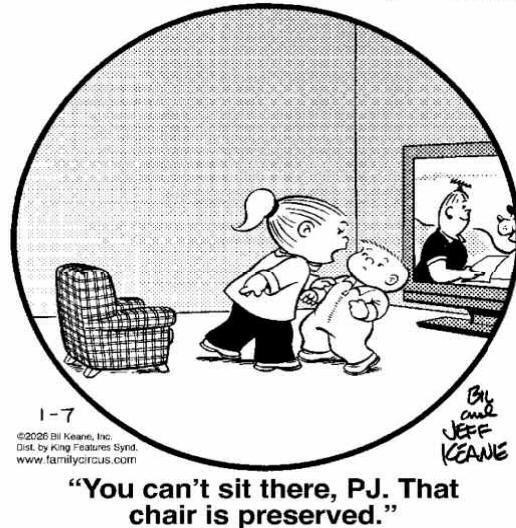
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Dave Coverly

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By Bil Keane

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

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South dealer.
Both sides vulnerable.

NORTH

♦ A K J 6

♦ K Q J 3

♦ A 10 7 2

♦ A K 10 7 2

WEST EAST

♦ K Q 8 7 2 ♦ A J 10 6 4 3

♦ 9 5 3 ♦ Q 7 4

♦ A 8 5

♦ Q J 9 6 3 ♦ 8

SOUTH

♦ 9 5

♦ 10 8 2

♦ 10 9 7 6 4 2

♦ 5 4

The bidding:

South West North East

Pass Pass 1 ♠ 1 ♠

Pass 4 ♠ 4 NT Pass

5 ♠

Opening lead — king of spades.

Here is a fine hand from a team-

of-four match. At the first table, the

bidding went as shown, and West

led the king of spades. Declarer

ruffed with dummy's jack and

played the king of trump. East

took the ace and returned a trump.

Declarer won with the nine and

ruffed his last spade with dummy's

last trump. Then, with the contract

assured if he could draw East's

remaining trump, he played the A-K of clubs, planning to ruff the next club. Unfortunately, East ruffed the second club, and South later lost a heart finesse to finish down one.

The play started identically at the second table, where the contract was also five diamonds. Here, too, declarer ruffed the spade lead high and led the king of diamonds, East taking the ace and returning a trump. And here also, South ruffed a spade in dummy and cashed the ace of clubs — but then came a parting of the ways.

Declarer realized he would be running an unnecessary risk by continuing with the king of clubs, since there was certainly a possibility that East might ruff it. So he led a low club from dummy at this point, being perfectly willing to lose a club trick in order to ensure the contract.

West won the club with the six and returned the queen, but South was now in full control. He ruffed the club, drew East's last trump and then discarded his heart loser on the king of clubs to finish with 11 tricks.

South's well-thought-out safety play paid exceptionally fine dividends.

Tomorrow: He should stand in bed.

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Peanuts



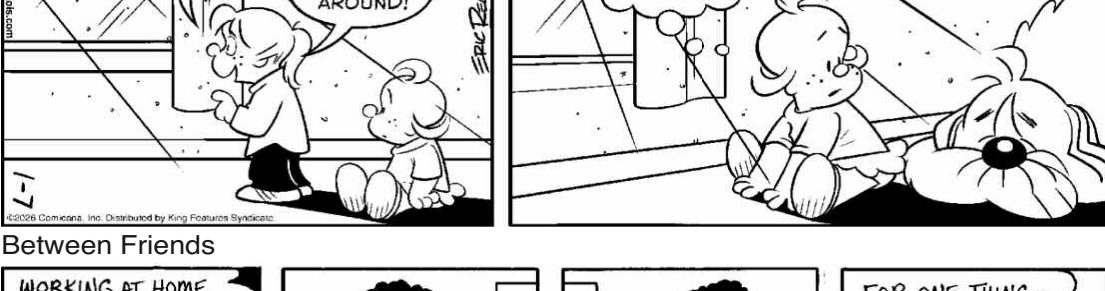
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Agnes



Hi and Lois



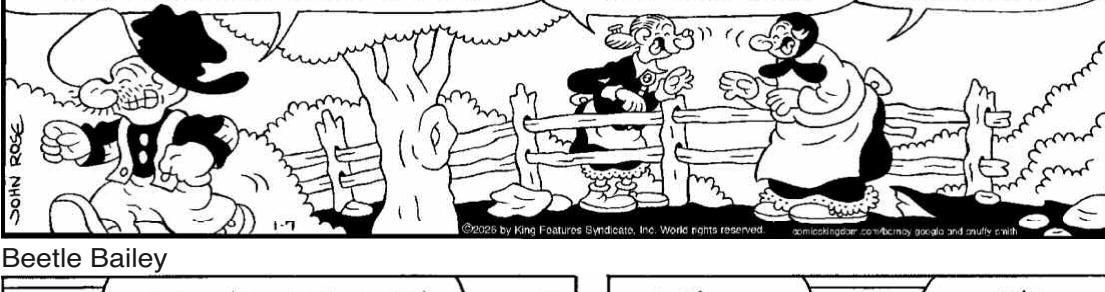
Between Friends



Blondie



Snuffy Smith



Beetle Bailey



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L M X L H P P D Y R H V A G H V D Q Y X V O
H P B K X V H R X V O W H L H Y Q K J D R :

H W X M X G X W X M X .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A HARDY FLOWER KEEPS GROWING BACK EACH TIME YOU PICK IT, SHOULD YOU CALL IT A BLOOMERANG?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: H equals O

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

| ACROSS | 38 | Sch. sup- | DOWN | 16 | Asian |
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| 5 Pool unit | 39 | Night | Knight's | 20 Ostrich | |
| 8 Trudge | school | subj. | backup | kin | |
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| Rae | 46 | Singer | 23 Frenzied | | |
| 13 Right | Mariah | 4 Lustrous | 25 Bill's | | |
| angle | 50 | Valhalla | fabrics | partner | |
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| tion | | | alien | scale | |
| 17 Miles | 54 | Stupor | 7 Entreaty | 29 Pop | |
| away | Lupino | of | 8 Roofing | 31 Actress | |
| 18 Aleppo's | film | 5 | material | Arthur | |
| land | 56 | Jazz | 9 Emer- | 32 Mag. | |
| 19 Blood line | singer | 43 | gency | staff | |
| 21 Linguist | James | 46 | vessel | 34 Women | |
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| 24 That girl | duck | duck | "This Is | 40 Tendon | |
| 25 Cartoon | 58 | Refusals | Us" | 42 Learning | |
| frames | Sprint | 11 Indiana | 43 Scepters | ctr. | |
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| holder | | | coated | | |
| 30 Copper | | | cheese | | |
| head? | | | 45 Reedy | | |
| 33 Egg | | | 47 Broad- | | |
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| variety | | | 48 New | | |
| 35 Nour- | | | newts | | |
| ished | | | 49 "Amen!" | | |
| 36 Klutz | | | 52 Altar vow | | |
| 37 Saharan | | | 53 Petrol | | |

Solution time: 23 mins.

REFS HPS PERP

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FORT KNOX RUFF

AID TOSSES

SMART SYNE

HAMS MUSIC BOX

OTB LIMITE

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GOSHNO AMI

AMIR MEGAN FOX

GILA ERT TRIO

ATTN REASILIO

Yesterdays answer 1-7

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| 12 | | | | 13 | | | 14 | | | |
| 15 | | | | 16 | | | 17 | | | |
| 18 | | | | | 19 | | | | | |

Regional ...

Continued from page 8
Parsons' first match in the 135-pound bracket is against Lacie Lowe (18-5) of Lawrenceburg. She then will likely face No. 6 Dayonna Dyson (29-4) of Franklin Central in the ticket round.

Should Parsons make it past Dyson, she has a nice path to the final as Pendleton Heights' Claire Bowman (23-5) is the favorite from the top quarter. The final will likely feature either No. 11 Caitlyn Moore (21-7) of Perry Meridian, or set up a rematch of the sectional title with No. 5 June Wagner-Gilbert (29-3) of New Palestine.

Crawford will face Adalia Harvey (3-14) of Pendleton Heights in the first round of the 190 bracket. A win pits her against either No. 11 Aneesa Thompson (24-7) of Perry Meridian or Lawrence North's Ace Grayson (21-8) in the ticket round.

Last season, Jay County sent five girls to state, including Katie Rowles. Three more made it to the ticket round, including Parsons and Crawford. Gage fell in the first round, while Gracie Rowles, Tipton and Lyons are all first-year qualifiers as freshmen.

Fourth-ranked Sophia Jones (28-3) of Franklin Central is favored to be Crawford's semifinal opponent. No. 3 Zoie Gray (25-0) — who ended Crawford's season in 2025 — and No. 8 Shelby Life (13-0) of Centerville are set up to meet in the top semifinal.

Kenady Lyons (7-11) is set to face the top-seeded wrestler of the Shenandoah sectional to open the 235 weight class. Should Lyons get past Hailey Salisbury (5-4) of Frankton, her shot at a run to state relies on a win against either To'Neyse Stigler (14-8) of Lawrence Central and Breanna Birdsong (15-11) of Warren Central.

Katie Rowles of the Jay County High School girls wrestling team will aim to punch her ticket to back-to-back appearances at state at Saturday's regional. The senior ranks No. 7 in Indiana in the 100-pound division.



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Katie Rowles of the Jay County High School girls wrestling team will aim to punch her ticket to back-to-back appearances at state at Saturday's regional. The senior ranks No. 7 in Indiana in the 100-pound division.

Jay junior high girls nab sweep vs. Delta

One team dominated and the other barely hung on, but both Jay County junior high girls basketball teams emerged victorious on Monday night.

The eighth grade squad scraped out a 31-27 victory over the Delta Eagles. Jay County (8-3) got 16 points from Boo Towell to lead all scorers. Arabella Link was second on Jay

the scoresheet for the Patriots.

The seventh grade Patriots skipped the suspense with a 28-2 demolition of Delta. The Patriots used a balanced attack in the blowout, with Makenna Wellman and Gretchen Petro tying for the team lead with seven points each. Haley Comer was next up with six points

while Adalee Rigby, Evie Skirvin, Kendall Farr and Alyssa Schwieterman each added two points.

Boys earn split

The eighth grade boys joined the girls teams with a strong victory over Delta, but the seventh grade unit suffered Jay County's only loss of the night.

Finn Hemmelgarn and Abram Lee did most of the damage in the eighth grade Patriots' 49-33 win. Hemmelgarn led the team with 20 points, while Lee was right behind with 19.

Bentley Comer tallied four points, while Eli Homan, Jenson Edwards and Job Dirksen added two points each for Jay County (10-0). Dirksen

helped fuel the offense with a team-best seven assists.

The seventh graders endured a 36-21 loss to the Eagles.

Sawyer Smitley provided a team-high 11 points for Jay County (5-5). Beckham Hough and Carson Pfeifer accounted for the rest of the Patriots' scoring with five points each.

Local Roundup

County with eight, while Kinze Homan (three points) and Makenzie Coy (two points) also cracked

Rack attack

The Jay County boys basketball team improved to 6-2 on the season with a 72-63 victory over the Muncie Central Bearcats on Saturday. At left, Aiden Phillips attempts a layup for the Patriots. At right, Kade Sommers puts up a close-range shot.



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Sports on tap

Local schedule

Thursday
Jay County — Swim vs. Celina/Coldwater — 6 p.m.; Freshman basketball at Anderson — 6 p.m.; Junior high boys basketball vs. Selma — 6 p.m.; Junior high girls basketball at Fort Recovery — 6 p.m.

Fort Recovery — Girls basketball at New Brethren — 6 p.m.; Middle school boys basketball at Celina — 5:30 p.m.; Middle school girls basketball vs. Jay County — 6 p.m.

Friday
Jay County — Swim hosts JCHS Invitational — 6 p.m.; Girls basketball vs. Bluffton — 6 p.m.; JV boys wrestling at Centerville — 6 p.m.

Fort Recovery — Boys basketball vs. New Brethren — 6 p.m.

Saturday
2 p.m. — Super Cup soccer: FC Barcelona at Athletic Club (ESPN2)

6:30 p.m. — College basketball: Indiana at

Maryland (BTN)
7 p.m. — NBA: Denver Nuggets at Boston Celtics (ESPN)

7 p.m. — College basketball: Missouri at Kentucky (ESPN2); Xavier at Marquette (FS1)

7 p.m. — NHL: Dallas Stars at Washington Capitals (TNT)

8:30 p.m. — College basketball: Washington at Purdue (BTN)

9 p.m. — College basketball: Alabama at Vanderbilt (ESPN2); Kansas State at Arizona (FS1)

9:30 p.m. — NBA: Los Angeles Lakers at San

Antonio Spurs (ESPN)
9:30 p.m. — NHL: St. Louis Blues at Chicago Blackhawks (TNT)

11 p.m. — College basketball: Grand Canyon at Boise State (FS1)

Thursday

11 a.m. — Euroleague basketball: Fenerbahce at Dubai (FDSN Indiana)

2 p.m. — Super Cup soccer: Athletico at Real Madrid (ESPN2)

6 p.m. — College basketball: Northwestern at Michigan State (BTN)

7 p.m. — NBA: Indiana Pacers at Charlotte Hornets (FDSN Indiana)

7:30 p.m. — College Football Playoff: Ole Miss vs. Miami (ESPN)

8 p.m. — Women's college basketball: Creighton at Marquette (TRU)

8:30 p.m. — College basketball: Rutgers at Illinois (BTN)

8:30 p.m. — College basketball: Rutgers at Illinois (BTN)

10:30 p.m. — College basketball: Ohio State at Oregon (BTN)

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TERMS OF SALE:

10% Non-refundable

deposit day of sale.

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has been completed in

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prorated until day of

closing. Possession at

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2026

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TRACT 2: Approx. 30

Acres

TRACT 3: Tract 1 & 2

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WASHBURN ESTATE

IAA Auctioneer</p

Jay junior high hoops
earned three victories,
see local roundup

FR girls basketball faces
New Bremen on Thursday,
see Sports on tap

Sports

Page 8

www.thecr.com

The Commercial Review

Ready for regional

Seven Patriots will vie for trips to state

By ANDREW BALKO

The Commercial Review

Seven Patriots advanced to the regional. On Saturday, each will look to win at least two matches to punch their tickets to state.

Brackets for the IHSAA Regional 3 tournament hosted by Muncie Central were released on Sunday, giving the Jay County High School girls wrestlers an idea of what their path to state may look like.

Of the seven Patriots, four will have to open their day against a ranked wrestler.

Despite having to face No. 13 Josenit Vasquez Ochoa (20-9) of Franklin Central in the opening round of the 100-pound weight class, No. 7 Katie Rowles got one of the best draws she could hope for.

Vasquez Ochoa comes from the Perry Meridian sectional, which had a loaded 100 bracket that also included No. 2 Claire May (26-0) of Roncalli, No. 3 Aaliyah Brown (26-2) of Center Grove and No. 6 Aniah Delgado (18-4) of Perry Meridian. By drawing the fourth-seeded Vasquez Ochoa, Rowles avoids seeing Brown or Delgado in the ticket round.

Should Rowles beat the FCHS freshman, she will face either Nichol Smith of Eastern or Olivia Dudley of New Castle in the ticket round. Neither

opponent has a winning record on the season with Smith sitting at 8-9 and Dudley at 5-7.

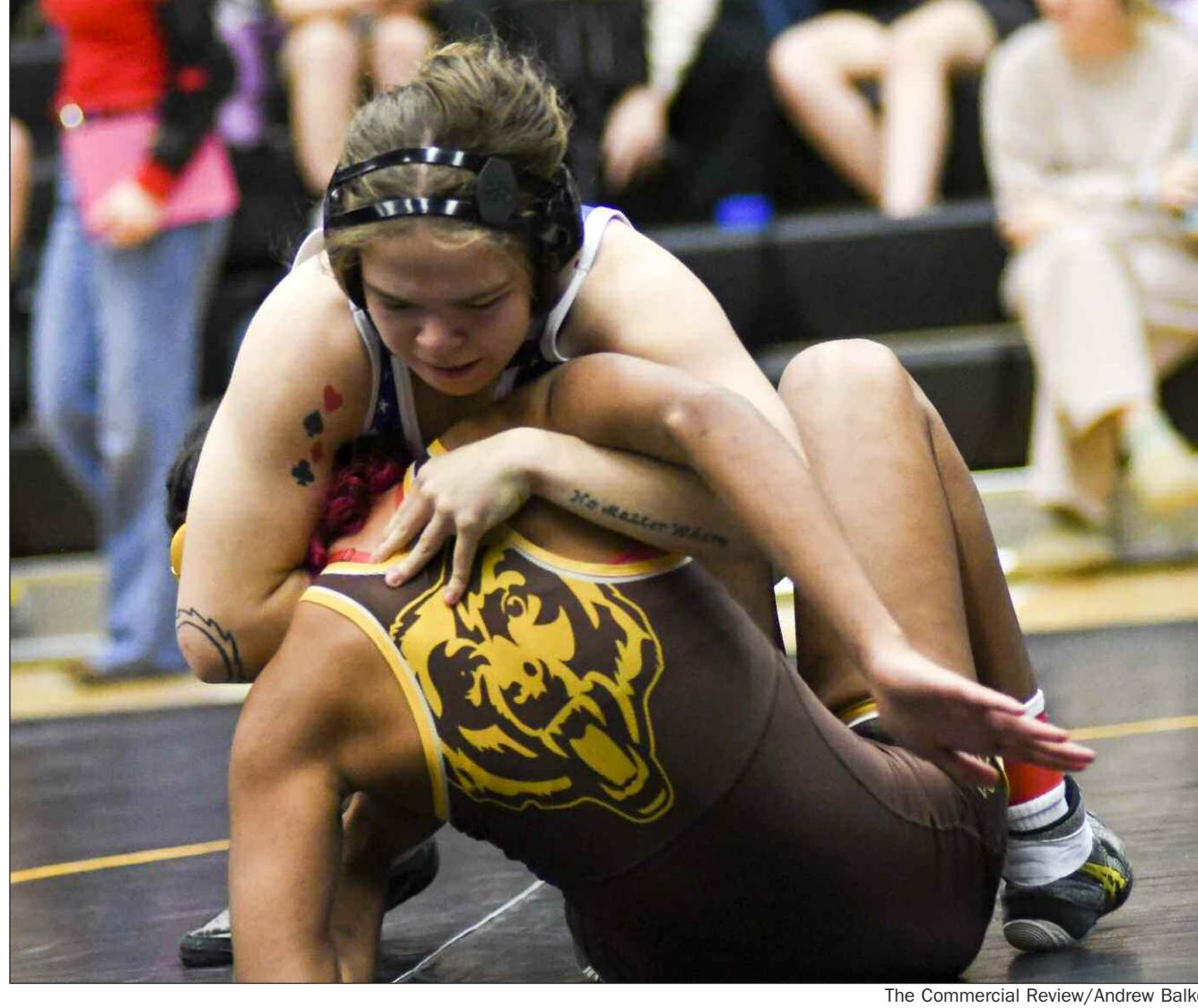
Rowles would likely see May in the semifinal. In 2025, May pinned Rowles in 3 minutes, 38 seconds in the third-place match at state.

Alexis Tipton (12-12) and Gracie Rowles (8-6) weren't as lucky as Katie Rowles. Tipton will face No. 6 Olivia Lemus (25-3) of Roncalli in the 115 opener, while Gracie Rowles drew No. 8 Monica Alvarado (12-1) out of North Central to begin the 125 bracket.

Should Tipton pull off the upset, she could face either Lawrence Central's Saniyah Broaden (14-17) or Pendleton Heights' Nova Tyler (8-5) in the ticket round. Potential quarterfinal opponents for Gracie Rowles are Marissa Szentes (8-6) of Bishop Chatard and Chloe Bills (14-5) of Franklin County.

Madison Gage also has a tough path in the 155-pound bracket. After falling to No. 15 Sophia Groppe (25-4) of Wes-Del 1-0 in an ultimate tiebreaker to lose the sectional final, Gage is forced to go against Eastern Hancock's Elizabeth Fish (21-7), who is ranked 16th.

Should Gage upset Fish, she would get the winner of Anderson's LaRayna Elliott (23-10) and Alia Stocker (17-12) of Franklin Central with



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Maleah Parsons of the Jay County High School wrestling team holds a 27-7 record and is currently ranked No. 7 in the state at 135 pounds. She is one of seven different Patriots to qualify for the regional tournament.

a trip to state on the line. Potential semifinal opponents include No. 13 Eastern Ajishyri (25-7) of Lawrence North and No.

14 Laycie Kirk (19-7) of North Central. The only other ranked wrestlers in the 155 bracket are Groppe and No. 8 Journee Wells,

who are set to collide in the semifinal as well. No. 7 Maleah Parsons and No. 16 Amara Crawford (24-4) avoided

ranked opponents in their opening matches, but will likely have to go through one to get to Indianapolis. See **Regional** page 7



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Fort Recovery, Ohio

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- Punch Press
- Milling
- CNC Plasma Cutting Service
- Welding-MIG, TIG Spot Shearing
- Production & Sub Assembly
- Steel Sales
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