

The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

www.thecr.com

\$1



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

INDOT installation

A crew works Wednesday morning to install new equipment at the southeast corner of the intersection of Meridian and Main Streets in Portland. The work is part of the ongoing Indiana Department of Transportation for U.S. 27 (Meridian Street) that includes new traffic signals at Water, Main, Walnut, High and Lafayette streets as well as paving and sidewalk work.

Jay rate is up to 3.9%

Data showed more than 48,000 deaths in 2022

By **RAY COONEY**

The Commercial Review

The local unemployment rate jumped back up in the last month.

Indiana Department of Workforce Development estimates released Monday show Jay County with an unemployment rate of 3.9%.

The local rate had climbed to 4.1% in February — the first time it had cleared the 4% mark since September 2020 — before dropping nearly a full percentage point over the next two months.

Jay County's rate in May was up 0.7 percentage points from the previous month. It was also an increase of 0.5 percentage points from May 2023.

Unemployment was up across the region as all of the counties adjacent to Jay saw increases of at least a half a percentage point. Indiana's rate of 4% was up 0.6 percentage points from the previous month.

See **Rate** page 2

Gun violence declared crisis

Data showed more than 48,000 deaths in 2022

By **RACHANA PRADHAN and FRED CLASEN-KELLY**

KFF Health News
Tribune News Service

U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy declared firearm violence a public health crisis, as gun deaths and injuries punctuate daily life in America.

On nearly every day of 2024 so far, a burst of gunfire has hit at least four people somewhere in the country. Some days, communities have endured four or five such shootings.

The nation's top doctor called on policymakers to

consider gun safety measures such as bans on assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines and universal background checks for all firearm purchases. His advisory also urges a "significant increase" in funding for research on gun injuries and deaths, as well as greater access to mental health care and trauma-informed resources for people who have experienced firearm violence.

In 2022, more than 48,000 people were killed by guns in the U.S., or about 132 people a day, and suicides accounted for more than half of those deaths, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. An additional 200-plus Americans seek emergency care for firearm injuries each day, according to estimates from Johns Hopkins University research.

See **Rate** page 2

Assange pleads guilty

By **CHRIS STROHM and BEN WESTCOTT**

Bloomberg News
Tribune News Service

WASHINGTON — Julian Assange pleaded guilty to leaking U.S. national security secrets, ending a 14-year legal drama that has seen him spend time in U.K. jails and self-imposed exile in a London embassy.

The Wikileaks founder entered the plea in a U.S. courtroom in Saipan a few hours after arriving in the U.S. territory following his release from a London jail on Monday, according to the Associated Press. Under a deal with federal prosecutors, the 52-year-old's next stop was his native Australia.

The agreement resolves an international fight to prosecute Assange that has been underway since sensitive U.S. military documents, war logs and diplomatic cables were publicly leaked in 2010 and 2011, including footage of a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad a few years earlier.

While Assange will avoid a lengthy prison sentence — the plea deal gives

Agreement resolves 14-year legal battle

him credit for the five years he spent in a high-security UK prison as he fought extradition to the US — Wikileaks is raising funds on his behalf to cover what it says is an additional "half a million U.S. dollars" he must pay.

In one of the largest breaches of state secrets in U.S. history, Assange was accused of assisting Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning in obtaining around 750,000 classified or sensitive documents. Manning was convicted of leaking classified material in 2013, but then-President Barack Obama commuted her 35-year prison sentence in 2017.

Assange and Manning unlawfully conspired "to receive and obtain documents, writings, and notes connected with the nation-

al defense, including such materials classified up to the "SECRET" level," according to a four-page filing by the Justice Department.

The leaks and an unrelated Swedish rape investigation that triggered his years on the run gained Assange global notoriety. He was portrayed by Benedict Cumberbatch in a 2013 film about the early days of Wikileaks and was frequently lampooned on Saturday Night Live as a shadowy and mysterious figure.

The U.S. criminally charged Assange in 2019 under the Trump administration with violating the Espionage Act and was seeking to extradite him from the U.K., where he has been in prison ever since.

See **Pleads** page 2

Queen crowning

Molly Muhlenkamp grins Sunday evening while 2023 Miss Jay County Fair Queen Rachel Heitkamp places the 2024 crown. Muhlenkamp won the pageant at Jay County Junior-Senior High School with Inara Sanderson (first runner-up), Makinsey Murphy (second runner-up), Hannah Laux (third runner-up) and McKenna Vore (Miss Congeniality) joining her on the court.



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Deaths

Susan Girod, infant, Bryant
Details on page 2.

Weather

Jay County had a high temperature of 81 degrees Tuesday. The low was 68.

Tonight's low will be in the upper 50s. Expect partly cloudy skies Friday with a high in the lower 80s. There is a 60% chance of rain Friday night.

See page 2 for an extended outlook.

In review

The City of Dunkirk will hold its Independence Day fireworks at dusk on Saturday. The day will also be a free day at Dunkirk City Pool.

Coming up

Friday — Coverage of the Jay County commissioners and council joint session.

Saturday — Results from the Jay County Summer Swim Team's meet against Catalina.

Tuesday — Results from the Portland Rockets' games at Bethel University.



Field work

A combine and a grain cart drive side-by-side Monday evening in a field on the south side of the Blackford-Delaware county line just east of Delaware County road 600 East.



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Obituaries

Susan Girod, Bryant, June 23, 2024-June 24, 2024. Services were held Tuesday.

The Commercial Review publishes death notices for those with a connection to our coverage area free of charge. They include the name, city of residence, birth/death date and time/date/location of services.

There is a charge for obituaries, which are accepted only from funeral homes or mortuary services.

Felony arrests

Failed to appear

A Portland man was arrested Tuesday for failing to appear in court.

Richard J. Brewster, 62, 954 S. Bridge St., is charged in Jay Superior Court with a Level 6 felony for pointing a firearm at another and a Class A misdemeanor for resisting law enforcement. He failed to appear in court June 25.

Brewster was being held without bond in Jay County Jail.

CR almanac

Friday 6/28	Saturday 6/29	Sunday 6/30	Monday 7/1	Tuesday 7/2
84/70	88/65	77/53	78/59	86/71
Friday's forecast shows mostly cloudy skies with a high of 84 degrees.	Saturday has a 70% chance of showers and thunderstorms under mostly cloudy skies.	There's a slight chance of rain continuing into Sunday. Otherwise, sunny.	Monday's forecast shows sunny skies with a high in the mid to upper 70s.	Mostly sunny skies are expected Tuesday with a high of 86 degrees.

Crisis ...

Continued from page 1
No federal database records nonfatal gun injuries.

The Office of the Surgeon General does not set or carry out gun policy, but historically its reports and warnings have nudged policymakers and lawmakers to act.

Murthy, a physician, told KFF Health News he hoped to convey the broader toll of gun violence on the nation and the need for an urgent public health response. He cited soaring gun deaths among children and teens and noted that "the mental health toll of firearm violence is far more profound and perva-

sive than many of us recognize."

"Every day that passes we lose more kids to gun violence," Murthy said, "the more children who are witnessing episodes of gun violence, the more children who are shot and survive that are dealing with a lifetime of physical and mental health impacts."

Firearm-related homicides over the past decade and suicides over the past two decades have driven the sharp rise in gun deaths, the advisory says.

Guns are the leading cause of death for children and teens, with higher death rates among Black and Hispanic youths.

Researchers from Boston University found that during the height of the COVID pandemic, Black children were 100 times as likely as white children to experience gun injuries. Hispanic and Asian children also saw major increases in firearm assault injuries during that time, that study showed.

Joseph Sakran, executive vice chair of surgery at John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore and chief medical officer for Brady United Against Gun Violence, said the surgeon general's declaration is a "historic moment that sounds the alarm for all Americans."

Pleads ...

Continued from page 1
The initial charges — 17 related to espionage and one to computer misuse — carried a maximum penalty of 175 years in prison if he was found guilty on all counts, although sentences for federal crimes are typically less than that.

But the U.S. charges came years after the Swedish investigation, which led to his being detained in 2010 in London. Assange said the Swedish case was politically motivated, and after months of fighting extradition while on bail

fled to the Ecuadorian embassy in London.

Those charges were dropped in 2017, but Assange remained in a small apartment in the embassy as he continued to dodge U.K. police and American prosecutors.

Ecuador dropped his asylum status in 2019, leading to his dramatic arrest early one morning in April of that year. That kicked off his incarceration in London's Belmarsh prison and another five years of legal wrangling as he fought the U.S. charges before the current deal was hammered out.

Rate ...

Continued from page 1
Gibson County recorded the lowest rate in the state for the fourth consecutive month, tying with Martin and Daviess counties at 3.1%. White, Hamilton, Dubois, Clinton and Boone counties all came in at 3.2%.

Howard County again had the highest rate in the state at 5.7%. Fayette County was next at 5.5%, with Lake County as the only other above the 5% mark as it came in at 5.4%.

Adams County: 3%, down 0.7 percentage points, tied for 25th-lowest

Blackford County: 4.6%, up 0.8 percentage points, tied for seventh-highest

Delaware County:

Indiana average came in at 4%

4.7%, up 0.8 percentage points, tied for fourth-highest

Jay County: 3.9%, up 0.7 percentage points, tied for 34th-highest

Randolph County: 4.4%, up 0.8 percentage points, tied for 11th-highest

Wells County: 3.3%, up 0.5 percentage points, tied for ninth-lowest

EXPLORE

CATHOLIC

"What is Truth?"

An informal discussion on the search for objective Truth in a world that seems to lack truth nearly everywhere, with Fr. Peter Logsdon of the Catholic Churches of Jay and Randolph County

- Considering Becoming Catholic?
- Want to Know More about the Catholic faith?
- Just Curious or Interested in this topic?

THURS, June 27TH

BUFFALO WINGS-N-RINGS in Portland @ 7:00 PM

SERVICES

Friday

Doss, Jennifer: 10 a.m., Wilson-Shook Funeral Home, 2048 N. 1000 West, Parker City..

Burchnell, James: 7 p.m., Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home, 208 N. Commerce St., Portland.

Service listings provided by

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Markets

Cooper Farms Fort Recovery
Corn.....4.16
Oct. corn4.17
Wheat4.80

POET Biorefining Portland
Corn.....4.20
July corn.....4.20
Aug. corn4.21

The Andersons Richland Township
Corn4.05
July corn.....4.05
Beans11.81

July beans11.81
Wheat 5.10

ADM Montpelier
Corn.....4.06
July corn.....4.04
Beans11.62
July beans11.57
Wheat5.10

Heartland St. Anthony
Corn.....4.15
July corn.....4.15
Beans11.50
July beans11.25
Wheat4.90

Today in history

In 1829, British scientist James Smithson died, leaving an endowment "to the United States of America, to found at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an 'establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.'"

In 1971, six people were injured in a two-vehicle collision on Indiana 28 east of Indiana 3 in Delaware County. Carl Imel of rural Portland was involved

in the accident when another vehicle pulled in front of his car.

In 2022, Portland City Council agreed on a 4-2 vote to put the former Sheller-Globe south site at 510 S. Bridge St. up for sale. (In September, the city's board of works approved the sale to Chad Fifer for installation of a sawmill, but transfer of the property is still being held up because of environmental issues.)

—The CR

Citizen's calendar

Monday
5:30 p.m. — Portland City Council, council chambers, fire station, 1616 N. Franklin St.
7:30 p.m. — Fort Recovery Village Council, village hall, 201 S. Main St.

Tuesday
4 p.m. — Jay County Development Corporation, community resource center, 118 S. Meridian St., Portland.

4 p.m. — Portland Board of Works executive session, mayor's office, city hall, 321 N. Meridian St.

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

7 p.m. — Pennville Town Council, town hall, 105 N. Washington St., Pennville.

7 p.m. — Salamononia Town Council, School-house Community Center.



Swiss Village

HEALTHCARE ACTIVITIES ASSISTANT

Swiss Village is now seeking a Full-Time Healthcare Activities Assistant to participate in the coordination, development, and implementation of comprehensive therapeutic recreation services and program for Swiss Village residents. Position will be 40 hours/week, with varying daytime hours. Minimal evening and weekend hours required. Candidates must have an outgoing personality and excellent interpersonal skills. Must be able to push wheelchairs and spend a majority of the workday walking. Seeking candidates willing to be flexible. Computer skills preferred.

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

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Coalition grant applications close Monday

It's not too late to apply for a grant through Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition.

The organization is accepting applications to award grants from the Jay County Alcohol and Drug Countermeasures fund this year. Dollars are available for Jay County organizations or agencies providing services in Jay County with a focus on initiatives addressing

Taking Note

issues in the areas of prevention, justice and treatment. Approximately \$4,000 is available for each category. Grant applications are

due by the end of the day July 1. To learn more, contact Ally Raines at (260) 251-3259 or at allyssa@jdcpc.org.

Blues is on the way

Darke County Center for the Arts will host its annual BBQ & Blues event at 6 p.m. July 12 on the lawn of Greenville Ohio Library.

Brass Tracks Band will be the featured performer

for the event with Alex Poteet joining the group as a special guest. Food trucks and beverages will be available.

"BBQ & Blues has become a beloved tradition in our community, bringing together great music, delicious food and a fun atmosphere," said David Warner, Darke County Center for the Arts artistic director of performing, said in a press

release. "We are thrilled to feature Brass Tracks Band this year and can't wait to see everyone dancing and enjoying the music."

Admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and younger. They are available at darkecount-yarts.org.

Contest opening

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources' license card

background artwork contest is underway.

From Monday through Aug. 2, entries will be accepted for the contest. All work should be Indiana-based and have a nature or wildlife theme. For additional guidelines, visit events.IN.gov/event/DFW CardContest.

Four entries will be chosen to be printed on licenses this year.

Friend takes advantage of living situation

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend and I rented an apartment six weeks ago. A friend of his needed a place to stay due to some marital problems, so we decided she could stay with us. At the beginning, she offered us \$500, and we agreed to that. Abby, she hasn't paid us a dime. She has chipped in maybe \$30 for food.

She sleeps all day and sits in her room playing games on her phone all night. She demands we take her anywhere she needs to go, gives no help around the house and makes nasty comments about my boyfriend. (I just caught her looking at my phone to see what I am writing.)

We have tried explaining that I'm the only one paying the bills here and she seems to be freeloading. She even had her boyfriend here. I am on a fixed income, and I feel like she's taking advantage of the situation. Do you have any advice for me? — FEELS LIKE A FOOL

DEAR FEELS: Yes. The longer you tolerate this, the longer it will continue. Tell your boyfriend (if he doesn't already know) that his friend hasn't given you the agreed-upon \$500 and has made no effort to become self-supporting and inde-

Dear Abby



pendent. If she's entertaining her boyfriend at your place, it's no wonder she was having "marital problems."

Tell your boyfriend you want his freeloading friend out of there. Then set a date for her to be out — unless he wants to support the two of them himself.

DEAR ABBY: When my mother-in-law turned 75, her kids decided to throw her a surprise party. My two sisters-in-law and I offered to make the food, with one of them doing the shopping and the three of us splitting the cost and the work. We agreed upon a menu and hashed out a shopping list.

The party was a success. But when the grocery bill came, it was three times higher than I'd expected. Sister-in-law had bought only fancy-brand organic foods from a boutique store, expensive wine and way more than we needed.

Now, we're planning a party for the parents' anniversary. I said I'm happy to make food again, but I have to put a cap on the budget or be the one to do the shopping. This did not go over well. The family is taking turns making digs at me for being "cheap."

At what point do I say they need to be respectful or I'll bow out of the event altogether? I refuse to be shamed for holding the line on my budget or for making less money than they do, but I'm also not interested in giving them intimate details of my financial situation, which is none of their business.

Am I wrong to think that when I say I have to stick to a budget, they should believe me? They think I'm being stingy. — NO PARTY POOPER IN TEXAS

DEAR NO PARTY POOPER: Of course you are not wrong. Because you are reluctant to reveal exactly what your financial situation is (and you are within your rights to keep mum), the next time you are accused of being "cheap," simply respond that NOBODY has as much money as other people think they do. Period!

DEAR ABBY: I am 49. I grew up in a toxic, abusive household. My mother can't drive.

She's broke and needs me. Up until the last few years, she has been a nightmare.

I'm a single mom of three children and I work A LOT. On weekends, I'd like to rest and try to have a social life, but my mother wants me to come nearly every Saturday to take her out and visit with the kids. She lives 45 minutes away and it's an all-day endeavor.

I am going crazy. I have no social life, and I'd like to get remarried one day. Would it be selfish to visit only once a month? I need to focus more on myself and my needs. I don't know what to do or what to suggest for my mother to do in my absence. — NO LIFE IN SOUTH CAROLINA

DEAR NO LIFE: Remind your mother that you work hard all week and during the last few years you have sacrificed your personal time to be her chauffeur. Explain that you need time for yourself and can only visit her once a month.

Do not expect her to like it, but you MUST take time for yourself to unwind and have a social life. Advise her that there may be a senior center near her that provides the transportation she needs for activities. Then stand your ground.

DEAR ABBY: Several months ago, I let the 49-year-old son of a dear friend move into my basement. "Jason" pays me rent plus utilities.

Last week, he informed me that he is not vaccinated for COVID. He was drinking at the time. Since my husband passed away with COVID in his system two years ago, I told Jason he would need to get vaccinated or find another place to live, but now I'm not sure he remembers the conversation.

How should I handle this? I don't want to alienate his mother (or him, whom I love like a son) over this. — HEALTH-CONSCIOUS IN COLORADO

DEAR HEALTH-CONSCIOUS: Ask Jason if he remembers the conversation you had in which he mentioned that he has not been vaccinated for COVID. If he doesn't recall having made the statement, remind him. Then tell him that when your husband passed, he had COVID in his system, that you do NOT want to risk being exposed to COVID and that if he wishes to continue living with you, he will have to stay current on his vaccines. This need not be a confrontation if you approach the subject calmly.

Community Calendar

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

Today

SMART RECOVERY — A group for those struggling with addiction that focuses on motivation, coping with cravings, managing thoughts, feelings and behavior, and living a balanced life meets at 11 a.m. each Thursday in the IU Health Jay Outpatient Behavioral Health Center, Entrance C, 510 W. Votaw St., Portland.

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

LOCAL'S MARKET — Will be held from 8 a.m. to noon each Saturday in June through October in the parking lot at Jay Community Center in Portland. For more information, contact Bill Cook.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS — Will meet at 10 a.m. at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, 218 E. High St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 251-3336 or (260) 729-7000.

Sunday

A BETTER LIFE - 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 BREAK-

FAST 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.

Sudoku

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

Level: Intermediate

Wednesday's Solution

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

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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Blackford band
Wednesday, July 10 - NT*

Blackford County Fair preview
Wednesday, July 10 - NT*

Randolph County bands
Tuesday, July 11 - N-G*

Randolph County Fair preview
NG*Thursday, July 18

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*UNIV = appears in all Graphic Printing Newspapers, CR = The Commercial Review, NG = The News-Gazette, NT = The News Times, NS = The News and Sun

For inflation, we're on right path

By MORTON J. MARCUS

We get lots of news about inflation. Sometimes, the numbers seem out-of-line with what we are experiencing. Maybe this column will help.

Let's start with some numbers that are virtually unknown to most of us: the actual Consumer Price Index (the famous CPI).

The CPI is an average of prices in urban areas across the nation. Its starting point of 100 was the level of prices from 1982 through 1984.

The mix of goods and services changes over the years because we weren't buying the same things back then as we buy today. No cell phones and

Eye on the Pie



no autos with backup cameras. The medications we had then did not protect us as well as those we have today.

Daily, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) collects data on prices and the very nature of our purchases. Then every month they offer a CPI number, the best indicator we have of price changes allowing for all

the changes in our buying habits.

In May this year, the CPI stood at 314, that's 3.14 times higher than consumer prices in 1982-84. That nickel candy you bought back then would cost at least 15 cents today.

The BLS provides CPI data for the four big regions of the nation. Indiana is in the Midwest region (roughly the Ohio River to the Great Plains) where the May 2024 CPI was not 314, but 290. Long run, inflation has been lower for our part of America than for the nation at large.

Nobody is telling us that, because we don't care about long ago. We're focused on the

near-term. And, maybe our lagging price increases are not good news, but the result of a lagging, staggering economy.

The news we do get is that U.S. prices, in general, in May 2024, were 0.2% higher than a month earlier. If that 0.2% (actually 0.166%) stayed the same over the course of a year, what would the annual rate be? The answer is a delightful 2.01%. That's what the Federal Reserve wants: 2% annual inflation.

But one month does not a year make. The growth rate of a tulip, in its first days above ground, slows or tulips would be higher than our houses. Similarly, the Chicago Cubs win-

ning in May does not mean they will be in the World Series.

The Fed is not prepared to declare victory on the basis of a single month. If we look back beyond one month, we'll find prices are still 3.3% higher than a year ago, in May 2023. But wages are 3.5% ahead of where they were a year ago.

Since this inflation began three years ago, consumer prices have increased 17.6% with wages rising 15.2%. Wage increases usually lag prices. The fight against inflation isn't over; but we and the Fed are on the right path.

Marcus is an economist. Email him at mortonjmarcus@gmail.com.

Keep the fear, give us all hope

By NOLAN FINLEY

The Detroit News
Tribune News Service

What are people looking for in their darkest hour, when they are frightened, angry, frustrated and uncertain whether the coming years will be better or worse?

Hope. They want something to believe in, a message that will lift their spirits and rally them to a vision of a brighter future.

Good luck finding that in this election season. With the nation still dealing with the aftereffects of crushing inflation, crises at the southern border and abroad, hateful protests on college campuses and a conviction by 68% of voters that we're on the wrong track, what they're being offered is fear and division.

The presidential election is playing out like a Grumpy Old Men sequel. Neither President Joe Biden nor Former President Donald Trump is talking about the future and how they'll make it better should either be returned to the White House this fall. Perhaps that's because, at age 81 and 78 respectively, their own futures are so limited.

Instead of trying to inspire us with big ideas and long-term plans for getting out of the mess we're in, the worst two presidential candidates to ever appear across from each other on a ballot are non-stop fear mongering.

Every message from the mouths of Biden and Trump starts with, "If my opponent is elected ..." and ends with dire warnings of the disasters that will occur should that happen.

I suspect I'm like most voters in that I don't need to be further frightened about four more years of Trump or Biden. I'm already plenty scared.

What I need is something hopeful to cling to. I'd like to know how they plan to bring peace and prosperity to America and bring its people together.

We have started the process at The News of interviewing candidates for endorsements. This year, we've put in place a firm rule: Talk about yourself and what you would do if elected, and not about your opponent. We won't endorse anyone whose only case to the

Noah Finley



I'd like to know how they plan to bring peace and prosperity to America and bring its people together.

voters is that they aren't as bad as the person they're running against.

What we're looking for are candidates who can articulate positive ideas for moving the country forward, and I believe most voters are looking for the same. So why aren't we getting it?

Because the brimstone messaging "resonates with their bases," says pollster Richard Czuba of the Glengariff Group. "Both presidential candidates have problems with their bases, and they're trying to motivate them."

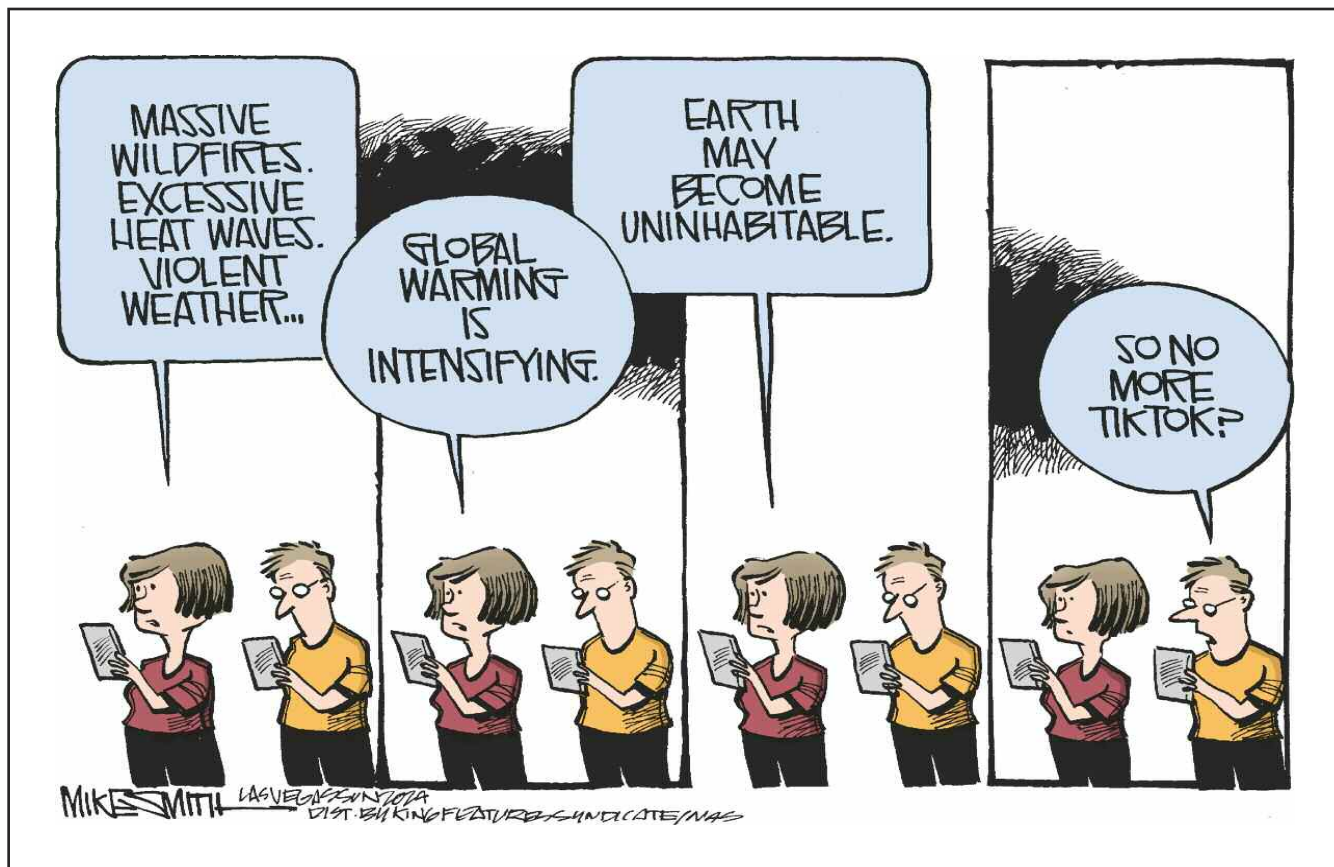
"Who it doesn't resonate with is independents and centrist voters. Elections aren't about the past, they're about the future. Centrist voters want to know what's the plan for the next four years."

Count me in that group. I'm most of all looking for something I haven't heard much about this cycle: optimism.

"Most successful presidents have optimism at their core," Czuba says. "Reagan, Clinton, Bush, Obama were all optimistic leaders."

Some of those presidents Czuba mentioned I voted for, some I didn't. But I'd take any one of them over the two gloomy doomsday purveyors we have to choose from in November.

Optimism, hope, inspiration — call it what you will. But it's what voters are looking for. And right now, as Czuba says, "they don't see the future in either of these candidates."



Steps could curb excess prescribing

By ZACHARY WAGNER and CRAIG R. FOX

Los Angeles Times
Tribune News Service

America's opioid epidemic is as bad as it has ever been. Although the sharp increase in opioid overdose deaths over the last decade is largely attributed to the rise in fentanyl distributed through drug cartels, a startling number can be traced to prescriptions.

In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 45 people died each day in 2021 from a prescription opioid overdose — about one-fifth of all opioid-related deaths.

Some efforts to curb opioid prescribing have shown promise, including prescription drug monitoring programs, promotion of alternative analgesics, provider education and informing prescribing physicians when their patients die from opioid overdoses.

But there is one medical specialty for which opioids are still a crucial part of most patients' treatment plan: surgery. Nearly every patient discharged after surgery leaves the hospital in significant pain, which is why surgeons prescribe more opioids than almost any other specialty.

Most patients, however, do not use all the opioids they are prescribed after an operation. That leaves excess pills in circulation and helps fuel the epidemic. If we could get surgeons to prescribe only the number of pills patients need for their own use, this could greatly reduce the number of excess pills available for diversion and misuse, among patients, their families and members of their communities. This, in turn, could reduce addiction and overdoses.

Minimizing how often a surgery patient ends up with extra opioids would not solve the crisis, but it's part of the solution — and it's achievable.

Changing prescribers' behavior is hard. They get set in their ways, moored by a strong belief that what they are doing is best for their patients. Moreover, they strenuous-

Guest Opinion

ly resist attempts to constrain their freedom to decide what is best. Our research team looked to behavioral science for ways to nudge providers to prescribe in accordance with best practices, while leaving them with full autonomy to choose what they think would be best.

Conventional strategies for curbing excessive opioid prescribing assume that surgeons are rational actors who, whenever they are informed about patient needs and incentivized to attend to them, will act to maximize the welfare of patients. If that were the case, simply educating doctors about the dangers of overprescribing might be sufficient.

However, numerous studies from experimental psychology and behavioral economics have shown that people are highly selective in the information they focus on and more socially minded than traditional models of rational self-interest would predict.

Such insights from behavioral science provide promising avenues for curtailing excessive opioid prescribing by surgeons. For instance, one group of researchers found that setting the default opioid quantity in the electronic health record system to match the amount patients actually use substantially reduces the amount of opioids prescribed. Apparently, busy surgeons tended to go with the flow when prescribing — presumably because the default number of pills became a salient reference point, was easiest to enter and suggested a norm of correct behavior.

Surgeons, like other humans, are social animals who are strongly motivated to adhere to the norms of good behavior endorsed by their peers. We capitalized on this for our

recent study, a randomized trial to test two simple interventions across 19 hospitals in Northern California for a year.

In one version, the emails informed surgeons that they had prescribed more pills than other surgeons in their health system had been prescribing for the same procedure. This message highlighted "descriptive" norms of actual behavior. In a second, simpler version, whenever a surgeon prescribed opioid amounts that exceeded recommended quantities for the procedure they had performed, we sent the doctor an email notification informing them. This intervention highlighted "injunctive" norms of ideal behavior.

Surprisingly, both social norm interventions had the exact same impact on prescribing. Subsequent patients were about 25% less likely to receive an opioid prescription that exceeded the recommended amount. This resulted in about 42,000 fewer pills in the community for the 26,000 patients who were part of the intervention group.

Imagine how many fewer pills would be prescribed if this were scaled up nationwide, given that there are more than 50 million inpatient surgical procedures performed each year in the U.S. Surely this would lead to millions, if not tens of millions, fewer opioid pills circulating in the U.S. each year.

Inexpensive solutions grounded in evidence on human behavior can be powerful tools in our campaign against opioid addiction. Sometimes just a light touch — a tweak to the default settings in the electronic health system or an automated email to surgeons — can have an outsized effect on prescribing decisions with life-or-death consequences.

Wagner is a health economist at USC and Rand. Fox is a professor of psychology and medicine at UCLA and chair of the Behavioral Decision Making Area at the UCLA Anderson School of Management.

The Commercial Review



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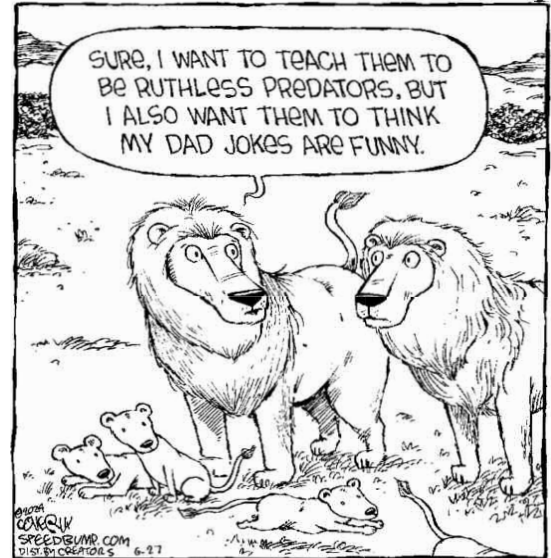
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—Thomas Jefferson

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SPEED BUMP Dave Coverly



THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



Contract Bridge By Steve Becker

Bizarre is the word for it

South dealer. Both sides vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ K 10 9 2
♥ 7 5
♦ A 9 3
♣ 10 8 4 2

EAST
♠ A 7
♥ J 9 2
♦ Q 10 6 5
♣ Q J 9 7

WEST
♠ 8 5
♥ Q 10 6 4 3
♦ K J 8 4 2
♣ 3

SOUTH
♠ Q J 6 4 3
♥ A K 8
♦ 7
♣ A K 6 5

The bidding:
South West North East
1♠ Pass 2♠ Pass
4♠
Opening lead — three of clubs.

Declarer is sometimes called upon to make a play that might at first appear bizarre, but which, upon subsequent analysis, proves to be absolutely essential. For a striking example, consider this deal where West led his singleton club against four spades, dummy playing the deuce, East the seven and South the ace.

Declarer led a spade to the king, losing to the ace, and East returned the queen of clubs. It was at this point that South showed his mettle by playing the five instead of the king.

As a result, he made the contract. When East continued with the nine of clubs, South followed low and West ruffed, but that was essentially the end of the play. Declarer's only losers proved to be a spade, a club and a club ruff.

Now let's go back to trick three and see what would have happened had South played the king of clubs on East's queen, which seems the normal thing to do. In that event, South would have gone down one, losing a spade, a club ruff and two more club tricks to East's J-9.

It is not difficult to demonstrate that ducking the queen of clubs is the right play. South cannot go down if he ducks the queen, regardless of how the opposing clubs are divided, but he can go down if he covers the queen with the king and the opening lead turns out to be a singleton.

Since making the contract is always declarer's No. 1 priority, it must be right to duck the queen at trick three. The ducking play, unusual as it might appear, has everything to gain and nothing to lose.

Tomorrow: Bidding quiz.
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Peanuts



Rose is Rose



Agnes



Hi and Lois



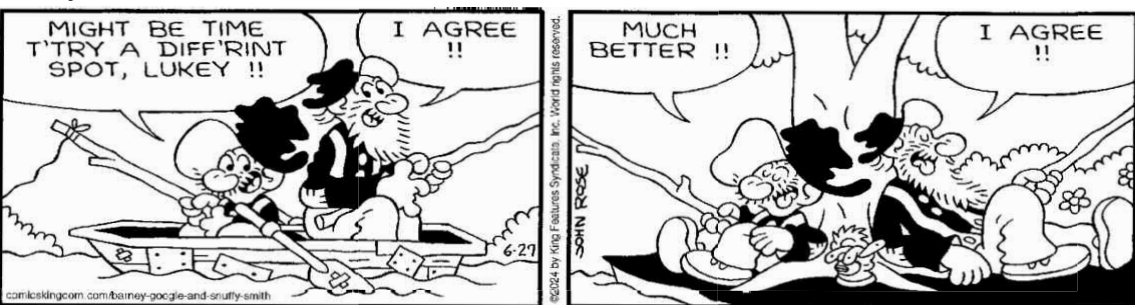
Between Friends



Blondie



Snuffy Smith



Beetle Bailey



6-27 CRYPTOQUIP

N K Q G A J N F G E B M D F Y D Z Z J H
K D A Z D V Q Z V K Z K J L D D P J F Q H Y,
L R Z Z K Q H T M R E E B N Z V Q P J

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT COULD ONE CALL LEECHES THAT MAKE THEIR HABITATS IN AND AROUND SMALL STREAMS? BROOKWORMS.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals H

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 China setting
5 Sphere
8 Bar fight reminder
12 Behave
13 Itinerary word
14 Skater Lipinski
15 Teen fave
16 Very long time
17 "Exodus" author
18 Prom attendee
20 Take for ransom
22 "It's c-c-cold!"
23 Half of CIV
24 Blunders
27 Avid museum-goer
32 Luau souvenir
33 Greek cross
34 Bird (Pref.)
35 Supervisor
38 Grand — (four-run homer)
39 Moment

DOWN
1 Writer Kingsley
2 Faction
3 Privy to
4 Improvises
5 Judge too highly
6 Brazilian city
7 Teller's place
8 Small apartment
9 Fair
10 "Madama Butterfly" solo
11 Grate
19 Choice word?

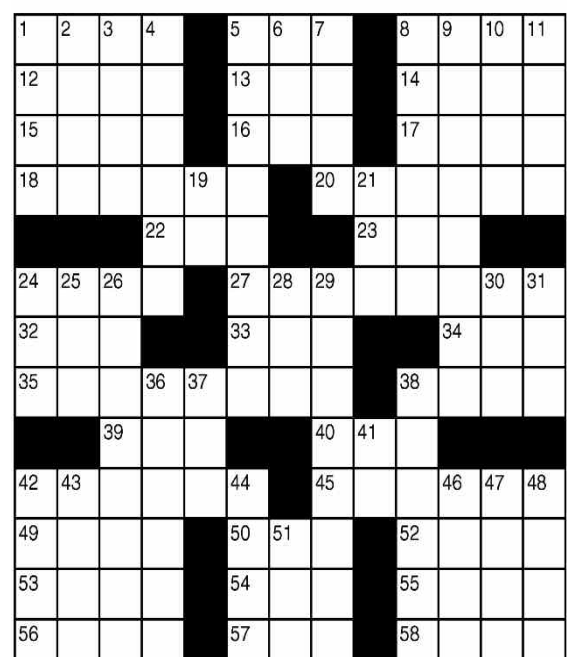
40 Petty peeve
42 Oracle setting
45 Texas city
49 Pianist Gilels
50 "The Newsroom" actor Patel
52 Breakfast chain
53 "Dracula" heroine
54 Poetic tribute
55 Tide variety
56 Wild revelry
57 California's Big —

21 Under the weather
24 "Strange Magic" gp
25 Gun the engine
26 German wine
28 Singer Carly — Jepsen
29 Triangular pastry
30 Hollywood's Gabor
31 Crater edge
36 Sports-cast footage
37 Learning ctr.
38 Oktoberfest vessels
41 Freudian concept
42 Trial version
43 Mideast ruler
44 Marriage vows
46 — butter
47 Drench
48 PC programs
51 Univ. URL ender

Solution time: 24 mins.

S	T	A	B	D	I	M	A	B	U	T
A	A	R	E	A	C	E	R	U	S	E
S	Y	L	L	A	B	A	B	A	S	T
S	E	O	U	L	—	—	S	M	E	R
—	—	—	—	G	I	S	T	—	—	—
Y	M	C	A	—	L	I	O	N	—	U
O	O	—	—	N	O	T	R	E	—	T
N	I	L	—	I	P	O	S	—	—	W
—	—	—	—	U	S	C	—	S	O	U
—	—	—	—	H	A	M	P	E	R	—
—	—	—	—	A	B	B	E	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	M	A	U	L	—	—	I
—	—	—	—	M	A	S	T	—	—	H

Yesterday's answer 6-27



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Crew ...

Continued from page 8
Simmons gives one of the new tires to jackman Shane Wilson, who fastens the lugnut onto the front wheel after lifting the car with a 35-pound jack. Simmons screws on the back tire as Pozega gets the old one off, and they hurry back to the other side.
Brook Davenport, a former offensive lineman at Catholic University, stays on the side of the car closest to the pit road walls fueling the car with a can of Sunoco gasoline. The tire changers hasten back over to the near side, grab the final two tires from over the wall and secure them onto the car.
“The time is less than 10 seconds, which is really similar to a football play,” Davenport said. “The only difference is you have a ton of time between pit stops, like

30 to 40 minutes, whereas in football, there are 25 seconds on the clock.
“A lot of high endurance strength stuff, and training-wise, it really does encompass the same aspects as the football field.”
‘That locker room feeling that you miss’
Every morning at around 7:30 a.m., pit crew members start arriving at their race shop.
A pace car gildes toward team members. Wearing athletic shorts and T-shirts, they dash in front of the car holding tires and drill lugnuts onto axles.
There’s a camera positioned atop a pole that oversees this practice area, and the team members congregate in front of a television screen on a pit box following each pit stop and replay tape.

The teams head inside for a film session after roughly an hour of pit practice. All six of Chastain’s crew members sit alongside each other before two television screens, with crew chief Phil Surgen in the middle.
Surgen drags video clips from every angle of each pit stop in the previous week’s Cup Series race onto a timeline in Adobe Premiere Pro. They have the high angle like they see in their practices outside, along with having cameras from different positions around the pit stall.
They discuss ways to cut down time and break down their pit stops from that prior race. Eventually, they look at pictures of the upcoming race track to prepare.
“It’s fun to go out here, hang out with the guys — it’s just that locker room feeling that you just

miss when you’re done playing sports,” Pozega said. “Coming to NASCAR has just been awesome.”
Still competing for a sports team
Trackhouse pit crews venture about a mile from their shop to Vitality Fitness in Concord, where all the team members are putting up power cleans, sailing through the air for box and broad jumps, hitting the leg press and much more. A detailed lifting program for each day is spelled out on TV screens.
Some of the Trackhouse athletes decide to jog that trip around the corner instead of getting in a car. They all work out inside a big, open room together, rotating in different areas of the gym in groups.

By around noon, most of the team members are back at the race shop hanging out with each other some more. They’re back at the shop training again the following morning, one step closer to their next race.
For Simmons, it’s been meaningful to become a professional athlete in the area in which he grew up.
Coming from a family closely involved with sports, it’s been special for him to find a new community within his hometown that’s been so supportive to him.
“Charlotte has done a lot for my family,” Simmons said. “My dad devoted 30-something years of his life to that school. I grew up in the Charlotte area, my mom and my brother still live down there, so I’m still down there a lot. That city means a lot.”



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Jacob Foote slings in a fastball for the Fort Recovery ACME baseball team in its 2-1 win over St. Henry on Tuesday. Foote went the distance on the mound for the Indians, only giving up one earned run on six hits without issuing a walk.

Roundup ...

Continued from page 8
Foot leads

FORT RECOVERY — The Fort Recovery ACME baseball team took down St. Henry 2-1 on Tuesday to earn the No. 3 seed in the Mercer County ACME sectional tournament.
The Indians (5-4) got off to a hot start in the first inning, taking a 2-0 lead. Austin Siegrist smacked a single and swiped second base before Caden Grisez could drive him in for the first run of the game. Three batters later, Grisez scored on a single by Luke Fortkamp to left field.
Jacob Foote never relinquished the lead, going the distance for Fort Recovery on the mound. While he only struck out two batters, he didn’t issue a walk the entire game and gave up six hits.

St. Henry finally scored its first run in the top of the seventh inning after a leadoff double and a two-out single, but couldn’t manage to tie the Indians.
The Indians draw a first round matchup with sixth-seeded Parkway today at approximately 7 p.m. in St. Henry. The winner will go on to play No. 2 Marion Local on Friday.
St. Henry, who will be hosting the first four games of the tournament, earned the No. 4 seed and will face off against fifth-seeded Celi-

na today. The winner matchups up with top-seeded Coldwater on Friday’s quarterfinal.

Jay falls

BLUFFTON — The Jay County summer swim team finally fell in a dual meet against Wells Community swim team 607-525 on Tuesday.
Jay County only managed to win 25 of the 58 events at the meet.
Three swimmers still excelled despite the loss with three first-place finishes.
Carysn Guggenbiller handled the 9-10-year-old girls division with victories in the backstroke, breaststroke and short freestyle.
Henry Warvel was the youngest triple-event winner, topping the boys 8-and-younger long freestyle, butterfly and breaststroke.
Jay County dominated the boys 13-14-year-old division with Carson Westgerdes and Cooper Glentzer each winning a trio of events.
Westgerdes claimed the butterfly, individual medley and breaststroke while Glentzer dominated the long freestyle, backstroke and short freestyle.
Glentzer also competed in the 2024 Indiana Open Water Championships at Geist Waterfront Park in Fishers. He finished sixth in the 1,200-meter race.

Sports on tap

Local schedule

Today
Jay County summer swim team vs. Catalina – 6 p.m.
Fort Recovery swim team at Darke County in Greenville – 6 p.m.
Fort Recovery ACME baseball sectional opener vs. Parkway at St. Henry – 7 p.m.
Saturday
Portland Rockets vs. Battle Creek Merchants at Bethel University – 1 p.m.

TV sports

Today
4 p.m. — NBA draft second round (ESPN)
6 p.m. — Copa America soccer: United States

vs. Panama (FOX)
6:30 p.m. — Olympic men’s gymnastics trials (USA)
7:45 p.m. — MLB: Cincinnati Reds at St. Louis Cardinals (Bally Indiana)
8 p.m. — Olympic track and field trials (NBC)
8:10 p.m. — MLB: Cleveland Guardians vs. Kansas City Royals (FS1)
9 p.m. — Olympic track and field trials (USA)
9 p.m. — Copa America soccer: Bolivia vs. Uruguay (FOX)

Friday
6:30 a.m. — Formula 1: Austria Grand Prix (ESPN2)
10:30 a.m. — Formula 1: Austria Grand Prix (ESPN2)
6 p.m. — Copa America soccer: Costa Rica

vs. Colombia (FS1)
8 p.m. — Olympic track and field trials (USA)
8 p.m. — Olympic women’s gymnastics trials (NBC)
8:15 p.m. — MLB: Cincinnati Reds at St. Louis Cardinals (Bally Indiana)
9 p.m. — Copa America soccer: Brazil vs. Paraguay (FS1)
10 p.m. — Olympic track and field trials (NBC)
10 p.m. — Professional Fighters League (ESPN)

Local notes

Soccer camp announced
The Jay County High School boys and girls soccer teams will hold a youth soccer camp July 29-31. The camp is for kids going into first grade up to eighth grade. It will be held from 5-6:30 p.m. at the

old soccer field behind the baseball diamond.
Admission is \$30 per child and each additional child from the same household will cost only \$20.
To sign up visit <https://qrco.de/bf9AoD>. For more information, email klmuhlenkamp@jayschools.k12.in.us or rreynolds@jayschools.k12.in.us. Payment can be sent to the high school front office by July 12th.

Meet booked
The Jay County Chamber Classic golf outing is set for Friday, July 19, at Portland Golf Club.
The deadline to register is July 10, and it’s limited to 20 teams. Awards of \$400, \$200 and \$100 will be given out to first, second and third place, respectively.
Golf will begin with a shotgun start at 10 a.m.

To register, email tabby@jaycountychamber.com. For more information call (260) 726-4481.

Date set
The 42nd annual Cancer Association of Darke County/Annie Oakley Golf Tournament is set to take place on July 22 at Turtle Creek Golf Course in Greenville, Ohio.
Lunch will be served at 11:15 a.m., with a shotgun start to follow at 12:15 p.m.
All proceeds will go to the Cancer Association of Darke County.
For additional information or an entry form call (937) 548-9960 or email director@cadcin-flo.org.
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COUNTY OF JAY, SS:
2024 TERM
In the Matter of the Unsupervised Administration of the Estate of Mary Louise Evans, Deceased
No. 38CO1-2406-EU-000018
NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION
Notice is hereby given that James D. Evans was, on the 14th day of June, 2024, appointed Personal Representative of the estate of Mary Louise Evans deceased, who died on May 24, 2024
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 June, 2024.
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Jon Eads
Clerk of the Circuit Court, For Jay County, Indiana
CR 6-20, 27, 2024-HSPAXLP

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Sports



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Korbin Ranley swims the butterfly stroke for the Fort Recovery swim team on Tuesday as part of the Eels' 645-533 loss to St. Henry at Ambassador Pool. Ranley, along with Keegan Brunswick, Gavin Will and Henry Guggenbiller, won the 9-10-year-old boys 100-meter medley relay with a time of 2 minutes, 5.84 seconds.

Fort Recovery swim falls to St. Henry

FORT RECOVERY — The girls scraped out a two-point victory.

Yet the Eels couldn't pull out the victory.

The Fort Recovery Eels summer swim team fell to the St. Henry Stingrays 645-533 on Tuesday at Ambassador Pool.

The girls tallied 377 points, while St. Henry collected 375. The boys could only manage 156 to St. Henry's 270.

The Eels claimed 29 victories out of the 82 events.

Korbin Ranly put together the strongest day with a trio of wins in the boys 9-10-year-old division. He earned the top spot in the 25-meter butterfly, 25 backstroke and 25 freestyle.

Five more boys earned single wins, while the 9-10-year-old boys relay teams both won.

Rozlyn Diller, Livy Timmerman and Hailey Wenning all won a pair of events for the girls. Diller and Wenning both competed in the 11-12-year-old division with the former capturing the 50 butterfly and 50 breaststroke while the latter handled the 50 backstroke and 100 individual medley.

Local roundup

Timmerman won the 50 butterfly and 50 backstroke for the 13-14-year-old girls.

The girls won 13 more events, including three divers and five relays.

Kiwanis advances

Fourth-seeded Kiwanis took down No. 5 seed Lions Club 8-1 on Tuesday in the opening round of the Portland Junior League Willie Mays baseball tournament.

Griffen Lambert and Easton Steed had standout days for Kiwanis at the plate. Lambert went 3-for-3 at the plate with two RBIs and two runs scored. Steed hit a single and an inside-the-park home run to drive himself in for his only run of the game.

L.J. Carter matched Lambert with two RBIs, while Royce

Kaigler and Brantly Robinson each had one.

Gabe Lutes walked three times for Lions Club. He scored the only run of the game for the team on a double by Drew Lingo.

Kiwanis will move on to play top-seeded Display Craft tonight at 5:30 p.m. for a chance to reach Friday's championship against No. 2 seed PG14.

PG14 wins

No. 2 PG14 punched a spot in the Portland Junior League Willie Mays baseball championship by beating third-seeded Optimist 8-1 on Tuesday.

Eli Homan and Beckham Hough ended up being the stars of the show for PG14. Both players slashed a perfect 3-for-3 from the plate with five combined extra-base hits. Hough ended with a game-high four RBIs, while Homan had two.

The pair also dominated on the mound. Homan started the game by striking out eight batters over three innings before Hough closed with five punchouts over two.

Oaklin Blunk, Cash Reynolds

and Bruce VanSkyock each hit a double for Optimist, but Blunk's was the only one to drive in a run.

PG14 will face the winner of today's semifinal between No. 1 seed Display Craft and fourth-seeded Kiwanis on Friday at 7:15 p.m.

May leads

Top-seeded Cook's Nursery defeated No. 4 seed William's Auto Parts 12-7 on Tuesday in the Portland Junior League Rookie baseball semifinal.

Max May led the way for Cook's Nursery with two triples and a double to finish 3-for-3 at the plate.

Brett Huntsman matched May with three hits, including a double for William's Auto Parts.

Both teams ended with six batters slashing a line of 2-for-3 at the dish. Cook's Nursery's six batters were Kayden Alberston, Kolby Armstrong, James Bruggerman, Trey Hirschey, Steven Robbins and Brantley Stager. William's Auto Parts got production from Dax Davis, Wyatt Fenning, Thobe Keller,

Hudson Roussey, Zander Williams and Daylon Winters.

Cook's Nursery will compete in Friday's championship game.

Forge wins

Portland Forge pulled out a 9-7 win over Loy's Auction to close out the regular season on Tuesday in Portland Junior League Sandy Koufax baseball.

Brayden Gruntle provided a big two-run home run for Portland Forge to put a pair of runs on the board. Cooper Reynolds, Cohen Shimp and Jackson Wasson all followed suit with two RBIs for the team, while Andrew Day added one.

Sam Wiggins blasted a pair of homers to answer back for Loy's Auction. Grant Fenning and Caleb Sibray both crossed home plate twice as well. Fenning initially reached base on a double and a walk, while Sibray worked two walks.

The two teams have the chance to meet again in the playoffs that start today with the semifinal game at 5:30 p.m. and the championship to follow. See **Roundup** page 7

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A NASCAR pit crew's typical day

By SHANE CONNUCK
The Charlotte Observer
Tribune News Service

CONCORD, N.C. — Like most NASCAR pit crew members, Matt Simmons always wanted to be an athlete.

Including Super Bowl champions, most of the men on the NASCAR teams who hop over the pit road walls each Sunday come from backgrounds in other sports. These athletes are regularly training and watching film and bring a particularly competitive mindset to the track and shops every week.

Simmons, a former all-state baseball player at Charlotte Christian, is the tire carrier on the Trackhouse Racing pit crew of Ross Chastain. He's the son of Greg Simmons, the late 16-time state champion Knights coach.

He got a call from Mike Metcalf, a Charlotte Christian alum who played football at Appalachian State, during his senior year at Gardner-Webb University. A football and basketball player-turned-gasman, Metcalf encouraged him to check out the pits after his baseball career.

Simmons' grandfather was a race fan, and his father lived the sport as well. Still he hadn't watched a whole lot of races. He'd been to the Coca-Cola 600 just once as a little kid — when, his mother says, he fell asleep after 200 laps.

Simmons hoped to stay

in sports, but didn't necessarily want to go into coaching like his father. He watched pit practice and participated in a workout during his first time at a race shop — and knew it was an activity he could see himself doing.

"That's what I've loved about this sport: No matter what background you come from, if you're a good person, a good teammate, a good dude and you work hard, someone's going to take you under their wing," Simmons said. "Someone's going to have your back and help you be successful."

"Whether you're the football player at Alabama who won four national championships, or a guy who barely made the baseball team at Gardner-Webb University."

What happens during a four-tire NASCAR pit stop?

Clutching a couple of Goodyear tires, Simmons, along with the jackman and tire changers, hustle to the other side of the car as it arrives.

Michael Roberts, a former baseball player at Catawba Valley Community College, removes the singular lugnut to take off the front wheel. Ken Pozega, previously a safety on his high school football team in Ohio, unfastens the rear tire simultaneously. Both wheels on one side are off within a split-second of the car stopping.

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