

The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

www.thecr.com

\$1

Contract measure changes reviewed

Lehman's bill creates a procedure for contracts

By RAY COONEY
The Commercial Review
INDIANAPOLIS — A bill that would lay out a process for county contracts is seeing some revision.

Indiana House Bill 1158, lays out procedures for county elected officials to enter into contracts, was amended Thursday by the Senate Local Government Committee and was held for likely additional amendments by author State Rep. Matt Lehman (R-Berne).

Lehman, who represents the northern third of Jay County as well as Adams and Wells counties, presented the amended version of the bill Thursday.

The original version of the bill called for proposed contracts to be submitted to the county auditor, forwarded to the president of the executive branch (county commissioners) for review within 15 days and then either approved or returned to the elected official with a written explanation regarding what needs to be changed. It also detailed that commissioners would be able to specify language that contracts must include.

The legislation stemmed from a Lake County court case in which commissioners sued the sheriff over such contracts.

Changes via the amendment call for contracts to be submitted to the county auditor, who would then date stamp them and forward a copy to the president of the county commissioners and the county attorney. A 20-day period for review would follow. If the county executive finds the contract acceptable, it can move forward. If it is not found acceptable, it can be refused and returned to the elected officeholder with a written explanation.

Once approved, all contracts would return to the auditor's office and then posted onto Indiana Gateway, the collection platform for local units of government to submit required data to the State of Indiana.

See **Contract** page 2



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Two medalists

Jay County High School seniors Tony Wood (left) and Cody Rowles (right) both made the podium this weekend during the IHSAA Wrestling State Finals at the Ford Center in Evansville. Wood finished in fourth place at 138 pounds, the highest Patriot placing in a decade, and Rowles was eighth at 126 pounds. For more on the state finals, see page 10.

Medicaid \$ create uncertainty

By WHITNEY DOWNARD
Indiana Capital Chronicle
indianacapitalchronicle.com

Over the last several years, COVID-19 and its economic aftershocks have broken budgets one way or another as states scrambled to stabilize during fiscal upheaval. Indiana missed the target in 2020 after it delayed tax collections only to be inundated with federal assistance in the following years, ending back-to-back periods with billions of dollars in its reserves.

But most recently, the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) announced a "variance" in its Medicaid budget of nearly \$1 billion in December, a departure from a rosy April forecast.

Mid-year gaps aren't unusual by themselves, observed Josh Goodman, a senior officer and

Pew researcher: States must plan for possible deficits

researcher with Pew Charitable Trusts' State Fiscal Health project. State revenues are more sensitive following a recession, when economic activity plummets, while expenses might increase with more people utilizing government programs — potentially triggering some mid-year gaps.

"It's happening somewhere almost every year or in a few places almost every year," Goodman said. "That's because of things

like ... some particular program or some particular part of a program where costs are higher than expected, especially for an entitlement program."

States can't perfectly predict enrollment in Medicaid, one of those entitlement programs where anyone who qualifies must receive services.

Goodman said his organization's research indicated the importance of preparing for possible

budget deficits and exploring whether to use tax increases, rely on reserves or cut services ahead of time.

"Unless they have a plan, (states) rely on a few options which aren't always the best options and so planning ahead can be really important," Goodman said.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, hundreds of billions of dollars transferred from the federal government to state coffers to support pandemic health programs and shore up finances in a time of economic uncertainty.

This aid, combined with an unexpectedly hot economy, boosted Indiana's finances and allowed state leaders to pay down debt, triggered two rounds of taxpayer refunds and gave the budget writers the flexi-

bility to pay for billions of dollars of capital projects with cash.

But funds are drying up and states must transition away from those dollars.

One of the largest forms of federal spending came in the form of Medicaid. In exchange for not booting residents off of their Medicaid rolls, the federal government increased its share and covered 71.2% of Indiana's expenses, rather than the traditional 65%.

This meant that even as Indiana's enrollment swelled the state actually saved money on the program.

But that boost in funding is slowly returning to normal levels and states can again remove beneficiaries who no longer qualify, meaning Indiana will again have to pick up the tab.

See **Uncertainty** page 6

Israel planning attack

By ALISA ODENHEIMER and GWEN ACKERMAN
Bloomberg News
Tribune News Service

Israel will launch a ground offensive on the Gaza city of Rafah unless hostages still held by Hamas are released by the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan next month, a member of the Israeli war cabinet said on Sunday.

"The world must know and Hamas leaders must know: if by Ramadan our hostages are not home the fighting will continue to the Rafah area," Benny Gantz said in a speech Sunday to American Jewish leaders in Jerusalem.

If there is an assault, he

Ramadan deadline set for releasing hostages

pledged that the military would facilitate the evacuation of Gazan civilians in coordination with the U.S. and Egypt to minimize casualties. Israel has been under intense pressure, including from some of its closest allies, to scrap the planned assault on Rafah or at least ensure civilians are allowed to

leave beforehand and are sent to safe places.

More than one million Palestinians fled to Rafah in the southern part of the Gaza Strip as the Israeli military focused on northern and central areas during the start of the Israel-Hamas war.

See **Planning** page 6



Tribune News Service/AFP via Getty Images/Menahem Kahana

Israeli battle tanks roll along the border in southern Israel Monday amid the ongoing battles between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas.

Weather

Jay County's low dropped to 14 degrees Sunday. The high was 34. Tonight's forecast calls for a low in the mid 30s. Expect mostly sunny skies Wednesday with the high climbing into the mid 30s.

Wednesday night's low will be in the lower 40s with a 40% chance of rain and more rain to continue Thursday. See page 2 for an extended outlook.

In review

The Chill & Chili event that was scheduled for Wednesday at The Waters of Dunkirk rehabilitation and skilled nursing center, formerly known as Miller's Merry Manor, has been canceled because of sewer problems. A make-up date has not yet been announced.

Coming up

Wednesday — Coverage of this week's Fort Recovery Village Council meeting.

Thursday — Reporting from this week's Portland City Council meeting.



Capsule Reports

Three vehicles

Damage estimated at more than \$100,000 after a three-vehicle crash along Indiana 67 near county road 1150 West about 2 a.m. Feb. 13.

Devin R. Adams, 30, Celina, Ohio, was driving his 2006 Dodge Ram truck northeast on the highway. He told Jay County Sheriff's Office he was "in and out of a daze" when he noticed a southwest bound 2022 Freightliner Cascadia, driven by 31-year-old Adilet Nurbek Uulu of Oakdale, Pennsylvania, on the center line of the road. He told police he swerved to avoid a collision and instead overcorrected, causing him to clip the guardrail along the side of the road and crash into the vehicle Uulu was driving. The accident also caused Uulu to hit a northeast bound 2010 Kenworth driven by 60-year-old Duane D. Decker of Spencerville, Ohio.

Uulu suffered from broken

ribs and a chest contusion, according to the accident report. All three vehicles were towed.

Front collision

Two Indiana residents complained of injuries after their cars crashed into one another along U.S. 27 about 6 p.m. Friday.

Jakob L. Donathan, 21, Berne, was driving his 2008 Pontiac G6 south on the highway just north of county road 800 North when he began to lose control of his vehicle because of slick road conditions. His car went into the northbound lane of travel, causing Donathan to crash into a 2018 Nissan Pathfinder driven by 65-year-old James M. Fosnaugh of Geneva.

Donathan complained of lower leg pain, and Fosnaugh complained of back pain. Both refused medical treatment at the scene.

Both vehicles were towed,

with damage estimated between \$10,000 and \$25,000.

Rolled vehicle

A Huntington man lost control of his vehicle along U.S. 27, causing him to drive off the road and roll about 5:38 p.m. Friday.

Matthew J. Hoagland, 40, was driving his 1996 GMC Sierra north on the highway near county road 800 North when his trailer started to bend in half, causing his vehicle to go off the west side of the highway and roll twice.

Hoagland's vehicle was towed, with damage estimated between \$10,000 and \$25,000.

Intersection slide

A Ridgeville woman slid the vehicle she was driving through the intersection of county roads 250 West and 900 South, causing her to crash into a Lisbon man's vehicle about 4 p.m. Saturday.

Melissa S. Price, 39, Ridgeville, was driving a 2012 GMC Acadia north on county road 250 West and approached its intersection with county road 900 South. She lost traction because of ice on the road, causing her to glide through the intersection and crash into an eastbound 2019 Dodge Ram 1500 driven by 31-year-old Joshua D. Chalfant.

Damage is estimated between \$10,000 and \$25,000. Price's vehicle is registered to Michelle and Scott Mumbower of Ridgeville.

Upside down

A Portland man lost control of his vehicle and rolled it upside down along county road 300 east about 3:26 p.m. Saturday.

John E. Fields, 69, was driving north on the road near county road 300 North when his 1990 Ford Ranger lost traction on a patch of ice, causing him to

hit a snow embankment and roll his vehicle upside down.

Fields' vehicle was towed. Damage is estimated between \$2,500 and \$5,000.

Hit rail

An Eaton man lost control of the vehicle he was driving on a bridge on Indiana 67 and hit the railing about 4:20 p.m. Friday.

Brandon J. Riggs, 43, was driving a 2009 Ford Ranger south on the highway near county road 75 South when the truck began to slide on the road. He told police the vehicle spun out of control and hit the guardrail along the bridge.

The truck Riggs was driving is registered to Judith K. Stuart of Albany.

Damage is estimated between \$1,000 and \$2,500. The railing — it's owned by Indiana Department of Transportation — wasn't damaged, according to a Jay County Sheriff's Office report.

CR almanac

| Wednesday 2/21 | Thursday 2/22 | Friday 2/23 | Saturday 2/24 | Sunday 2/25 |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| | | | | |
| 51/43 | 52/33 | 43/25 | 39/31 | 52/39 |
| Mostly sunny skies are in the forecast for Wednesday, with wind gusts as high as 20 mph. | There's a 70% chance of rain on Thursday, with the low at night dipping to 33 degrees. | Mostly sunny on Friday. Temperatures may reach the low to mid 40s during the day. | Another day of mostly sunny skies on Saturday, when the high will be in the upper 30s. | Sunday's weather looks to be sunny and warm, with a high of 52 degrees. |

Lotteries

| | |
|---|---|
| Powerball Estimated jackpot: \$330 million | 59-60-63-64-79 Cash 5: 10-13-15-28-37 Estimated jackpot: \$635,000 |
| Mega Millions Estimated jackpot: \$493 million | Ohio Sunday Midday Pick 3: 1-2-9 Pick 4: 6-9-1-8 Pick 5: 9-4-4-5-9 Evening Pick 3: 1-8-0 Pick 4: 4-6-5-4 Pick 5: 2-3-4-9-4 Rolling Cash 5: 7-16-21-33-34 Estimated jackpot: \$850,000 |
| Hoosier Sunday Midday Daily Three: 1-1-8 Daily Four: 4-1-0-3 Evening Daily Three: 6-9-7 Daily Four: 6-2-6-5 Quick Draw: 2-6-7-11-19-21-26-35-38-39-43-51-57- | |

Markets

| | |
|--|--|
| Cooper Farms Fort Recovery Corn.....4.20 March corn4.20 Wheat4.31 | March beans11.57 Wheat 5.21 |
| POET Biorefining Portland Corn.....4.19 March corn4.21 April corn4.24 | ADM Montpelier Corn.....4.02 March corn4.04 Beans11.59 March beans11.62 Wheat5.20 |
| The Andersons Richland Township Corn4.09 March corn4.09 Beans11.57 | Heartland St. Anthony Corn.....4.17 March corn4.29 Beans11.38 March beans10.89 Wheat4.91 |

Today in history

In 1872, New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art opened to the public for the first time. Now known as one of the most popular museums, "The Met" presents more than 5,000 years of art from around the world today.

In 1943, a volcano erupted in Mexico, burying two villages in its wake. Hundreds of homes were destroyed from the eruption, which started in an open field.

In 1944, during the Battle of Eniwetok, United States forces took the Eniwetok Atoll. The action cost 37 American lives and wounded another 94. Approximately 800 Japanese soldiers were killed and 23 taken prisoner.

In 2018, the Jay County High School boys basketball team dominated the Woodlan Warriors in a 62-32 win, keeping the Patriots at that time undefeated in the Allen County Athletic Conference.

— The CR

Citizen's calendar

| | |
|---|--|
| Today 10 a.m. — Dunkirk Police Pension Board, city building, 131 S. Main St. 5:30 p.m. — Portland City Council, fire station, 1616 N. Franklin St. | port, 661 W. 100 North. 6 p.m. — Jay County Council, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland. |
| Wednesday 4 p.m. — Portland Board of Aviation, air- | Thursday 5:30 p.m. — Jay/Portland Building and Planning Inter-local Joint Board, Community Resource Center, 118 S. Meridian St., Portland. |

Contract ...

Continued from page 1
The amended bill also requires that all contracts be entered into in the name of the county rather than the officeholder. The process applies to contracts that are necessary for officeholders to carry out their constitutional duty and for which funds are already appropriated.

"I do think this is a little cleaner bill than what came out of the House," said Lehman. "Pretty much the same language with maybe a little more definitive definitions and some clarity ..."

Representatives of Indiana County Commissioners and the Association of Indiana Counties testified in favor of the amended bill Thursday. Indiana Sheriff's Association and Indiana Auditor's Association representatives expressed support as well but also raised concerns about the possibility of county attorneys, who are not elected officials, being able to halt a contract.

"We're committed to working with the partners on this ... to find the right wording for an amendment for next week," said Mike

Biberstine, a lobbyist for Indiana Sheriff's Association.

Sen. Scott Alexander (R-Muncie) questioned funding and asked if county councils would be involved in the process. Lehman noted that the process applies only to contracts for which money has already been appropriated. Any additional appropriations would still need to go through county councils.

Sen. Rodney Pol (D-Chesterton) asked about possible exemptions for emergencies and whether a minimum dollar threshold should be set. Lehman responded that he feels emergencies are already addressed in other areas of Indiana Code. He added that putting in a minimum dollar amount for the contract process would be up to each individual county. (The bill allows county commissioners to establish language that must be in each contract as well.)

The bill will return to the Senate Local Government Committee for possible additional amendments and a vote this week.

Also Thursday, a pair of bills authored by Sen. Travis Holdman

(R-Markle), who represents Jay, Adams, Wells and Blackford counties and part of Allen County, cleared second reading through the House without amendment and were headed for third reading Monday afternoon.

Holdman's Senate Bill 20 would expand the option of establishing riverfront districts. The districts, which allow communities to provide additional liquor licenses at a lower cost in order to help drive economic development, are currently only available to cities. The bill would allow towns to establish the districts as well.

Senate Bill 58, also authored by Holdman, would exempt specialty or gourmet markets with a restaurant permit from income requirements to sell carry-out alcohol. It does so by exempting such businesses from rules regarding their percentage of gross retail income that comes from the sale of alcoholic beverages. It defines a specialty or gourmet market as one that holds a beer retailer's permit and wine retailer's permit, sells miscellaneous specialty foods and does not sell automotive fuel.

Felony arrests

Drug possession

Two Jay County residents were arrested Friday for drug possession and other charges.

Justin E. Bragg, 32, 3606 S. 1000 West, Dunkirk, and Harleigh C. Shea Zigler, 27, 328 W. Third St., Portland, are each charged in Jay Superior Court with Level 6 felonies for possession of methamphetamine and neglect of a dependent and Class C misdemeanors for possession of paraphernalia. They were both released from Jay County Jail on \$3,000 bonds.

Domestic battery

A Portland man was arrested Friday for domestic battery.

Life T. Farley, 20, 118 W. Second St., was preliminarily charged with a Level 6 felony.

He was being held on a \$35,000 bond in Jay County Jail.

SERVICES

Wednesday

Dorris, Richard: 1 p.m., Marion National Cemetery, 1700 E. 38th St., Marion.

March 2

Meier, Nancy: 4:30 p.m., Kuhn's Den, 442 E. Line St., Geneva.

Service listings provided by

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GRAPHIC PRINTING
NEWSPAPERS

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Swift bullying simply makes no sense

By JAMES FULKS

The Commercial Review

Around here there's been plenty of anti-Taylor Swift stuff being shared on social media via derisive memes and such.

I honestly don't get why so many seem OK with spouting such hatred for her.

She has absolutely zero control of how much camera time the NFL and network camera opera-

**Fulksy
Mayhem**



tors give her during games.

It's pretty apparent that she seems to genuinely like a guy who is playing the sport at a very high

level, and one would expect her to want to support him as he plays by attending the games he's in.

If they were up to no good, out committing crimes together, social media would absolutely glorify them and memes would call her his "Ride Or Die" ... Yes, we've all seen that so you know it's true.

Unfortunately, far too many now use the bully

pulpit of social media to be ... well ... exactly that. Bullies.

As to Taylor, I also distinctly recall, years ago, Madonna, Britney Spears, Miley Cyrus, the list goes on and on, of women who made it big, only to be berated and insulted, having their names and reputations besmirched by pettiness and outright jealousy of their fame and fortune.

I said it years ago about

Madonna: She was absolutely an expert at marketing herself to her fan base and appealing to them.

Taylor is the same.

When a guy like Sir Paul McCartney says she's got the songwriting and performing talent that only comes around once in a generation, then I will say I am betting he knows of what he speaks.

For those sharing hate

and posting all of the out-right jealousy of her success (and yes, if you admit it, deep down, that's exactly what it is), you'll see, hating her just for the sake of hating her with no basis in reason, says a lot more about you, than it does about her.

Like her music or not, she's certainly a truly talented songwriter and performer, and no amount of social media bullying is going to change that fact.

Disease prognosis doesn't encompass life

DEAR ABBY: I was recently diagnosed with a progressive disease for which there is no cure. It will affect me physically and mentally as I age. For now, I'm treating the symptoms and trying to minimize their effect on my day-to-day life. But this is certainly not how I expected to live out my "golden years."

I have shared my diagnosis with close family and friends, but until my symptoms become more pronounced, I'm choosing to move forward in as positive a way as possible, without dwelling on the inevitable health issues that lie ahead.

My problem is, some of these friends and family members continually quiz me on the status of my condition. I don't believe I'm in denial, but I choose not to speak or think about my illness every minute of the good days I still have. This disease will take over much of my future soon enough. When voicing these thoughts in response to their queries, I have been met by some with surprise and it's perceived as insulting by others who are showing concern for me.

How do I convey my desire for privacy regarding my health without offending well-wishers? This problem is sure to become

**Dear
Abby**



more frequent as the disease progression becomes evident to more people. — GOOD FOR NOW IN MICHIGAN

DEAR GOOD: Too many people are "endlessly curious." If you prefer to take each good day as it comes and not dwell on or be quizzed about your illness, that should be your privilege. You have a right to some privacy.

Ask these well-meaning individuals to please not discuss your illness further because, when you are ready to discuss it, YOU will raise the subject. If that message offends anyone, so be it.

.....

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend just started his first year of college. We have been together for about a year and a half. He isn't super far away, but his mom is restricting us from seeing each other "too often." Every time I go

to visit him, I pay for my own train ticket. I don't really think my visiting him is affecting her in any way. We both want to be respectful of her and her wishes, but when it's possible to see him, I'd like to be able to.

A relationship is hard to maintain seeing each other only once a month. He does come home for breaks and some weekends, which I am grateful for. I just don't feel she should be making those choices for us. I want to communicate to her about this, but I don't want to seem disrespectful or rude. What should I do? — THREE IS A CROWD

DEAR THREE: Your boyfriend's mother wants to be sure her son concentrates on his education with as few distractions as possible. She may also be fearful that the two of you are becoming intimate before you are mature enough to manage the consequences. If you are smart, you will refrain from having the discussion you are contemplating. If the visitation schedule is too restrictive, your boyfriend is the person who should talk to his mother about it.

.....

DEAR ABBY: For nearly three

years, I have been seeing a man who later asked me to move in with him. He abruptly stopped emailing me four months ago. I waited several weeks and then emailed him, telling him how upset and hurt I was and asking what was going on. I found out — NOT from him — that he has been in a relationship with another woman for the last five years. I am furious! I am at a loss about what I should do. — SHATTERED IN OREGON

DEAR SHATTERED: The man may have abruptly stopped communicating with you because the woman he has been involved with found out about the romance he was having with you. Have you heard from him since? (If not, she may have rendered him speechless.) It's important you find a way to discharge some of your righteous anger. Believe it or not, physical exercise can help. Talking to friends or a therapist may also lessen the urge to explode. Learn whatever lesson there is to learn from this and move on. Do NOT let it rule your life. Everyone makes mistakes, and he was one.

.....

DEAR ABBY: Without consulting me, my husband gave my father's U.S. Army uniform to my brother complete with honor patches. My sister-in-law now wears it as a fashion statement, saying that she is a "Sullivan." This is not sitting well with me. She is only a Sullivan by marriage.

I feel it is disgraceful to prance around in something you haven't earned, and it's insulting not just to my late father, but to all who have served. Her father also served, but she isn't wearing his uniform. — DISRESPECTED IN THE MIDWEST

DEAR DISRESPECTED: Your husband should not have given YOUR brother the uniform without first consulting you because it wasn't his property to give. What your SIL is doing with it seems less like a fashion statement and more like an example of "stolen valor," which may be offensive to many people, particularly those who have served. It is not a crime by virtue of the fact that she isn't impersonating a soldier. But it would be in better taste for her to wear her own father's uniform rather than your dad's.

Community Calendar

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

Today

JAY COUNTY PASTORS AND CHAPLAINS — Meet at 11:30 a.m. on the third Tuesday of each month in the chapel at Indiana University Health Jay Hospital.

BRYANT COMMUNITY CENTER EUCHRE — Will be played at 1 p.m. each Tuesday. The public is welcome.

FRIENDS OF JAY COUNTY LIBRARY — Will meet at 6 p.m. the third Tuesday of each month at the library.

A BETTER LIFE - BRIANNA'S HOPE — A faith-based recovery group for substance abuse. Meal starts at 6 p.m. and the meeting is from 6:30 to 8 p.m. every Tuesday at the

Nazarene Fellowship Building across from the Nazarene church, 249 E. Center St., Dunkirk. For more information, call Amanda Price at (765) 283-2107.

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

Wednesday

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

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

PORTLAND ROTARY

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

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

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

Thursday

CELEBRATE RECOVERY — A 12-step Christian recovery program meets at 10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. each Thursday at A Second Chance At Life Ministries, 228 S. Meridian St. in Portland. For more information, call Brenda Eads at (260) 726-9625 or Dave Keen at (260) 251-8792.

LAWYERS IN LIBRARIES — Free and confidential consultations

with a lawyer are available from 10 a.m. to noon at Jay County Public Library, 315 N. Ship St., Portland. Consulting is available on topics including divorce, custody, guardianship, tenant-landlord issues, bankruptcy, debt collection, estates and immigration. Those interested in participating should sign up in advance at the library, 315 N. Ship St., Portland, or by calling (260) 726-7890.

DEMENTIA SUPPORT GROUP — Meets at 5:30 p.m. at Persimmon Ridge Rehabilitation Centre, 200 N. Park St., Portland.

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. For more information, call (260) 251-3259.

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.

Sudoku

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

Level: Beginner

Saturday's Solution

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

The objective is to fill a nine-by-nine grid so that each column, each row, and each of the nine three-by-three boxes (also called blocks or regions) contains the digits from 1 to 9 only one time each.

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Home Improvement

Our spring home improvement special section will be distributed in The Commercial Review (Portland), The News-Gazette (Winchester), The News Times (Hartford City) and The News and Sun (Dunkirk)

Contact Lindsey at L.Cochran@thecr.com or (260) 726-8141

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1/2-page B&W **\$300**

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Business card (2x2) **\$60**

Deadline for ads is Wednesday, March 6

Space for color ads is limited and will be on a first-come, first-serve basis.

GRAPHIC PRINTING NEWSPAPERS

Applying shouldn't be so torturous

Los Angeles Times
Tribune News Service

The federal government had supposedly made it much easier to apply for college financial aid. Except there was a glitch and students could not access the new online tool they needed. Applications were delayed by months and the numbers of students seeking aid plunged.

That's the scene in 2024. No, wait, that was 2017. Actually, it's both.

It seems as though each time the dreaded Free Application for Federal Student Aid is made easier, it (temporarily) gets a lot worse. Never has the problem been bigger than this year, when colleges have been forced to put off their application deadlines to allow more students to work their way through the impossibly

Guest Editorial

mangled FAFSA system, when they can at all.

Students are getting stuck in repeating loops, or told by the website that they already have accounts when they don't, and if they try to access this unheard-of account, they can't. Some parents who don't have Social Security numbers find they can get through the system without one. Others can't. School counselors who try to help their students get error messages but no indication of what the problem is or how to

overcome it. The U.S. Education Department, which is responsible for the FAFSA, has set up help lines, but the lines are swamped with calls and many students can't get through. As a result, the number of applications is half what it normally would be at this point.

This week, U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said the department would soften many of the requirements for income verification, a complicated process for colleges that shouldn't be necessary anyway, since the new system uses families' federal tax returns. He's also lowering other bureaucratic hurdles.

It's a good start but not nearly enough. Cardona should hire a host of quickly trained people to answer phones or work with fam-

ilies online to fill out their paperwork then and there. He also must stand prepared to offer additional financial aid to students who miss their colleges' deadlines through no fault of their own.

Above all, the public is owed an explanation of what appears to be a bungled rollout of the new system. The online application, which had been promised by late October, was late by nearly three months. And once it was up and running, the endless loops, mysterious error messages and other glitches made it look more like a rush job in its early phases than a sophisticated system that would lighten the load on families.

Democratic lawmakers want guarantees that Cardona will make sure students don't fall

through the cracks. Republicans want a Government Accountability Office investigation of the still-chaotic FAFSA rollout. Both are right.

But lawmakers also played a significant role in creating the financial-aid pandemonium this year. The Department of Education was ordered to produce this new, simpler FAFSA system at the same time that it had to start collecting student loan payments, which had been on hiatus because of the COVID-19 pandemic. That's two massive projects, without receiving the funding the department had estimated it needed to produce a smoothly running operation. The price of that cheapness will be high.

That's something to remember the next time the federal government wants to "simplify" FAFSA.

Low-income voters are sleeping giants

By SARAH ANDERSON
OtherWords

Amidst all the uncertainty over the 2024 election, one thing's for sure: turnout will be key. This February, the Poor People's Campaign announced plans to mobilize a powerful yet often overlooked voting bloc: the 85 million eligible voters who are poor or low-income.

The campaign determined that if this bloc voted at the same rate as higher-income voters, they could sway elections in every state. But most voting drives — and candidates — still ignore this segment of our society.

"The conventional wisdom — which isn't very wise — is that the poor don't care about voting," said Poor People's Campaign Policy Director Shailly Gupta Barnes at a February 5 press conference. "But that's just not true."

What's the biggest factor discouraging low-wage people from exercising this basic right?

"Political campaigns do not talk to them or speak to their issues," explained campaign co-chair Bishop William J. Barber II. "In our election cycles sometimes we have 15, 20 debates for president. In 2020, not one of those — not 15 minutes — was given to raising questions about how the policies of that particular party or politician would impact poor and low-income people."

The Poor People's Campaign is organizing to push the concerns of poor and low-income people into the center of the 2024 political debate. Their goal is to mobilize 15 million "infrequent" poor and low-income voters.

Will politicians listen? At the press conference, pollster Celinda Lake ticked off one battleground state after another where a small increase in participation could determine the outcome. She pointed out that in Arizona, 40% of voters are low-wage — and in 2020 the margin of victory was just 0.03 percent.

What are some of the most pressing issues on the Poor People's Campaign agenda?

The campaign and the Institute for Policy Studies just co-published fact sheets on the interlocking problems that hit the poor hardest: poverty and inequality, systemic racism, ecological devastation and militarism. Several speakers spoke about these problems from their own personal experiences. "I'm tired of companies

Sarah Anderson



and billionaires buying politicians who are pushing people deeper into poverty and debt," said Matthew Rosing of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. "I've put up with the thankless toll of minimum wage retail jobs and back-breaking construction jobs in a state that has 19 billionaires. And because of our flat tax, they pay the same state income tax rate as I do."

Linda Burns, a former Amazon warehouse assembly line worker, has struggled for basic labor rights and decent health care benefits. Burns was a supporter of the valiant union drive at the Bessemer, Alabama, facility that Amazon eventually crushed.

Burns says she was fired for her union activity, which led to the loss of her health benefits right before a needed surgery related to a workplace injury.

"I've worked too hard to have nothing," said Burns. "We have to stand up for our rights."

Veronica Burton spoke about the economic gulf in her community of Beloit, Wisconsin. A woman who lives "around the corner" from her is a billionaire while Burton is struggling to pay bills in the face of multiple rent increases and the low wages she earns at an understaffed child care center.

On top of dealing with her own problems, Burton often finds herself trying to help parents of the children under her care.

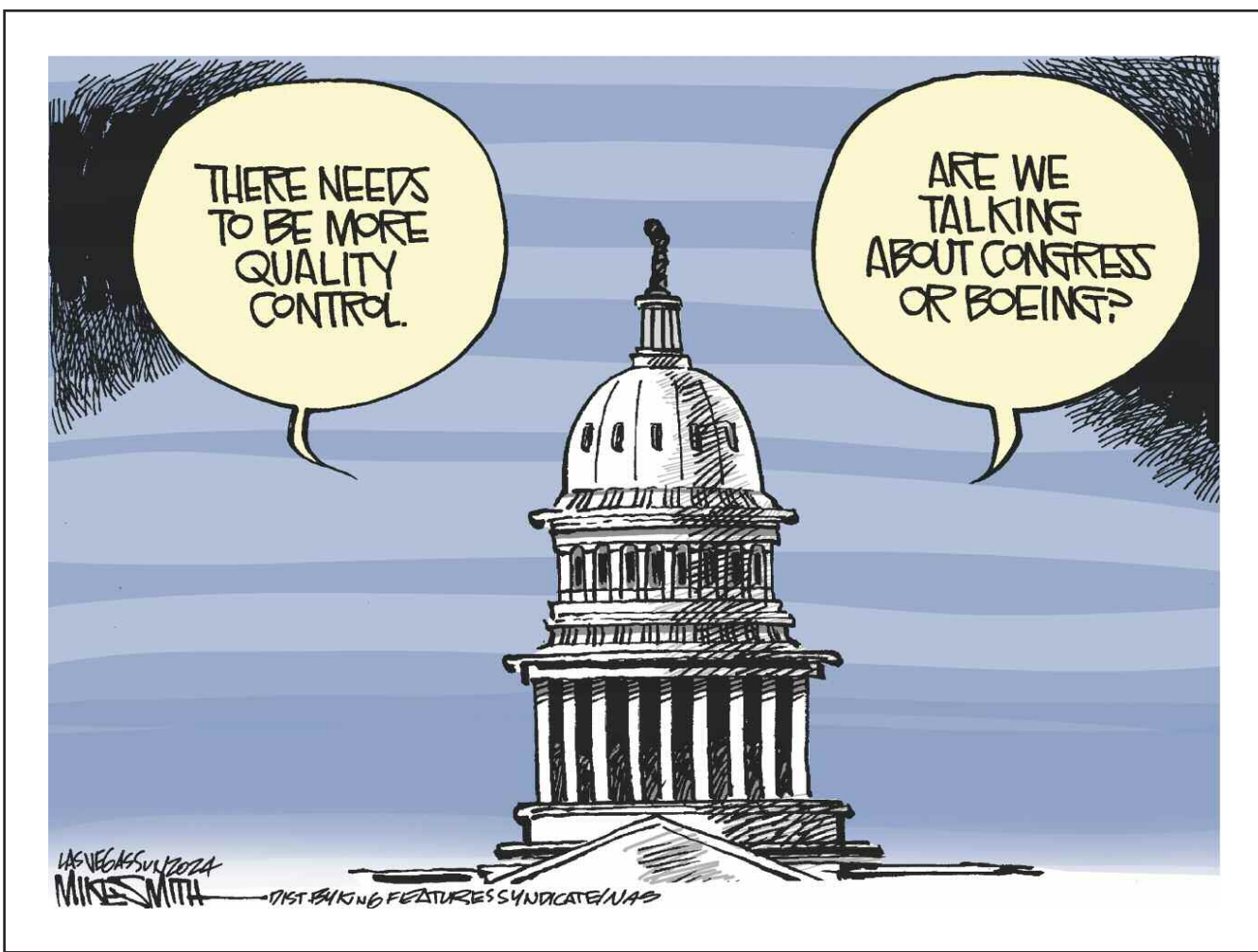
"We've had mothers unenroll their children because they can't afford their asthma medicine," she said.

These and other organizers in more than 30 states are ready to put on their door-knocking shoes in the lead-up to this year's election and beyond.

"We are not an insurrection," Bishop Barber said. "But you better believe we are a resurrection — a resurrection of justice and love and righteousness."

.....
Anderson directs the *Global Economy Project* and co-edits the *Inequality.org* website at the *Institute for Policy Studies*.

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Impeachment was cowardly

By PATRICIA LOPEZ

Bloomberg Opinion
Tribune News Service

In a fit of pique, stung by their inability to take action on the border crisis, House Republicans have resorted to their usual go-to moves: distraction and retribution. It is a playbook that has been used before in state government, with a far less satisfying result: frustration.

The impeachment of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas by a single vote was certainly disgraceful, as Republicans presented no credible evidence of any wrongdoing. They simply don't like the policies of President Joe Biden and needed to change the subject from their own policy failures — including a previous failed attempt to impeach Mayorkas. The bar should be much higher. As Biden rightly noted shortly after the vote Tuesday night: "History will not look kindly on House Republicans for their blatant act of unconstitutional partisanship."

But the impeachment was more than just petty — it was also dangerous and corrosive. When Republicans in Minnesota and Wisconsin took out their frustrations with Democratic governors in recent years, it threatened the states' ability to attract top candidates to appointed positions. Who is going to take a job if they could be fired simply for following the chief executive's agenda?

In Minnesota, where only 17 commissioners had been rejected in the previous 85 years, two major commissioners were removed within a month in 2020. Senate Republicans were using the votes to force Governor Tim Walz's hand on other issues. Unlike with Mayorkas, a vote against the commissioner in question meant she had to vacate the

Patricia Lopez



office immediately. The following year, a third commissioner resigned rather than face the prospect of being forced out. Others were threatened, including a well-respected health commissioner during the pandemic.

The result? Disruption and delays in attending to far more important tasks that had a tangible impact on Minnesotans, such as the issuance of pandemic rebate checks.

So commonplace did the practice become that in August 2020 the Republican leader of the House tweeted: "Looks like the Senate is executing a prisoner today." Eventually some Republicans began to have misgivings about the tactic, which created disruption but ultimately little change. The practice was ended once Democrats regained narrow control of the Senate in 2023 and changed the rules.

Then there is the case of Wisconsin, where the Republican Senate voted to oust eight appointees of Democratic Governor Tony Evers on a single day in October 2023. (In the preceding 40 years only five had been rejected.) As Evers noted at the time: "This is insanity, and this is an issue of democracy — Republicans have to stop doing this. These Wisconsinites are completely qualified to do the job they've been asked to do, and they are volunteering their time, talent, and expertise without pay to serve their neighbors and our state."

The weaponization of the impeachment process also undermines its power to force accountability and preserve the system of checks and balances. It will become just another political tool. Consider what Republican Representative Mark Green of Tennessee, chair of the Homeland Security committee, said when asked whether he was concerned about who might replace Mayorkas: "Of course I am, but if that person doesn't do his job well, we will impeach his ass too."

Of course, the impeachment vote will not remove Mayorkas. That would require the vote of two-thirds of a Senate narrowly controlled by Democrats.

If Mayorkas is smart, he will use his trial to show what the administration has done to improve security on the border, and to highlight the abject failure of Republicans to allocate the funding they know is needed. The opportunity is rare: a high-profile forum to publicize the Republican Party's repeated failures to address a crisis at a time when that crisis is a top concern for Republican voters.

Democrats need to be as unafraid on the issue of immigration as they are on abortion. Strong and consistent border enforcement; firm but humane treatment of those who cross over; swift and fair handling of court cases; and sustained and focused attention to the causes of illegal migration — all are necessary to resolve the border crisis. Not one of those issues was advanced, much less addressed, by the Republicans' cowardly decision to impeach Alejandro Mayorkas.

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Lopez is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering politics and policy.

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—Thomas Jefferson

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Photo provided

Bank donates

First Bank of Berne recently made a \$4,000 donation to Arts Place to support its Arts in the Parks classes and other special arts programming. Pictured, from left are Berne bank branch manager Kaitlyn Roby, visual arts director Allison Smiley and Jay County Center director Shawnda Roussey of Arts Place, and Portland bank branch manager Tracy Carpenter.

Community awards nominations open

Nominations are open. Jay County Chamber of Commerce has opened nominations for the 2023 Jay County Community Awards.

Nominations will be accepted across 10 categories — business, innovator, citizen, industry, not-for-profit, young professional and community group of the year, Dunkirk Community Commitment, Small Community Commitment and Lifetime Achievement. Forms are available at form.jotform.com/240283847835162 or the chamber office. The deadline is Feb. 28.

Finalists will be announced in April and the Jay County Community Awards Banquet and Ceremony will be held in May.

The first LIFT Jay meeting of 2024 is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 27. Cindy Cash will present "Love 2 Learn: How to Make Face-to-Face Meetings Interactive." Cost for the event, which includes the meal and program, is \$18 for chamber members and \$23 for non-members. To register, visit jaycountycommerce.com.

The chamber also preparing for the next radio spotlight day with WPGW Radio on Thursday, March 7. Those interested in participating can pick up a sign-up form at the chamber office, 118 S. Meridian St., Portland. The deadline to sign up to participate is March 1.

For more information, visit JayCountyChamber.com.

Elected delegate

First Bank of Berne president and CEO Kent Liechty was elected recently to the Independent Community Bankers of American Delegate Board.

The ICBA board works with its national policy positions and programs. Liechty will also be involved in grassroots activities in Indiana and serve as a liaison

Business roundup

between independent bankers and the IBCA staff.

"Kent is a respected member of his community and a dedicated advocate for our industry," said ICBA chairman Derek B. Williams, president and CEO of Century Bank & Trust in Milledgeville, Georgia, in a press release. "We are fortunate to have Kent serve as a volunteer and contribute his valuable experience and unique perspective for the benefit of our industry, as well as the customers and communities we serve."

Director named

East Central Indiana Small Business Development Center announced last week that Judy Porter has been named as its new regional director.

Porter has worked at the center for nearly a decade, including as interim regional director since November. She takes over for Karen Lloyd, who resigned from the role at that time.

"As we welcome Judy Porter to an elevated leadership role, we recognize her unwavering commitment to the Indiana SBDC's values of professionalism, collaboration, and client-centered excellence," said Andrew Carty, state director for the Indiana Small Business Development Center, in a press release. "Her proven nine-year track record of results-oriented service ensures that the East Central Indiana SBDC will be led with dedication and effectiveness, serving our communities with integrity and innovation."

Porter listed several points in her plan for the center's future:

- Capitalizing on the region's past achievements.
- Forging new connections and fortifying existing ties in local communities.
- Overhauling and presenting new training resources.
- Maintaining the local pitch competitions

"I have a passion for helping small businesses and entrepreneurs reach their full potential," Porter said. "That could mean a one-person business or a 500-person business. Everyone has a unique situation, and our team will meet them where they are."

Clinic moves

Adams Memorial Hospital's StatCare urgent care clinic has moved to its new location at 1401 N. 13th St., Decatur.

The facility is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily. It will be open from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on holidays.

"We are excited about the relocation of StatCare to our new medical office building in Decatur, which will allow us to better serve our community," said Dr. Scott Smith, CEO and medical director at Adams Health, in a press release. "The new location offers improved accessibility and space for our patients."

Planning outreach

Meridian Health Services last week announced plans to expand its community outreach.

The organization plans to implement or expand its Back-to-School Physical Fit Fair, Give Kids a Smile free dental exam program, Flu-Lapalooza for free flu shots, its speaker series and the annual City Fit fitness fair in Richmond. The speaker series, which has been held previously in Muncie, Richmond and Lafayette, will be expanded to include schools.

"Today, Meridian's impact is felt in every corner of the state," said Meridian president and CEO Seth Warren in a press release. "We have the responsibility as one of the leading providers of integrated health services in Indiana to offer more free events that give greater access to important health services and information, especially to those in traditionally under-served communities."

For more about Meridian's plans, visit rialzo.meridianhs.org.

Nominations open

Indiana Chamber of Commerce is accepting nominations for its 2024 Ogletree Deakins Human Resources Professional of the Year Award.

The award goes to full-time human resources employees in Indiana who "have made significant contributions to their organization over the past year through implementation of best practices, organization design and effectiveness, and alignment and accomplishment of the strategic direction of their company."

The award will be presented during the Indiana HR Conference April 30 through May 2 and the Indiana Convention Center.

"Managing human resources is one of the most vital functions of any business or organization," says chamber president and CEO Vanessa Green Sinders in a press release. "It can also be an extremely complicated task, and the job has only gotten more challenging since the pandemic with hybrid work schedules, labor shortages and changing employee needs, and government regulations."

To nominate, visit indianachamber.com/hrpro. The deadline is March 8.

Goal reached

McDonald's announced Friday that it has reached its goal of using 100% cage-free eggs.

The fast food chain partnered with supplier Cargill and farms across the country to reach the target. It originally set the goal in 2015 to be cage-free by the end of 2025.

"Our journey to move to sourcing 100% cage-free eggs in the U.S. was a huge undertaking — made uniquely possible by our McDonald's owner/operators, egg producers, and our supply chain working together as one team," said Bob Stewart, McDonald's senior vice president, in a press release. "I am incredibly proud of what we achieved together and the positive impact we will continue to make on the path toward a more sustainable future."

McDonald's bought almost 2 billion eggs in the U.S. in 2023.

Hosting events

The Central Indiana Chapter of the American Society of Safety Professionals and the Indiana Chamber of Commerce will host the 2024 Indiana Safety and Health Conference Feb. 26, through 28.

Former Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback and current NFL analyst Terry Bradshaw will be the featured speaker for the conference. The event will also include the Indiana Forklift Rodeo, speakers, a 10-hour course for general industry, an innovation showcase and the governor's workplace safety awards luncheon.

For more information, or to register, call (800) 824-6885 or email events@indianachamber.com.

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Widow says she will keep fighting

Bloomberg News
Tribune News Service

Alexey Navalny's widow said she'll continue his fight against Russian President Vladimir Putin as she met with top European Union officials weighing fresh sanctions over the Kremlin critic's death.

"The main thing we can do now for Alexey and for ourselves is to keep up the fight," Yulia Navalnaya said in a video address to his supporters posted Monday on social media. "Fight and don't give up. I'm not afraid, and you shouldn't be afraid of anything."

EU foreign affairs chief

Josep Borrell said earlier Monday that Navalnaya would attend a meeting of the bloc's foreign ministers in Brussels to give a "message about how to support the political opposition inside Russia." Member states will "for sure" propose sanctions against Russia, he said.

Putin has made no comment on the death of his most formidable domestic opponent in a remote Arctic prison since it was announced Friday. U.S. President Joe Biden has said "Putin is responsible" for Navalny's death, which happened as the Russian president is preparing to gain a fifth

term in March elections in which he faces no serious competition.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the death of the imprisoned opposition leader displayed the "ruthlessness and perfidy" of Putin and his regime, noting that Navalny's widow said he was in good health. "So everything indicates, and what she said really confirmed that, that he was deliberately murdered," von der Leyen told reporters in Berlin on Monday.

News of the fatality came as a surprise to officials working in the Kremlin, according to a person

familiar with the matter: It's unlikely Navalny's wife will be able to lead the opposition or represent a challenge, the person said.

Officials haven't given a cause of death for 47-year-old Navalny at the IK-3 prison colony in Russia's northern Yamalo-Nenets region, while local authorities continue to bar his family from even viewing his body.

Navalny's spokeswoman, Kira Yarmysh, said his mother and lawyers were prevented from entering the Salekhard morgue nearest the prison on Monday and staff refused to say whether the body was

being held there. The Investigative Committee told them a probe into the activist's death has been extended for an unspecified period, she said.

Under Russian law, authorities are required to transfer the body of a deceased person to family representatives within 48 hours once the cause of death has been established. There's no time limit on an investigation.

Authorities are taking every action necessary to investigate the circumstances of the death, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Monday, according to the Interfax news service.

Police detained at least 400 people over the weekend as they tried to lay flowers at makeshift memorials to Navalny in Moscow and other cities, in spite of the atmosphere of fear created by an intensifying Kremlin crackdown on protests since Putin ordered the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

"If she has decided to engage in political activity, then I will definitely support her," self-exiled oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky said of Navalnaya, adding that he favored a coalition of opposition groups with "Yulia as one of the leaders."

Uncertainty ...

Continued from page 1

The state anticipates that Medicaid enrollment will remain elevated even once it finishes reviewing 2.3 million enrollees and won't return to the pre-pandemic 1.5 million beneficiaries.

These changes, after years of booming state revenues, present a challenge to those crafting the state's two-year budget. West Virginia reported its own \$114 million Medicaid deficit partially came from these factors combined with rising drug costs and court orders to expand benefits and payments. Florida, similarly, said the "unwinding" process in Medicaid contributed to its own shortfall of a couple hundred million.

But in an email to the Capital Chronicle, FSSA said the above challenges had nothing to do with the \$1 billion "variance."

"The forecast variance is unrelated to the end of the enhanced federal Medicaid dollars. The state has planned well and properly accounted for the expected end of the enhanced federal dollars," said FSSA.

The agency has revealed little about how the mistake occurred, saying lagging data used in the April forecast contributed as well as higher-than-expected enrollment in Medicaid programs. Specifically, they point to one program paying Legally Responsible Individuals — often parents

— as attendants for medically complex children.

State leaders have decided to use a combination of reserves and surplus money to cover the initial deficit. And they are looking at program cuts of roughly \$300 million — which includes the attendant care program along with pausing a 2% Medicaid indexing among other changes — to limit future growth.

Goodman said he was surprised at how suddenly the deficit was revealed, noting that other states were more public about expense reports and not just revenue reports — the latter of which Indiana releases monthly.

"(In) Connecticut, as an example of this ... there's a report that comes out every month that says — not just for Medicaid but generally for the budget — 'here's what we expected for spending. Here's what we expected for revenue,'" Goodman said. "Therefore, the budget we adopted is on course to have a surplus or on course to have a deficit." There's this careful and publicly available monitoring of whether there's a shortfall or not and that can help us if a problem starts to emerge."

Such a maneuver may have signaled to the public earlier about emerging issues in the Medicaid budget. Costs for attendant care

doubled from \$60 million over the summer to \$120 million by December and were a key driver behind the \$1 billion gap.

But requiring reporting of such warning signs has — so far — been dismissed in the House by the Republican supermajority.

Republican leadership killed an agency bill rather than discuss amendments targeted at FSSA and Medicaid. Last week another Democratic amendment on auditing the agency died on a party-line vote. Previous amendments would have required quarterly FSSA reports to the State Budget Committee.

"The Holcomb administration made a \$1 billion mistake in estimating the cost of Medicaid," Rep. Ed DeLaney, D-Indianapolis, said about the death of his latest authored amendment. "We owe it to the taxpayers to make this administration explain how on earth a mistake of this magnitude occurred in the first place. Getting to the bottom of this is the only way to prevent citizens from being punished in the future for government blunders."

To trim costs, FSSA has decided to cut families out of the attendant care program and transition them to structured family caregiving, which means that parents previously getting livable wages up to \$15 per hour will now get a smaller per diem.

In response, families have repeatedly rallied at the Indiana Statehouse and participated in numerous press conferences, lambasting the agency for a change they say would plunge many of them into poverty.

FSSA has declined to share how many families are impacted by the change with the media, House Representatives and even Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, who has called for an agency audit.

Republicans, from Gov. Eric Holcomb to caucus leaders, have pointed to increasing Medicaid costs as a cause for concern in the state budget. On Wednesday, Holcomb emphasized the need to keep Medicaid, the fastest-growing part of the budget, sustainable and affordable.

"There is room to work with each and every one of the families (impacted) as we go forward ... we want to make sure that they're receiving services," Holcomb said. "... We have to make sure that we can provide those services. How we do it is the absolute key and the FSSA will continue to work directly with each and every family."

As health care costs increase across the board, Goodman said states saw the same bumps for Medicaid enrollees and incarcerated residents as well as under their own insurance policies for state employees.

"I think part of the big ques-

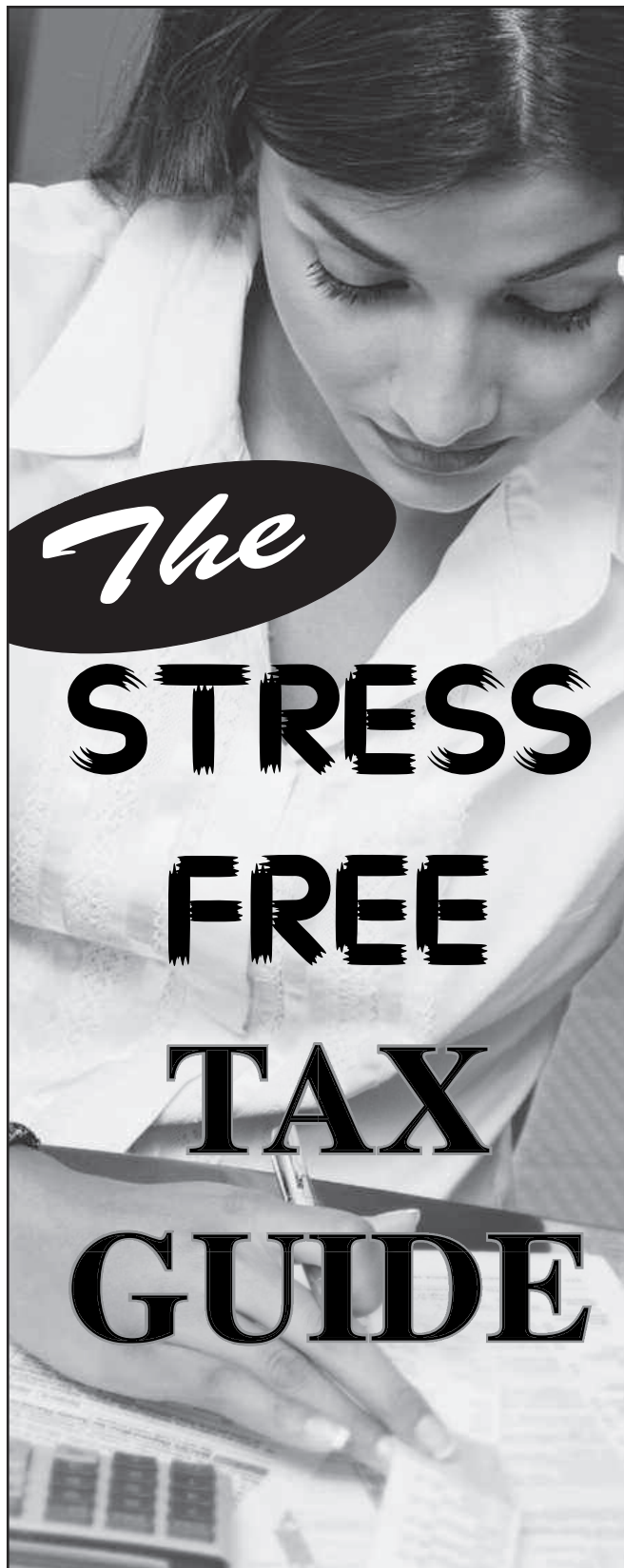
tion going forward is what the future of ... these rapid increases in Medicaid costs and Medicaid becomes a larger and larger and larger share of state budgets," Goodman said. "... I think a great question, if the state's having problems with Medicaid problems or anything else, what is the long-term picture?"

He continued, "Is this something (that's) one time, a sort of idiosyncratic situation and a particular part of the Medicaid program? Or do we have a long-term imbalance here that would sort of require more structured solutions to our budget?"

Goodman noted that managed care programs in Medicaid tend to have more stable and predictable budgets, as opposed to fee for service. Under managed care, the government pays a lump sum upfront to managed care entities to cover enrollees and manage their services. Under fee for service, the government pays afterward.

Indiana is transitioning to managed care for long-term care and services for aged and disabled Hoosiers and is set to go live this summer. All of Indiana's other Medicaid programs have already transitioned.

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Planning ...

Continued from page 1
Ramadan, a month during which Muslims fast in the day, is expected to start on March 10.

"To those saying the price is too high, I say this very clearly: Hamas has a choice," Gantz said. "They can surrender, release the hostages, and this way, the residents of Gaza can celebrate the holy holiday of Ramadan."

It was unclear from Gantz's remarks if Israel is insisting on both a release of captives and a surrender from Hamas to stop the attack on Rafah, and — if the group doesn't lay down its arms but lets captives go — whether an assault would only be held off until after Ramadan. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is yet to comment on Gantz's speech.

Netanyahu has previously said a ground operation in Rafah is essential to eliminate Hamas' remaining battalions and that those calling for Israel to stay out of the area are essentially calling for Israel to lose the war.

Gantz is an opposition leader and former head of the Israel Defense Forces. The war cabinet, made up of just five people, was formed days after the war erupted on Oct. 7 and is meant to see Israel through the conflict.

According to recent surveys, Gantz is more popular than Netanyahu among Israelis and is considered the most suitable candidate to become the next prime minister. His National Unity party is polling far ahead of Netanyahu's Likud.

Gantz said Israel would continue fighting until its goals are achieved, which, in addition to destroying Hamas and bringing the remaining hostages in Gaza home, include

removing the threat of Hezbollah in Lebanon.

He also told the Jewish leaders he opposes unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state, and that following the Oct. 7 massacre by Hamas, such a step is not the way to regional stability and peace.

The war with Hamas began when the Iran-backed group infiltrated from Gaza and carried out attacks across southern Israel, leaving about 1,200 people dead and taking more than 250 hostage. According to the Hamas-run health ministry, more than 28,000 Palestinians have been killed in the ensuing war. It hasn't said how many of those are combatants.

Around 130 people are still thought to be held hostage in Gaza, though the Israeli government says only about 100 are alive.

Rafah is close to Gaza's border with Egypt and the main point of entry for aid into the Mediterranean enclave. The Egyptian government has consistently said it won't take in refugees en masse, arguing that would pose security risks and be a betrayal of the Palestinian cause for an independent state because Israel may not let them back in to Gaza again.

Israel's said that people in Rafah can instead move to parts of Gaza further to the north.

In recent days, satellite imagery has shown construction activity in Egypt about two miles from the border with Gaza, with land being cleared and a wall being built. That's prompted speculation the country is making contingency plans to host Palestinians fleeing the conflict — something Egyptian officials strenuously denied over the weekend.

SPEED BUMP Dave Coverly



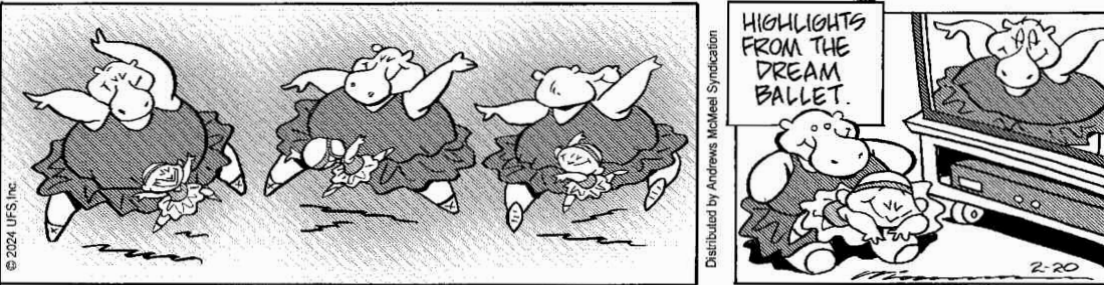
THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



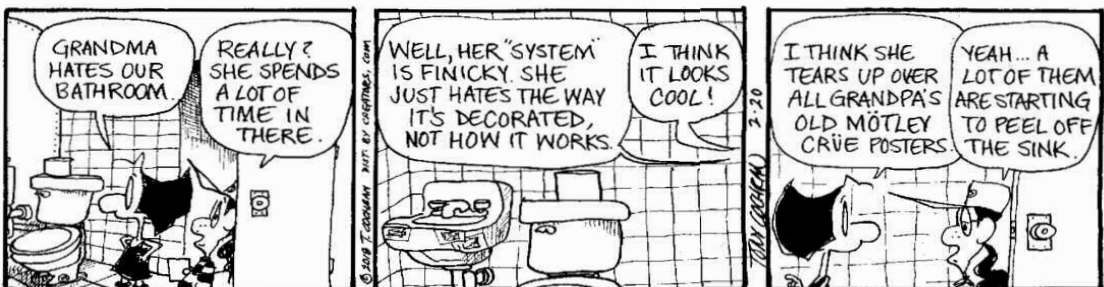
Peanuts



Rose is Rose



Agnes



Hi and Lois



Between Friends



Blondie



Snuffy Smith



Beetle Bailey



Contract Bridge By Steve Becker

A question of probabilities

South dealer.
Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ A 4 2
♥ 7 5 3
♦ A K 8 7 6
♣ 10 5

WEST
♠ 8 3
♥ K 9 4 2
♦ J 5
♣ Q J 9 7 2

EAST
♠ 9 7
♥ J 10 8
♦ Q 10 9 3
♣ 8 6 4 3

SOUTH
♠ K Q J 10 6 5
♥ A Q 6
♦ 4 2
♣ A K

The bidding:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
3 ♠ Pass 4 ♠ Pass
4 NT Pass 5 ♥ Pass
5 NT Pass 6 ♠ Pass

Opening lead — queen of clubs.

Perhaps the simplest approach is to cross to the king of diamonds and lead a heart to your queen. If the finesse succeeds, you're home. If it fails, you still have a chance to recover by cashing the ace of diamonds and ruffing a diamond, making the slam if the opposing diamonds are divided 3-3 (a 36% chance).

Alternatively, after drawing trump, you could start by cashing the A-K of diamonds and ruffing a diamond. If the suit breaks 3-3, you make seven. If it doesn't, you can cross to dummy with a trump and try the heart finesse.

If you choose either of these lines of play, you have about a 68% chance of making the slam. Not bad, of course, but not as good as a third method of play, which is to lead a low diamond from your hand at trick four and play low from dummy!

Bridge is basically a game of percentages, which means you'll do well if you follow the odds, and you won't if you don't.

Assume you're declarer at six spades and West leads the queen of clubs. You win with the ace and cash the K-Q of spades, finding the trumps divided 2-2. You must now decide which of three lines of play to adopt.

Let's assume East wins and shifts to a heart. You go up with the ace, cash the A-K of diamonds, discarding a heart, and ruff a diamond to establish dummy's last diamond. You then lead a trump to the ace and discard the heart queen on the diamond eight to make the slam. This approach succeeds whenever the diamonds are divided 3-3 or 4-2, an 84% probability. It is therefore the best percentage play.

Tomorrow: Hot potato.
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2-20

CRYPTOQUIP

V BEVQY BEZ PNMB MVQCZL
VQ BENB OVC BNPZQB MEKH
HNM N ONQCYKY LZMVJZQB,
MK VB ZQJZZ VQ N BENV.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: HIT POP SONG THAT'S A MOTIVATIONAL ANTHEM TO THE LABRADOR DOG BREED: "DON'T STOP RETRIEVIN'."
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals K

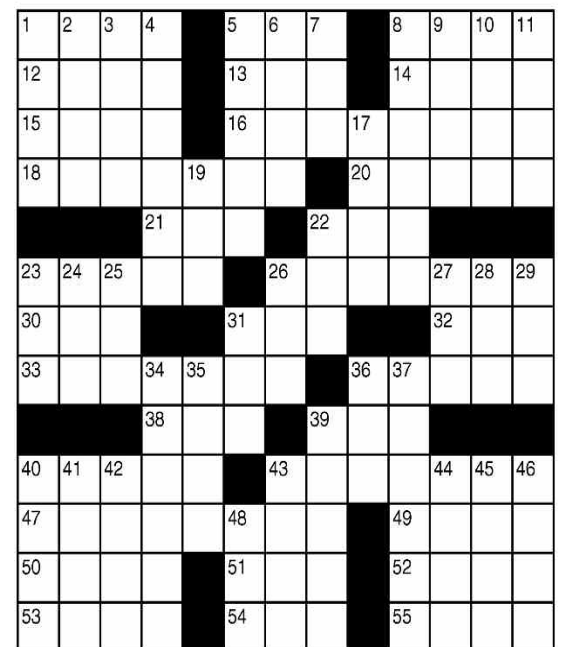
CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 Asian desert
 - 5 Enjoy the Alps
 - 8 Jet speed measure
 - 12 Bakery fixture
 - 13 Sushi fish
 - 14 Anti-oxidant berry
 - 15 Give temporarily
 - 16 Soaked
 - 18 "Sister Carrie" author
 - 20 Peace goddess
 - 21 Needle-fish
 - 22 "Let's Get Loud" singer's nickname
 - 23 Big copier brand
 - 26 Bridal boutique buys
 - 30 Epoch
 - 31 Dawn goddess
 - 32 Prefix with athlete
 - 33 German city
 - 36 Allied
- DOWN**
- 2 Done with
 - 3 Nota —
 - 4 Deep blue
 - 5 Passover feast
 - 6 Actress (Abbr.)
 - 7 — -de-
 - 8 Computer shortcuts
 - 9 Massage target
 - 10 Nomandy city
 - 11 Conceal
 - 17 Aswan's river
 - 19 Swing band instrument
 - 22 Third-yr. class
 - 23 Deleted
 - 24 Mess up
 - 25 "Norma —"
 - 26 Mafia boss
 - 27 Map lines
 - 28 Before
 - 29 Caesar or Vicious
 - 31 Comics cry
 - 34 Indian instrument
 - 35 Historic Scott
 - 36 Farm female
 - 37 The Last Frontier
 - 39 Van Gogh venue
 - 40 1506, in letters
 - 41 Region
 - 42 Abound
 - 43 Hood-wink
 - 44 Synthesizer pioneer
 - 45 Deco artist
 - 46 Antique cars
 - 48 Passing craze

Solution time: 22 mins.



Yesterday's answer 2-20



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SATURDAY, MARCH
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10 A.M.
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Cole Luthman — 937-658-1380
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The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Jay County's No. 18 Cody Rowles wraps up New Palestine's 13th-ranked Gunner Butt on Saturday during the quarterfinals of the 126-pound bracket at the state finals. Rowles dropped the match to Butt in sudden victory overtime and went on to finish eighth.

Fourth ...

Continued from page 10
"I think Tony just showed that he's right there," said Myers. "He's able to wrestle with those kids. ... Tony was feeling pretty good toward the end of the day. I felt like that may have been the best match that he wrestled the whole tournament. He was really moving his feet well. Super close to having that first takedown and he couldn't get past that arm. Ison was able to adjust and ended up getting the two. I'm really proud of the state tournament Tony had."

Rowles was looking good for a trip to the semifinals early Saturday against Rioux as he had a 4-1 lead in the second period. But the third-ranked wrestler in the state got an escape and takedown to pull even, then rode out Rowles in the third period. In sudden victory, Rowles was unable to hold off Rioux's double-leg takedown as he fell 6-4.

He took a lead again in the consolation semifinals with a double-leg takedown of No. 10 Matthew Maldonado. But the Merrillville junior responded with a headlock for a takedown and two-point near fall and went on to hand Rowles a 9-3 defeat.

The seventh-place match was the fourth in a series between Rowles and Union City's Bradin Daniels, who were once teammates at East Jay Middle School. (Daniels knocked off Rowles for the sectional title, Rowles avenged the loss in the regional championship and Daniels won the showdown in the semi-state finals.) Rowles fell behind 2-0 and could never lock in his headlock on the Indian junior as he fell 5-0.

"How many kids Friday night would love to have that medal?" said Myers. "We were just so close to bumping into the semifinals there in that overtime match. We even had a double where we had hips covered and couldn't quite stop that momentum that he had."

"After that we had a tough match with the Maldonado kid, and then Daniels again. That's kind of the way it happens sometimes. ...

"He was able to have a great state tournament series and finally get a medal. I think he'll be able to look back at his state finals as a pretty big success even though Saturday was a little rough on him."

The Patriot seniors closed out a pair of outstanding careers.

Rowles finished it off with a state medal after having already won four Allen County Athletic Conference championships, three sectional titles and three regional championships. He posted a career record of 140-22.

Wood is a two-time state medalist, two-time semi-state champion, the school's first four-time regional champion, a four-time sectional champion and a four-time Allen County Athletic Conference champion. He edged Eric Hemmelgarn for second on the school's all-time wins list — 2020 graduate Mason Winner is at the top with 170 — as he finished at 163-13.

"I've been really blessed to have the opportunity to coach those guys," said Myers, the emotion of the moment beginning to hit him. "It's gonna be an adjustment for us not to have those guys in the room and out on the mat. But at the same time, you've just got to be so thankful that you had the opportunity to have them representing Jay County, had the opportunity to coach them, had the opportunity to have them in the room. ... I'm really proud of what they've been able to accomplish."

Daytona 500 postponed due to weather

By EDGAR THOMPSON

Orlando Sentinel
Tribune News Service

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — The Daytona 500 was postponed until 4 p.m. Monday due to inclement weather for just the third time in the illustrious 66-year history of NASCAR's showcase event.

Sunday morning's decision signaled that NASCAR officials wanted to avoid fans having to play the waiting game on Florida's Surf Coast.

Previously, bad weather — including heavy rains or even tornado warnings — had created multiple-hour delays, forced crowds of more than 100,000 to seek shelter, wait out storms and return for the race.

Fans travel long distances in many cases and spend several

days in anticipation of the Daytona 500. A postponement could leave their efforts unrewarded. Monday being Presidents' Day, a national holiday, will help to mitigate the exodus of an expected sell-out crowd.

Sunday's decision creates the first-ever Monday doubleheader at Daytona International Speedway. The Daytona 500 will run after the NASCAR Xfinity Series season opener set for 11 a.m.

The 4 p.m. weather forecast calls for sunny weather with a 4% chance of rain and 15-mph winds from the north.

The 2012 race was the first Daytona 500 moved to Monday. The race ultimately spread out over three days before Matt Kenseth won in overtime early Tuesday morning. The late fin-

ish followed a 7 p.m. Monday start time and two-hour delay after Juan Pablo Montoya hit a jet dryer on Lap 160 during a caution, causing fuel to leak and catch fire.

Bad weather pushed the 2020 Daytona 500 to a Monday holiday finish, this time following hours-long delays. The race ended with Denny Hamlin's third Daytona 500 win, but is best remembered for Ryan Newman's terrifying final-lap crash.

The Daytona 500 has a rich history associated with Presidents' Day weekend and its George Washington's Birthday holiday predecessor (Feb. 22).

The first Daytona 500 won by Lee Petty in 1959 was actually held on Feb. 22, Driving for Petty Enterprises, Pete Hamil-

ton won the 1970 race on Feb. 22.

But the most famous Presidents' Day weekend staging occurred in 1979 when Richard Petty took the checkered flag for his sixth of his record seven wins in the race as an infield fight ensued between Bobby Allison and Cale Yarborough.

A final-lap wreck between Donnie Allison and Yarborough led to a heated argument that escalated when Bobby rushed to his brother's defense in the track infield. A massive TV audience — because a Presidents' Day weekend storm left tens of millions snowbound after a major storm pounded the Northeast — boosted the sport's popularity.

More than 15 million viewers tuned in, a record until 2001

when Darrell Waltrip's maiden Daytona 500 win after 17 tries drew more than 17 million viewers.

Ratings for the Daytona 500 have dipped the past decade. The last six Daytona 500s have drawn 9.2 million viewers or fewer, down from a record 19.355 million during Jimmie Johnson's 2006 win.

The lowest-rated Daytona 500 followed major weather delays and an early-morning finish.

Michael McDowell's 2021 win followed a 5-hour, 40-minute weather delay with drivers still having more than 425 miles to go when the race resumed. A TV audience of just 4.908 million tuned in, more than two million fewer than the 7.33 million in 2020 and more than 3 million less than any 500.

90 SALE CALENDAR

PUBLIC AUCTION SATURDAY MARCH 23rd, 2024
TIME 10:00 A.M.
LOCATED:
7136 N 650 E. BRYANT, IN.
OPEN HOUSE:
Sunday, March 10TH from 1-3 pm, or for private showing phone auctioneers.
REAL ESTATE
80 Acres in Section 7, Wabash Township. To be offered in tracts and combinations.
Tract 1: 2.5 Acres with 3 bed, 2 bath brick ranch style home containing 1792 sq ft finished living area. Attached 2 car garage, central air, lofted barn, detached garage/grainery.
Tract 2: 66 Acres Practically all tillable with frontage on SR 67 and CR 650 E.
Tract 3: 2.4 Acres practically all tillable with frontage on SR 67 and CR 650 E.
Tract 4: 7 Acres Wooded with access on CR 650 E.
TRACTOR – ANTIQUES – MISC
Farmall A Tractor with cycle bar mower, belly mower and blade. 5 gallon milk can. CC saw. Chicken crate. Old gates. Walking plows. Old toys. Tinker toys and games. Hand painted lamp globe.
OWNER: Laux Trustee SHAWVER AUCTIONEERING AND REAL ESTATE
AC31800004
Zane Shawver
Lic. #AU10500168
260-729-2229
Pete D. Shawver
Lic. #AU19700040
260-726-5587
Check AuctionZip for more photos.

90 SALE CALENDAR

PUBLIC AUCTION SATURDAY MARCH 9th, 2024
TIME 10:00 A.M.
LOCATED:
4023 S 800 W. REDKEY, IN.
REAL ESTATE
Tract 1: 25 Acres in Section 5, Jefferson Township with 23 acres tillable, balance being non-tillable and road frontage.
Tract 2: 9.6 Acres in Section 6, Jefferson Township. Practically all tillable. For more information phone auctioneers. Land will be sold at 4023 S 800 W, Redkey IN.
TRUCK – TRACTOR – FARM EQUIPMENT – MISC
Bambauer hog manure hyd. hose reel, PTO driven on transport. PTO hog manure pump. Wilson 45' hopper bottom grain trailer. 1000-500-300 gallon fuel tanks.
Work benches.
ANTIQUES – HOUSEHOLD
Plastic Marathon sign. Garden plows. Garden planter. Oil cans. Maytag washer and dryer. Gladiator refrigerator. Full line of household furnishings and furniture.
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250 PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION
NO. 38C01-2402-EU-000008
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF JAY COUNTY, INDIANA
Notice is hereby given that Linda Byers was on the 14th day of February, 2024, appointed Personal Representative of the estate of Robert L. Byers, deceased, who died on the 9th day of July, 2014.
All persons who have claims against this estate, whether or not now due, must file the claim in the office of the Clerk of this Court within three (3) months from the date of the first publication of this notice, or within nine (9) months after the decedent's death, whichever is earlier, or the claims will be forever barred.
Dated at Portland, Indiana, this 14th day of February, 2024.
Jon Eads
Clerk of the Circuit Court for Jay County, Indiana
COCKERILL & COCKERILL
235 South Meridian Street
P. O. Box 247
Winchester, IN 47394
(765) 584-3241
Attorneys for Estate
CR 2-20,27-2024-HSPAXLP

250 PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice

STATE OF INDIANA
JAY COUNTY, SS:
IN THE JAY CIRCUIT COURT
IN THE MATTER OF THE
ESTATE OF
TREADESA M. JACKSON,
Deceased
38C01-2402-EU-000006
NOTICE OF UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION
Notice is hereby given that LOREN W. JACKSON was, on the 6th day of February, 2024, appointed personal representative of the estate of TREADESA M. JACKSON, deceased, who died on October 28, 2023, and was authorized to administer said estate without court supervision.
All persons who have claims against this estate, whether or not now due, must file the claim in the office of the clerk of this court within three (3) months from the date of the first publication of this notice, or within nine (9) months after the decedent's death, whichever is earlier, or the claims will be forever barred.
Dated at Portland, Indiana, this 7th day of February, 2024.
Jon Eads
Clerk, Jay Circuit Court
Kristin L. Steckbeek
Attorney No. 27029-02
DALE, HUFFMAN & BABCOCK
30 Premier Avenue
Bluffton, Indiana 46714
(260) 824-5566
Attorney for Estate
CR 2-13,20-2024-HSPAXLP

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250 PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice

NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE
By virtue of a certified copy of a Judgment and Decree to me delivered from the Clerk of the Circuit Court of White County, Indiana, in Cause No: 38C01-2311-MF-000025, wherein
FIRST FINANCIAL BANK
Plaintiff,
V.
UNKNOWN HEIRS AND DEVISEES OF GREGORY L. DOTSON, MICHELE D. DOTSON, UNKNOWN OCCUPANT, AND NICHOLAS FINANCIAL, INC.
Defendants.
CAUSE NO: 38C01-2311-MF-000025
I will offer for sale at public auction to the highest bidder on the 7th day of March, 2024 at 10:00 AM on said day at the Jay County Courthouse, 120 N. Court Street, Suite 305, Portland, IN 47371, Jay County, Indiana, the fee simple title together with the rents, profits, issues and income or so much thereof as may be sufficient to satisfy said judgment, interest, cost and accruing cost of the following described Real Estate, to-wit:
LOT NUMBER SEVENTEEN (17) AND EIGHTEEN (18) IN BLOCK NUMBER THIRTY-FOUR (34) IN THE TOWN, NOW CITY OF DUNKIRK, RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK A, PAGE 120 IN THE OFFICE OF THE RECORDER OF JAY COUNTY, INDIANA
More commonly known as 215 E. Commerce Street, Dunkirk, IN 47336
Tax No. 38-09-08-104-112,000-014 (Lot 17) and 38-09-08-104-116,000-014. (Lot 18)
The Sheriff's Department does not warrant the accuracy of the street address published herein.
Subject to all liens, encumbrances, rights of redemption, easements and restrictions of record not otherwise foreclosed and extinguished in the proceedings known as Cause #38C01-2311-MF-000025 in the Circuit Court of the County of Jay, Indiana and subject to all real estate taxes, and assessments currently due, delinquent or which are to become a lien.
Said sale to be without relief from valuation or appraisal laws. If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled only to a return of the deposit paid. The Purchaser shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee or the Mortgagee's attorney.
Larry R. Newton Jr., Deputy
JAY COUNTY SHERIFF
Michael E. Anderson, #26001-45
Attorney for Plaintiff
ANDERSON & ANDERSON, P.C.
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CR 2-6,13,20-2024-HSPAXLP

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Avoid ...

Continued from page 10
Matthew Fisher was the only Patriot to make the finals heat in any swimming event. He came in as the seventh seed for the 100-yard backstroke with a time of 1 minute, 5.66 seconds. Huntington North's Luke Stults earned the eighth seed with a 1:06.35.

Fisher ended up falling to eighth after swimming a 1:06.12 in the finals.

"He went a little slower than he did at prelims because when he hit the wall and had a bad turn on lap one," Slavik said. "Had he not misjudged the wall, he certainly would have been a couple seconds faster than Thursday."

"All things considered, he was our lone finalist this year. I'm super proud of how he did in both his events as a sophomore."

Jay County had 11 entries in the consolation finals.

- 200 medley relay team (ninth)
- 400 freestyle relay team (ninth)
- 200 freestyle relay team (10th)
- Joseph Dow - 200 freestyle (10th) and 500 freestyle (12th)
- Peyton Yowell - 100 freestyle (13th) and 50 freestyle (15th)
- Fisher - 200 individual medley (14th)
- David Keen - 100 butterfly (15th)
- Lincoln Clamme - 100 breaststroke (15th) and 100 freestyle (16th)



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Jay County High School freshman Bryden Carter plunges into the pool during the preliminary round of diving during the sectional meet Saturday. Carter's fifth-place finish was the highest of any Patriot in the meet.

Roundup ...

Continued from page 10
Reece Guggenbiller, Troy Homan and Rex Leverette all finished with five points, while Mason Diller and Gavin Faller hit a pair of shots each. Eli Lennartz also had two points in the final quarter.

Braden Keating of Tri-Village put up three triples to also outscore all of the Indians with nine.

Girls move on

MINSTER, Ohio — The Fort Recovery girls bowling team came up 91 pins short of a Division II sectional championship at Community Lanes on Friday.

St. Marys Memorial earned the sectional championship with 3,572 pins while Fort Recovery (3,481), Coldwater (3,070), and Parkway (2,996) also advanced to the district tournament at Star Lanes in Port Clinton, Ohio.

Ella Schoen put together the best day for the Tribe, finishing as the individual runner-up. Knocking down 200 pins in her second game helped her to a total score of 554, but Memorial's Chole Gibson matched with 222 pins to total 577, taking the sectional championship.

Brooklyn Weyerick also threw a 200 game as she tied for fifth with Memorial's Kayla Homan at 536 pins.

Three more Indians finished in the top 20 with

Deanna Brown finishing 11th (486), Emily Lauber 16th (478) and Kayla Heitkamp 20th (449).

FRHS won baker play with 988 pins, while Memorial netted 973, but the strong individual play carried the Rough Riders to the sectional championship.

Champ leads

NEW CASTLE — Addisyn Champ finished as the high point winner in the 9-10-year-old girls age group as the Jay County Winter Swim Team competed at the TAC Winter Invite at New Castle Middle School on Sunday.

While Champ claimed the top spot, Carsyn Guggenbiller earned the third-most points in the age group.

Both girls competed on relay teams that captured the only first-place finishes. Champ led the 200-yard medley relay that finished in 2 minutes, 48.72 seconds, by swimming the backstroke. Emme Theurer followed with the breaststroke, before Guggenbiller swam the butterfly and Ellie Wiggins closed with the freestyle.

Champ also led the 200 freestyle relay that finished in 2:30.63. Joining Champ and Guggenbiller were Wiggins and Kynlee Homan.

Jay County had 19 other finishes in the top 5.

Sports on tap

Local schedule

Today
Jay County — Boys basketball vs. Winchester — 6 p.m.

TV sports

Today
2:30 a.m. — Premier League: Brent

ford at Manchester City (USA)
3 p.m. — UEFA Champions: Atletico Madrid at Inter (CBS)
6:30 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Butler at Villanova (FS1)
7 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Syracuse at N.C. State (ESPN2); Arkansas at Texas A&M (ESPN)
7 p.m. — Women's college basketball: Wisconsin at Minnesota (BTN)

8:30 p.m. — Men's college basketball: UConn at Creighton (FS1)
9 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Baylor at BYU (ESPN); TCU at Texas Tech (ESPN2)
9 p.m. — Women's college basketball: Northwestern at Nebraska (BTN)
10:30 p.m. — Men's college basketball: San Jose State at Boise State (FS1)
11 p.m. — Men's college basketball:

San Francisco at St. Mary's (ESPN2)
Wednesday
2:30 p.m. — Premier League: Luton Town at Liverpool (USA)
3 p.m. — UEFA Champions: Barcelona at Napoli (CBS)
6:30 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Illinois at Penn State (BTN)
7 p.m. — Men's college basketball:

Duke at Miami (ESPN); Florida at Alabama (ESPN2); St. John's at Georgetown (FS1)
7:30 p.m. — NHL: Philadelphia Flyers at Chicago Blackhawks (TNT)
8 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Belmont at Drake (Bally Indiana)
8:30 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Nebraska at Indiana (BTN)
9 p.m. — Men's college basketball:

DePaul at Marquette (FS1); Kentucky at LSU (ESPN); Ole Miss at Mississippi State (ESPN2)
10 p.m. — NHL: Boston Bruin at Edmonton Oilers (TNT)
11 p.m. — Men's college basketball: UNLV at Air Force (FS1)
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Bryden Carter earns highest placement for Patriots, see story below

Jay basketball hosts Winchester today, see Sports on tap

Sports

Fourth in 138



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Fourth-ranked Tony Wood of Jay County High School grimaces as he tries to fight off No. 2 Kyrel Leavell of Warren Central during their 138-pound semifinal match Saturday in the IHSAA Wrestling State Finals at the Ford Center in Evansville. Wood lost to Leavell, the eventual state champion, and went on to finish in fourth place.

Wood takes fourth at state; Rowles places eighth

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

EVANSVILLE — Tony Wood fought to the end.

Following blood time with 23 seconds left, he hunted for his opportunity for a takedown.

After a reset to the center of the mat with 10 seconds left, he went on a furious attack. Brady Ison was able to hold him off.

Wood, a Jay County High School senior, dropped the final match of his high school career 3-1 to Ison as he finished fourth at 138 pounds Saturday in the IHSAA Wrestling State Finals at the Ford Center.

“That’s nothing to sleep on,” said Wood, who was unbeaten headed into the tournament

and had his sights set on a state championship. “It’s still really cool, especially when you get out here on the podium and see everybody. That feels really nice.

“Obviously I would have liked to place higher. I didn’t quite reach my goals, but I still feel like I wrestled really good, had a good day. Can’t be mad at that.”

Fellow Patriot Cody Rowles placed eighth at 126 pounds. It was a difficult final day as he came up just short in the quarterfinals against No. 13 Gunner Butt (35-7) of New Palestine and went on to drop his next two matches as well. Still, thanks to his victory Friday night, he finished his career

with a medal in his third visit to the state finals.

“I’ve never performed here like I’m capable of,” said Rowles, who had qualified for state twice previously. “I just never could really make it click at this tournament. But it’s been pretty fun. I’m glad I could end it on the podium.”

Wood became the first Patriot wrestler to reach the semifinals since Eric Hemmelgarn in 2014 despite failing to get an escape against No. 13 Justice Thornton of Columbus North after choosing the bottom position to start the second period Saturday morning. Thornton finally broke a scoreless tie with an escape with 1:08 left in the match and still led 1-0 as

the wrestlers returned to the center of the mat in the neutral position with 15 seconds left. But Wood got to Thornton’s body, forced him to the mat, gained control for a takedown and held off Thornton as he scrambled to find an escape or reversal as the final second ticked away.

“I just kept pushing the pace,” said Wood. “He kinda wanted to keep that a low-scoring match and he did a really good job of that. ...

“I’m still looking to score. I really wasn’t too worried about losing, and I found a score and I won that match.”

The dream of a state title came to an end in the semifinals as Wood never quite found

his footing against eventual state champion No. 2 Kyrel Leavell of Warren Central. He fell behind 5-0 en route to a 9-3 defeat.

The loss sent him to the third-place match against No. 3 Brady Ison (31-7) of Brownsburg. Wood fought off a single-leg takedown for a while but gave up two points with 20 seconds left in the first period. He fell behind 3-0 on an Ison escape in the second before getting an escape of his own early in the third. He went after Ison in the final 23 seconds of the match but couldn’t get home for the two points he needed to extend the match, and his career, into overtime.

See **Fourth** page 8

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Patriots avoid last

By ANDREW BALKO

The Commercial Review

Things looked bleak for the Patriots after the sectional prelims on Thursday.

Their divers helped them avoid the bottom spot.

The Jay County High School boys swim team got a lift from Bryden Carter and Brasen Glassford to score 115 points and finish 10th in the field of 11 at the IHSAA sectional meet on Saturday.

The Patriots’ 115 points was enough to beat South Adams (81), and came up five points shy of Blackford with 120. Bluffton ran away with the sectional championship as its 425 points outscored second-place Delta by 134.

“I felt these kids did an outstanding job performing,” JCHS coach Matt Slavik said. “When it came down to the end with where we were seeded, we

Jay divers lift Patriots above South Adams

got everybody to score that I was hoping to score.

“A couple more making it back would have been ideal, but all things considered, I’m super proud of it.”

Carter boasted the highest finish of the Patriots, taking fifth in the 1-meter diving. The JCHS freshman just missed the opportunity to make the trip to the diving regional at Homestead, as the top four finishers moved on.

Carter finished with a score of 242.2 points. Bluffton’s Elija Robles claimed the fourth spot at the regional with 268.7 points.

Glassford was initially

in position to take fifth, and was only two points behind fourth place going into his final dive. Glassford’s final dive resulted in a failure, leaving him at 215.5 points, earning eight place.

“Bryden started later in the season and came on strong,” Slavik said. “He’s a super athletic kid and put everything together at the right time.

“Brasen had a great meet going into his final dive, but unfortunately ended up fail diving it. ... All things considered, both our divers performed pretty well. They’ve come a long way in the last year.”

See **Avoid** page 9

Jay to play New Castle

The Patriots have already faced off with the Trojans on the road.

They just got word that they’ll have to do it again.

The Jay County High School boys basketball team drew a first round matchup with the host New Castle Trojans in the IHSAA Class 3A Sectional 24 in the first game on Feb. 28.

The Patriots (7-12) previously visited New Castle (10-10) on Dec. 9. The Trojans won the game 56-44 as they barraged Jay County with 14 made 3-point shots.

A win would set up a potential semifinal game against the winner of No. 8 Delta (16-6) and Frankton (14-8) on March 1.

On the other side of the bracket, Yorktown (12-9) has an opening matchup with Centerville (13-10). The victory will face off with Hamilton Heights (9-13) for a chance to play in the championship on March 2.

The Patriots have also played both Delta and Yorktown this season, falling by more than 20 points to both.

FR falls

NEW MADISON, Ohio — The Tri-Village Patriots exploded in the second quarter as part of a 64-41 victory over the

Local roundup

Fort Recovery boys basketball team on Saturday.

Fort Recovery (7-14) blanked Tray Sager in the first quarter to stay with in a point at the first break. That didn’t last as Sager provided eight of the 20 second-quarter points for Tri-Village (20-2).

Sager also had eight in the third as the Patriots put up 19 to take a 47-27 lead. He finished with a game-high 21 points. Reed Wehr and Tanner Printz reached double figures as well with 12 and 11 respectively.

Breaker Jutte had the most points for the Indians with eight. He had buckets in the second and third, while hitting two free throws in both the third and fourth quarters. After Jutte was Gavin Evers, scoring six points with buckets in the first, second and third periods.

See **Roundup** page 9