

The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

www.thecr.com

\$1

Testimony describes neglect

By BAILEY CLINE
The Commercial Review

Prosecutors say Chelsea Crossland knowingly killed her son.

Her attorneys argue it was neglect resulting in death, not murder.

Crossland's murder trial in Jay Circuit Court started Tuesday morning and a portion of the prosecution's case, which included several witness testimonies, pictures, a call made to 911 and body camera footage.

The Portland woman is charged with murder and a Level 1 felony for neglect of a dependent resulting in death. She's accused of killing her 5-year-old son, Christian Crossland, in March 2022.

Defense argues that 5-year-old's death was not a murder

Zechariah Landers, Jay County's chief deputy prosecutor, told the jury the evidence will show Crossland made the "conscious decision to kill her son" over the course of the last few months of his life by slowly starving him and beating him.

He explained the jury would be shown evidence displaying how Christian

was malnourished and dehydrated and had bruises all over his body. He pointed to Crossland's calm demeanor throughout the 911 call and visit from police after Christian's death, including a response he said she made when officers were on scene: "So I'm guessing this is going to take a while?"

Brandon Murphy, Jay

County chief public defender, agreed Christian was neglected, but he argued Chelsea did not murder him.

"The evidence in this case will show Christian had a short and tragic life," said Murphy. "In the final days of his life, he desperately needed medical care."

He said Christian had been sick, but Crossland was a "non-vaccination mother" and did not believe in utilizing doctors. Murphy added Crossland wasn't the only person in contact with her son and told the jury she attempted to feed him before his death.

"The worst part about this case is about how preventable this all was," he said.

Prosecutors shared photos taken by James Stevens, a crime scene investigator with Indiana State Police. Stevens had snapped pictures of the refrigerator, freezer and pantry, which were all full of food. They also shared photos of Christian, including one of his body, which lay flat against the ground, covered by nothing but a diaper.

The prosecution flipped to a picture of Christian's face, which was pale white, with a skeletal outline of his nose, dark eyes and hair stringing out from his head in all directions. There was also a mark on the side of his head.

Upon seeing the picture of Christian's face, two women in the courtroom

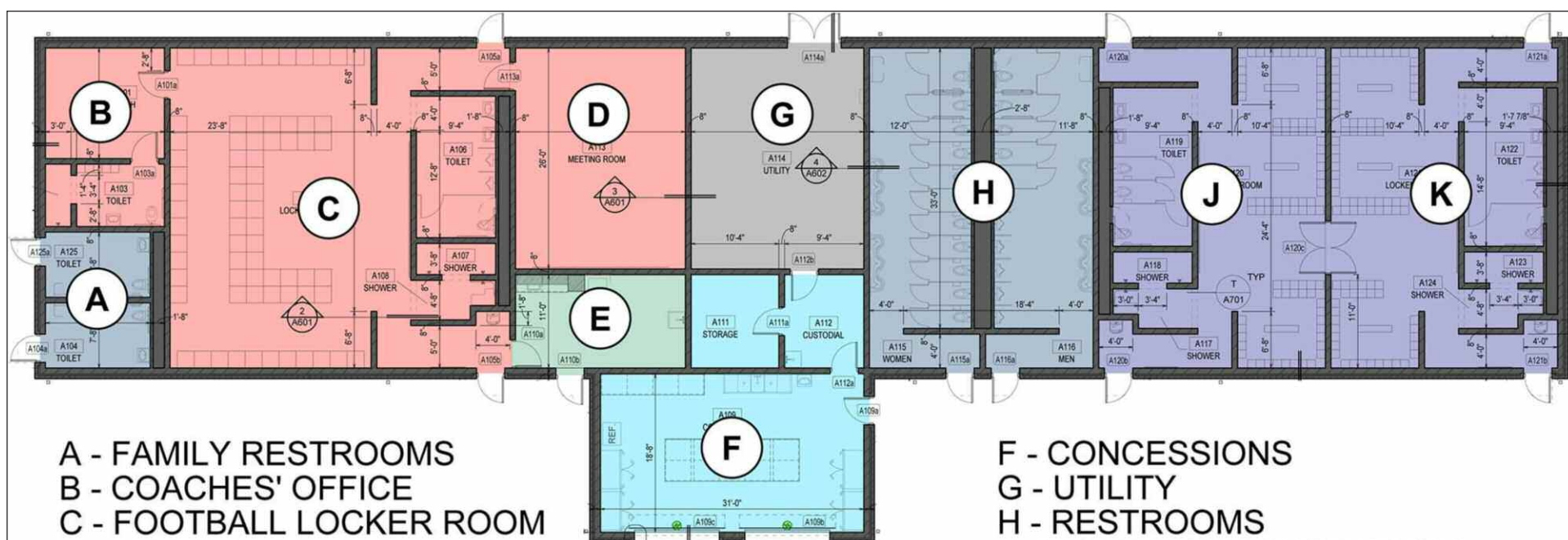
covered their mouths and began sobbing.

"This scene was in Jay County, Indiana?" asked prosecutors, with Stevens confirming.

Murphy asked Stevens if he recalled seeing a spoon next to Christian, and Stevens said he did not remember.

Eric Fields and Brandon Wright, both of Portland Police Department, took the stand Tuesday. Both officers responded to the Crossland home, 689 S. Western Ave., around 11 p.m. March 24. They recalled Christian's body laying in the upstairs bathroom. Fields described him as "very skinny" with multiple bruises on his body.

See **Testimony** page 2



A - FAMILY RESTROOMS
B - COACHES' OFFICE
C - FOOTBALL LOCKER ROOM
D - MEETING ROOM
E - TRAINING ROOM

F - CONCESSIONS
G - UTILITY
H - RESTROOMS
J - WOMEN'S LOCKER ROOM
K - MEN'S LOCKER ROOM

Barton Coe Vilamaa

The above diagram shows the proposed layout of a new locker room, concessions and restroom facility to be constructed at the northeast end of the football field at Jay County Junior-Senior High School. Jay School Board expects to review bids for the project, which also includes adding synthetic turf to the football field, at its September meeting.

Plans presented

Info to be available to bidders in August

By RAY COONEY
The Commercial Review

The process of bidding on an improvement project for outdoor athletic facilities at Jay County Junior-Senior High School is expected to begin next month.

Dana Wannemacher of architecture and engineering firm Barton Coe Vilamaa on Monday presented plans to Jay School Board for projects

to construct a locker room, restroom and concession facility and to install turf at Harold E. Schutz Memorial Stadium.

The Fort Wayne firm's proposed plans call for the construction of a 7,000-square-foot building locker room, restroom and concession facility (estimated at \$3.15 million) to be constructed on the northeast end of the football

stadium in an area that is now a stone parking lot. Working from northwest to southeast, the building would house family public restrooms, a coach's office, home football locker room, a meeting room, a trainer's room, a concession area, a utility room, public restrooms, a girls locker room and a boys locker room.

A new driveway would be installed to allow buses to

load and unload in front of the new facility, with a shallow detention basin in the remainder of the area that is currently the stone lot. (Another detention basin would be located at the east corner of the football stadium.) Wannemacher said the detention basins are intended to be dry most of the time.

New sidewalks would be constructed around the north-

east end of the football stadium to provide better access between seating and the concession stand and restrooms.

Synthetic turf (estimated at \$1.25 million) would replace the current grass field at the stadium, which would then be used for soccer as well as football and be available for physical education classes, band practice and other activities.

See **Plans** page 7



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Bird judge

Larry Paxson of Portland talks with turkey exhibitors while judging the poultry show Saturday at the Randolph County Fair. The fair in Randolph County kicked off Saturday and runs through Friday.

Council reviews two proposals

By RAY COONEY
The Commercial Review

A new state law will require that government units record, and in most cases live-stream, their meetings beginning in 2025.

Portland City Council got its first look at options for handling those requirements Monday.

Representatives from Dynamic Business Solutions and BIS Digital each presented city council

with proposals for equipment and service at its meeting Monday.

House Bill 1167 passed during the 2023 requires that state and local governing bodies provide live transmissions of public meetings and archive recordings along with links to agendas, minutes and other documentation for at least 90 days. It will go into effect on July 1, 2025.

See **Proposals** page 7

Deaths

Ruth Koenig, 80, Woodburn

Details on page 2.

Weather

Jay County had a high temperature of 81 degrees Monday. The low was 64.

Tonight's forecast calls for a low in the upper 60s with a slight chance of rain after midnight. There is a 50% chance of rain Thursday with a high in the mid 80s.

See page 2 for an extended outlook.

In review

Jay County Board of Health has scheduled a meeting for 7 a.m. Tuesday at the health department, 504 W. Arch St., Portland.

Coming up

Thursday — Coverage of the ongoing Chelsea Crossland murder trial.

Saturday — Coverage of Thursday's Redkey Town Council meeting.



Obituaries

Ruth Koenig
Oct. 8, 1942-July 17, 2023
Ruth Lauretta Koenig, 80, of Woodburn, Indiana, formerly of rural Jay County, passed away peacefully on Monday, July 17, 2023, at St. Anne Communities in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

She was born on Oct. 8, 1942, in Wapakoneta, Ohio, to the late Henry and Lauretta (Ritchie) Klima.

In addition to her parents, Ruth was preceded in death by her husband, Marvin F. Koenig, whom she married on Aug. 6, 1966, and he passed away on Feb. 5, 2018; and her siblings,

Henry Klima, Donald (Jean Ann) Klima and James Klima.

Ruth is survived by her children, Mark (Kimberly) Koenig of New Haven, Indiana, Karen (Richard) Reinhart of Bryant, Indiana, Kevin (Angela) Koenig of Holgate, Ohio, Bevan (Suzanne) Koenig of Linn Grove, Indiana, and Sarah (Douglas) Northrop of Grass Lake, Michigan; her 12 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren; her siblings Leo (Carol) Klima



Koenig

of Wapakoneta, Robert (Kathy) Klima, Wapakoneta, Michael (Susan) Klima of Wheaton, Illinois, Melvin (Connie) Klima of Lima, Ohio, Tony (Andrea) Klima of Sycamore, Ohio, Ronald (Ginny) Klima of Sidney, Ohio, and Barbara (Mark) Heffner of Lima, Ohio; her sister-in-law Sue Klima of Phoenix, Arizona; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Ruth graduated from St. Joseph High School in Wapakoneta in 1960. She was a life-long homemaker and farm wife. In her free time, Ruth enjoyed playing cards, watching TV and playing with her grand-

children. She was a member of the Church of the Most Holy Trinity in Bryant, Indiana, and St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in New Haven, Indiana. She served on the funeral luncheon committee for numerous years and was a member of the Ladies Sodality.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, July 22, 2023, at the Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Bryant, Indiana, with Father Peter Logsdon celebrating. Burial will follow in the church cemetery.

Guests may visit with Ruth's family on Friday, July 21, 2023,

from 4 to 8 p.m. and again on Saturday from 9 to 9:45 a.m. at Brockman Boeckman Funeral Home, Fort Recovery.

Condolences may be shared with the family by visiting brockmanboeckmanfh.com.

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.

CR almanac

Table with 5 columns: Thursday 7/20, Friday 7/21, Saturday 7/22, Sunday 7/23, Monday 7/24. Includes weather icons, temperature ranges (e.g., 84/64, 79/59), and forecast descriptions.

Lotteries

Powerball
Monday
5-8-9-17-41
Power Ball: 21
Power Play: 4
Estimated jackpot: \$1 billion

Mega Millions
Estimated jackpot: \$640 million

Hoosier
Monday
Midday
Daily Three: 5-9-2
Daily Four: 8-8-0-6
Quick Draw: 2-7-10-11-18-19-23-25-29-32-35-36-46-49-50-51-52-53-67-77
Evening
Daily Three: 8-8-0

Daily Four: 6-0-7-2
Quick Draw: 5-8-9-14-15-18-20-30-32-38-39-40-42-47-50-53-61-66-76-79
Cash 5: 4-15-24-34-35
Estimated jackpot: \$513,000

Ohio
Monday
Midday
Pick 3: 4-9-3
Pick 4: 4-3-7-6
Pick 5: 7-6-8-7-6
Evening
Pick 3: 1-9-0
Pick 4: 1-6-6-3
Pick 5: 5-7-8-7-7
Rolling Cash: 6-21-23-24-31
Estimated jackpot: \$120,000

Markets

Cooper Farms Fort Recovery
Corn.....6.01
Oct. corn5.06
Wheat6.06

POET Biorefining Portland
Corn.....6.15
Aug. corn5.80
Oct. corn5.11

The Andersons Richland Township
Corn5.70
Aug. corn5.00
Beans15.05

Aug. beans.....15.05
Wheat 6.29

Central States Montpelier
Corn.....5.71
Late July corn5.66
Beans14.86
Late July beans.....14.76
Wheat6.24

Heartland St. Anthony
Corn.....5.85
Aug. corn5.85
Beans14.66
Aug. beans.....14.66
Wheat6.01

Today in history

In 1799, the Rosetta Stone, a tablet with hieroglyphic translations into Greek, was found in Egypt.

In 1848, the Seneca Falls Convention, known as the first such gathering in support of rights for American women, launched in New York. About 300 attended the meeting that resulted in the Declaration of Sentiments, which called for granting women the same rights and freedoms as those afforded to men.

In 1903, French cyclist Maurice Garin won the first Tour de France in Paris.

In 1941, cartoon char-

acters Tom and Jerry made their first appearance in "The Midnight Snack."

In 1972, Jerry Landess of Portland drove one double-heat winner and tied for first in two other feature harness races at the Clinton County Fair in Frankfort.

In 2021, Jay School Board approved a return to standard operating procedures after in-person classes were called off for the final two and a half months of 2019-20 school year and various rules, including a state mask mandate, were in place throughout 2020-21.

—The CR

Citizen's calendar

Today
4 p.m. — Portland Board of Aviation, airport, 661 W. 100 North.
6 p.m. — Jay County Council, courthouse auditorium, 120 N. Court St., Portland.

Thursday
6 p.m. — Redkey Town Council, park cabin, 200 S. Mooney St.

Monday
9 a.m. — Jay County Commissioners, courthouse auditorium, 120 N. Court St., Portland.
3:30 p.m. — Jay County Solid Waste Management District Board, 5948 W. Indiana 67, Portland.
6 p.m. — Dunkirk Board of Works, city building, 131 S. Main St.
7 p.m. — Dunkirk City Council, city building, 131 S. Main St.

Village awards paving project

By BAILEY CLINE

The Commercial Review
FORT RECOVERY — A contract has been awarded for the next street reconstruction project.

Fort Recovery Village Council selected PAB Construction of Coldwater, Ohio, during its meeting Monday to reconstruct portions of Gwendolyn and Wiggs streets.

Reconstruction plans include Gwendolyn Street between Milligan and Wiggs streets and Wiggs Street between Gwendolyn and Wayne streets. Village administrator Randy Diller explained the work

isn't expected to start until February, and it should be completed by June.

Choice One Engineering estimated the project to cost approximately just under \$535,000. The village received the following bids: Toms Construction of St. Henry, Ohio, for \$486,395, Shinn Brothers of Celina, Ohio, for \$530,000 and PAB Construction for \$482,260.

Also Monday, council learned Diller had received a draft of the water plant study conducted by PMG Consulting of Maryland. The company has been working on recommenda-

tions for the village's water treatment processes since February. Currently, the village uses lime and caustic soda, which had drastically increased in cost prior to the study, leading officials to seek other treatment avenues.

"They're looking at two different processes," explained Diller. "Both of them take up a lot less (of a) footprint and both of them take up a lot less chemicals."

Either option, he noted, would decrease operating expenses. He plans to review the study and have a representative attend a

council meeting to differentiate treatment plans.

Council members also:
•Authorized Mayor Dave Kaup to sign the annexation of 0.909 acres of land near Fort Recovery Community Park. (Council approved the annexation July 12. The land donated by Buzz and Patt Hull will be utilized for the future Sawyer Overman Ninja Park.)

•Established a fund for \$9,700 received from the H2Ohio Drinking Water Equipment grant

•Were reminded about paving scheduled for the fall at Fort Site Park

Testimony ...

Continued from page 1

In the recording of the 911 call, Crossland told the emergency responder she tried to bathe her son and he got out of the tub and fell. It sounded as if her voice broke a few times in the recording as she repeatedly said, "I tried everything I could." She estimated at the time she placed the call it had been an hour and a half since he last took a breath.

Fields and Wright both testified that Crossland did not cry when they appeared on scene. Wright said she appeared to have a calm demeanor.

Crossland could be heard in the body camera footage trying to explain the situation to officers, including the words, "it was out of nowhere," shortly before officers taped off the front entrance to the house. A crying child could be heard somewhere off screen.

During Tuesday morning's proceedings, Crossland kept her head down most of the time, appearing to be scribbling on a piece of paper.

Kyle Gerlach, now a director at Jay Emergency Medical Service, also responded to the scene. In a video deposition — he was not available for the trial this week — he described how he found Christian, "a very emaciated child," on the bathroom floor

dead. He noted blood around Christian's face and that his face was blue from a lack of oxygen. He pointed out that he could also see the outline of his bones through his skin, having "very little meat on his bones." Gerlach also testified Crossland appeared calm and detached from the situation.

Crossland told Gerlach she attempted CPR about half an hour before she placed the 911 call.

When Gerlach asked Crossland to sign a form for EMS, "she signed it with her first name and a smiley face."

Rhonda Ballenger and Brittany Easton, both of New Castle, also testified Tuesday morning. Christian had stayed with them for a few years starting in 2018, when he was 2 years old. He moved back in with Crossland on Jan. 8, 2022.

Ballenger confirmed during his time with them that Christian never seemed sick and had an appetite.

"He liked food," she said.

She and Easton visited Crossland's home for a birthday party about a week before Christian's death. When asked where Christian was at the party, Crossland told Ballenger he was being bad, according to her testimony.

Easton, who identified herself as a friend of Crossland's, recalled a time Crossland had scolded her son for getting food out of the fridge. She said he had to ask permission. She also remembered when Christian had soiled his clothing and Crossland punished him by bathing him in a cold shower.

When asked how Easton knew it was cold, she said, "Because I could hear him crying. She (said) that, 'You gotta learn.'"

She also said Crossland at one point called Ballenger, who put the phone on speaker, and she heard Crossland say, "Please pray for me. I did something bad. Don't tell the police."

Murphy suggested Easton's partner, Trevor, had been in a relationship at one point with Crossland. Ballenger said she'd heard gossip, but that she'd never witnessed a relationship.

In Indiana, murder carries a sentence of 45 to 65 years with an advisory sentence of 55 years. A Level 1 felony for neglect of a dependent resulting in death carries a sentence of 20 to 40 years with an advisory sentence of 30 years.

SERVICES
Today
Keever, Jerry: 2 p.m., Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home, 208 N. Commerce St., Portland.
Schoenlein, Robert: 3 p.m., Baird-Freeman Funeral Home, 221 N. Meridian St., Portland.
Thursday
Myron, Carol: 1 p.m., Davids Community Mausoleum Chapel, 4600 Mad River Road, Kettering, Ohio.
Friday
Keen-Jenkins, Amber: 3 p.m., The Rock Church, 1605 N. Meridian St., Portland.
Saturday
Koenig, Ruth: 10:30 a.m., the Church of the Most Holy Trinity 7321 Indiana 67, Bryant.
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THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



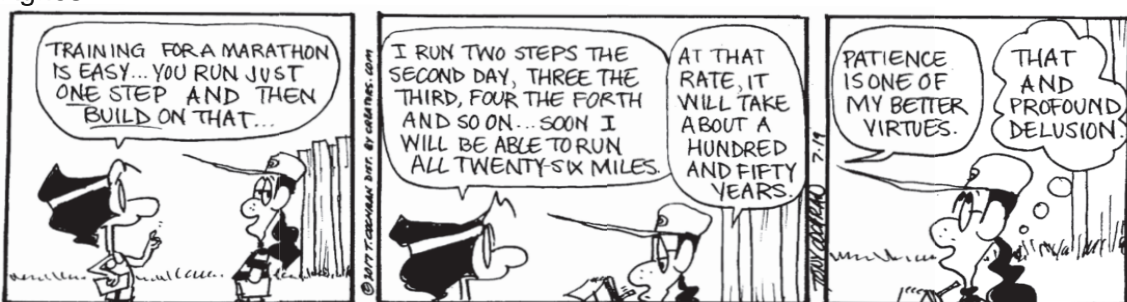
Peanuts



Rose is Rose



Agnes



Hi and Lois



Between Friends



Blondie



Snuffy Smith



Beetle Bailey



Contract Bridge By Steve Becker

A sophisticated play

East dealer. North-South vulnerable. NORTH: ♠83, ♥AQ6, ♦AJ953, ♣752. WEST: ♠J9762, ♥953, ♦76, ♣1083. SOUTH: ♠K105, ♥KJ10, ♦K84, ♣AQ64. EAST: ♠AQ4, ♥8742, ♦Q102, ♣KJ9.

The bidding: East Pass, South 1NT, West Pass, North 3NT. Opening lead — six of spades. Point count can frequently prove very useful to the defenders. For example, consider East's play to the first trick in this deal. Normally, East would take the ace on the opening lead. This would be in keeping with the general principle of third-hand high. He would then continue with the queen of spades, ducked by declarer, and the four, which South would win with the king. Observe the effect of these plays. Declarer — after losing a diamond finesse to East's queen — winds up making three notrump, scoring one spade, three hearts, four diamonds and a club.

Tomorrow: The proper order of plays. ©2023 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

7-19 CRYPTOQUIP

VZOI HU OL GKWYN DOKY JHNW QNGD VZHMZ O QKYWXKHLX GJIOHLU MNEMHOK XEHWOLMY? O QYOIZYN QHXENY.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN A BUNCH OF FOLKS ARE STANDING SINGLE-FILE WAITING TO BOARD A BUS, IS THAT A PICKUP LINE? Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals G

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS: 1 Popular card game, 4 Sleep phenomena, 8 Words to Brutus, 12 Sailor's chart, 13 Differently, 14 Unrepaired, 15 School book fair org., 16 Discounter's disclaimer, 18 Sun-powered, 20 Actress — Dawn Chong, 21 Violin part, 24 Town square, 28 Chinese design system, 32 Whole lot, 33 Ginger dye, 34 Reddish, 36 Jargon suffix, 37 Entryway, 39 Actors' work-places. DOWN: 2 Post-WWII alliance, 3 October birthstone, 4 Browser button, 5 Yale grad, 6 ISP choice, 7 Caulerize, 8 Art props, 9 Airport screening org., 10 Up to employ, 17 Napkin's place, 19 "Hulk" director Lee, 22 Food Network star, 23 Mila of "Black Swan", 25 Downwind, 26 Pizzazz, 27 Dazzles, 28 Crazes, 29 "The Time Machine" people, 30 Inert gas, 31 "To Live and Die —", 35 Mozart's middle name, 38 Gung-ho, 40 Govt. lender for some start-ups, 42 Online chats, briefly, 45 Lean-to, 47 "Doing my best", 48 Actress Elisabeth, 49 Desires, 50 "Terrill", 51 Carte lead-in, 52 "— a deal!", 53 Botanist Gray, 54 Jay follower.

Yesterday's answer 7-19 crossword solution grid showing words filled in.

Large crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-61.

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Sports



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

High point winners

The Jay County Summer Swim Team awarded monogrammed towels to the swimmer from each age group that earned the most points throughout the season on Sunday's banquet. Pictured are those awarded. In the back from left are Elly Byrum, Grady Warvel, Mara Bader, Carson Westgerdes and Brooklyn Byrum. Front row from left to right are Cora Arnold, Henry Warvel, Sam Benirschke and Addisyn Champ. Not pictured is David Keen.

Sports on tap

Local schedule

Thursday
Portland Rockets vs. Fort Wayne Jackers - 7:15 p.m.

TV sports

Today
9 a.m. — Soccer: Olympique Lyonnais at Manchester United (ESPN2)
7 p.m. — MLB: San Francisco Giants at Cincinnati Reds (Bally Indiana)
7 p.m. — Golf: Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational (Golf Channel)
7:30 p.m. — Soccer: Wrexham at New Mexico United (ESPN2)

Thursday
3 a.m. — Women's World Cup: Norway vs. New Zealand (FOX)
6 a.m. — Women's World Cup: Ireland vs. Australia (FOX)

12:35 p.m. — MLB: San Francisco Giants at Cincinnati Reds (Bally Indiana)
9 p.m. — Motorsports: Camping World SRX Series (ESPN)
10:30 p.m. — Women's World Cup: Canada vs. Nigeria (FOX)

Local notes

Hunt applications open
The Indiana Department of Natural Resources is accepting applications for reserved hunts.
Applications can be made for dove, deer, squirrel, teal and goose hunts. Hunters will be selected through a random drawing.
To apply, visit on.IN.gov/reservedhunt. The deadline is Aug. 6.

Flag football registration open
Registration for Jay Community Cen-

ter's Boomer Fall Flag Football is now open.

The league is for children ages 3 through 12. Games will be played on Saturdays from Aug. 26 through Oct. 7 at Jay County Recreation Complex, 5363 W. 450 South, Portland.

Registration is \$30 for those who sign up by July 31. For more information, visit jaycc.org.

Swiss Days race set
Registration is open for the 50th annual Swiss Days Race.
The event is scheduled for July 29 with a 5K at 8:15 a.m. and a 1-mile race for children 11 and younger at 9:15 a.m. Awards will be presented to the top 10 in each age group and there will be refreshments for all participants.
To register, search for "Swiss Days Race" at runsignup.com.

5K circuit continues July 22
The next race in the Jay County 5K Circuit is scheduled for July 22.

The Bonus 5K is scheduled for 8 a.m. July 22. The race will be at the IU Health Jay trail.
Registration is \$20.
The circuit features eight races running from April through August. Awards are presented in nine divisions.
For more information, visit runjaycounty.com.

Chamber outing scheduled
Jay County Chamber of Commerce will hold its golf outing July 21.
The event will begin with registration at 9 a.m. followed by a shotgun start at 10 a.m.
Registration is \$250 per team and is open now by emailing tabby@jay-countychamber.com or visiting the

chamber office at 118 S. Meridian St., Portland. The event is limited to 20 teams and the deadline is July 10.
For more information, call (260) 726-4481.

Soccer sign-ups available now
Registration for Jay Community Center's Boomer Fall Soccer league is now open.
The league is for children ages 3 through 14. Games will be played on Saturdays from Aug. 26 through Oct. 7 at Jay County Recreation Complex, 5363 W. 450 South, Portland.
Registration is \$60 for those who sign up by July 31. For more information, visit jaycc.org.

JC season tickets
Season tickets are available for the 2023-24 Jay County high school sea-

son. Tickets may be purchased during the school's office hours from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Patriots Passes and Senior Patriot Passes that provide admission to all high school and junior high events will be available. They cost \$105 and \$60 respectively.

Also available are super tickets. High school adult super tickets cost \$80, junior high super tickets come out to \$60 and senior super tickets are \$45.

A pre-paid sports pass that is good for 12 regular season events may be purchased for \$50 as well.

Boys basketball and football season passes will cost \$50 and \$25 respectively.

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To have an event listed in "Sports on tap," email details to sports@theocr.com.

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