

# The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

www.thecr.com

\$1

## 'Truth' debuts

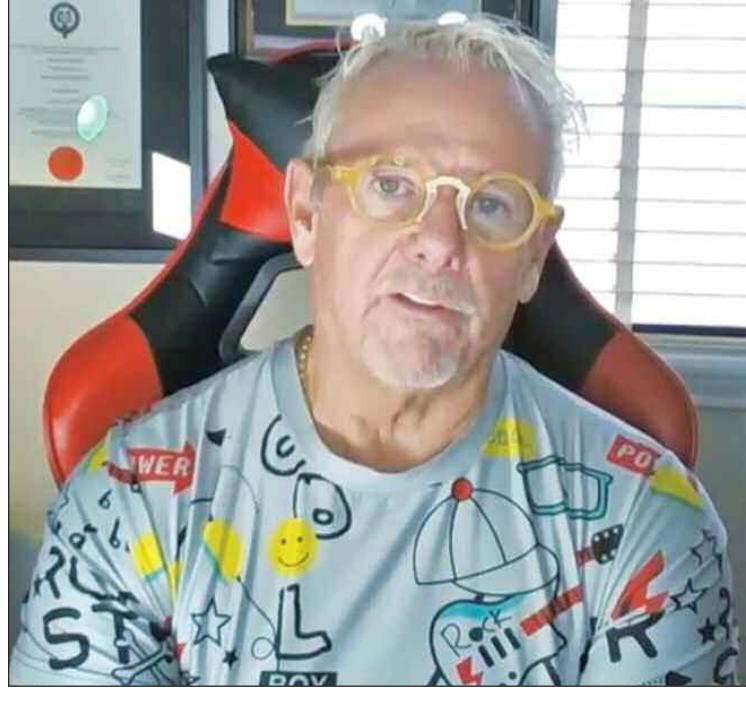


Photo provided

A Better Life - Brianna's Hope founder Randy Davis (right) and Dr. Robb Kelly chat in a studio for the "Faith in Your Recovery" podcast. The organization's new TV show "Faith In Your Recovery - The Truth Behind Hope" debuted Wednesday on Roku TV's new MPowermeTV channel.

### TV show on Roku's new MPowermeTV combines podcast and mini-documentaries

By BAILEY CLINE

The Commercial Review

A Better Life - Brianna's Hope extended its reach Wednesday.

The faith-based addiction recovery program's new TV show, "Faith in Your Recovery - The Truth Behind Hope," premiered Wednesday on new Roku TV channel MPowermeTV.

New episodes air Mondays and Wednesdays, with reruns slated for Fridays.

"This is a faith-based, family-friendly effort," explained Randy Davis, founder of Brianna's Hope. "So it's right down the alley of what we've been doing with our podcast. It's a perfect fit for us."

Plans are for the show to include Davis' podcast, "Faith In Your Recovery," as well as a 15-minute segment for "The Truth Behind Hope," a mini-documentary series led by Jay County native Aric Hartvig.

Davis, a retired Jay County pastor, founded A Better Life - Brianna's Hope in 2014 following the death of Brianna DiBattista. What started as a faith-based addiction support group has grown in the last decade to

include 44 chapters, with groups in 28 Indiana counties and three Ohio counties.

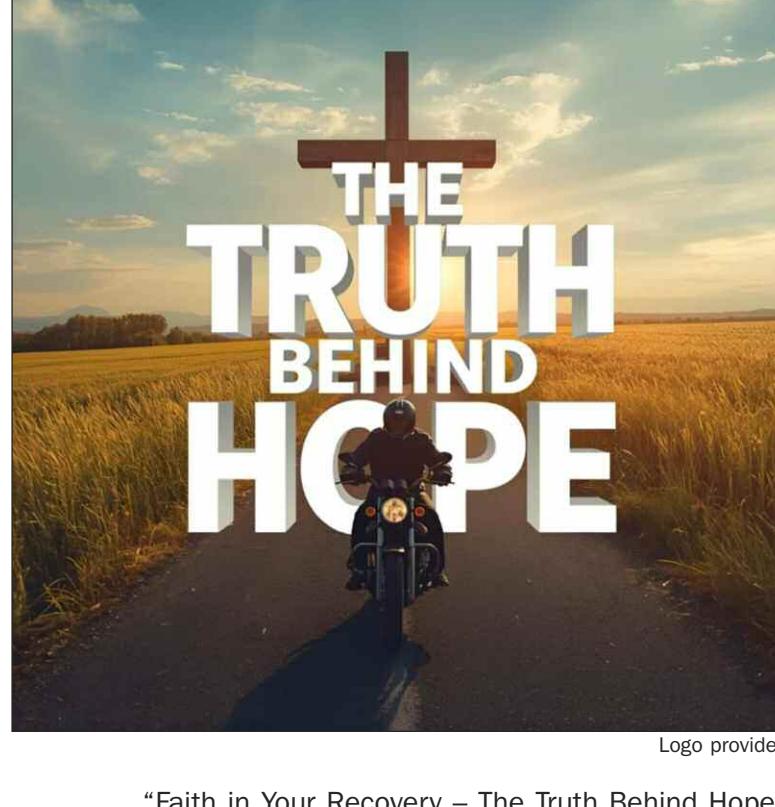
Four years ago, Davis launched "Faith in Your Recovery," a podcast focused on "all things recovery." It's had more than 200 episodes since then and releases a show weekly.

Brianna's Hope leaders saw an opportunity to expand its reach when they read a Facebook post from former professional wrestler Ira Mark Smith gauging interest for establishing a faith-based, family-oriented channel. Organizations and individuals from across the United States have joined to create shows for the new TV channel.

According to its website, MPowermeTV aims to "help families and individuals overcome struggles such as marriage issues, drug dependency, depression, grief, and those needing encouragement."

Brianna's Hope received \$25,000 in opioid settlement funds from Jay County Commissioners last month to go toward producing the new hour-long TV show.

See 'Truth' page 2



Logo provided

"Faith in Your Recovery - The Truth Behind Hope" combines the podcast and a segment from Jay County native Aric Hartvig's mini-documentaries on hope and overcoming challenges.

## Park board looks toward the summer

### Water park needs, dates discussed, Haynes Park to get new sign

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

With unseasonably warm temperatures, thoughts of summer are already creeping in.

Portland Park Board spent a chunk of its meeting Tuesday discussing schedules and maintenance needs for Portland Water Park.

Park board president Brian Ison noted that Mara Bader

plans to return as water park manager this summer, with Hannah Laux again to serve as her assistant manager. Both were in their first year in those roles in 2025.

He added that Bader recommended keeping the same hours of operation — noon to 8 p.m. Sunday through Friday and noon to 5 p.m. Saturday. (The facility has typically been rented for private events on Saturday evenings.) Ison projected that opening day for the water park would be May 23, with a likely closing day of Aug. 8.

The board plans to consider pool admission rates over the next couple of months.

Board members Michael Brewster, Jennifer Weitzel, Kyle Carpenter, Emily Goodrich and Ison also discussed water park needs with street and parks department superintendent Matt Shauver and parks manager Ronnie Reynolds.



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

News signs are planned for Haynes Park. Signs were donated to the city, with Portland Rotary Club providing funding to create new faces. The existing signs, also donated by the Rotary Club, are beginning to rot, parks manager Ronnie Reynolds said.

On top of the list is a new covering for the top of the water slides. Previously, the area has been shaded with a cloth canopy. It was starting to look dilapidated, Shauver said, and then was damaged in a wind-storm.

He suggested a permanent steel covering as an alternative, saying it would be cheaper and more durable. He and Reynolds are in the process of obtaining quotes for fabricating the piece.

Reynolds also noted that

there is a small area of the pool floor that has plaster coming up. He said city staff will try to fix the issue.

Ison asked Shauver and Reynolds to consider what other pool and lifeguard equipment needs there might be.

See Summer page 2

## Deaths

Annette Coblenz, 58, Portland  
Judith Briner, 85, Fort Recovery  
Details on page 2.

## Weather

The temperature Wednesday hovered between 38 and 45 degrees.

Tonight's low will be in the upper 30s with a slight chance of rain after midnight. Rain is expected Saturday with a high in the mid 40s. The low will drop into the 30s Saturday night.

See page 2 for an extended outlook.

## In review

There are now three candidates slated to vie for the Republican nomination for Jay County assessor. Kerioka Henkle of Portland filed to run for the office Wednesday afternoon. Henkle joined Angela Moeller and Cherrie Geesaman, who filed earlier in the day Wednesday.

## Coming up

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

Tuesday — Details from Monday's Jay County Commissioners meeting.

Wednesday — Coverage of next week's Dunkirk City Council meeting.



## Motion filed in lawsuit against police

*Attorney says department, individuals can't be sued under state law*

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

A motion to dismiss is pending in one lawsuit against Portland police.

Another was filed this week.

Portland Police Department, Police Chief Dustin Mock and investigator Jeff Hopkins filed a motion to dismiss Monday in a lawsuit brought by former Portland police officer Patrick Long.

Douglas Mawhorr of Delaware Circuit Court 3 is serving as special judge for the case. He gave the plaintiff and other defendants 30 days to file a response to the motion to dismiss.

Also Monday, a hearing on a motion to dismiss from Mock and Hopkins in a lawsuit filed by Portland clerk-treasurer Lori Phillips was rescheduled.

The City of Portland is a defendant in both suits but was not a party to either motion.

Monday's motion from attorney Katlyn M. Christman of Clark, Johnson & Knight asks that the lawsuit be dismissed on several grounds, saying it fails to state a claim on which relief may be granted, it is not legally sufficient and the facts are incapable of supporting relief.

Christman is making the same arguments for dismissal in the Long suit as she has in the Phillips lawsuit.

Long is seeking judgment from the court on several counts.

See Motion page 2

# Summer ...

Continued from page 1  
He emphasized that the board needs to work to stay within its \$70,000 repair and maintenance budget for the water park this year.

Reynolds also told the board that a 12-foot by 2-foot business sign that is no longer being used has been donated for Haynes Park. Portland Rotary Club has donated funds to create new

faces for the sign. Plans are to install it at the park this spring.

Existing wood signs, which were also donated by the Rotary Club, are beginning to rot, Reynolds said.

Ison shared a list of other projects the park board will need to consider this year. They include stabilizing the edge of the pond at Hudson Family Park, remodeling restrooms at Weiler-Wilson

and Milton Miller parks, dugout improvements at Weiler-Wilson Park and repairs to the retaining wall in the playground area at Hudson Family Park.

He also noted that there is \$50,000 in the budget for asphalt work. The board used those funds last year to resurface a section of the Hudson Family Park walking path.

In other business, the board:

•Re-elected Ison as president, Brewster as vice president and Weitzel as secretary.

•Approved a request from Arts Place for alcohol sales during its summer concert series performances at the Hudson Family Park Amphitheater on June 4, July 16 and Aug. 13.

•Was reminded that the board's next meeting will be at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 3.

## CR almanac

Saturday 1/10	Sunday 1/11	Monday 1/12	Tuesday 1/13	Wednesday 1/14
<b>46/23</b>	<b>30/21</b>	<b>36/28</b>	<b>41/32</b>	<b>37/32</b>
Rain is likely, mainly before noon. Skies will be mostly cloudy with a high of 46 and winds up to 20 mph.	The high will be near 30. There is a 20% chance of snow.	Expect mostly sunny skies with a high of 36.	Skies will be partly sunny with a high of 41. There is a 20% chance of rain in the evening.	There is a chance of rain with a high in the upper 30s.

## Lotteries

<b>Powerball</b> 15-28-57-58-63 Power Ball: 23 Power Play: 2 Estimated jackpot: \$124 million	Daily Four: 6-9-6-3 Quick Draw: 1-2-15-19-24-27-28-29-31-35-37-39-45-48-58-65-68-75-76-80 Cash 5: 12-16-26-36-37 Estimated jackpot: \$125,000
<b>Mega Millions</b> Estimated jackpot: \$199 million	<b>Ohio</b> Wednesday Midday Pick 3: 7-3-7 Pick 4: 5-6-1-8 Pick 5: 9-3-7-2-5 Evening Pick 3: 2-0-4 Pick 4: 3-9-9-7 Pick 5: 4-6-1-7-1 Rolling Cash: 5-15-18-33-37 Estimated jackpot: \$150,000
<b>Hoosier</b> Wednesday Midday Daily Three: 8-2-3 Daily Four: 5-6-9-0 Quick Draw: 19-21-25-27-30-32-34-36-41-43-44-45-49-58-59-62-65-66-67-79 Evening Daily Three: 2-9-0	

## Markets

<b>Cooper Farms</b> <b>Fort Recovery</b> Corn.....4.65 Feb. corn.....4.67	Wheat .....4.75
<b>ADM</b> <b>Montpelier</b> Corn.....4.42 Feb. corn.....4.44 Beans .....10.36 Feb. beans .....10.43 Wheat .....4.88	
<b>POET Biorefining</b> <b>Portland</b> Corn.....4.65 Feb. corn .....4.59 March corn .....4.59	
<b>The Andersons</b> <b>Richland Township</b> Corn .....4.52 Feb. corn .....4.52 Beans .....10.49 Feb. beans .....10.58	
<b>Heartland</b> <b>St. Anthony</b> Corn.....4.62 Jan. corn.....4.57 Beans .....10.17 March beans .....10.32 Wheat .....4.76	

## Today in history

**In 1431**, the trial against Joan of Arc began. Joan had liberated Orleans and succeeded in other victories against the English before she was captured by the Duke of Burgundy's forces in 1430. She was put on trial for heresy, witchcraft and "violating divine law" for dressing like a man, and she was burned at the stake on May 30.

**In 1768**, British equestrian Philip Astley opened a riding school in London. He later became known as the father of the modern circus for his performance tricks during afternoon shows.

**In 2001**, iTunes was

introduced by Apple as a digital media player application.

**In 2019**, three local candidates filed for the Dunkirk mayoral election. Incumbent mayor Gene Ritter, a Republican, was running for a second term in office, with Democrats Jack Robbins and Sandra (Lawhorn) Rollins seeking a nomination to the ballot in November. Robbins went on to face off against Ritter, earning 58% of the vote. Robbins secured a second term in November 2023, doing away with a decades-long streak of Dunkirk mayors being limited to a single term.

—The CR

**Monday**  
9 a.m. — Jay County Commissioners, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland.

3:45 p.m. — Jay County Election Board, voting room, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland.

4 p.m. — Jay County Public Library Board of Trustees, community room, library, 315 N. Ship St., Portland.

6 p.m. — Dunkirk Board of Works, city building, 131 S. Main St.

6 p.m. — Fort Recovery School Board, community room, high school, 400 E. Butler St.

7 p.m. — Dunkirk City Council, city building, 131 S. Main St.

5:30 p.m. — Portland Board of Zoning Appeals, Community Resource Center, 118 S. Meridian St., Portland.

6 p.m. — Ridgeville Town Council, fire department, 302 N. Walnut St.

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# Family game show night set for Thursday

Take family game night to a whole new level.

Jay County Public Library will host a family game show experience for children and their parents Thursday.

Families may play rounds similar to those in shows like "Wheel of Fortune," "Name That Tune," "The Price is Right" and "Family Feud." Each team will compete to win a family game night basket, with second and third place earning a board game of their choosing.

## Taking Note

ing. Teams may include between three and six members. Sessions are from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., 5 to 6 p.m. and 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Registration is required. Call or visit the

library to sign up. Other activities going on next month also include:

- Adult book bedazzling, 1 to 2:30 p.m. and 6 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday
- Wintergreen "Take and Make" activity bags, available Jan. 19

### Oratorical contest

Jay County Optimist Clubs are accepting speeches to enter into the annual Optimist International Oratorical Contest.

This year's topic is "The Moment I Realized I Belonged—My Definition of Community." Local Optimist clubs will judge students' speeches based on content and presentation. Winners will receive awards, with winners advancing to zone, district, regional and world championships, with a chance to win up to \$22,500 in scholarships. The contest is open to all students 18 years old and younger as of Oct. 1.

The deadline is March 10. To participate or learn more, contact the Dunkirk and Redkey chapters at (765) 744-4092 or Portland chapter at (260) 766-9131.

### Book sale

Fort Recovery Public Library will host a used book sale Monday through Jan. 17. Free will donations will be accepted for materials from the sale.

## Marriage licenses

Sergio V. Ortiz Olivar, 30, Portland, and Seyli N. Vasquez Santos, 19, Portland

Christopher E. Best, 42, Portland, and Melissa A.

Carter, 37, Portland  
Olivia R. Bragg, 20, Portland, and Jason R. Woolslager, 45, Portland

Nathan L. Link, 36, Pennville, and Erin E. Nemeth,

39, Pennville  
Sierra J. Adkins, 29, Portland, and Casey D. Shawver, 32, Portland  
Sergio J. Avila, 35, Tehachapi, California, and

Emma J. Foster, 29, Steamboat Springs, Colorado  
Hossam M.O. Al-Jaghami, 30, Portland, and Chelsea R. Castro Martell, 32, Portland

Justin T. Call, 27, Portland, and Bailey A. Cline, 27, Portland  
Bradley S. Eldridge, 34, Portland, and Avery M. Moore, 25, Portland

Eric M. Timmerman, 22, Portland, and Gentry E. Clark, 20, Portland  
Anthony J. Harvey, 34, Dunkirk, and Angela C. Gehrett, 56, Dunkirk

## Boyfriend is in no rush to make commitment

DEAR ABBY: I have been in a relationship for almost two years with an incredible man who makes my heart sing. We are both in our mid-30s. I have three children. He has one whom, for lack of better words, his own parents co-parent.

We are at the point in our relationship where I want to marry, move in together and do the whole family thing. He often says he wants to marry me and wants that life, but "not yet." When I ask him why, he says, "I wish I knew why. I wish I could snap my fingers and make it something I want to do now."

His parents are amazing, but they always come before anyone else. If he had to choose right now, it would be his parents over me or any of the kids. I feel like I'm in a never-ending cycle of "Is he going to?" or "When will he get there?" What should I do? We've had long and extensive conversations, but I don't feel he

### Dear Abby



is actually trying to "get there."

— WANNABE WIFEY

DEAR WANNABE WIFEY: Your boyfriend clearly likes the status quo. After two years, it's time to offer him the option of couples counseling. If he refuses and you still want to take the relationship to a higher level, you will have to recognize that nothing is likely to change and act accordingly.

.....

DEAR ABBY: I've been with my boyfriend for 12 years. We have two children and a third on the way. Three years ago, we got our family a dog, "Astro," the

love of our lives. She passed away three months ago from heat exhaustion. She was only 2 years old. I was driving while my boyfriend held her as we drove to the vet. She died before we got there.

I am now in grief therapy. I expressed my grief to my boyfriend, and he has expressed his to me. I'm adamant about not wanting another dog. He told me he wanted another one, but that I had nothing to worry about for a while — more than likely, a year. I was OK with it because I felt it would give me time to grieve.

Well, this past weekend, my boyfriend came home with a new dog. He didn't warn me. The new dog looks exactly like Astro, the same breed and color. I am heartbroken. I feel like my trust has been betrayed. I've been a wreck ever since, and I don't think I can compromise.

This is a no-win situation

because one of us will end up unhappy. I'm thinking about ending our relationship over this. Am I being unreasonable or selfish? — OVERWHELMED IN KANSAS

DEAR OVERWHELMED: You are neither unreasonable nor selfish. What your boyfriend did was inconsiderate and underhanded and showed disregard for your feelings. At the very least, you deserve an apology. That dog should be returned to the breeder or rescue from which it came. However, while I don't blame you for having second thoughts about the relationship after this man's display of insensitivity, after 12 years (and three kids), ending the relationship may be impractical.

.....

DEAR ABBY: About six months ago, I began arranging a group dinner for the wives of

my husband's poker buddies. It started out great. However, a new wife to the group has instigated praying in the restaurant, along with holding hands as we pray.

This is not my style nor is it for a few others. We feel held hostage to her request and aren't sure how to put a stop to this display. I'm very private about the spiritual side of my life. Another member of the group is agnostic. Please advise me on a tactful way to address this dear woman. — UNCOMFORTABLE IN THE WEST

DEAR UNCOMFORTABLE: I'm glad to help. Address this privately. Explain to the woman that not everyone in the group is comfortable displaying their religiosity in public, and some may prefer to do their worshiping privately. If necessary, remind her that silent prayer is just as effective as praying aloud.

## Community Calendar

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

### 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 — BRIDGING 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

PORLAND 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 Cam-

pus of Arts Place, 131 E Walnut St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 251-3259.

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.

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.

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

REDISCOVERING JOY — The support group of widows and widowers meets at 6:30 p.m. on the second Monday of each month at R & R Fabrications, 601 E. Washington St., St. Henry, Ohio.

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 — BRIDGING 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.

## Sudoku

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

Level: Advanced

### Thursday'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.

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

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**COLD WEATHER HOT SAVINGS**  
JANUARY ADVERTISING SPECIALS

1/4-page color ad

**\$226**

1/4-page black and white

**\$176**



Ask us about reduced rates for running the same ad a second time!



Rates do not apply to special sections.

Ads must run in January.

**The Commercial Review**

**GRAPHIC**  
PRINTING  
NEWS PAPERS

Contact Lindsey at  
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# Dark money has put us in danger

By MORTON J. MARCUS

Will money be the death of America?

There is no vaccine against money. With the advent of digital currency, money itself has no substance. It remains merely our long-held faith that others will accept it in trade. No moral goodness or evil attaches to it.

These thoughts arise from the Netflix series "Death by Lightening." As the program makes clear, President James A. Garfield was not killed by the bullet that struck him, but by the doctor who attended him. The gunman was hanged for his intent, while the physician who denied science was not held accountable.

Charles Guiteau was mentally unstable and angry that he had

**Morton J.  
Marcus**



been rebuffed for a job by everyone he approached. Today, unstable people still have access to guns. In the absence of political courage, the endless flow of money from the gun industry leaves us with little hope that our nation will be spared further deaths by firearms.

Today, our government is run by money. It is more destructive than the guns it supports. Money elected our president. He was

able to spend his way to popularity with voters who knew little of our history or his.

Blame public education if you must. But much of the responsibility rests with parents who seized control of public education. They were enabled by other parents who failed to support teachers and administrators in maintaining meaningful standards.

In their place came a noisy, self-righteous mob that demanded an end to imparting knowledge and its replacement with entertainment. They elevated athletic prowess over intellectual development.

Thus, our nation was undermined and made ready for the calamity from which we now suffer: an incompetent, deranged

president accompanied by ill-prepared and ignorant administrators who seek to eviscerate the Constitution.

Seeing the moral weakness of Donald Trump and his entourage, many wealthy donors supported his campaigns in 2016, 2020 and 2024. They purchased the attention of an ethically estranged electorate that had been outraged to find itself led by an articulate, educated African American president.

Thus, we got a man who lied repeatedly and who, now in a second term, lies on a larger stage. Our president is a danger to world peace. He attacks other nations with impunity, unconstrained by domestic or international sanctions.

His minions undermine public

health, enable the unraveling of ties to our allies, facilitate narcissistic attacks on our institutions and assist efforts to diminish freedoms of speech, the press and liberty.

We must speak out. We must work to end dark money in politics. We must encourage those who are fearful and speak boldly to those who fail to see the danger.

The first order of business is reclaiming Congress and state governments. This year's primaries and elections will require strong, well-financed candidates committed to protecting America from the evil among us.

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*Marcus is an economist formerly at the IU Kelley School of Business. Contact him via email at mortonjmarcus@gmail.com.*



# Trump has tied his legacy to Venezuela

By ANDREAS KLUTH

Bloomberg Opinion

Tribune News Service

Possibly, just possibly, Donald Trump just scored a foreign-policy success that could define his legacy. By striking Venezuela and whisking away Nicolás Maduro (along with Maduro's wife), the U.S. president removed a patently illegitimate dictator and, in theory, opened the door for a wretched nation to return to democracy and stability. And Trump appears to have done it without dragging America into another "forever war" of the sort that he promised his MAGA base to avoid. If all goes well, this American coup in Venezuela could become exhibit A of a newly proclaimed "Donroe" or "Trump Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine.

That's a big if. Any number of other scenarios can still mar this achievement and instead confirm the trajectory that Trump's foreign policy has mostly taken since he began his second term — one that points toward regional and global chaos and lawlessness.

Trump, along with most Venezuelans and the world, obviously hopes for an orderly transition in Caracas to the democratic opposition. Instead, the Chavistas may remain in charge, and a new dictator may clamp down even harder. Or the country could descend into civil war among its warlords. As a former U.S. secretary of state used to say, chaos would be

**Andreas  
Kluth**



down to Trump: You break it, you own it.

In a nightmare scenario, Venezuela, already a big exporter of tired, poor, huddled masses fleeing to the U.S. and other places, could become a new sort of Libya or Afghanistan, a failed state that destabilizes its entire region to America's detriment.

"Our record of forcible regime change in general is not that great," Richard Fontaine told me before Maduro's capture.

He's the chief executive of the Center for a New American Security and a veteran of the National Security Council and the State Department.

"It's particularly bad in Latin America, and it often seems to invite a lot of unintended consequences."

A bad turn in Venezuela would raise the same questions that have dogged the unlawful U.S. strikes against alleged drug boats in the Caribbean: Why now, and why at all?

Trump's stated aim has been that he is waging war against "narco-terrorism." This can be dismissed as a pretext: The drug that kills most Americans, fen-

tanyl, enters the U.S. via Mexico from China. The cocaine on the U.S. market largely comes from Colombia. By contrast, Venezuela is a minor exporter of drugs and sends them mostly to Europe.

Yes, the U.S. has indicted Maduro on drug charges in a New York court. But Trump already put an asterisk of credibility on this rationale last month, when he pardoned a former president of Honduras who was actually doing time in the U.S. for his narcotics conviction.

The strategic rationale for intervening in Venezuela — as opposed to deploying all that military might in Asia or Europe, say — is no clearer.

"There are a lot of dictators who have stolen elections and are running their country into the ground around the world," Fontaine told me.

Alexander Lukashenko in Belarus leaps to mind, with whom Trump is talking deals instead of regime change.

For some hard-to-fathom reason, Fontaine added, Trump "seems to care about Maduro in a way that he doesn't care about the other ones."

In the best case, as represented by Marco Rubio, Trump's national security advisor and secretary of state, the fall of the Venezuelan dictatorship will also undermine the regime in Cuba. In every other scenario, it will do nothing of the sort and merely distract the U.S. from pursuing its more vital interests in resisting Russian aggression.

in Europe and Chinese expansion in Asia.

The cost that is hardest to quantify but has perhaps the longest tail is the damage that Trump has done to international law. Maduro was bad, but he had not attacked the U.S., and this intervention violated Venezuelan sovereignty.

Mexico's president, Claudia Sheinbaum, drew attention to this lawlessness by posting Article 2 of the United Nations Charter,

the one stipulating that "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state."

Even if the situations are very different, the coup in Venezuela is in effect what Russia attempted (but failed) to do in February 2022 in Ukraine.

The intervention probably also violates domestic U.S. law.

It comes well after the period (if one starts the clock on Sept. 2, when the U.S. struck the first boat in the Caribbean) during which the administration, under the Nixon-era War Powers Resolution, should have sought Congressional approval.

Democrats in the House and Senate have tried and failed to reassert the legislative branch's constitutional authority over waging war, but the Republicans in the majority have shielded Trump. Whether they will

continue to do so depends on what happens next in Venezuela.

As indeed does everything. "We are going to run the country" until a transition is complete, Trump told the press.

That's quite a non sequitur from a man who spent years accusing his predecessors of trying and failing to administer Iraq and other places they barely understood.

If Venezuela and its region instead spiral into chaos and suffering, Trump will merely look like a bully, a president who cowards when facing the mighty — in Moscow or Beijing, say — but bombs those who can't return fire, whether in Nigeria, Yemen or Venezuela. He will go down in history as an American president who buried international law and ushered in anarchy.

But if Venezuela, after inevitable turmoil in the near term, thrives, perhaps even helping to spread regional prosperity and security, those qualms won't matter. Trump will have made one part of the world better, and freed resources that America can, if it is wise, redeploy to stabilize other regions. In that outcome, the costs will have been worth it, and Trump will deserve credit.

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*Kluth is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering U.S. diplomacy, national security and geopolitics. Previously, he was editor-in-chief of Handelsblatt Global and a writer for the Economist.*

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US PS 125820

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VOLUME 151-NUMBER 176

FRIDAY, JANUARY 9, 2026

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Mail: Monthly auto-pay - \$14; 13 weeks - \$51; six months - \$83; one year - \$156.

Home delivery problems: Call (260) 251-9588

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., PO. Box 1049, Portland, Indiana 47371 or call (260) 726-8141.

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# Corn likely to grab acres again

*Turbulent markets mean there are no clear choices*

By EMILY BEAL  
Agweek Magazine  
Tribune News Service

As a new year begins, farmers are thinking about what to plant on their acres in 2026. Turbulent markets across the board for commodities mean there are no clear choices for farmers and a lot of indecision, unlike some years where a certain crop reigns king or appears the likeliest to make money.

While no crop is the obvious choice, seeds will still need to be planted and the land will still need to be tended to.

Carl Peterson, Peterson Farms Seed president, said one commodity is continuing to perform well.

"Corn is continuing to be strong. The growers have had a good crop, and the genetic improvements for this region over the last 8 to 10 years have been just absolutely stunning. So I think we'll continue to see more corn," he said. "The soybean crop last year was a little bit dis-



Tribune News Service/dpa/John Messineo

appointing ... but year after year for this region, soybeans have been a pretty strong crop. So even though maybe right now it doesn't look that good, soybeans are still a go-to and of course, you know, wheat is under pressure. Really, everything is under pressure."

With major crops like soybeans and wheat falling under pressure, Peterson predicts that specialty crop acreage will continue to rise; he noted sunflowers

as one particular commodity of budding interest.

"I think we're going to see an increase in sunflowers over the next year or two, but that's a small market, and we can't see that there really isn't anything on the horizon that can replace the huge quantities of weak corn-soybeans that we have. So I think there will be more niche markets," Peterson said. "If we think it's going to be the same in 20 years, we're kidding ourselves.

So we need to be looking forward."

The crop mix is very different in the region compared to what it was 20 years ago. Soybeans have been moving across the region, both north and west. Corn follows suit, but a little behind the adoption rate of soybeans in the area. Peterson attributes this trend to a longer growing season the region now experiences compared to years or decades past. And with a longer growing sea-

Corn is harvested in Colorado. As 2026 begins, uncertainty in commodities markets mean there are no clear choices for farmers regarding what to plant this year. Experts expect the situation will lead to more acres of corn being planted.

## Farmer sentiment dipped in December

By MORGAN FRENCH  
Purdue Ag News

WEST LAFAYETTE — Farmer sentiment dipped slightly in December, with the Purdue University/CME Group Ag Economy Barometer dropping 3 points to 136. The decline was attributable to a softening in producers' long-term outlook. The Future Expectations Index fell 4 points from the previous month to 140, while the Current Conditions Index

### *Drop attributed to concern about long-term ag outlook*

remained steady at 128. Crop producers expressed increased concern about the competitiveness of U.S. soybean exports as Brazil expands its role in global markets, contributing to the more cautious outlook. The survey was conducted Dec. 1-5, 2025.

Producers' expecta-

tions for their farms' financial performance remained mostly unchanged in December. The Farm Financial Performance Index inched up 2 points to 94, reflecting more producers expecting this year's farm financial performance to be similar to last year's. The Farm Capital Investment Index also rose 2 points to 58. Despite this increase, most producers (60%)

still see December as a bad time to make large farm investments.

"Even with some stability in expectations for their own operations, producers remain cautious about longer-term decisions," said Michael Langemeier, the barometer's principal investigator and director of Purdue's Center for Commercial Agriculture. "Uncertainty surrounding agricultural trade and grow-

ing concern about global competitiveness continue to influence how farmers think about the future."

Farmers' views on U.S. agricultural exports were mixed in December. When asked a generic question about the long-term outlook for agricultural exports, producers offered one of their most optimistic readings of the year, with only 5% expecting exports to decline over the next five years.

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2025 football

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Defensive line – McCormac Anderson (Win.)

Defensive line – Grey Backus (Delta)

Defensive line – Josh Evers (Fort Recovery)

Linebacker – Xavier Hill (Union City)

Linebacker – Breaker Jutte (Fort Recovery)

Linebacker – Cole Mynett (Delta)

Linebacker – Reece Wendel (Fort Recovery)

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## Ravens fire John Harbaugh

By BRIAN WACKER

The Baltimore Sun  
Tribune News Service

BALTIMORE — The John Harbaugh era in Baltimore has come to a stunning end.

After 18 seasons, Harbaugh, 63, and the Ravens agreed to part ways on Tuesday, according to a source with direct knowledge of the team's decision. The move comes less than a year after Harbaugh signed a three-year extension that would have kept him with the organization through the 2028 season.

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