

The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

www.thecr.com

\$1

Jail officer fired, charged with sexual misconduct

Felony count against Norris stems from incident in December

By BAILEY CLINE
The Commercial Review

A Jay County Jail correctional officer has been fired and is accused of engaging in sexual acts with an inmate.

John Richard Norris, 32, was charged in Jay Circuit Court on Feb. 21 with a Level 5 felony for sexual misconduct. According to documents filed in connection with the case, Norris allegedly "did knowingly or intentionally engage in sexual intercourse or other sexual conduct" with an inmate.

Jay County Sheriff's Office administration

learned about the alleged act Jan. 31 from the inmate's cellmate, identified as Paige Curtis in court documents. Both the inmate, referred to as "KB" in court documents, and Curtis told investigators "KB" performed oral sex on Norris in December. Text messages between Norris and "KB" were also described as "of a very sexual nature," according to court documents.

Norris was arrested Feb. 2 and terminated the same day from the sheriff's office.

Curtis told investigators "KB" was "hyper sexual and wanted some male attention," court documents say. She said Norris slipped "KB" his phone number on the back of a female hygiene pad while working in December.

Curtis told investigators "KB" had been flirting with Norris on the jail's messaging system, "Chirps," and that he expressed sexual arousal and a desire to be alone with her.

See **Fired** page 2



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Tool targets property fraud

Free service will provide alerts about documents

By BAILEY CLINE
The Commercial Review

There's a free tool available to Indiana residents to help combat property fraud.

Jay County Recorder's Office recently announced a partnership with Doxpop for its Property Alert service, which lets property owners know any time a document is recorded that references their name or parcels they own.

The announcement comes in response to a press conference hosted by Indiana Recordors Association in January advocating for the program.

"People are going in, and they've got deeds, quitclaim deeds and such, and they are going in and they are recording them with their name on them," explained Jay County recorder Melanie Upp. "Then the owners of the property don't realize, they don't understand this has happened, and so they're losing their properties."

Fraud in Indiana can vary in severity between a Level 5 and Level 6 felony, depending on several factors.

See **Fraud** page 2

Out in opener

The Jay County High School boys basketball team's season came to an end Wednesday as it fell to host New Castle in the Class 3A Sectional 24 opener, 46-38. Pictured, senior Liam Garringer rises up for a 3-pointer in the third quarter. To read the full story, see page 8.

McConnell will step aside as leader

By MARY ELLEN MCINTIRE and NIELS LESNIEWSKI
CQ-Roll Call
Tribune News Service

WASHINGTON — Mitch McConnell's announcement he will voluntarily end his record-setting reign as Senate Republican leader drew praise and some derision Wednesday as the contest to succeed that was already underway began to move out from behind the scenes.

Potential candidates to replace McConnell include the "three Johns," as they're known, who have all served as deputies under McConnell in recent years. South Dakota Sen. John Thune, currently the No. 2 Senate Republican, Wyoming Sen. John Barrasso, the current conference chair, and Texas Sen.

Kentucky senator plans to serve out term

John Cornyn, a former GOP whip who termed out of leadership, could all make a run for party leader.

"Mitch leaves enormous shoes to fill, and it's with humility that I look forward to having a discussion with my colleagues about what the future holds for the Senate Republican Conference and a new generation of leadership," Thune said in a statement.

Barrasso said he was focused on the November elections and winning a

Republican Senate majority.

"I'm going to talk to members of the conference, hear what they have to say, listen to them in terms of what direction that they want to take with the conference," Barrasso told reporters.

Those three, and any other interested candidates, could now spend much of the election year courting support for an internal election that typically occurs after the November elections.

See **McConnell** page 2



Tribune News Service/Getty Images/Nathan Howard

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Kentucky, departs the Senate chamber on Wednesday in Washington, D.C. McConnell announced Wednesday that he would step down as Republican leader in November.

Weather

Jay County had a high temperature of 64 degrees early Wednesday before dropping throughout the day to a low of 28.

The forecast calls for a low in the upper 30s tonight with winds

gusting to 20 miles per hour and a 20% chance of rain. Skies will be mostly cloudy Saturday with a high in the mid 50s.

See page 2 for an extended outlook.

In review

Jay County Solid Waste Management District will have recycling trailers available from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday in the shopping center at 220 Lincoln St., Portland, the parking lot east of Redkey Post Office and the parking lot south of Salamon Fire Station.

Coming up

Saturday — Coverage of this week's Portland Board of Works meeting.

Tuesday — Results from the FRHS girls bowling team at the state finals.



Opposition to assisted suicide affirmed

By CASEY SMITH

Indiana Capital Chronicle
indianacapitalchronicle.com

As more than a dozen states contemplate “death with dignity” laws, Indiana lawmakers are making clear they’re staunchly opposed to any policy allowing physician-assisted suicide.

A Senate resolution penned by Sen. Tyler Johnson, R-Leo, emphasizes that the legalization of assisted suicide “sends a message that suicide is a socially acceptable response to aging, terminal illnesses, disabilities, and depression” and subsequently imposes a “duty to die.”

Further, it states assisted suicide “is a direct threat to human dignity, patient rights, and the disabled when the medical goal must be to eliminate suffering rather than the person who suffers.”

Alternatively, the resolution preferences ongoing advancements in palliative care that can relieve pain and allow a person “to die naturally, comfortably, and in a dignified manner without a change in the law.”

The Senate health committee approved the resolution in a 9-2 vote, along party lines, on Wednesday.

“You cannot compassionately kill a patient, and you cannot care for the patient that you are comfortable killing,” said Johnson, who works as an emergency physician. “Physician-assisted suicide is contrary to everything I have as a physician and my duty to my patients, as a healer, and it clearly undermines the physician-patient relationship.”

The arguments in the resolution are similar to those held by other critics of physician-assisted death, including some religious groups, disability rights advocates, and the American Medical Association. They

maintain the practice is at odds with physicians’ responsibility to care for patients and can open the door to more suicide.

Last year, the AMA’s legislative body voted against changing its stance on physician-assisted death, which its code of ethics describes as “fundamentally incompatible with the physician’s role as healer.”

Advocates, on the other hand, say giving terminal patients more control of end-of-life decisions brings more dignity to death.

Assisted suicide is already banned in Indiana. Current

statute states that a person who “participates” or “provides the physical means” for another person to attempt or commit suicide commits assisting suicide, a Level 5 felony. Those who have knowledge of an assisted suicide can also face the felony charge.

Exempt from the law are medical professionals who provide care “to relieve a person’s pain or discomfort, even if the medication or procedure may hasten or increase the risk of death, unless such medications or procedures are intended to cause death.”

CR almanac

Saturday 3/2	Sunday 3/3	Monday 3/4	Tuesday 3/5	Wednesday 3/6
55/43	66/51	69/46	57/42	54/34
Mostly cloudy skies are in the forecast for Saturday, when the high will be in the mid 50s.	Sunday looks to be mostly sunny. The high will jump to the mid to upper 60s.	Monday has a slight chance of thunderstorms. Otherwise, warm with a high of 69.	Another chance of rain on Tuesday when temperatures will drop to the mid 50s.	More rain is possible Wednesday. The low at night may dip to 34 degrees.

Lotteries

Powerball

16-26-29-38-50
Power Ball: 6
Power Play: 2
Estimated jackpot: \$443 million

Daily Four: 4-3-6-4
Quick Draw: 2-6-12-15-16-19-26-37-41-44-46-48-49-57-64-66-71-73-74-80
Cash 5: 12-17-23-28-44
Estimated jackpot: \$962,000

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$607 million

Ohio

Wednesday
Midday
Pick 3: 6-7-5
Pick 4: 3-5-7-5
Pick 5: 6-4-3-0-7
Evening
Pick 3: 7-0-6
Pick 4: 3-9-9-3
Pick 5: 3-5-9-8-8
Rolling Cash: 8-10-23-29-33
Estimated jackpot: \$278,000

Hoosier

Wednesday
Midday
Daily Three: 9-2-6
Daily Four: 7-7-3-0
Quick Draw: 1-5-6-11-12-19-27-29-31-41-49-54-58-59-63-64-67-69-72-74
Evening
Daily Three: 8-2-4

Markets

Cooper Farms Fort Recovery

Corn.....4.21
April corn.....4.22
Wheat.....4.46

April beans11.25
Wheat 5.36

ADM Montpelier

Corn.....4.04
April corn4.08
Beans11.21
April beans11.27
Wheat5.36

POET Biorefining Portland

Corn.....4.23
April corn4.23
May corn4.28

Heartland St. Anthony

Corn.....4.14
April corn4.19
Beans10.99
April beans11.03
Wheat5.06

The Andersons Richland Township

Corn4.10
April corn4.13
Beans11.18

Today in history

In 1692, Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne and Tituba were interrogated in Salem, Massachusetts, to determine if they practiced witchcraft, launching the Salem Witch Trials. More than 150 men and women in the area were arrested and charged with exercising witchcraft and sorcery. It resulted in 19 people being hanged, one man being pressed to death and others dying in prison.

In 1810, Frédéric Chopin was born in Zelazowa Wola, Poland. The famous pianist wrote solos and concertos during the Romantic period.

In 1972, Yellowstone became the first national park.

In 1904, Glenn Miller was born in Clarinda, Iowa. A leader in the big band era, some of his most famous hits include “In the Mood” and “Chattanooga Choo Choo.”

In 1995, internet search engine Yahoo! was incorporated. It was founded the year before as a guide created by Jerry Yang and David Filo.

In 2019, Fort Recovery High School girls basketball team defeated the Ridgemont Golden Gophers, 58-24. Grace Thien led the Indians, scoring 19 points and extending her school record of 3-pointers made in a season to 76. — The CR

Citizen’s calendar

Monday
5:30 p.m. — Portland City Council, council chambers, fire station, 1616 N. Franklin St.

7 p.m. — Salamonia Town Council, Schoolhouse Community Center.
7:30 p.m. — Fort Recovery Village Council, village hall, 201 S. Main St.

Tuesday
5:30 p.m. — Portland Park Board, council chambers, fire station, 1616 N. Franklin St.

Thursday
5:30 p.m. — Portland Plan Commission, Community Resource Center, 118 S. Meridian St., Portland.

Fired ...

Continued from page 1
At about 2:20 a.m. Dec. 15, “KB” began choking on a potato chip while in her cell. Norris entered her cell and performed the Heimlich maneuver on her. Curtis told investigators Norris and “KB” then began kissing.

Later that night, Curtis said, Norris returned to their cell and “KB” and Norris had oral sex. Curtis tried to leave the cell but Norris would not let her, she told investigators. She also said he lent his e-cigarette to other female inmates while joking about having oral sex with them.

“KB” told investigators

she had oral sex with Norris, and after the initial incident Norris was “in and out of the cell block many times,” walking into the cell to “expose himself to them,” according to court documents.

Video surveillance from the night of the incident lines up with the testimony from “KB” and Curtis, the report says, although the view is obstructed by books and papers across the cell bars.

Jay County Sheriff’s Office chief deputy Ben Schwartz confirmed the department is taking measures to prevent simi-

lar situations in the future.

“We’re looking at better training for our officers, hopefully they can see that repercussion can happen when this occurs, and it’s not taken lightly,” he said.

Jay County Sheriff Ray Newton noted plans to buy body cameras — he shared hopes for Jay County Council and Jay County Commissioners to allocate American Rescue Plan Act dollars toward the purchase — and require all deputies and correctional officers to wear them during their shifts.

“I think once we start getting body cameras back

there, cameras don’t lie, and it’s going to tell us everything we need to know,” he said.

Like Schwartz, he also stressed training for officers, pointing out the majority of the correctional officer staff has been employed at the jail for less than a year. When an officer notices something doesn’t seem right, he said, they should question it.

“If we hear something like this, we are going to investigate, and we are going to hold people accountable for their actions while working at the security center,” he said.

Fraud ...

Continued from page 1
To be classified as a Level 5 felony, the victim must be a financial institution, the crime must result in a pecuniary loss of between \$50,000 and \$100,000 or the pecuniary loss must be at least \$750 if the victim is an endangered adult or a person younger than 18. (In Indiana, a Level 5 felony carries between one and six year sentences, with an advisory sentence of three years.)

Despite the punishment, fraud is still an ongoing issue. Elderly property owners or those with lots of properties can be at risk, explained Upp.

She referenced an example shared by the state association about an older woman who spent time in the hospital for an extended period of time.

“When she got out of the hospital and went to go home, it was not her home any longer,” Upp said.

Doxpop provides court documents and other information to the public. Its free Property Alert service allows users to sign up for notifications — options include a text message or email as well as providing information to their county recorder — when their name or property is officially recorded. The alert system serves to quickly alert a property owner to take legal action against property fraud. Simultaneously, it also allows property owners to know when other legitimate documents have been filed in relation to their property.

“Even if it’s you, it’ll send you a text, just so you know that it’s working,” Upp said.

Property owners can visit

watch.doxpop.com to sign up. The process includes searching the property owner’s name, selecting documents with their properties and entering their contact information. It takes less than five minutes, explained Upp.

Free support is also available from the recorder’s office during regular business hours at (260) 726-6940 or from Doxpop at (866) 369-7671. Jay County residents without internet or email access are also welcome to register in person at the recorder’s office.

Upp noted several local residents have already signed up for the system.

“It’s just an easy step that you can take to protect yourself and what you have,” Upp said. “This isn’t 100%, but by golly it sure helps.”

McConnell ...

Continued from page 1
Sen. Mike Rounds made an early endorsement on Wednesday for Thune, his home state colleague, but others said they planned to hold out on any announcements.

“I wouldn’t announce it early anyway because I’m hoping to get a lot of free dinners out of the Johns,” North Dakota Sen. Kevin Cramer said jokingly when asked who he would back as McConnell’s successor.

Cramer called McConnell the “standard-bearer of the Reagan era,” but noted much of the

party has shifted away from that positioning.

“Mitch is more of a reflection of that change in our party than sort of leading that charge,” he said.

Sen. Rick Scott, who unsuccessfully challenged McConnell for party leader in 2022 and is up for reelection in Florida this year, didn’t say whether he’d run again for the top job but said it’s been clear that he has “long believed that we need new leadership in the Senate that represents our voters and the issues we were sent here to fight for.”

“This is an opportunity to refocus our efforts on solving the significant challenges facing our country and actually reflect the aspirations of voters,” Scott said in a statement.

Former Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, Scott’s likely Democratic challenger in November, suggested that Scott could run again to lead the party or serve in leadership and said that would be “disastrous.” Asking who a candidate would support for leadership if elected can be a common attack line on the campaign trail.

SERVICES

Friday

Shetler, Savilla: 9 a.m., Shetler residence, 1875 W. 50 South, Monroe.

Saturday

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

Service listings provided by

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PORTLAND, IN 47371

9:00 AM
MARCH 2, 2024

SESSION



Extension - Jay County



EA/EQU



Photo provided

Nature's Green donates

Fort Recovery Morvilius Opera House recently received a \$10,000 donation from Nature's Green Nursery for its restoration project. Pictured above are owner of Nature's Green Nursery Steve Stone and his mother, Irene Stone, holding a large check in front of the opera house. The 1883 building at 101 N. Main St., Fort Recovery, is on the National Register of Historic Places. Local residents are working to restore the facility to be used as a community space.

Husband gives ultimatum

DEAR ABBY: My husband has a poor relationship with our son and his wife. They want nothing to do with him and don't want him around the grandchildren because of how he acts. My husband tells me I should stick up for him and tell them what they're doing is wrong, and that he would never do or say anything bad in front of the grands.

My son and his wife have made their decision. If I send them a text or visit them, it causes fights in our house because he is not welcome. Now my husband is demanding that I choose: Stand by him and have nothing to do with the kids, or choose the kids and have nothing more to do with him. How fair is it to have to make a choice like that? — TORN IN FLORIDA

DEAR TORN: Fairness has nothing to do with it. Your husband is trying to blackmail you into running interference for him with your son. It's time to decide which is more important — having a relationship with your son, his wife and your grandchildren or remaining with your controlling, unpleasant husband. Keep doing what you're doing and call his bluff, because disengaging from you could be more complicated — and expensive — than your husband realizes.

DEAR ABBY: I am writing because my wife has lost interest in her appearance. I love her, but I cannot figure out a way to tell her she has become obese. She seems to think her appearance is just fine.

I know I can't say anything without her getting extremely upset, so I'm in a quandary about how to get her to understand that obesity is not only a danger to her health but also looks awful. Can you suggest a way to approach a woman without getting in deep trouble with her? I'm

Dear Abby



sure other men (and women) have this similar situation. Please advise. — WORRIED HUSBAND

DEAR HUSBAND: The message might be less unwelcome if you concentrate solely on the HEALTH aspect of her weight gain. Encourage her to see her doctor, begin exercising (with you, if necessary) and adopt a healthy diet for BOTH of you "because you love her, and want to enjoy many more happy years together."

DEAR ABBY: A relative recently moved to my state and wants to get together more than I care to. This person had more than a year to prepare for the move, but didn't plan ahead for many of the tasks and now is overwhelmed, needy, whiny and complaining constantly.

I'm now being asked for information regarding many of the personal services I use. My relative talks over me and doesn't listen, so conversation is difficult. Aside from not initiating calls or answering my phone, have you any suggestions about how I can limit my interactions with this person? — KEEPING TO MYSELF

DEAR KEEPING: If your relative has a computer or cellphone, email or text a list of resources they can use to acclimate to the community. (I'm thinking pharmacy, dry cleaners, specialty stores, etc.) And after that, be "busy." VERY busy.

Community Calendar

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

Today

DUNKIRK HISTORICAL SOCIETY — Is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the first and third Friday of each month in the former W.E. Gaunt Jewelry building, 113 S. Main St., Dunkirk.

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.

CININNATUS LEAGUE — Will meet at noon Friday, March 1, at the Harmony Café in Portland.

SOFT SHOULDERS — A support group for anyone suffering from memory loss, will meet at 10:30 a.m. the first Friday of each month in the Fireplace Room at Edelweiss Place at Swiss Village in Berne. For more information, call (260) 589-3173.

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.

ROAD RIDERS FOR JESUS — Will meet at 10 a.m. on the first Saturday of each month in the West Walnut Church of Christ fellowship hall, 204 W. Walnut St., Portland. (Please enter from the door facing the alley on the north side of the building.) For more information, call (260) 726-8463.

DUNKIRK HISTORICAL SOCIETY — Is open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the first and third Saturday of each month in the former W.E. Gaunt Jewelry building, 113 S. Main St., Dunkirk.

MUSEUM OF THE SOLDIER — Is open from noon to 5 p.m. the first and third Saturday and Sunday of the month. It is located at 510 E. Arch St., Portland. The website is museumofthesoldier.com.

Sunday

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 Sunday at The Rock Church, 1605 N. Meridian St., Portland. Come early for a meal.

For more information, call (260) 766-2006.

Monday

PORTLAND BREAKFAST OPTIMISTS — Will meet at 7 a.m. for breakfast at Richards Restaurant.

PING PONG — Will be played from 9 a.m. to noon each Monday at Jay Community Center.

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP — Will meet at 1 p.m. the first Monday of each month at Portland Place, 430 W. Lafayette St. For more information, call (800) 589-1121.

EUCHRE — Will be played starting at 1 p.m. each Monday at West Jay Community Center, 125 Hoover St., Dunkirk.

TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY (TOPS) — Will meet for weigh-in at 4:30 p.m., with the meeting at 5 p.m., at Trinity United Methodist Church, 323 S. Meridian St., Portland. New members welcome. For more information, call (260) 726-5924.

PREGNANCY CARE CENTER — Free pregnancy testing with ongoing support during and after pregnancy. The center is located at 216 S. Meridian St., Portland. Hours are 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call (260) 726-8636. Walk-ins accepted.

BREAD OF LIFE COMMUNITY FAMILY MEAL — Will be served from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at Asbury United Methodist Church, 204 E. Arch St. in Portland. Everyone is welcome.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS — Will meet at 6:30 p.m. each Monday at A Second Chance At Life Ministries, 228 S. Meridian St. in Portland. For more information, call Brenda Eads at (260) 726-9625 or Dave Keen at (260) 251-8792.

Tuesday

BRYANT COMMUNITY CENTER EUCHRE — Will be played at 1 p.m. each Tuesday.

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.

SINGLES AND SEPARATES SUPPORT GROUP — For anyone who's lost a loved one or has a spouse living in long-term care or suffering from an illness, the group will meet at 2 p.m. the first Wednesday of each month in the Arthur & Gloria Muselman Wellness Pavilion in Berne. For more information, call Sarah Conrad at (260) 589-4496.

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.

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Sudoku

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

Level: Advanced

Thursday's Solution

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

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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Pricing does not apply to Special Sections

FAFSA makes the process worse

New York Daily News
Tribune News Service

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is known by high school seniors, college students and their parents, as well as everyone else by its acronym, FAFSA.

As its name says, there is no fee to fill out the online FAFSA form to become eligible for college scholarship and aid money, but this year it is imposing a high cost on families and colleges. And the culprit is the United States Department of Education, which runs the program.

Colleges around the country, including both the SUNY and CUNY public systems here in New York, are in the blind about who can pay how much to attend next fall. SUNY pushed back

Guest Editorial

their deadline for students to accept their admission offers from May 1 to at least May 15. CUNY is moving the date to June 1. So much for making things better.

We know FAFSA well, having filled it out since before COVID and are now suffering through its new and improved version as mandated by the Congress when lawmakers passed the FAFSA Simplification Act in December 2020.

The goal was to have fewer

questions about assets and income. But instead the outcome has a huge mess as what had been a matter of days to have the forms processed has become much longer.

Without the info on how much students and their families can afford, colleges can't make decisions on admission and aid packages for students they offer spots to. Matriculating and continuing students are likewise stuck, as financial aid is reviewed annually.

Before they "simplified" this year, each new FAFSA season began on Oct. 1 every year. We went back and looked at the FAFSA we completed last year and found these messages emailed from StudentAid.gov.

Oct. 16, 2022: "We Received Your FAFSA Form. Take Steps

to Prepare to Pay for School." That came moments after the final steps on our end were completed, which included answering all the questions about farm income, bank accounts and investments and granting the IRS permission to send tax return data to the FAFSA.

Oct. 18, 2022: "Processed Successfully: Your Child's 2023-24 FAFSA Form." So two days was all it took for the feds to evaluate the info and prepare a report to send to the colleges for which aid was being sought. Some years it was a day or two longer, but always less than a week. And since the process opened on Oct. 1, getting needed material from FAFSA to colleges in a timely fashion was never an issue.

Under the new regime, FAFSA

didn't begin until Dec. 31, three months later than before. From what we read, trying to log on during New Year's Eve was a nightmare, so we gave it some time before we attempted.

When we began the process Jan. 17, it was a bit balky, but it seemed to work and like usual, we had to complete it over a few sessions, having to gather all the required data. We finished the FAFSA on Jan. 28, but didn't really notice if it was easier than before.

What we did notice was that there's been nothing since. Logging in yesterday shows the Jan. 28 submission and now, nearly a month later, still not processed.

FAFSA did ask to "Please rate your overall satisfaction with StudentAid.gov." We gave it the lowest possible score.

Chaplain offices have no place in public schools

By CHRIS DALEY
Indiana Capital Chronicle
indianacapitalchronicle.com

The Indiana legislature is pushing through legislation to allow public and charter schools to establish chaplains' offices by hiring or recruiting volunteer "school chaplains."

The idea started off as Senate Bill 50 and passed the Senate. However, once it was clear that the House was not going to take up the bill, the language was shoe-horned into House Bill 1137 in a Senate Education and Career Development Committee hearing. At one time, procedural shenanigans of this sort were frowned upon but in today's "anything goes" General Assembly, it breathed new life into the concept.

The ACLU of Indiana opposes the bill because it positions religious leaders — and only religious leaders — as an additional resource for students in violation of the First Amendment's anti-establishment clause.

Legislators supporting HB 1137 claim the purpose of the bill is to help fill in for overworked and understaffed licensed school counselors. Providing additional support to students is important, but Indiana can do so without violating the constitution. The First Amendment doesn't allow government entities to prefer religion over non-religion or favor one faith over others. Also, specific to the public-school setting, the U.S. Supreme Court has urged vigilance about possible religious coercion of students. HB 1137 outlines a program that will most likely require schools to violate all three of these principles.

HB 1137 specifically allows school districts to hire or recruit as volunteers only people who have an advanced degree in religious studies or a related field. In striking down a similar program in Texas in 2002, a federal judge found that the program's reliance only on clergy meant that it "conveyed the message that religion is preferred over non-religion." Any program established under HB 1137 would suffer the same fate.

And, any faith leader that school officials select will inherently be affiliated with a specific religious denomination and its traditions. Students not affiliated with a school chaplain's denomination or its tradi-

Chris Daley



tion can easily feel alienated by a school appointing them to provide "advice, guidance, and support" to the student body.

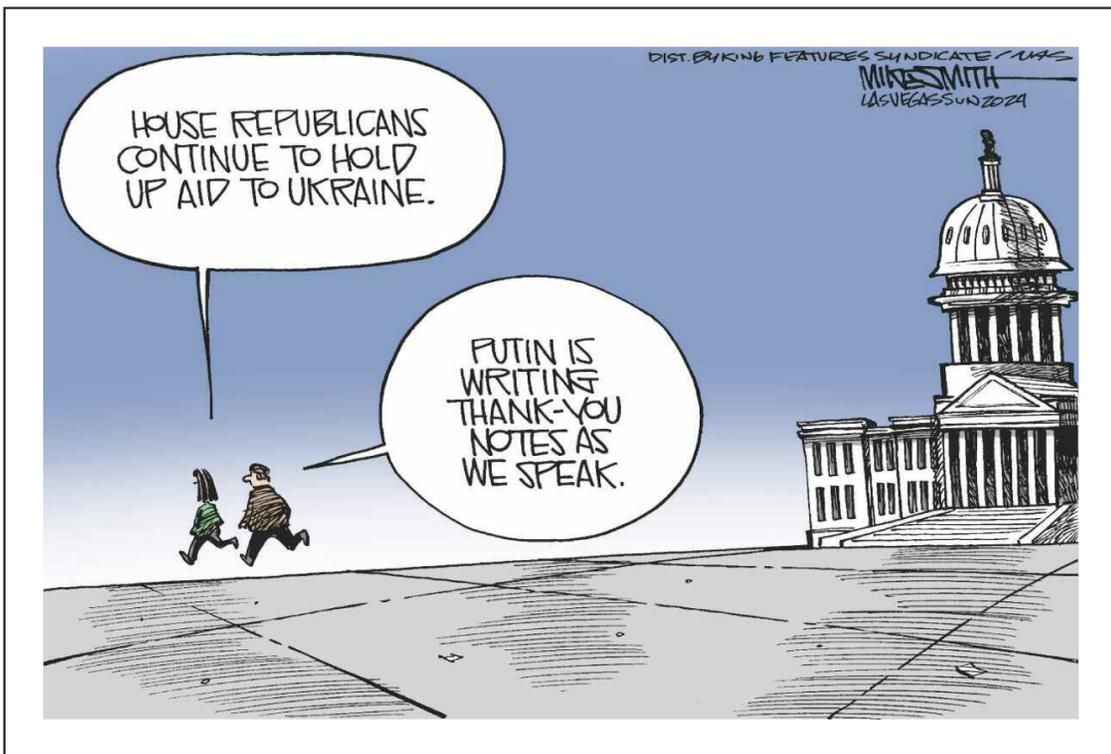
Chaplains play an important role in many institutions in our state but they should not hold official positions in our public schools because their presence in an official capacity would open up our students to religious coercion. The primary role of chaplains is to provide pastoral or religious counseling to people in spiritual need. That is an important service that can be provided in the community. However, providing a faith leader an official position and office in a public school during instructional hours — specifically because they are a faith leader — is inherently coercive.

It's no secret that Indiana has a school counselor shortage. In fact, according to the American School Counselor Association, the Hoosier State ranks dead last in student-to-school counselor ratio, at 694-to-1. Legislators are right in wanting to address this crisis; but HB 1137 is the wrong way to do it. Beyond the constitutional violations outlined above, HB 1137 would insert employees or volunteers who have no training in child development or even trauma-informed care practice into the school environment.

Families and students in Indiana practice a wide variety of faiths, and many are nonreligious. All should feel welcome in our public schools. Freedom of religion means that parents and faith communities — not government officials — have the right to direct their children's religious education and development. Establishing offices in public schools for "school chaplains" crosses these well-established boundaries.

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Daley is executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana.

Indiana Capital Chronicle is an independent, non-profit news organization. Its website is indianacapitalchronicle.com.



We must close digital divide

By MEKA EGWUEKWE
Chicago Tribune
Tribune News Service

According to a 2023 article in Forbes, 42 million Americans have no access to broadband. In our interconnected world, lack of broadband feeds the digital divide, and if you think that doesn't affect you, well, you're wrong.

I am talking to you, the Midwestern farmer, the single mother of three in Chicago, the family-man rancher in Texas, the free-spirited woman in Vermont, the high-flying executive in New York, the hard-working immigrant in New Mexico, the coal miner in Kentucky, the snowbird in Florida, the artist in San Francisco and the homeowner in every American suburb.

Stereotypes like these aside, closing the digital divide is an imperative that demands the attention of every individual. By focusing on closing this divide for all households, we pave the way for a safer, more prosperous and united society. Embracing this endeavor benefits America, as it strengthens national security, enhances public safety, reduces dependence on government support, promotes personal freedom and drives economic growth. Uniting in the vision of empowering all families through digital inclusion should matter to you because it benefits you and our nation as a whole.

Ensuring that all families have access to broadband internet and digital skills bolsters our national security. A digitally connected population is more resilient against cyber threats and disinformation campaigns that can undermine our economy and our democratic processes. A digitally connected America fortifies our nation's defenses, ensuring the safety of our critical infrastructure and sensitive information.

Access to digital resources empowers communities to stay informed about local safety initiatives, emergency services and crime prevention efforts. Digital connectivity facili-

Meka Ekwuekwe



tates quicker communication with law enforcement and access to public safety resources, fostering safer neighborhoods for all residents.

Bridging the digital divide offers a pathway for families to become more self-reliant and reduce dependence on government assistance. Access to digital education and online job opportunities empowers individuals to seek better economic prospects, improve their skills and pursue gainful employment. As families grow more self-sufficient, they contribute to a stronger economy and reduce the burden on social support programs, ultimately benefiting our entire nation.

And think about this: Promoting digital inclusion for all actually advances personal freedom for everyone. In an increasingly digital world, access to information, education and communication is essential to personal liberty. Empowering communities with digital tools allows residents to exercise their right to access information, express their views and engage in online discourse.

To achieve these significant milestones, we must confront specific challenges head-on. The lack of physical infrastructure continues to plague remote and underserved regions, both in terms of broadband availability and access to connected devices. It is imperative that we champion the equitable implementation of federal infrastructure programs such as the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program and the Digital Equity Act.

The fallacy of pitting rural against urban must be rejected; these two sides are not at odds but rather unit-

ed in the pursuit of a digitally connected nation. Affordability remains a significant hurdle, underscoring the need to reinforce programs such as the Affordable Connectivity Program.

As affordable access and connected devices are secured, the challenge of effective use comes to the fore. Investment in digital literacy, digital skills and digital education programs is crucial. The nurturing of these competencies, particularly through community institutions such as libraries, schools and community centers, holds the key to empowering individuals with the tools they need for the digital era.

Moreover, recognizing the impact of factors such as age and language barriers is pivotal. Intergenerational learning initiatives can bridge gaps in families and communities, fostering an environment of mutual digital growth. Simultaneously, the creation of multilingual online resources and training materials acknowledges the diverse linguistic and cultural tapestry of our nation.

When the day comes when there is no digital divide, fostering a more united economy everyone benefits from, our country will propel into incredible economic growth. By empowering all communities with digital skills, we unlock a wealth of untapped talent, creativity and entrepreneurship. As families actively participate in the digital economy, they contribute to job creation, innovation and economic diversification.

Embracing digital inclusion is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic investment in the future of our nation. Let us stand united in the pursuit of empowering families, creating a stronger, safer and more prosperous America for all its citizens.

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Ekwuekwe is executive director of CodeCrew, a nonprofit that empowers youths and adults from underrepresented communities to be tech innovators.

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"Were it left for me to decide whether we should have government without newspapers or newspapers without government I should not hesitate to prefer the latter."
—Thomas Jefferson

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Drainage decline

Six states reported lower numbers for subsurface tile

By EHSAN GHANE

Michigan State University Extension

The Midwest is still the most prominent area for tile drainage.

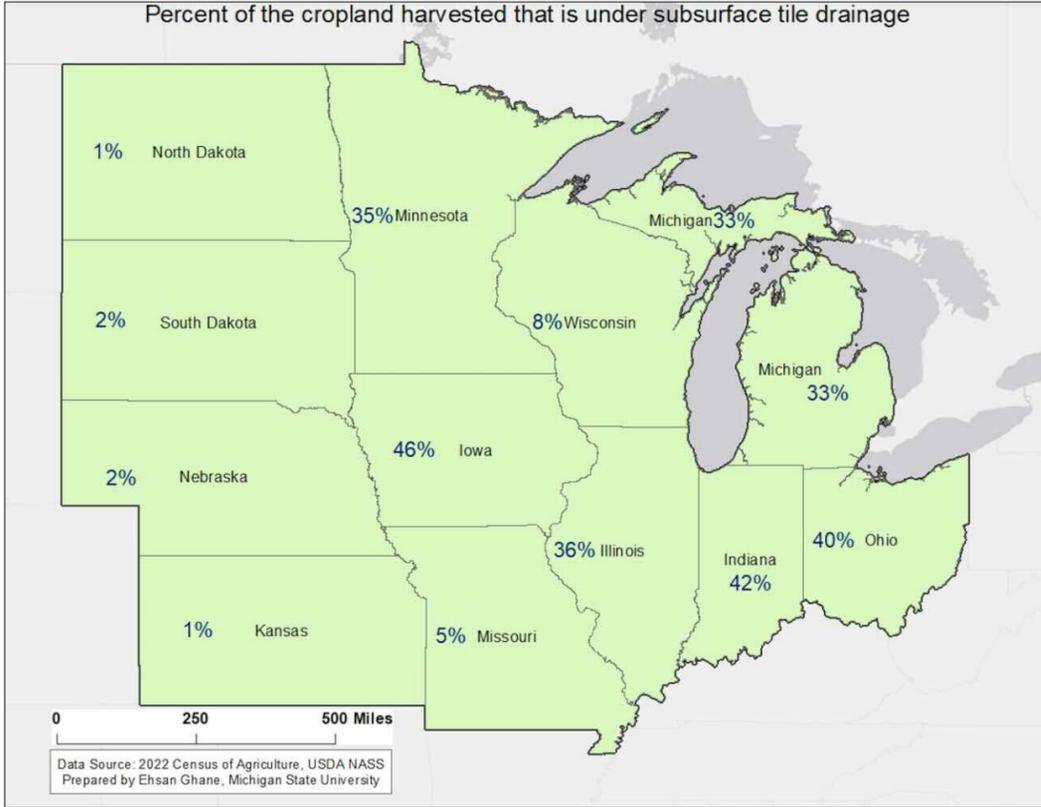
But the numbers have decreased. Some Midwest states reported a reduction in acreage of subsurface tile drainage from 2017 to 2022 according to 2022 Ag Census data was released Feb. 13.

One census question asked, "During 2022, considering the total acres on this operation, how many acres were drained by tile?" This is the same question that was asked in 2017.

Subsurface tile drainage is concentrated in the corn belt. It accounts for a considerable portion of the cropland harvested in the Midwest, especially in states that are dominated by rain-fed agriculture and have poorly drained soils that require drainage. These states have some of the world's most fertile soils that require subsurface drainage for crop production. Without drainage, crop production would not be able to meet the growing food demand because of poor crop yield due to excess water.

If the field is not dried out before spring field operation, it could delay planting, or even prevent planting altogether like in 2019. On the other hand, if field operations are performed on wet soil, it could cause soil compaction, which in turn reduces infiltration, increases surface runoff, causes drainage underperformance and harms the crop from wet stress. Therefore, increased crop yield, reduced year-to-year yield variability, timely field operations and trafficability are some of the main reasons why subsurface drainage is expected to increase.

Similar to the 2017 Ag Census, the 2022 Ag Census shows that Iowa has the largest acreage of



subsurface tile drainage, followed by Illinois, Minnesota, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan. The top ten states with the highest acreage of tile drainage did not change rank in the 2022 census compared to the 2017 census.

Even though all Midwest states had an increase in tile drainage from 2012 to 2017, the 2022 census data shows that six Midwest states — Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan — had a reduction in acreage of subsurface tile drainage from 2017 to 2022. Other Midwest states had a much lower increase in tile acreage from 2017 to 2022 compared to the increase they had from 2012 to 2017.

A total of 48.1 million acres were reported to be tile drained in the Midwest in the 2022 census compared to the 50.4 million acres in the 2017 census. This is a 4% reduction in tile acreage from 2017 to 2022. In contrast, a total of 50.4 million acres were reported as tile

drained in the 2017 census compared to 40.1 million acres in 2012, a 14% increase from 2012 to 2017.

The states showing a drop in acreage of tile drained land from 2017 to 2022 Ag Census present an unrealistic outcome because tile drainage has been going into the ground over the five years from 2017 to 2022.

"Michigan drainage contractors install millions of feet of drainage tile each year, driven by the high demand and favorable results, which has led to a significant increase in tile-drained acres over the past few years in Michigan," Will Word, a Michigan LICA board member said.

Subsurface tile drainage provides a good return on investment. We expected an increase in subsurface tile drainage from 2017 to 2022 because high-intensity, heavy rainfall has become more frequent, thereby creating an incentive for growers to invest in subsurface

drainage. For example, the wet 2019 growing season that prevented planting had some growers invest in tile drainage or split lateral spacing in half.

"Farmers in the Midwest are looking to improve their water management systems to reduce their risks. This means expanding their tile-drained acres and improving their existing drainage systems," Keegan Kult, executive director of Ag Drainage Management Coalition said.

Even with the unexpected 2022 tile acreage data, the distribution and proportion of harvested cropland with tile drainage shows that subsurface drainage continues to play a significant role in crop production in the Midwest. Although drainage is required for crop production, it also transports nutrients off the farm; that is where phosphorus reduction and nitrate reduction strategies come into play.

In review

Scheduled

An invasive species Weed Wrangle is scheduled for 10 a.m. March 16 in rural Adams County.

The event at the Ceylon covered bridge, 9486 County Road 950 South, Geneva, will include identifying invasive plants as well as information about how such species are costing money and best practices to remove them.

For more information, contact Jay County Soil and Water Conservation District at (260) 726-4888.

Enroll now

Enrollment is open for the United States Department of Agriculture's 2024 Dairy Margin Coverage for Indiana farmers.

Sign-up began Wednesday and continues through April 29. Those who sign up can receive payments as early as this month.

For more information, go to usa.usda.gov or visit your local USDA service center.

Launched

The United States Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Energy announced last week that they have launched the Rural and Agricultural Income & Savings from Renewable Energy (RAISE) initiative.

The program is targeted at helping farmers create smaller-scale wind projects utilizing the USDA's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP).

Also announced was \$4 million in related funding. For more information, visit usda.gov.

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Triples ...

Continued from page 8
With the victory, the fifth-seeded Rams (15-8) advance to host No. 6 seed New Bremen (10-13) in the sectional championship game at 7 p.m. Friday. (The Cardinals beat No. 4 seed Ridgemoor 67-50 in first-round sectional action Wednesday.) The winner will advance to the district tournament at Wapakoneta.

Fort Recovery (6-15) took its first lead since the opening basket when freshman Brody Barga hit two free throws with 17.1 seconds left in the third quarter. The teams traded buckets to a 41-40 Tribe advantage early in the fourth before the Rams got Kindled.

When the sophomore got the ball wide open on the left wing, he initially was going to pass up the shot. (He was scoreless on 0-for-3 shooting at the time.) But his teammates, and some fans, yelled for him to take it. He did, and drained the triple.

A Troy Homan drive on the other end evened the score, but another Kindle triple, this time from the right wing, found the net. Underwood hit three of his dozen free throws on the next trip down the floor for a six-point USV lead.

A Briggs Overman hoop at the 4:21 mark pulled the Indians to within four, but they never scored again. The home team hit 9-of-12 free throws down the stretch to lock up the win.

"We were excited. We had a little chip on our shoulder," said USVHS coach Dre White, whose team lost 61-50 to Fort Recovery

in the tournament last season. "We played these guys last year in the sectional and we had to walk off the floor and watch them cut down a net. ...

"They kinda were wearing us down. ... We talk about process every time. The guys locked in and we won the fourth quarter 18-6."

From the field, Underwood did most of his damage from long distance, hitting four 3-pointers including one from the right wing at the first-half buzzer. Sanders, meanwhile, worked the ball into the paint. They both were strong at the foul line, with Underwood shooting 12-of-13 while Sanders was 7-of-10.

Rex Leverette, Bob's son, was the lone Indian in double figures, scoring eight of his dozen points in the third quarter. He also had a game-high 12 rebounds.

Homan, Overman and Barga each added eight points.

The game marked the end of the high school careers of Gavin Faller, Alex Dues, Reece Guggenbiller, Leverette and Homan.

"Just a tough way to end the year," said Leverette.

"I'm more upset that I don't get to be with this group of kids anymore. A great group of seniors. I've had them since the third grade," he continued, choking back emotion. "Great role models for our younger guys coming in."

"I'm just super proud of them. Not the season we wanted wins and losses wise. But you know what, we had fun, we competed and that's all I can ask."



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Fort Recovery High School senior Rex Leverette puts up a shot over Hunter Damron of host Upper Scioto Valley during the sectional opener Wednesday night. Leverette scored eight of his team-high 12 points in the third quarter, but the Indians' season came to an end with a 58-45 defeat.

Box score

Fort Recovery Indians vs. Upper Scioto Valley Rams

Boys varsity summary

Division IV sectional opener

at Upper Scioto Valley

Fort Recovery (6-15)			
	FG-FGA	FT-FTA	PTS
Overman	3-10	1-2	8
Sieffring	0-2	0-0	0
Guggenbiller	1-6	0-0	3
Homan	4-8	0-0	8
Leverette	6-12	0-0	12
Diller	0-0	0-0	0
Evers	1-5	1-2	3
Faller	1-2	0-0	2
Jutte	0-0	1-2	2
Barga	3-3	2-2	8
Totals	19-58	5-8	45
	.328	.625	
Def. rebound percentage: .760			

Upper Scioto Valley (15-8)			
	FG-FGA	FT-FTA	PTS
ASanders	6-14	7-10	20
Kindle	2-5	1-2	7
Damron	0-2	0-0	0
BSanders	1-3	0-0	2
Thompson	0-1	1-2	1
Underwood	6-13	12-13	28
Totals	15-37	21-27	58
	.405	.778	
Def. rebound percentage: .655			

Score by quarters:			
Fort Rec.	11	17	6 — 45
USV	13	16	11 — 58

3-point shooting: Fort Recovery 2-12 (Overman 1-1, Guggenbiller 1-8, Leverette 0-3). Upper Scioto Valley 7-15 (Underwood 4-6, Kindle 2-5, ASanders 1-4, Damron 0-1).

Rebounds: Fort Recovery 29 (Leverette 12, Barga 5, Homan 4, Faller 3, Guggenbiller 2, Overman, Jutte, team); Upper Scioto Valley 25 (ASanders 6, Underwood 4, Kindle 4, BSanders 4, Thompson 3, Damron 3, team).

Assists: Fort Recovery 8 (Homan 4, Guggenbiller 3, Evers, Faller). Upper Scioto Valley 3 (Kindle, Damron, Thompson).

Blocks: Fort Recovery 2 (Guggenbiller, Leverette).

Personal fouls: Fort Recovery 17 (Homan 5, Barga 4, Guggenbiller 3, Leverette 2, Evers 2, Jutte). Upper Scioto Valley 11 (ASanders 3, Thompson 3, Underwood 2, Kindle, Damron, BSanders).

Turnovers: Fort Recovery 10. Upper Scioto Valley 3.

Box score

New Castle Trojans vs. Jay County Patriots			
Boys varsity summary			
Class 3A sectional opener			
Jay County (8-14)			
	FG-FGA	FT-FTA	PTS
Comer	0-3	0-0	0
Nichols	1-3	3-4	5
Mhinkmp	0-2	0-0	0
Garringer	0-4	0-0	0
Dunnington	2-5	0-0	5
Dirksen	5-7	0-1	11
Phillips	1-2	2-2	4
Bihn	2-3	0-0	4
Swoveland	4-11	0-0	9
Totals	15-40	5-7	38
	.375	.714	
Def. rebound percentage: .826			
New Castle (12-11)			
	FG-FGA	FT-FTA	PTS
Butler	2-4	3-4	9
Logston	1-5	0-0	2
Taylor	8-18	2-2	22
Miller	2-8	0-0	8
Griffin	1-4	2-2	2
Madden	0-0	0-0	0
Blackford	1-2	0-0	3
Totals	15-41	7-8	46
	.366	.875	
Def. rebound percentage: .444			

Score by quarters:			
Jay Co.	5	10	9 14 — 38
N. Castle	14	6	8 18 — 46

3-point shooting: Jay County 3-14 (Dirksen 1-1, Dunnington 1-3, Swoveland 1-3, Comer 0-2, Muhlenkamp 0-2, Garringer 0-2). New Castle 9-28 (Taylor 4-10, Butler 2-4, Miller 2-8, Blackford 1-2, Logston 0-4).

Rebounds: Jay County 34 (Phillips 7, Dunnington 6, Bihn 5, team 4, Nichols 3, Dirksen 3, Swoveland 3, Comer, Muhlenkamp, Garringer). New Castle 16 (Griffin 5, Madden 4, Logston 3, Miller 2, team 2).

Assists: Jay County 4 (Garringer 2, Nichols, Dirksen). New Castle 9 (Taylor 4, Butler 2, Logston, Miller, Madden).

Blocks: Jay County 2 (Swoveland 2). New Castle 2 (Taylor, Griffin).

Personal fouls: Jay County 12 (Nichols 4, Swoveland 3, Garringer, Dunnington, Dirksen, Phillips, Bihn). New Castle 13 (Logston 4, Butler 3, Madden 3, Taylor 2, Griffin).

Turnovers: Jay County 20. New Castle 10.

Outlast ...

Continued from page 8
Of the 20 JCHS turnovers, seven occurred in the fourth, hampering the Patriots' efforts to string together buckets to make a run at the lead.

"It's been the same things all year, turnovers and missed shots," Bomholt said. "You can't win close games against teams that are good that way. ... We were trying to push it to get them to foul us, but our guard play all year long has been suspect and we had turnovers at tough times."

"I'm proud of our kids. We played well enough defensively to win the game. When you play well on one end and then you give it away on the other it's tough to take."

The Trojans jumped on top of Jay County early, scoring the first eight points and splashing in four first-quarter threes to gain a 14-5 advantage.

JCHS fought back in the second

'I'm proud of our kids. We played well enough defensively to win the game. When you play well on one end and then you give it away on the other it's tough to take.'

— JCHS coach Jerry Bomholt

and third quarters, winning the periods by a combined five points.

Junior guard Eli Dirksen finished as the Patriots' leading scorer with 11 points on 5-of-7 shooting from the field (71.4%). Seven of Dirksen's points came in the fourth.

One area that Jay County excelled in was the glass. The Patriots outrebounded New Castle 34-16. Fifteen of the Patriots' rebounds came from the offensive glass,

while the Trojans only secured the ball 12 times to close out possessions. Aiden Phillips had the most in the game at seven rebounds.

"The thing is that a couple of times we did a nice job getting to the boards and didn't finish it," Bomholt said. "That's the stuff that all year long has been our bugaboo."

"We'll go back to work and hopefully the underclassmen will take a little pride in it. They don't want that feeling again, I know that."

Sports on tap

Local schedule

Today
Jay County — Track Marion HSR Qualifier at Indiana Wesleyan University — 5:30 p.m.

Saturday
Fort Recovery — Girls bowling State at H.P. Lanes in Columbus — 10:45 a.m.

TV sports

Today
11 a.m. — Formula 1: Bahrain Grand Prix (ESPN2)
6 p.m. — College gymnastics: Alabama at LSU (ESPN2)
6:30 p.m. — NASCAR Xfinity Series: The LiUNA! (FS1)
7:30 p.m. — NBA: Dallas Mavericks at Boston Celtics (ABC)
7:30 p.m. — College gymnastics: Michigan at Oklahoma (ESPN2)
8 p.m. — NBA: Indiana Pacers at New Orleans Pelicans (Bally Indiana)
9 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Dayton at

Loyola Chicago (ESPN2)
10 p.m. — NBA: Milwaukee Bucks at Chicago Bulls (ESPN)
11 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Air Force at Utah State (FS1)

Saturday
10 a.m. — Premier League: West Ham United at Everton (USA)
10 a.m. — Formula 1: Bahrain Grand Prix (ESPN)
12 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Villanova at Providence (FOX); Butler at DePaul (FS1); Florida at South Carolina (ESPN)
12:30 p.m. — Premier League: Aston Villa at Luton Town (USA)
1 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Kansas at Baylor (ABC); Illinois at Wisconsin (BTN)
1 p.m. — PGA Tour: Cognizant Classic (NBC)
1:30 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Arkansas at Kentucky (CBS)
2 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Oklahoma State at Texas (ESPN2)
2:30 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Marquette at Creighton (FOX); UMass Amherst at Davidson (USA)

3 p.m. — NASCAR cup Series: Pennzoil 400 (FS1)
3 p.m. — Women's college basketball: Illinois State at Missouri State (Bally Indiana)
3 p.m. — NHL: Florida Panthers at Detroit Red Wings (ABC)
3:15 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Penn State at Minnesota (BTN)
4 p.m. — Men's college basketball: N.C. State at North Carolina (ESPN); Mississippi State at Auburn (ESPN2); USC at Washington (CBS)
4:30 p.m. — MLS: Orlando City at Inter Miami (FOX)
5 p.m. — NASCAR Xfinity Series: The LiUNA! (FS1)
5:30 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Iowa at Northwestern (BTN)
6 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Virginia at Duke (ESPN); Texas Tech at West Virginia (ESPN2)
6 p.m. — NHL: Minnesota Wild at St. Louis Blues (Bally Indiana)
7:30 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Xavier at Georgetown (FS1)
8 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Michigan

State at Purdue (FOX); Houston at Oklahoma (ESPN2); Tennessee at Alabama (ESPN)
8:30 p.m. — NBA: Denver Nuggets at Los Angeles Lakers (ABC)
10 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Gonzaga at St. Mary's (ESPN); Long Beach State at UC Irvine (ESPN2)

Local notes

Tournament scheduled
The Fort Recovery High School volleyball program is holding its annual alumni volleyball tournament on Friday, March 22.

Teams can consist of former players or anyone living in Fort Recovery, and don't need to be from the same graduating class.

Entry costs are \$10 per player, with all proceeds going to the FRHS volleyball team.

For more information, contact Travis Guggenbiller by March 20 by emailing guggenbiller@fortrecoveryhighschools.org

Midwest Walleye Challenge
Indiana anglers are invited to participate in the 2024 Midwest Walleye Challenge, a virtual

fishing tournament.

The tournament begins March 30 and ends June 30, with walleye, sauger and saugeye counting. Contestants need to utilize the MyCatch mobile app to submit photos of their catches with a measuring device.

Participants can enter for free for the chance at the grand prize or pay a \$25 fee to be eligible for biweekly cash prizes.

Those interested in participating can register by visiting AnglersAtlas.com/event/769 or by using the MyCatch app. For further information, visit on.IN.gov/walleye.

Registration open
Registration for the Dunkirk co-ed softball league is now open.

The league will start on April 7, and will cost \$250 for each team to register. First and second-place teams win a payout of \$400 and \$200 respectively.

To register, call Brock Farmer at (765) 209-4289.

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

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WAGONS, MANURE EQUIPMENT, AND HAY EQUIPMENT

90 SALE CALENDAR

New Idea 484 4x5 round baler, Two 18 ft Bale Queen wagons, trailer, 8 ft PTO driven tedder/rake combo.
MISCELLANEOUS
John Deere 997 zero turn diesel lawn mower with 72 inch deck, Hard-ee tree sprayer, Live-stock trailers, 375 board feet of cherry wood lumber, Anvils, mowers, Elevators, Gates, Duals, Tires.
This is only a partial listing of equipment that will be at the Auction. We are still accepting equipment on Thursday, March 14th and Friday, March 15th; 9am till 8pm No Saturday Consignments
Any Questions or to consign items call Brad Rindler 419-584-6356
COLDWATER AUCTION SERVICE
Auctioneers bonded in favor and licensed by the State of Ohio
PUBLIC AUCTION SATURDAY MARCH 23rd, 2024
TIME 10:00 A.M. LOCATED:

90 SALE CALENDAR

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.

90 SALE CALENDAR

Chicken crate. Old gates. Walking plows. Old toys. Tinker toys and games. Hand painted lamp globe.
OWNER: Laux Trust-Thomas J. 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.
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 informa-

90 SALE CALENDAR

tion 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.
OWNER: Anita Orr, Wade Weesner POA
SHAWVER AUCTIONEERING AND REAL ESTATE
AC31800004
Zane Shawver Lic. #AU10500168
260-729-2229
Pete D. Shawver Lic. #AU19700040
260-726-5587
Check AuctionZip & Auctionsoft for more photos.

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Trojans outlast the Patriots

Jay County pulled within a point but couldn't secure the lead

By **ANDREW BALKO**

The Commercial Review

NEW CASTLE — The Patriots remained within striking distance, but they couldn't find a way to take the lead.

The host New Castle Trojans held on late to end the Jay County High School boys basketball team's season in the opening round of the IHSAA Class 3A Sectional 24 opener by a score of 46-38 Wednesday.

"When we got it to one, I thought we had a shot," Jay County coach Jerry Bomholt said. "They were back on their heels a little bit and all we had to do was knock a shot down."

With the win, New Castle advances to face No. 8 Delta in the semi-final game on Friday night.

For most of the game, the Patriots (8-14) trailed New Castle (12-11) by single digits, but never led. The closest they got to overtaking the Trojans came as the result of a 9-2 run over the second half of the third quarter.

Trevin Dunnington sparked the run with a three pointer on an assist from Liam Garringer. JCHS scored the next two baskets as well with Wesley Bihn grabbing an offensive rebound for a putback and Gradin Swoveland finishing a wide open layup off of a Garringer dime.

The Trojans finally answered with Colin Taylor hitting a pull-up jumper from the short corner to give NCHS a 25-22 lead.

Jay County pulled within a single point for the first time with 1 minute, 45 seconds remaining in the quarter, after Bihn was credited with a tip in by challenging New Castle's Tucker Griffin for the rebound, who accidentally knocked the ball into his own hoop.

The Patriots failed to score again in the period, as Taylor hit another shot off of a baseline-out-of-bounds play with 25 seconds remaining to push the Trojan's lead back to five.

Jay County got the game within four points twice in the fourth quarter, but couldn't break through, giving New Castle the victory.

"This time of year, when that 32-minute buzzer hits, you have to have one more point and be 1-0," Trojans coach Daniel Cox said. "We did what we set out to do."

"Was it always pretty, everything you've drawn up and everything you want? No, but it's postseason play and Jay County is a well coached team so we knew it wasn't going to be easy. They were fighting for their life too."

"I thought our guys did a good job when it got to one of not panicking and staying the course."

Taylor fueled New Castle's offensive efforts scoring a game-high 22 points on 8-of-18 shooting (44.4%). He also scored seven of the Trojans' 18 fourth quarter points, while Clay Butler added six.



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

JCHS sophomore Gradin Swoveland floats up an easy layup after receiving a dime from Liam Garringer on Wednesday in the sectional opener at New Castle. Swoveland finished as Jay County's second leading scorer in the 46-38 loss.

A trio of 3-point buckets and strong free-throw shooting played a pivotal role in New Castle maintaining the lead. NCHS shot 3-of-4 from beyond the arc in the fourth — it made 9-of-28 shots from dis-

tance throughout the game — and knocked down 7-of-8 free throws down the stretch.

"It was really big," Cox said. "We always harp on free throws. We come in and shoot extras in the morning

and it's important this time of the year."

Turnovers plagued the Patriots all throughout the game. Jay County wound up with 20 turnovers, while New Castle only gave up 10 extra possessions.

See **Outlast** page 7

Timely triples

Consecutive 3-pointers kindle the Rams as they end FR's season

By **RAY COONEY**

The Commercial Review

MCGUFFEY, Ohio — After trailing for most of the first 24 minutes, the Indians had clawed their way back.

They had taken a one-point lead early in the fourth quarter and looked as if they might be able to fight off Upper Scioto Valley's two-headed monster.

But a third option emerged.

Andrue Kindle hit 3-pointers on consecutive possessions to put his team back on top for good and Maddox Underwood connected on all three free throws after being fouled on a triple try of his own. The nine points on three possessions put the Fort Recovery High School boys basketball team in a six-point hole as its season came to an end Wednesday with a 58-45 loss to the host Rams in the Division IV Northwest 4 sectional semifinal.

Kindle's triples were the final spark on a night during which Upper Scioto Valley got 28 points from junior Maddox Underwood and 20 from senior Alex Sanders.

"They had two guys that we knew that they were going to have everything go through, and they did," said FRHS coach Bob Leverette.

"What can you say, they got hot. We hadn't seen them get that hot during the season. We knew everything went through them, but we had never seen them get that hot."

See **Triples** page 7

Home Improvement 2024

GRAPHIC PRINTING
NEWSPAPERS

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