

The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

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JCHS grad part of new team

By BAILEY CLINE

The Commercial Review

KOKOMO — Indiana University Kokomo has a new esports team.

One of its co-captains is a Jay County graduate.

In February, IU Kokomo announced it would be launching an esports team as a varsity sport.

“Really, it was an idea coming from our new chancellor,” explained coach Nick Liegey. “It’s one of those sports — we’re actually considered under athletics — that you don’t have the tra-

McCrosson is a co-captain for IU Kokomo’s esports

ditional travel as some other sports, so it can obviously be a real profit-maker as well as something that can really draw in a lot of recruits for the school.”

Esports, short for electronic sports, is a team-based video game competition. Several members from the group had previously been involved in the esports club, which continues to

serve as an environment for casual gamers. One of those students is sophomore Gavin McCrosson, a 2022 graduate of Jay County High School.

“I had joined the club — I saw them at the activity fair my freshman year,” he explained. “And then, one day, Nick started asking people who wanted to compete ... I messaged him saying I’d be interested, and it went on from there.”

Esports team members currently have the option of playing three video games competitively — “Overwatch 2,” “Rocket

League” or “Super Smash Bros. Ultimate.” (Players are placed into squads for each game.) Liegey shared the possibility of adding other titles as interest grows and conference availability opens up.

“As trends change, we’ll switch out games for what students are really interested in competing in,” explained Liegey.

IU Kokomo’s team participates in the National Esports Collegiate Conference, which has more than 300 schools across America.

See Team page 2

Haley draws fire from rivals

By GREGORY KORTE

Bloomberg News
Tribune News Service

Former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley emerged as the top target of her rivals during the fourth Republican presidential debate, defending her growing base of Wall Street donors and her foreign policy stances.

Haley, who has been surging in polls and attracted new interest from big-dollar donors in recent weeks, drew pointed attacks straight out of the gate from Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and Ohio entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy.

“Look, we will take support from anybody we can take support from, but I have been a conservative fighter all my life,” Haley said Wednesday on the stage in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Haley shot back that DeSantis was “mad because those Wall Street donors used to support him and now they support me.”

Ramaswamy criticized Haley for taking money from LinkedIn Corp. co-founder Reid Hoffman, who donated \$250,000 to a super political action committee backing her. Hoffman has historically donated to Democratic candidates but said he sees Haley as a potential alternative to Donald Trump, the GOP frontrunner.

Ramaswamy criticized Haley’s ties to BlackRock Inc. Chief Executive Officer Larry Fink, who he termed “the king of the woke industrial complex.”

“To say that doesn’t affect her is false,” Ramaswamy added.

Wednesday’s debate saw just four candidates take the stage — Haley, DeSantis, Ramaswamy and former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie — as the field of potential challengers to Trump shrinks and the former president extends his lead against his remaining rivals. Time is running short, with Iowa — the first state on the nominating calendar — less than six weeks away.

See Rivals page 2

East celebration

East Elementary students participated in their annual Christmas program Thursday. Pictured at right, second grader Arabella Beltz holds her hands up during her class’ practice session at East Jay Elementary on Thursday morning. Beltz wore a sweatshirt themed after Jack Skellington, a character from “The Nightmare Before Christmas.” Below, second graders Maverick LeMaster, Allison Navaro-Garcia, Archer Nichols and Emree Spoonemore sing “We Wish You A Merry Christmas” at the end of their practice session.



The Commercial Review/Bailey Cline



Holcomb defends pipeline process

By WHITNEY DOWARD

Indiana Capital Chronicle
indianacapitalchronicle.com

Gov. Eric Holcomb defended the timeline process for a water pipeline from Tippecanoe County to Boone County for a massive, high-tech development grounded by a multi-billion dollar investment from Eli Lilly.

Other companies coming to the area haven’t yet been announced but the Indiana Economic Development Corporation hopes to pipe millions of gallons of water daily from the Wabash Alluvial Aquifer — though local officials aren’t sold on the idea.

“When you deal with something on an unprecedented scale, as (the IEDC is) ... I’m pleased that they were operating at the speed of business, not to the speed of what we’re used to,” Holcomb said. “And knowing that there may be some bumps along the way but always know that the data would drive our ultimate decision.”

To verify the water supply statewide, both the Indiana Chamber of Commerce and an IEDC contractor are working on a study — though the contractor for the latter, narrower study has been moved to the Indiana Finance Authority.

Holcomb said that speed could

help or hurt because being slow could mean losing the bid but thought that Indiana was “at a place, right now, (where) the interest is still there.”

“No one was ever going to promise a company water if we don’t have it; no was ever going to take water away from a community if we don’t have it,” Holcomb said.

Rather, he believed the studies would show “an abundance of water sources” similar to neighboring states, states he said were in the best position to attract businesses in coming years.

Holcomb said he wasn’t yet ready to unveil his final legislative

agenda as governor, which is set to be revealed on Jan. 8. Lawmakers seem keen to keep session short in 2024, meaning any priorities will need to be ready when legislators convene on that same date.

He shared three generalized priorities, including: government efficiency and transparency; wrapping up outstanding or in-progress projects and increasing awareness of current government programs.

“We want to finish strong; we don’t want to limp to the line,” Holcomb said. “That will require us not only finishing some projects but also getting some programs (with) the structure in place.”

Deaths

Gerald Bertke, 82, St. Joe, Ohio
Details on page 2.

Weather

Jay County had a high temperature of 37 degrees Wednesday. The low was 32.

There is a chance of showers tonight with the temperature holding steady around 50 and winds gusting to 35 miles per hour. Expect more rain Saturday.

See page 2 for an extended outlook.

In review

Jay County Solid Waste Management District will have recycling trailers available Saturday. Trailers will be open from 9 a.m. to noon in the shopping center at 220 Lincoln St., Portland, and Dunkirk City Park.

Coming up

Saturday — Results from the first day of the ACAC wrestling duals at Jay County.

Tuesday — Coverage of Monday’s Jay County Commissioners meeting.



Team ...

Continued from page 1
Unlike other sports, esports tournaments are typically hosted remotely. (Larger matches may be hosted in-person via local area network (LAN) communications.)
“We may be playing a school in California, we could be playing a school in Florida, it just kind of depends on the week,” Liegey said.
The Cougars had been playing remotely from their own homes utilizing Discord, an instant messaging and social platform regularly used by gamers. (The application ties into video game software, allowing users to play and chat with their friends in the same space online.)
They planned to set up in the Student Activities and Events Center while waiting for construction to be finished on the esports arena, a new addition to IU Kokomo’s Kelley Student Center. (Plans are to have the space completed some-

time in January.) Their arena will be outfitted with 18 computers for players, along with a coach’s computer, streaming room and various outlets and data ports for their equipment.
The team has been sharing its competitions online via Twitch, a live-streaming service, and planned to stream games on screens across campus.
As co-captain of the “Overwatch 2” squad, McCrosson plans out strategies and keeps his teammates in check with regular practice sessions at least two times a week.
“Most of us practice more than that,” he said. “It is a video game, you can hop on it at your leisure. It’s a lot different than like, let’s say baseball, where you want to go to a field or where you want to hit somewhere. Most of us, we can sit at home and play together.”
The Cougars’ first games started

in September, with the playoffs wrapping up this month.
McCrosson boasted in October about the “Overwatch 2” squad’s record, which ultimately came to 5-0 for the regular season.
“We’re definitely just going to keep steamrolling the competition like we are right now,” said McCrosson. “We have a pretty good group behind us, and we’re just going to keep plowing forward.”
According to the group’s schedule on IU Kokomo’s website, “Rocket League” players finished with 3-3 for the season and “Super Smash Bros. Ultimate” players were 2-3. In the NECC Navigator Division Great Lakes Conference playoffs, IU Kokomo’s “Overwatch 2” squad dominated Murray State University in the quarterfinals Nov. 16 with a 3-0 win and advanced past University of Missouri with a 4-2 win in the semifinals Nov. 30.

Their fall season is nearing a close — the “Overwatch 2” group was set to face off against Southern Illinois University in a championship match on Thursday. Still, the spring season is just around the corner.
Interest has quickly grown for the program, noted Liegey. Near the beginning of the season, the esports team boasted more than 20 players. Liegey hopes to bring the headcount to 40 in the next year.
A full-time business and computer science teacher at Western High School in Russiaville, Liegey served as his high school’s esports coach for a year before taking over as coach of IU Kokomo’s first esports team.
“This opportunity opened up, and it was like a dream come true, I totally wanted to be a part of it, be able to build a program and really see it through,” he said.

Obituaries

Gerald “Jerry” L. Bertke, St. Joe, Ohio, Jan. 2, 1941-Dec. 5, 2023. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 10:30 a.m. Monday at St. Joe Catholic Church.

SERVICES

Today
Denney, Sandy: 2 p.m., Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home, 208 N. Commerce St., Portland.
Whitesell, Debbie: 2 p.m., Meacham Funeral Service, 648 W. State St., Albany.
Iliff, Anita: 6 p.m., Wayne Street Methodist Church, 130 N. Wayne St., St. Marys, Ohio.

Saturday
Timmerman, Alma: 10:30 a.m., St. Paul Catholic Church, 517 Meiring Road, Fort Recovery, Ohio.

Monday
Bertke, Gerald: 10:30 a.m., 1689 St. Joe Road, Fort Recovery.

Service listings provided by
PROGRESSIVE DEL TORO OFFICE PRODUCTS
120 N. Meridian St.
Portland, Indiana 47371
(260) 726-9201
progressiveofficeproducts.com

35th Annual Jay County Farm Toy Show
Sun, Dec. 10, 2023
from 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
In the green Bob Schmit Memorial Building at the Jay Co. Fairgrounds Portland, IN
Admission: \$3/Adults, \$2 Youth, 12 & Under Free with an adult.
Brows thru 70+ tables of new and used farm toys and a few related crafts. You may find toys from 1/64th scale all the way up to pedal tractors with scaled size implements! This is a great opportunity to find something special for the farm enthusiast in your family, regardless of their age! Handicap accessible. Plenty of parking. Concessions in the side room by local 4-H.
For more info call or text: 260-726-6433 or 260-251-0463

CR almanac

Saturday 12/9	Sunday 12/10	Monday 12/11	Tuesday 12/12	Wednesday 12/13
59/34	38/23	38/26	42/25	40/26
Rain is likely on Saturday with a 70% chance of showers day and night.	Sunday has a 60% chance of rain and snow throughout the day.	Mostly cloudy skies are expected Monday, when the high won't go past 40 degrees.	Tuesday's forecast shows mostly sunny skies with a high of 42 degrees.	Another day of mostly sunny skies on Wednesday, when the high will be around 40 degrees.

Lotteries

Powerball
6-47-50-61-68
Power Ball: 4
Power Play: 2
Estimated jackpot: \$400 million

Daily Four: 2-5-4-2
Quick Draw: 4-15-16-18-21-22-23-24-34-36-37-39-41-43-46-62-64-72-74-79
Cash 5: 8-26-31-35-38
Estimated jackpot: \$105,000

Mega Millions
Estimated jackpot: \$355 million

Hoosier
Wednesday
Midday
Daily Three: 9-7-1
Daily Four: 9-2-4-9
Quick Draw: 1-3-6-7-12-21-25-32-34-41-51-52-58-60-65-69-71-72-73-76
Evening
Daily Three: 0-7-2

Ohio
Wednesday
Midday
Pick 3: 7-0-6
Pick 4: 6-0-2-1
Pick 5: 9-7-3-9-9
Evening
Pick 3: 8-1-3
Pick 4: 6-5-1-2
Pick 5: 0-8-8-7-2
Rolling Cash: 10-14-17-24-33
Estimated jackpot: \$150,000

Markets

Cooper Farms Fort Recovery	Jan. beans12.95 Wheat 6.04
Corn.....4.58 Jan. corn4.79 Wheat5.59	ADM Montpelier Corn.....4.43 Jan. corn4.60 Beans12.81 Jan. beans12.87 Wheat5.72
POET Biorefining Portland	Corn.....4.58 Late Dec. corn.....4.68 Jan. corn4.78
The Andersons Richland Township	Corn4.33 Jan. corn4.73 Beans12.85 Wheat5.44

Today in history

In 1980, John Lennon was fatally shot by Mark David Chapman in New York City. Lennon rose to fame as a member of The Beatles before moving on to a solo career.
In 2003, Portland mayor-elect Bruce Hosier announced the appointment of new department heads that would go into effect Jan. 1. Bob Sours was named police chief, Jeff Harker superintendent of the street and parks department and Bob Brelsford superintendent of the wastewater treatment plant.
In 2020, Indiana Department of Transportation announced Community Crossings grants totaling \$475,612 to Portland, Dunkirk and Bryant. Paving via the grants included a section of Bridge Street in Portland, Moore Avenue in Dunkirk and Main Street in Bryant.
—The CR

Citizen’s calendar

Monday
9 a.m. — Jay County Commissioners, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St.
3:45 p.m. — Jay County Election Board, voting room, courthouse, 120 N. Court St.
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 St. building, 131 S. Main St.
7 p.m. — Dunkirk City Council, city building, 131 S. Main St.

Wednesday
1 p.m. — Jay County Sheriff’s Office Merit Board, sheriff’s conference room, sheriff’s office, 224 W. Water St., Portland.
6 p.m. — Jay County Council, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St.

Rivals ...

Continued from page 1
DeSantis faced questions about his electability as he struggles to right a struggling campaign that saw him enter the race as a potential viable alternative to Trump before sliding in the polls.
“I’m sick of hearing about these polls,” DeSantis said, noting that he had won reelection to the governor’s mansion in Tallahassee in 2022 — even as Republicans in other races across the country underperformed.
“They said there was gonna be a big red wave,” he continued, “The one place it didn’t crash and burn was in the state of Florida.”
Trump, who is leading by wide margins in state and national polls, skipped the debate as he has prior forums this cycle, opting to host a fundraiser in Florida.
A Monmouth University poll released Wednesday showed a majority of Trump’s supporters want his rivals to drop out as the former president’s opponents struggle to coalesce around a single candidate.
Fifty-three percent of Republican voters named Trump as their pick for a nominee, up from 26% a year ago. President Joe Biden has also increasingly treated Trump as the de facto nominee, focusing his attacks on the frontrunner.
Still, the race for runner-up has higher stakes this cycle, with Trump, 77, facing a number of legal cases that threaten to pull him from the campaign trail.

DeSantis, 45, was asked if he believed Trump is mentally fit to serve.
“The idea that we’re going to put someone out there that’s almost 80 — and there’s going to be no effects from that — we all know that that’s not true,” he replied.
“I think we need to have somebody younger,” he added, saying he did not believe Trump would be able to get elected.
Christie, who has made denying Trump the nomination the centerpiece of his bid, criticized DeSantis, saying he had failed to address the question about Trump’s fitness.
“He’s afraid to answer,” he said.
Exchanges on foreign policy, including support for Israel and Russia’s war in Ukraine, dominated the first thirty minutes of the debate and drew most heated rhetoric.
Ramaswamy challenged Haley’s knowledge of global affairs, saying the former U.N. ambassador was wrong to characterize the deadly Oct. 7 Hamas incursion into Israel an attack on the U.S.
“I mean, if you can’t tell the difference between Israel and the U.S. is on a map, I can have my three-year-old son show you the difference,” he said.
Ramaswamy who has also been skeptical of providing continued U.S. aid to Ukraine, also criticized Haley’s support for Kyiv, saying she was in lockstep with President Joe Biden.

McCarthy to retire

By ERIN B. LOGAN
Los Angeles Times
Tribune News Service
WASHINGTON — Former House Speaker Kevin McCarthy will not seek another term in Congress, ending a tumultuous two-decade career in public office that was marked by a swift ascent and descent in Washington GOP leadership. He said he would leave the House by the end of the year.
McCarthy announced his decision days before the state’s deadline to file to run again for his Bakersfield-based seat. His departure opens the door for what could become a contested House race in California’s heavily Republican Central Valley.
McCarthy’s retirement from Congress continues the steep decline of California’s political power in Washington, where just a handful of lawmakers from the state remain in leadership posts.

Felony arrests

Drug possession
A Union City woman was arrested Monday for possession of methamphetamine and related charges.
Rayna M. Garringer, 33, 313 W. Oak St., was preliminarily charged with a Level 3 felony, along with a Class C misdemeanor for possession of paraphernalia.
She was being held on a \$31,000 bond in Jay County Jail.

Failed to appear
A Virginia man was arrested Monday for failing to appear in court.
Randy R. Addie, 49, 321 Coal Hollow, Christiansburg, is charged in Jay Superior Court with two Level 6 felonies for unlawful possession of a syringe and maintaining a common nuisance, along with a Class C misdemeanor for possession of paraphernalia.
He’s being held in Jay County Jail without bond.

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DECEMBER 9, 2023
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Apply online at www.swissvillage.org, in person, or send Resume to:
Taylor Lehman, Vice President of HR
Swiss Village, Inc.
1350 W. Main St., Berne, IN 46711
careers@swissvillage.org

Swiss Village

NOW SEEKING CANDIDATES FOR FEBRUARY 2024 C.N.A. CLASS!

Swiss Village, Inc. is now seeking candidates for a Certified Nursing Assistant class that will begin in February 2024!! Classes will be held in the evenings and on Saturdays. Seeking candidates available to work in Healthcare on 2nd shift, in Assisted Living every other weekend on 1st shift, or in Assisted Living on 2nd or 3rd shifts. Full-time positions available on 2nd shift, and a part-time position available on 3rd shift in Assisted Living. Full-time positions are eligible for benefits including health, dental, vision, and life insurance, Paid Time Off (PTO), and 403(b) retirement plan participation. Part-time positions are eligible for benefits including dental and vision insurance, Paid Time Off (PTO), and 403(b) retirement plan participation.

Application deadline for the C.N.A. class: Friday, January 12, 2024.

Apply in person, online at www.swissvillage.org, or send Resume to:
Kayla Reilly, HR Specialist
Swiss Village
1350 W. Main St.
Berne, IN 46711
Or e-mail: careers@swissvillage.org

Justice O'Connor was a trailblazer

Chicago Tribune
Tribune News Service

News that Sandra Day O'Connor, the Supreme Court's first woman justice, had died Friday at age 93 brought back fond memories in these offices of her gracious — and well-attended — visit 10 years ago to our Editorial Board.

Although retired since 2006, she politely disappointed us by holding to the high court's practice of refusing to comment on decisions made during her time there or after.

Guest Editorial

"I'm an old lady with a short memory," she said.

That self-deprecating crack took on new poignancy in 2018 when she announced that she'd been diagnosed with "the beginning stages of dementia, probably Alzheimer's disease." Her husband John O'Connor

had died of complications of Alzheimer's in 2009.

Yet, she showed no difficulty in remembering the frustrations of life decades ago when she was trying to get started as a lawyer. Back then, the self-described "cowgirl from the Arizona desert" called 40 firms that had advertised on the Stanford Law School's bulletin boards and didn't get a single interview.

She finally was hired by a county attorney after she offered to work for no pay and shared a space with the secretary. "I loved

the work," she said with a smile.

Better offers would come later, most memorably in 1981 when, after only two years on Arizona's Supreme Court, President Ronald Reagan nominated her to the nation's highest court, fulfilling his campaign promise to name the nation's first female Supreme Court justice.

The Senate confirmed her unanimously. Those were less partisan days, especially when it came to the judiciary. But the lack of opposition signaled con-

fidence she would be a consensus-builder, grounding her decisions in her interpretation of the Constitution, not ideology.

Did she succeed? On some of the most contentious issues of our times — abortion, voting rights affirmative action, sex discrimination — she proved to be an equal-opportunity offender to those on the left and the right. Conservatives, for example, expected a Reagan appointee to come down on their side more often. Instead, O'Connor's conservatism was prag-

matic, seeking to build public confidence in what after all is our least democratic branch of government, with lifetime appointments to boot.

You could hear her appeal to reason in her confirmation hearings when she was asked what kind of legacy she would like to leave. "Ah, the tombstone question," she said. "I hope it says, 'Here lies a good judge.'"

She was that and far more. A trailblazer. A quintessentially American success story. And an excellent justice.

Shop locally, in person

The Seattle Times
Tribune News Service

As with all else in life, technology has created a fork in the road regarding the holiday season, specifically the gift-giving part.

Between the convenience of browsing from home and three years of pandemic-era social distancing, consumers have grown habituated to honoring friends and family by clicking a link on Amazon.

That may be convenient, but it doesn't build much holiday spirit.

The best thing about this time of year is the way Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa encourage us to connect with one another — with our communities, our neighbors, and yes, our neighborhood businesses.

Beyond the obvious boost to local economies, shopping in person is an effort made to demonstrate our feelings about others and what they mean to us. It requires thoughtfulness. It means putting your hands on the item you're going to choose for someone else. In that sense, it both symbolizes and reinforces connection.

The same cannot be said for scrolling through a page on a website and clicking a "Buy Now" button. That act turns holiday shopping into a chore, rather than an opportunity to celebrate or strengthen bonds.

Stepping into a neighborhood shop goes well beyond supporting those proprietors and their employees, though that is important. Shopping local provides an annual check-in with the home team. Maybe you pop into a store and catch up with a worker you've known for years, or share a joke or an observation about what remains the same despite so much change in all our lives.

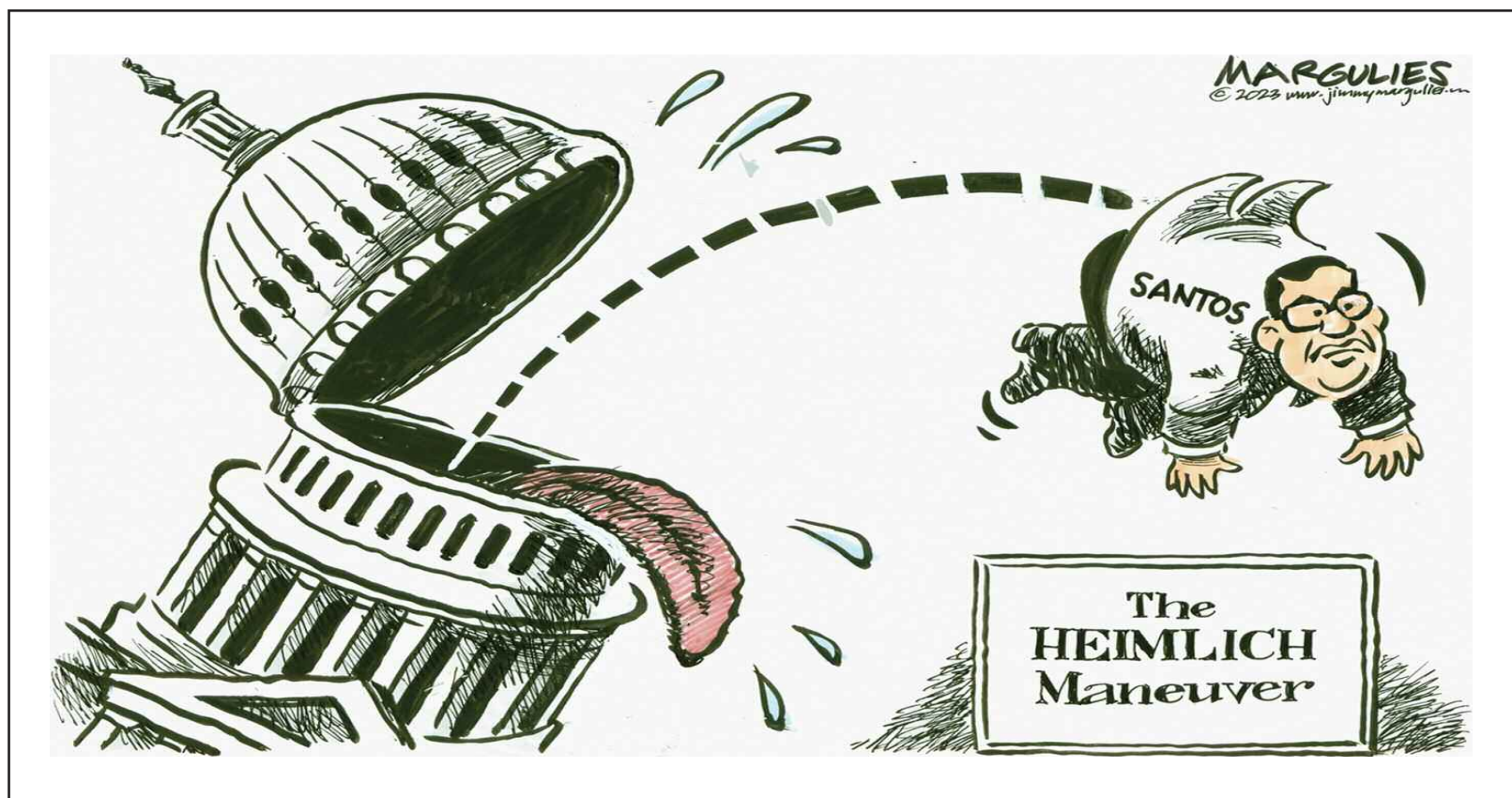
Or maybe you spot a new business and dart in to browse its unfamiliar shelves. Maybe you find something that reminds you of someone you hadn't even planned to shop for. Maybe on the spur of the moment, you buy it for them.

Either way, you're thinking about others, affirming bonds. Amazon, convenient though it may be, provides the very opposite of that experience. It is checking a box, interacting with a cyborg.

In rural areas, incidentally, the demands of Amazon package deliveries at holiday time are causing havoc for mail carriers from Minnesota to the San Juan Islands, according to a recent report. (In large cities, Amazon has its own network of delivery drivers. But in more remote regions, mail carriers routinely use their personal vehicles to distribute the mail, including Amazon packages.)

Admittedly, shopping in person, rather than by touch screen, means standing in line at the post office. But that, too, is a way to connect with your community.

Guest Editorial



Case could have a major impact

By LYNN GREENKY
Indiana Capital Chronicle
indianacapitalchronicle.com

The First Amendment does not protect messages posted on social media platforms.

The companies that own the platforms can — and do — remove, promote or limit the distribution of any posts according to corporate policies. But all that might soon change.

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear five cases during this current term, which ends in June 2024, that collectively give the court the opportunity to reexamine the nature of content moderation — the rules governing discussions on social media platforms such as Facebook and X, formerly known as Twitter — and the constitutional limitations on the government to affect speech on the platforms.

Content moderation, whether done manually by company employees or automatically by a platform's software and algorithms, affects what viewers can see on a digital media page. Messages that are promoted garner greater viewership and greater interaction; those that are deplatformed or removed will obviously receive less attention. Content moderation policies reflect decisions by digital platforms about the relative value of posted messages.

As an attorney, professor and author of a book about the boundaries of the First Amendment, I believe that the constitutional challenges presented by these cases will give the court the occasion to advise government, corporations and users of interactive technologies what their rights and responsibilities are as communications technologies continue to evolve.

In late October 2023, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments on two related cases in which both sets of plaintiffs argued that elected officials who use their social media accounts either exclusively or partially to promote their politics and policies cannot constitutionally

Lynn Greenky



block constituents from posting comments on the officials' pages.

In one of those cases, O'Connor-Radcliff v. Garnier, two school board members from the Poway Unified School District in California blocked a set of parents — who frequently posted repetitive and critical comments on the board members' Facebook and Twitter accounts — from viewing the board members' accounts.

In the other case heard in October, Lindke v. Freed, the city manager of Port Huron, Michigan, apparently angered by critical comments about a posted picture, blocked a constituent from viewing or posting on the manager's Facebook page.

Courts have long held that public spaces, like parks and sidewalks, are public forums, which must remain open to free and robust conversation and debate, subject only to neutral rules unrelated to the content of the speech expressed. The silenced constituents in the current cases insisted that in a world where a lot of public discussion is conducted in interactive social media, digital spaces used by government representatives for communicating with their constituents are also public forums and should be subject to the same First Amendment rules as their physical counterparts.

If the Supreme Court rules that public forums can be both physical and virtual, government officials will not be able to arbitrarily block users from viewing and responding to their content or remove constituent comments with which they disagree. On the other hand, if the Supreme Court rejects the plaintiffs' argument, the only recourse

for frustrated constituents will be to create competing social media spaces where they can criticize and argue at will.

Two other cases — NetChoice LLC v. Paxton and Moody v. NetChoice LLC — also relate to the question of how the government should regulate online discussions. Florida and Texas have both passed laws that modify the internal policies and algorithms of large social media platforms by regulating how the platforms can promote, demote or remove posts.

NetChoice, a tech industry trade group representing a wide range of social media platforms and online businesses, including Meta, Amazon, Airbnb and TikTok, contends that the platforms are not public forums. The group says that the Florida and Texas legislation unconstitutionally restricts the social media companies' First Amendment right to make their own editorial choices about what appears on their sites.

In addition, NetChoice alleges that by limiting Facebook's or X's ability to rank, repress or even remove speech — whether manually or with algorithms — the Texas and Florida laws amount to government requirements that the platforms host speech they didn't want to, which is also unconstitutional.

NetChoice is asking the Supreme Court to rule the laws unconstitutional so that the platforms remain free to make their own independent choices regarding when, how and whether posts will remain available for view and comment.

In an effort to reduce harmful speech that proliferates across the internet — speech that supports criminal and terrorist activity as well as misinformation and disinformation — the federal government has engaged in wide-ranging discussions with internet companies about their content moderation policies.

To that end, the Biden administration has regularly advised

— some say strong-armed — social media platforms to deplatform or remove posts the government had flagged as misleading, false or harmful. Some of the posts related to misinformation about COVID-19 vaccines or promoted human trafficking. On several occasions, the officials would suggest that platform companies ban a user who posted the material from making further posts. Sometimes, the corporate representatives themselves would ask the government what to do with a particular post.

While the public might be generally aware that content moderation policies exist, people are not always aware of how those policies affect the information to which they are exposed. Specifically, audiences have no way to measure how content moderation policies affect the marketplace of ideas or influence debate and discussion about public issues.

In Missouri v. Biden, the plaintiffs argue that government efforts to persuade social media platforms to publish or remove posts were so relentless and invasive that the moderation policies no longer reflected the companies' own editorial choices. Rather, they argue, the policies were in reality government directives that effectively silenced — and unconstitutionally censored — speakers with whom the government disagreed.

The court's decision in this case could have wide-ranging effects on the manner and methods of government efforts to influence the information that guides the public's debates and decisions.

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Greenky is professor emeritus of communication and rhetorical studies, Syracuse University. She is also an attorney admitted to practice in New York.

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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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Leave the leaves

Tree debris is resource for habitat, food and shelter

By KATHERINE FORAN

University of Missouri
KINGSTON, Mo. — The “Leave the Leaves” movement could just as easily be called “Save the Pollinators,” says University of Missouri Extension horticulture specialist Manoj Chhetri.

Chhetri, who serves northwestern Missouri from his base in Caldwell County, agrees that letting leaves do their thing is better than carting them off to a landfill. That has all kinds of long-term costs, environmental and otherwise. Moreover, removing fallen leaves takes away vital habitat that insects need to survive the winter, Chhetri said.

“The leaves that fall in your yard are a wonderful resource for habitat, providing food and shelter for many helpful pollinators like butterflies, moths, native bumblebees and other ground-nesting insects,” Chhetri said. In return, birds rely on overwintering bugs for food.

Nonetheless, there’s no “one-size-fits-all” approach to leaving the leaves. “You use different methods for different parts of your yard,” he said.



MU Extension

University of Missouri horticulturist Manoj Chhetri says leaving fallen leaves in place can be beneficial, especially when compared to having them hauled to a landfill. “The leaves that fall in your yard are a wonderful resource for habitat, providing food and shelter for many helpful pollinators like butterflies, moths, native bumblebees and other ground-nesting insects,” he said.

Vegetable garden

If you let leaves decay in your vegetable garden naturally, you risk carrying over insect problems from one season to the next.

“In your vegetable garden, first chop or shred the leaves with a lawn mower or leaf mulcher, and till that back into ground in late fall,” Chhetri said. “That will reduce infestations from overwintering pests while still allowing your garden to benefit from nutrient-rich leaf waste.”

the greatest added value in the flower beds, Chhetri said. They provide habitat for beneficial insects, protect the soil from erosion and shelter plants from extreme weather.

Do not shred the leaves you put in flower beds; you don’t want to damage overwintering eggs and larvae, he said. Wait to clean up the yard until it warms to 50 F the following spring.

Grass yard

Run a leaf mulcher or mower over your lawn and let the leaf litter add

organic matter to the yard. “That way, they decay and naturally filter back into the soil,” Chhetri said. “Although not providing habitat for insects, it is certainly better than sending yard waste to the landfill.”

That said: “You need balance,” he said. “If you have too many leaves, that can affect the health of the grass.”

Chhetri recommends mowing/shredding leaves at least once or twice a month as needed. While not a set rule of thumb, if there is more than an inch

of leaves covering the grass, it’s time to shred the leaves, redistributing the excess to flower beds and other garden areas.

Compost bin

Another alternative is to place excess leaves in a compost bin: “Yard waste is wonderful,” Chhetri said. “It is rich in carbon and essential for good composting.”

Too many leaves?

“Think about sharing some with a neighbor who doesn’t have as many trees, or expand your flower beds

so you have more places to help provide a good habitat for insects,” he said.

While mulching with dead leaves may not have the same curb appeal as pristine raked lawns, attitudes are changing. “People are thinking more about the good we can do for the environment by not adding to landfill waste issues,” Chhetri said. “You’re also helping our food industry, when you think about it, because our crops need pollinators. And your leaf-covered yard is one way to help pollina-

tors reproduce and survive.”

Black walnut leaves

You may have heard that black walnut leaves must be removed to prevent damage to plants and lawns. Not so, Chhetri says. While the tree does release a toxin, juglone, that can hinder plant growth, “several studies have shown that the amount of that toxin left in fallen leaves, branches and twigs is so minimal that it’s no longer toxic,” he said.

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Sports



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Applying pressure

Jay County High School's Breanna Dirksen swipes away the ball from Muncie Central's Taj Isom during the 54-13 win by Jay County. The Patriots forced 40 turnovers in the contest.

Schwieterman continues to excel

Two weeks ago, Renna Schwieterman started her first collegiate game.

Collegiate check-up

As each game passes, she is making coach Maria Marchesano's decision look better and better.

The 2023 Jay County graduate followed up a strong week since being entered into the starting rotation, with three more solid games for the Purdue Fort Wayne women's basketball team.

Schwieterman is also starting to receive league recognition, being named the Horizon League freshman of the week for averaging 12 points per game, 4 rebounds per game, shooting 52.95 from the floor, helping Purdue Fort Wayne to a hot start in league play and being the second-leading scorer among freshmen in the league.

Since being named a starter, the Mastodons (7-2, 2-0 Horizon League) have gone on a five-game winning streak that includes wins against Horizon League foes Oakland (84-66) and Wright State (71-60).

Schwieterman opened up league play on Nov. 30 against the Golden Grizzlies by dropping 10 points on 4-of-7 shooting with one steal and one block.

On Dec. 3, she was the team's leading scorer with 14 points as it took down the Raiders. She

added six rebounds to her line score as well.

She played a season-high 29 minutes in the contest as well.

During the two game stretch she shot 44.4% beyond the arc.

Dealing with foul trouble on Wednesday, Schwieterman scored six points in a 57-46 win over Belknap. She had three rebounds, an assist and a steal as well.

She currently sits fourth on the team in points per game at 10.1.

Olivia Patch FRHS — 2020

Played five minutes in the Hillsdale College women's basketball team's 88-52 win over Ohio Dominican on Dec. 2.

The Fort Recovery graduate did not take a shot in the contest.

Freeney inducted

Former Colt is in college Hall of Fame

By EMILY LEIKER
syracuse.com
Tribune News Service

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Syracuse football great Dwight Freeney was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame this week.

Freeney and the 17 other player inductees, plus the four coach inductees, were recognized with plaques at the 65th NFF Annual Awards Dinner.

A highlight reel featuring some of Freeney's biggest plays, including sacks against Michigan's Tom Brady and Virginia Tech's Michael Vick, was played prior to him receiving his plaque.

This year was Freeney's third time on the college hall of fame ballot.

Syracuse's star defensive end from 1998-2001, Freeney was a unanimous first team All-American in his final collegiate season. He was a

two-time unanimous first team All-Big East pick.

Freeney finished ninth in 2001 Heisman Trophy voting. He was named Co-Defensive Player of the Year with fellow hall of famer Ed Reed (Miami), and he was a finalist for the Bednarik, Lombardi and Nagurski awards.

"I think for me, I just played every play like it was my last," Freeney said. "You never know when it's gonna be over. Us defensive linemen, we like to have a certain mentality. You gotta come around that corner like something's wrong with ya, and you have to make the offensive tackle feel like, 'There's something wrong with this kid. He won't stop.' That was my mentality."

Freeney's name can still be found in both NCAA record book's and among Syracuse's top 10 lists.

He was drafted No. 11 overall in the 2002 NFL Draft by the Indianapolis Colts, for whom he played 10 seasons and won a Super Bowl with in 2007. Freeney also had stints with San Diego, Arizona, Atlanta, Seattle and Detroit.

He retired in 2017 as a seven-time Pro Bowl pick and a three-time first team All-Pro.

NY can replace haul sent for Soto

By RANDY MILLER
nj.com
Tribune News Service

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Days of Yankees and Padres haggling over what Juan Soto's return should be finally ended early Wednesday afternoon. As the Rule 5 Draft was taking place and these mostly uneventful Winter Meetings were coming to an end, an agreement was made, a 2-for-5 that would send a generational talent to the Bronx.

Aaron Judge would be getting a superhero sidekick.

The only holdup was the Padres signing off on the medicals for Michael King and three other pitchers coming their way.

Brian Cashman and Aaron Boone waited for a couple hours before checking out of the Gaylord Opryland Resort and heading to Nashville International Airport. They waited there for an hour, then spent 2 1/2 hours in the air flying from Tennessee to New York. When their jet landed, they checked their phones and discovered the

wait wasn't over.

Fixing the Yankees

A few hours after day turned to night, the Padres finally were content that they weren't getting damaged goods and told the Yankees around 10:30 New York time that it was a done deal.

These are exciting times for the Yankees because they're getting a 25-year-old superstar, but this was no steal of a deal.

During his Winter Meetings media availability this week, Cashman was right in saying you have to give to get.

To get Soto for maybe just one season in a corner outfield spot and two-time Gold Glove winner Trent Grisham for fourth-outfielder duties, the Yankees reluctantly agreed to include Michael King as the centerpiece of their offer. King was a great multi-innings reliever for most of the last two seasons, then even better last August and September when he was starting games.

See NYY page 7

A CHRISTMAS STORY

The Musical

Book by Joseph Robinette. Music and lyrics by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul. Based on the motion picture *A Christmas Story* distributed by Warner Bros., written by Jean Shepherd, Leigh Brown and Bob Clark, and upon *In God We Trust: All Others Pay Cash* written by Jean Shepherd. Produced with permission of Warner Bros. Theatre Ventures and Dalfie Entertainment.

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