

The Commercial Review

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\$1

Union pushes for pay, funding

Agenda asks \$\$ for early childhood, textbooks

By CASEY SMITH
Indiana Capital Chronicle
indianacapitalchronicle.com

Indiana's largest teachers union listed educator pay boosts, increased public school funding and consolidated training requirements among its top asks for the 2025 legislative session.

The Indiana State Teachers Association, which represents roughly 40,000 Hoosier educators, released a priority agenda on Tuesday — just weeks before state lawmakers are set to return to the Statehouse.

Jennifer Smith-Margraf, ISTA's vice president, emphasized that "equitable funding for Indiana's public schools" is of highest concern to the union.

The 2025 session will see state legislators craft the state's next biennial budget, about half of which has historically been earmarked for education.

In recent years, however, Indiana's Republican-dominated legislature has opted to grow the state's private school voucher system at a faster rate — a shift ISTA has long opposed.

"We're here to speak for educators and every student whose future depends on a fair, safe and supportive learning environment," Smith-Margraf said during a Tuesday news conference. "Hoosiers value strong public schools that provide equal opportunities for all students. Whether Black or white, Latino, Asian, Native (American) or newcomer, every Hoosier child deserves a quality education, and that starts with well-funded schools."

A two-page agenda released by ISTA officials breaks the union's priorities down into five categories.

A section on funding emphasizes increased funding to "efficiently support" Indiana's public schools. That includes greater funding for early childhood education, as well as additional dollars to ensure that schools can adequately afford students' textbook costs.

In 2023, the General Assembly mandated K-12 schools to cover the cost of textbooks and a range of other curricular materials, but district officials have since expressed concerns that the state dollars they've received do not completely cover related fees.

"What we're asking (lawmakers) to do is to not just cover the textbook portion of it, but the fee portion of it, because we don't believe that parents should be responsible for that, especially if they're out working two, three and four jobs," Smith-Margraf said.

See **Pushes** page 2

'Still shaking'

Millspaugh surprised with Lilly

By RAY COONEY
The Commercial Review

Aubrey Millspaugh knew an announcement was coming.

She had recently seen the newspaper article about Gage Sims receiving his honor the previous year.

She and fellow finalist Maddy Snow had chatted about it in the locker room at swim practice.

When librarian Cathy Fugiett stopped her in the hallway and asked her to come to the temporary library set up in the former TV studio, she had an idea of what was about to happen.

Millspaugh broke into a giant grin when she walked through the door to see her parents and others gathered Wednesday morning to celebrate her as Jay County High School's 2025 Lilly Endowment Community Scholar.

"I'm shocked," Millspaugh said spontaneously, still shaking with excitement moments after finishing her interview with Rob Weaver of WPGW Radio.

"I didn't think it was going to be me," she added. "Everybody was so deserving of it. I really didn't think it was going to be me."

Millspaugh said she was catching on when Fugiett approached her, but she still doubted that she would be the recipient.

"I started shaking before I even walked through the door," she said. "It's an amazing feeling."

The Lilly scholarship



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Jay County High School senior Aubrey Millspaugh hugs Krista Muhlenkamp of The Portland Foundation's scholarship selection committee after being informed that she was selected as the 2025 Lilly Endowment Community Scholar. The honor includes full tuition to any Indiana college or university as well as funding for fees and books.

provides full tuition for four years to any college or university in Indiana. It also covers required fees and up to \$900 per year for books and equipment.

Millspaugh said her

current plans are to attend Anderson University to study elementary education and compete for the Raven swim team.

"It's close to home, which is something that

I definitely wanted," said Millspaugh, who added that she wants to stay connected to local organizations such as the Jay County swim teams and Jay County Civic Theatre. "And

then I also knew that I wanted the opportunity to swim in college and Anderson gives me a really, really great opportunity to be able to do that."

See **Shaking** page 2



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Wentz waves

The Jay County High School music department's Christmas concert Sunday afternoon featured a performance by the Patriot color guard to the Michael Bubl  version of "It's Beginning to Look a lot like Christmas." Pictured, Avery Wentz spins her flag over her head during the color guard's performance. The event also included performances by the jazz band, show choirs and concert band.

Blinken headed to the Middle East

U.S. seeks role in Syria's future after fall of Assad

By IAIN MARLOW
Bloomberg News
Tribune News Service

Secretary of State Antony Blinken is heading back to the Middle East as the Biden administration tries to shape the unfolding chaos in Syria before Donald Trump returns to the White House.

Blinken is scheduled to depart Washington for the region on Wednesday, just days after a surprisingly rapid rebel advance across Syria ousted the brutal dictator Bashar Al-Assad from the capital Damascus.

The trip is his 12th to the region since the Israel-Hamas war broke out in late 2023, and will begin in Jordan and continue in Turkey, two key allies

that both have long borders with Syria.

"The Secretary will reiterate the United States' support for an inclusive, Syrian-led transition to an accountable and representative government," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said in a statement on Wednesday morning.

The fall of the Assad regime, which had been supported by Iran and Russia, has led to jubilation among Syrians and massive celebrations in Damascus. But the power vacuum left by the sudden implosion of the government, and the rise of an Islamist insurgent group backed by Turkey, has led to chaos and uncertainty that is already being exploited by both domestic groups and regional players.

Israel has seized the moment to try and ensure that the Assad regime's weapons don't fall into the hands of any Islamist groups, sending fighter jets on hundreds of airstrikes over the past few days to destroy much of Syria's naval and air force armaments.

See **Blinken** page 5

Deaths

Jackie Robbins, 93,
Dunkirk
Jerry Moore, 72, Berne
Details on page 2.

Weather

Jay County had a high temperature of 46 degrees Tuesday. The low was 32.

Tonight's forecast calls for a low of 19 and a 20% chance of snow. Expect a high in the mid 30s Friday. Highs will be in the 40s over the weekend with rain possible.

See page 2 for an extended outlook.

In review

Cruis'n the HoliJay Lights at the Fairgrounds continues this weekend with the display open Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings at Jay county Fairgrounds. Admission is free will donation.

Coming up

Friday — Coverage of this week's Jay County Council meeting.

Saturday — Results from the JCHS girls basketball game against Woodlan.



Obituaries

Jackie Robbins

With sadness, we announce the passing of Jackie L. Robbins, a spirited and talented individual who has left an indelible mark on the hearts of all who knew him.



Robbins

Jackie was born on June 22, 1931, in Redkey, Indiana, and lived in Dunkirk, Indiana, for 90 years, contributing significantly to the community. He was a dedicated craftsman, lending his expertise in carpentry for over 40 years as a union trade worker before his retirement in

1990. His talent was evident in the precise and beautiful work he left behind, resonating with the words of Leonardo da Vinci: "Details make perfection, and perfection is not a detail."

Jackie was more than a talented carpenter; he was an avid bowler who channeled his strong will and dedication into this sport. His passion led him to participate in over 40 state bowling tournaments, earning him recognition from the National Bowling Association. He was also an accomplished dirt track racer for 40 years, winning numerous trophies.

Yet, Jackie's greatest achievement was not in the tangible trophies he acquired,

but in the love and respect he garnered from his family and friends. His spirited nature, combined with his talent and dedication, made him a beacon of light in their lives. As Albert Einstein once said, "Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile." Jackie embodied this sentiment, prioritizing his family above all else.

Jackie leaves behind a rich legacy filled with love and memories.

He is survived by his devoted wife of 74 years, Mary Robbins; his loving sons Jack (Pam), Alan (Nancy) and Tony (Maria); his caring brother Leroy (Chelsea); stepbrother Bill (Sharon); seven grandchildren;

16 great-grandchildren; and a great-great-granddaughter.

He was preceded in death by his parents Leroy and Elva Robbins; sister Wanda Curts; granddaughter Sophie Robbins; and stepfather Clarence Watson.

The family will be having services at a later date. Burial will be in Dunkirk I.O.O.F. Cemetery of Dunkirk, Indiana. Wilson Shook Funeral Home, Dunkirk Memorial Chapel has been entrusted with arrangements.

As we mourn the loss of Jackie, we take solace in remembering the spirited, talented and dedicated man he was. We invite you to share your memories of Jackie and upload photos to his memorial page, to keep his spirit

alive and celebrate the remarkable life he led. His story is not just told in words, but in the love and respect he inspired in us all.

Jerry L. Moore Sr., Berne, Aug. 1, 1952-Dec. 7, 2024. A celebration of life will be held at 4 p.m. Friday, Dec. 20, at Sapphires Reception Center, 1100 Votaw St., Portland.

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 services.

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

CR almanac

Friday 12/13	Saturday 12/14	Sunday 12/15	Monday 12/16	Tuesday 12/17
34/25	48/41	50/40	56/37	43/27
Mostly sunny skies on Friday when the high will be in the mid 30s.	Saturday's forecast shows an 80% chance of rain throughout the day.	Sunday looks to be mostly cloudy with a 50% chance of rain.	Another day of mostly cloudy skies Monday when there's a 40% chance of rain.	Tuesday looks to be mostly sunny with highs in the lower 40s.

Lotteries

Powerball Estimated jackpot: \$30 million	Evening Daily Three: 1-0-6 Daily Four: 0-2-2-0 Quick Draw: 1-2-7-8-15-22-25-29-37-38-40-47-51-55-60-64-68-71-73-80
Mega Millions 12-14-26-48-52 Mega Ball: 21 Megaplier: 5 Estimated jackpot: \$670 million	Ohio Tuesday Midday Pick 3: 7-7-2 Pick 4: 0-1-5-3 Pick 5: 3-5-2-1-5 Evening Pick 3: 5-5-2 Pick 4: 6-6-5-0 Pick 5: 8-0-1-9-0 Rolling Cash: 9-19-20-26-37 Estimated jackpot: \$100,000
Hoosier Tuesday Midday Daily Three: 4-9-6 Daily Four: 2-2-5-6 Quick Draw: 7-8-19-21-24-31-32-34-39-44-46-49-52-53-54-58-60-62-72-74	

Markets

Cooper Farms Fort Recovery Corn.....4.56 Jan. corn.....4.54 Feb. corn.....4.57	Jan. beans10.03 Wheat 5.16
POET Biorefining Portland Corn.....4.53 Jan. corn.....4.57 Feb. corn.....4.59	ADM Montpelier Corn.....4.44 Jan. corn.....4.44 Beans.....9.88 Jan. beans.....9.88 Wheat5.05
The Andersons Richland Township Corn4.47 Jan. corn4.47 Beans.....9.93	Heartland St. Anthony Corn.....4.54 Jan. corn.....4.54 Beans.....9.68 Jan. beans9.73 Wheat5.06

Today in history

In 1745, John Jay was born in New York City. Jay later served as a delegate to the First and Second Continental Congresses, debating whether the American colonies should become independent of Great Britain. Among other activities, Jay helped in negotiations with the Treaty of Paris and served as the secretary of foreign affairs.

In 1915, Frank Sinatra was born in Hoboken, New Jersey. Sinatra became one of the world's best-selling singers, marking 35 academy awards for his music and acting career. Some of his most popular pieces include "My Way" and "Fly Me to the Moon."

In 1933, Ace Bailey of the Toronto Maple Leaf team had his career cut short after National Hockey League star Eddie Shore fractured his skull.

In 1964, Kenya became a republic. The day also marked its first anniversary as an independent entity, having previously been governed by Britain.

In 1974, Sara Jane Moore pleaded guilty to an assassination attempt on president Gerald Ford, earning her a life sentence.

— The CR

Citizen's calendar

Monday 5 p.m. — Jay School Board, General Shanks, 414 E. Floral Ave., Portland. 5:30 p.m. — Portland City Council, council chambers, fire station, 1616 N. Franklin St. 6:30 p.m. — Fort Recovery Local Schools, community room, high school, 400 E. Butler St. 7:15 p.m. — Fort Recovery Records Com-	mission, village hall, 201 S. Main St. 7:30 p.m. — Fort Recovery Village council, village hall, 201 S. Main St. Tuesday 6 p.m. — Dunkirk Park Board, city building, 131 S. Main St. Wednesday 4 p.m. — Portland Board of Aviation, airport, 661 W. 100 North.
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Capsule Reports

Turning accident

An Ohio resident driving a semi hit a truck a Pennville man was driving at the intersection of county road 400 South and Indiana 67 about 2:39 p.m. Monday. Jeffrey D. Fochy, 65, Lima, was

driving a 2011 Mack truck on the highway and turning onto county road 400 South. His trailer's tires hit the back of a westbound 2015 Ford F-250 driven by 28-year-old Brent M. Davis. (Davis was stopped at the intersection at the

time of the crash.) Damage is estimated between \$2,500 and \$5,000. The Mack truck is registered to Crites Trucking of Lima, Ohio, and the Ford truck is registered to Waste Management Indiana of Fishers.

Shaking ...

Continued from page 1

In addition to her involvement with the school and club swim teams and civic theatre, Millspaugh has been involved in the Patriot Edition and Just Treble show choirs and student council at JCHS. She is also a member of the National Honor Society while carrying a 4.316 grade point average that ranks her ninth in her class.

She was one of five finalists along with Coryn Blalock, Ella Stockton, Morgan DeHoff and Snow.

"It's always hard, because these kids are just so wonderful. But this year was especially tough for the committee," said Doug Inman, executive director of The Portland Foundation. "These five ladies just were so tightly bunched when it came to their scores. They are just very quality individuals academically, girls of character. It just shone through in the interview process."

Millspaugh earned the Lilly honor — she is the 43rd Jay County recipient — from a group of 28 applications with a minimum grade point average of 3.5. Finalists are selected from an initial application that includes an essay, with candidates being evaluated on academic excellence and school/community activities. They then write an impromptu essay and

are interviewed by The Portland Foundation's scholarship selection committee.

Names are submitted to Independent Colleges of Indiana for selection of the recipient.

Millspaugh hopes to return to Jay County to become a teacher in first or second grade. She currently serves as a cadet teacher in Bart Brandenburg's first grade class at East Elementary School.

"I absolutely love little kids," she said. "I'm a cadet teacher in a first grade class right now and it is the greatest part of my day."

"I was so sad school was canceled (Tuesday) because I didn't get to see my first graders," she added. "So, just getting to work with kids every day and do something that I love, I'm so excited to be a teacher."

She then paused to ask her mom, JCHS guidance counselor Kristin Millspaugh, if she could leave a little bit early on her way to cadet teach in order to provide time to pick up cupcakes for the first graders.

In addition to her cadet teaching, she also helps coach the 10-and-younger members of the summer swim team.

"Getting to watch kids get better and improve at this is just so rewarding," Millspaugh said.

Pushes ...

Continued from page 1

The union is also advocating for Indiana's compulsory school attendance age to drop to six, meaning kindergarten would become a requirement for Hoosier kids. Currently, Indiana students are not required to attend school until age seven, when first grade begins.

"Every child deserves a solid start," Smith-Margraf said in reference to mandated kindergarten. "This funding will help make that possible."

Another bundle of ISTA requests center around "fair compensation and benefits for educators." The union wants to see teacher salaries aligned with "inflation-adjusted" benchmarks — which Smith-Margraf said would close the

22.8% pay gap with other professions. ISTA is also asking for all public school employees to receive 12 weeks of parental leave.

See **Pushes** page 5

36th Annual Jay County Farm Toy Show
Sun, Dec. 15, 2024
from 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
In the green Bob Schmit Memorial Building at the Jay Co. Fairgrounds Portland, IN
Admission: \$3/Adults, \$2 Youth, 12 & Under Free with an adult.
Browse thru 70+ tables of new and used farm toys and a few related crafts. You may find toys from 1/64th scale all the way up to pedal tractors with scaled size implements! This is a great opportunity to find something special for the farm enthusiast in your family, regardless of their age! Handicap accessible. Plenty of parking. Concessions in the side room by local 4-H.
For more info call or text: 260-726-6433 or 260-251-0463

God's Tent All Are Welcome!

When God journeyed with his people in the wilderness, his presence among them was in a tent of meeting. In John's Gospel, we are told that Jesus, the Word of God, came and pitched his tent among us. Now we invite you to God's Tent, a new place to learn about God's great love for all people.

Our next meeting in God's Tent will take place **Sunday, December 15th at 1:00 pm Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church 218 E High St, Portland IN** (in the church basement)

For this special Christmas event, we will hear the stories of Jesus' birth from the Bible, pray together, make a Christmas ornament, sing carols, and have cookies and hot chocolate.

God's Tent is moveable! Future meetings will be at various outdoor locations around our community.

See you in God's Tent!
Questions? Call Pastor Robin at 419-852-6499

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Office Hours: Tuesday - Friday 10 am - 4 pm

Kids should keep sharing stories

By JANN BLACKSTONE
Tribune News Service

Q. My husband's kids come back to our home with all sorts of stories about their mother and what they do at her house. I feel like I have no privacy. I have told the kids on multiple occasions that what goes on at our house is our business, and I don't care what goes on at their mother's home, but they continue to talk about it over there. It's just infuriating, and I don't know how to get them to stop. What's good ex-etiquette?

A. You don't want them to stop. In truth, you should be encouraging it. Abusers tell children not to tell. These kids are not



Ex-Etiquette

bragging or tattling, they are sharing their life.

The first rule of good ex-etiquette is, "Put the children first." You framed your question from your perspective. I get it, it's your life, but you made a choice to marry into this family. The kids did not, nor did they get a choice in their having to live in two homes.

To complicate the situa-

tion even further, parents and bonus parents often convince themselves that a child's life stops when they leave their home. "This is their real home. They are just visiting that other home, biding their time until they get home." Some parents don't believe that what happens at that other place is as important as what happens at their home, so they openly discount or compare the stories the children pass on.

In reality, these children share dual citizenship. They are members of both families and if they are raised to believe that one family is not as good or "temporary," that will

reinforce feelings of insecurity and not feeling safe at either home. That is why it is the parents' and bonus parents' job to look for ways to work as a team, creating as seamless a transition between homes as possible.

This is where estranged parents and their new partners scoff at the suggestion of becoming a co-parenting team. "I didn't get along with that jerk when we were together. I celebrate every day that I don't have to live with them!"

That may be true of you, but it is unlikely the children feel that way. They love both of their parents. They deserve a loving

relationship with both of their parents. If you have chosen to no longer live with their other parent, it is both you and the other parent's job, plus anyone you or that other parent is involved with, to create an atmosphere that allows those children to flourish in both homes.

How do you do that? Encourage open communication and transparency. No secrets at either home.

When a child comes home with a story about the other home — good or bad — be interested, not offended. If further clarification is needed, create an environment where both homes can explore what is

being reported and not take it personally.

You do not have to be a couple to raise these children together—but you do have to put the children's welfare before your own. It doesn't matter if the kids are yours biologically or not. They live with you. You impact their life. That's good ex-etiquette.

Jann Blackstone is a child custody mediator and the author of "The Bonus Family Handbook: The Definitive Guide to Co-parenting and Creating Stronger Families. She can be reached at bonusfamilies.com or jann@bonusfamilies.com.

Dating apps serve as constant disappointment

DEAR ABBY: As a 22-year-old gay man, I have tried dating apps to no avail. One guy was 10 years older than me, ex-military (Air Force) and extremely clingy in the first few hours of texting. He said he was "deeply in love with me," "wanted a future with me," etc.

The other guys I tried talking to never tried to keep a conversation going. I don't know what to do. Some co-workers and friends I mentioned this to said I should look only at men of my race. I don't care about race. I have seen many men, regardless of race, be abusive to their partners.

I care about characteristics that make someone enjoyable to be around. What are their hob-

Dear Abby



bies? What direction are they looking to take their career in? How do they operate in the kitchen? Do they keep things tidy? Also, I'm not much for parties, drinking and casual sex.

I would love to find a guy for me, but there aren't many LGBTQ areas where I am currently. I feel like I'm going to be alone for longer than I hope for. I'm trying to focus on school and

work, but it would be nice to have a special someone. Any advice? — FAILING AT IT IN NORTH CAROLINA

DEAR FAILING: Make sure you aren't using dating apps that are geared toward hookups. Instead, look for those that are geared toward relationships. They are out there. Also, make it a priority to visit the nearest large city and go to the LGBTQ community center so you can meet new people with similar interests. While I can't guarantee you'll find romance, you may make some lasting friends.

DEAR ABBY: I have cared for my elderly mother in my home

for 15 years. I have four brothers who live out of state. It is harder and harder for me emotionally to see Mom aging and the difficulties that come with it. My brothers don't call or visit often. I repeatedly remind them to call Mom regularly because she needs contact, but time and time again they fail us. We are five hours away, but they visit only once or twice a year.

In three months, I will be retiring early so I can move back to their state to be closer to them and Mom can see them and her many grandkids and great-grandkids more often. How do I stop resenting them for not stepping up? I love Mom and have sacrificed so much with pleasure, but I expected others to do

better. — DISAPPOINTED BROTHER IN MISSOURI

DEAR BROTHER: I understand your disappointment, but have you considered that your brothers may have circumstances in their lives that occupy their attention such as wives, families and jobs which prevent their being as present in their mother's life as you have been? Calm your anger. The move you are making may enable them — and their wives and children — to spend more time with her. Before you relocate, however, this is something you should discuss fully with your siblings to ensure that what you are hoping for will happen.

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.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY HEALTH JAY HOSPITAL OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP — Will meet at 6 p.m. the second Thursday of each month in Indiana University Health Jay Hospital Conference Room B.

The group is for ostomy and intestinal diversion patients and their friends and family to offer mutual support and learn about the latest products and information.

JAY COUNTY TRAILS CLUB — Will meet at 7 p.m. the second Thursday of each month at Jay Community Center.

Friday
PAST RECOVERY SERVICES — Peer Addiction Support Team recovery support group meets at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. each Friday at the Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition office at 100 N. Meridian St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 251-3259.

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

Sunday
A BETTER LIFE — BRIANNA'S HOPE — A faith-based recovery group for

all kinds of addictions, will meet from 5 to 6:30 p.m. each Sunday at Fellowship Baptist Church, 289 S. 200 West, 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 Com-

munity Center.

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.

Sudoku

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

Level: Intermediate

Wednesday's Solution

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

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.

Barber & Salon, Hair Stylist Specials

Show you're **AWARE** WITH YOUR UPPER-LIP HAIR!

Rates do not apply to Christmas Greetings special section. Ads must run in December.

Advertise in all of our publications with
Four 4x4 ads in The Commercial Review
Two 4x4 ads in The News-Gazette
One 4x4 ad in The News Times
One 4x4 ad in The News and Sun
for **\$230** (85% off regular price) **OR**
run **two 4x4 ads**
in the publication(s) of your choice
during December for:

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The News-Gazette — **\$145**
The News Times — **\$120**
The News and Sun — **\$120**

Merry Christmas

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Texas is strangling public education

San Antonio Express-News
Tribune News Service

The best place for children to learn biblical education is in Sunday school, at the discretion of their families, not through public school curriculum at the behest of the state.

But that's what's set to happen in Texas now that the State Board of Education has approved, by an 8-7 vote last month, new curriculum known as BlueBonnet Learning. It is infused with biblical teachings, and critics have noted there is only nominal inclusion of non-Christian faiths.

This curriculum is optional for districts, and we encourage those in Bexar County to take a hard pass on it, but there is a cer-

Guest Editorial

tain coercive quality to this choice.

The new curriculum comes with an incentive of \$60 per student, and in a state where public education is chronically underfunded, with multiple districts running deficits and either implementing or considering school closures, those additional funds could be appealing.

And yet despite the immense value of meaningful religious

education, it would be a bad trade. There is no state-sanctioned religion, thank God, and public school districts serve children and families of all faiths, as well as those of no faith.

Is it best for kindergarteners to learn of the good Samaritan from their parents and places of worship, or from their kindergarten teachers? And is a kindergarten teacher prepared to teach similar parables in other faiths or respond to questions from parents and students who may be atheist or agnostic?

The answer to these questions should be as clear as the meaning and implementation of Matthew 25:35-40, but this is Texas, where such reflection is often discarded at political convenience.

This curriculum will almost certainly be challenged for potentially violating the establishment clause, which prohibits state endorsement of a particular religion or favoring one faith over others. It has certainly raised concerns about breaching the separation of church and state.

In this vein, the State Board of Education's new Bible-infused curriculum reflects a broader trend in Texas to mix Christianity and public education. This effort manifests in two directions.

The first is to bring religion into public schools, through this curriculum, the presence of "In God we Trust" posters and the use of chaplains in schools, sometimes in lieu of counselors.

The other direction is the ongoing effort to implement vouchers for private schools. Since many private schools are religious, this would bring public dollars to faith-based education.

Texas is strangling public education. Per-pupil funding has not increased since 2019, even as the state sits on billions of dollars in reserves; students are crushed by relentless standardized testing; and there is a certain narrowing in the freedom of thought, be it in this new curriculum or in the relentless push to remove books from school libraries.

The argument is the new curriculum will improve student outcomes, and while we pray this is so, it hardly seems to be the goal.



Spending on college brings better results

By MICHAEL J. HICKS

Suppose you wanted to judge which political party was a better steward of the national economy over the past 75 years.

One way would be to select a half-dozen common economic indicators, such as inflation, unemployment rate, GDP growth or per capita incomes, and compare the performance under Democrats and Republicans. If you did so, you'd quickly discover there's no pattern.

If you did the same thing at the state level, up until about 1980, you'd find the same thing. Party affiliation played very little role in economic differences. In fact, if you picked just one variable that best measured prosperity—per capita income—there was no state-level correlation with a political party in 1980. There were rich states led by Republican and Democratic governors and poor states led by both as well.

That has changed. Of the 20 richest states today, 19 are solidly Democratic. Of the poorest 20 states, 19 are solidly Republican. The GOP dominates in poor, slowly growing states, while the Democrats dominate politics of prosperous, faster-growing states. The reason isn't clear, and it certainly isn't solely due to policy differences.

One big culprit is that political

Michael J. Hicks



parties changed, erasing regional party differences. Up until the late 1990s, there were many conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans. Think Georgia Democrats and Maine Republicans. Without room for state-level differences in what it meant to be a Republican or Democrat, states began to align with national politics.

This trend is more extreme today. Even races for local municipal government tend to be nationalized. State and local issues are often ignored, or barely discussed in primary or general elections. The homogeneity of national politics will naturally cause parties to represent more similar places.

A second trend is household sorting by politics. Though most of sorting happens at the sub-state level, the nationalization of politics means that state borders now affect household location choice.

The nationalization of politics means that each party has been

staking out positions that appeal to majorities in key states. As households sort, voters are choosing political landscapes they prefer. That will almost surely accelerate in the coming years.

The nationalization of state and local politics also means the nationalization of state and local policies. A quarter-century ago, when I first started serious research in state and local policy, state legislators rarely took their legislative marching orders from national think tanks or national parties. Today, elected leaders from both parties are expected to advance similar legislation, typically written by think tanks, everywhere at once.

The result is nearly identical legislation to raise the minimum wage, eliminate income or property taxes and create universal school choice appear in both Oklahoma and Massachusetts—the two most economically and electorally different states in the union.

The nationalization of American politics could have very uneven effects at the state and local levels. In affluent states and cities, policy mistakes usually don't matter much. In poor places, they matter enormously.

San Francisco, Chicago and Seattle are arguably among the worst-governed cities in North America. Yet, their economies

buzz, people visit, and even if a few people leave, home prices reflect the unending desire to live there.

A poor state or a declining rural town in the Midwest has no such luck. A bad decision or two could extend decline for decades. Deep tax cuts at a time when mobile residents are screaming for better services can end decades of hope for a stable population.

The most likely cause of divergence between rich and poor places is the fact that human capital—education, innovation and invention—replaced manufacturing and movement of goods as the primary source of prosperity. In other words, places that grow will collect more human capital. However, the educational policies pursued by both parties are vastly different.

The GOP has largely tried to adopt broad school choice, while cutting funding to both K-12 schools and higher education. The Democrats have largely eschewed school choice, but amply fund both K-12 and higher education. Today, 17 of the 20 states with high educational spending are Democratically controlled and 17 out of the 20 lowest funded states are GOP strongholds.

There's more to education than the spending. Still, higher

educational spending, even if it means higher tax rates, is leading to enrollment and population growth. Educational attainment differences alone explain about three quarters of the difference in per capita income between states.

At the same time, school choice effects are smaller than almost anyone hoped or expected. Today, it's clear that the average student in private school underperforms their public school counterparts (charter schools tend to out-perform both). So, if poor states spend less on education and rely more on school choice, they will become poorer than states spending more on public education.

Economists have been saying this for three decades, with little effect. The prognosis is simply that poor states like Indiana are going to get poorer for decades to come while rich states will grow richer.

That's terribly disappointing, but it is the most likely outcome.

Hicks is the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research and the George and Frances Ball distinguished professor of economics in the Miller College of Business at Ball State University. Email him at mhicks@bsu.edu.

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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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The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Saxophone songs

Zach Schoenlein and Cadence Eber play the tenor saxophone and baritone saxophone, respectively, during Sunday's Fort Recovery Local Schools Christmas band concert. The high school band played selections including "A Charlie Brown Christmas" and "Scenes from The Nutcracker."

Fire destroys seven structures

Los Angeles Times
Tribune News Service

LOS ANGELES — A ferocious wildfire fanned by strong winds burned through Malibu on Tuesday, destroying homes, triggering power outages and forcing thousands to evacuate along the coast in the dark while firefighters struggled to contain the flames.

The eastern half of Malibu remained under an evacuation order Tuesday. The rest of the city and portions of unincorporated Los Angeles County were under an evacuation warning affecting roughly 20,000 people.

The blaze, dubbed the Franklin fire, was reported a few minutes before 11 p.m. Monday along Malibu Canyon Road in the hills north of Pepperdine University. Fanned by strong Santa Ana winds, the blaze moved at a fierce pace, exploding to roughly 2,850 acres as of Tuesday afternoon with no containment, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Los Angeles County Fire Chief Anthony Marrone said during a news conference Tuesday evening that at least seven structures were destroyed and eight

damaged, based on a preliminary aerial survey. Inspection teams have been assigned to the incident and a more accurate account of the destruction is expected tomorrow, he said.

More than 1,500 firefighters battled the fire on the ground Tuesday, building containment lines as air tankers dropped water on the blaze. The aircraft were able to fly through the night and into the early morning Tuesday even amid heavy winds, Marrone said.

"The entire fire area remains under threat," he said on Tuesday evening. "As long as the current red flag conditions persist, strong winds and low humidities will continue to challenge firefighters on the line and in the air as they struggle to contain the stubborn fire."

He urged residents to limit the use of lawn sprinklers to maintain water pressure for firefighters.

The blaze jumped Pacific Coast Highway in the early morning hours and continued to march toward the city's historic pier, which officials said was not damaged. A sheriff's patrol car was destroyed in the fire, but the deputy driving it was not hurt.

Blinken ...

Continued from page 1
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also sent his armed forces into a military buffer zone between the two countries.

Other armed groups supported by Turkey have also made inroads against U.S.-supported Kurdish forces, who have been battling Islamic State militants. The U.S. has about 900 troops based in Syria to assist that mission — which President Joe Biden has pledged to maintain.

But Trump, who will assume

power on Jan. 20, has been clear that he doesn't consider Syria to be America's problem — and many observers believe he will pull U.S. forces out of the beleaguered country, which has been engulfed by civil war since 2011.

"Syria is a mess, but is not our friend," he wrote on X over the weekend. "The United States should have nothing to do with it. This is not our fight. Let it play out. Do not get involved!"

A key focus now for the Biden administration and other neighboring countries is preventing

the resurgence of Islamic State, which emerged from the chaos of the disastrous 13-year civil war.

But another crucial priority is trying to use U.S. leverage to forge the understandably chaotic current state of affairs into an ordered political process.

A key part of that leverage is U.S. recognition of a new government, a move that would help Syria avoid the international isolation that has befallen the Taliban government in Afghanistan.

On Tuesday, Blinken said in a

statement that the U.S. would be prepared to recognize a Syrian government that adhered to certain principles. He said a new government must respect the rights of Syria's minorities, help get aid to all those in need, prevent the country from being used as a base for terrorism or threatening neighbors, and ensure chemical weapons stockpiles are secured and destroyed.

At the same time, the Biden administration's attempts over the last year to influence events in the Middle East have largely

failed — most notably as the war in Gaza has dragged on and when Israel ignored U.S. warnings to expand the conflict with an invasion of Lebanon to confront the Hezbollah militia.

While in the Middle East, Blinken will also discuss the need for a ceasefire and hostage deal in the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, as well as efforts to monitor the cessation of hostilities agreement between Israel and Hezbollah militants in Lebanon, the State Department said.

Pushes ...

Continued from page 2
The latest data showed the average teacher salary in Indiana during the last school year was recorded at \$60,557 — up from \$58,531 the year prior.

ISTA is not recommending a specific minimum salary, however. Baseline educator pay in the state currently sits at \$40,000.

"We're looking at how inflation has affected all of our different locals across the state, and we are looking for an increase in funding that will help make sure that we are paid competitively," Smith-Margraf said. "We also know when we look at our surrounding states that we are not keeping up with salary increases with them, and we continue to lose folks across the border to Michigan, to Ohio, to Illinois and to Kentucky. And so we know we have work to do in looking at those metrics to make sure that our pay is competitive."

"We have a critical educator shortage," she continued. "We just have so many good people who are either retiring early or who are leaving the profession because they're burnt out from many different things ... we can all see from the numbers that there are too many of them leaving, and there are too many openings statewide. And that's affecting those things that the legislature has talked about being really important: making sure that every kid can read by third grade, making sure that we have numeracy skills in fifth grade, making sure that we have folks around who are qualified to implement these new high school diplomas."

Reduced training requirements via the creation of a five-year cycle for state-mandated professional development is among the union's other priorities, too. That would "reduce redundancy and improve efficiency," and affect trainings around

suicide awareness and child abuse prevention, according to ISTA officials.

Smith-Margraf also noted teachers' request to exclude veteran teachers from the state's new — and controversial — literacy licensure requirement, allowing for the completion of an 80-hour science of reading course, instead.

After the requirement was approved by the General Assembly earlier this year, ISTA and its members criticized the "unfair" and "overwhelming" 80-hour training. Many pleaded for more options to be made available for teachers to complete the professional development course — or that it be removed as a requirement altogether.

The state's education department has since adjusted and added training options. Some educators have already been exempted from the licensure requirements, as long as they aren't teaching literacy to students past fifth grade.

Smith-Margraf said many of the union's priorities are aligned with those in Gov.-elect Mike Braun's agenda. She noted that ISTA is actively meeting with the new Republican governor's administration and other state officials ahead of the legislative session.

"Gov.-elect Braun and various members of leadership from both parties have talked about all of these things as being priorities, and so they're priorities for them, and they're priorities for us," Smith-Margraf said. "We're looking forward to working together with them as we go through the legislative session to figure out how we're going to fund these and implement these different priorities. But since these are priorities for all of us and for our state, we believe that's how it stays top of mind for everyone."



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Asbury United Methodist
204 E. Arch St., Portland
Joe Boggs
(260) 726-8464
Services: 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m.
asburyministries.org

Bellefontain United Methodist
440 S. 600 East
Pamela Freeman
Services: 9 a.m.

Bluff Point Friends
80 E. 650 South
Services: 10 a.m.
Sunday school: 9:30 a.m.

Boundary St. Paul
Corner of Treaty Line Road and county road 300 East
Ava Gannon
(260) 726-2373
Services: 9:30 a.m.

Bryant Wesleyan
209 S. Hendricks St.
Paul VanCise
(260) 997-6231
Services: 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m.
bryantwesleyanchurch.com

Calvary United Methodist
301 N. Main St., Dunkirk
Susan Durovey-Antrim
(765) 499-0368
Services: 10:30 a.m.
susan.duroveyantrim@in.unc.org

Christ Chapel
2535 Wabash Road, Fort Recovery
(419) 733-1469
christchapelfr.com

Church of the Living God (Miracle Missions)
8472 S. 800 East, Union City
Services: 10:30 a.m.
Sunday school: 9:30 a.m.

Church of God of Prophecy
797 N. Creagor Ave., Portland
Nanette Weesner
(260) 766-9334
Services: 10 a.m., 6 p.m.
nanybell@yahoo.com

Church of the Brethren
Floral and Chicago avenues, Portland
Kevin McClung
(260) 729-7295
Services: 10 a.m.

Church of the Living God
South Broad Street, Dunkirk
Services: 7 p.m., 7 p.m. Friday

Collett Nazarene
450 South, 1 mile west of U.S. 27
Billy Stanton
(260) 251-2403
Services: 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m.

Cornerstone Baptist
211 E. Main St., Portland
Wayne Ward
(260) 726-7714
Services: 10 a.m.

Cornerstone Church of Pennville
190 W. Main St., Pennville
David Davidson
(260) 202-9718
Services: 10:30 a.m.

Dunkirk Nazarene
226 E. Center St., Dunkirk
Tom Fett
(765) 768-6199
Services: 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m.

Evangelical Methodist
930 W. Main St., Portland
Steve Arnold
(260) 251-0970
Services: 10:20 a.m., 6 p.m.

Fairview United Methodist/Jay County
2875 E. 200 South
Pamela Freeman
Lay leader: Beth Stephen
(260) 726-9184
Services: 10:15 a.m.

Faith Community
9560 W. 200 South, Dunkirk
Joe Schmit
(260) 251-5254
Services: 10 a.m.

Family Worship Center
200 E. Elder St., Portland
Ronald Willis
(260) 726-4844
Services: 11 a.m., 6:30 p.m. Wednesday
thefamilyworshipcenter.org

Fellowship Baptist
289 S. 200 West
Hugh Kelly
(260) 726-8873
Services: 9 a.m., 11 a.m.
Sunday school: 10 a.m.
pastorkelly@fbc-portland.com

First American Baptist
427 S. Main St., Dunkirk
Dan Coffman
(765) 768-7157
Services: 10:40 a.m., 5 p.m.

First Church of Christ
1049 Union City Road, Fort Recovery
David J. Nicholson
(419) 375-2860
Services: 10:30 a.m.
fccfcrecovery.org

First Community Baptist
341 S. Meridian St., Redkey
Everett Bilbrey Jr.
Sunday school: 9:30 a.m.
Services: 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; 7 p.m. Wednesday

First Free Will Baptist
12369 W. 600 South, Dunkirk
Sunday school: 10 a.m.
Services: 10:50 a.m., 6 p.m., 6 p.m. Wednesday

First Presbyterian
402 N. Ship St., Portland
Rev. M. Rex Espiritu
(260) 726-8462
Services: 9:30 a.m.
Sunday school: 10:15 a.m.
firstpcportland.org

Fort Recovery Church of the Nazarene
401 E. Boundary St., Fort Recovery
(419) 375-4680
Services: 10:30 a.m.
Kids vision and teen ministries: 6 p.m. Wednesday
frnaz@frontier.com

Fort Recovery United Methodist
309 E. Boundary St., Fort Recovery
Rev. Carol McKay
(304) 617-0101
Services: 9 a.m.

Full Gospel Lighthouse Tabernacle
468 E. Washington St., Dunkirk
Robert Thomas
(765) 348-4620
Services: 6:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m. Thursday

Geneva First United Methodist
100 W. Line St., Geneva
Barry McCune
(260) 368-7655
Services: 9:30 a.m.

Geneva Nazarene
225 Decatur St., Geneva
(260) 525-8609
Services: 10 a.m., 6 p.m.
Sunday school: 9 a.m.
Prayer meeting: 6 p.m. Wednesday

Gilead Church
County road 650 North, one-quarter mile east of Balbec
Services: 10:30 a.m.

Hickory Grove Church of the Brethren
Indiana 1 and Indiana 26
Earl Doll
(260) 731-4477
Services: 10:30 a.m.

High Street United Methodist
435 High St., Geneva
Rev. Joseph Hampton
(260) 368-7233
Services: 9 a.m.

Holy Trinity Catholic
7321 E. Indiana 67, Bryant
Fr. Peter Logsdon
Fr. Martin Sandhage
Services: 8 a.m., 4:30 p.m. Saturday

Hopewell of Life Ministries
County road 200 South, 2 miles east of Indiana 1
Rev. Ruth Funk
(260) 251-8581
Services: 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m.

Immaculate Conception Catholic
506 E. Walnut St., Portland
Fr. Peter Logsdon
Fr. Martin Sandhage
(260) 726-7055
Services: 5:30 p.m. Saturday, 10:30 a.m. Sunday

Kingsley Full Gospel
4030 S. 700 East, Dunkirk
Stuart Phillips
Services: 9:30 a.m. and 6 p.m., 7 p.m. Wednesday

Mary Help of Christians
403 Sharpshurg Road, Fort Recovery
Rev. Alexander Witt
(419) 375-4153
Services: 4:30 p.m. Saturday, 9 a.m.

Mount Tabor Community Church
216 W. Pleasant St., Dunkirk
Scott McClain
(765) 768-7273
Services: 9:30 a.m.

Mount Zion United Methodist
County roads 600 East and 200 North
Rev. Darrell Borders
(260) 726-4786
Services: 9 a.m.

New Beginnings Holiness Church of Blaine
4017 W. 200 South
Randy Smith
(260) 251-2406
Services: 10 a.m., 6 p.m.
nbholiness.com

New Covenant Fellowship
1238 W. 450 South
Chuck Myers
(260) 251-0063
Services: 10:30 a.m.

New Life Ministries
415 S. Helen St., Portland
Dr. Kay Fairchild
(260) 223-2961
Services: 4 p.m.
drkayfairchild.com

New Mt. Pleasant United Methodist
5905 S. Como Road
Neil Butcher
(765) 499-7838
Services: 9 a.m.

Noble Congregational Christian
1964 N. 800 East
Aaron Huey
Services: 10:30 a.m.

Oak Grove United Methodist
829 S. Indiana 1
Neil Butcher
(765) 760-9085
Services: 10:45 a.m.

Pleasant Hill
9945 N. 800 East, Union City
Bruce Bryan
(765) 964-3664
Services: 9 a.m., 6 p.m.
mypleasanthillchurch.org

Portland Church of Christ
1217 W. Votaw St., Portland
Bob Graham
(260) 726-7777
Bible class: 9:15 a.m.
Services: 10:20 a.m.
Bible School: 6 p.m. Wednesday
portlandcoc.com

Portland First Church of Nazarene
920 S. Shank St., Portland
Steve Cecil
(260) 726-8040
Services: 10:45 a.m.

Portland Friends
226 E. Main St., Portland
Herb Hummel
(260) 202-9732
Services: 10 a.m.
Sunday school: 9 a.m.

Praise Chapel Church of God
4527 E. 1000 North (Jay-Randolph county line)
Rev. Josh Canfield
(765) 584-7045
Services: 10:30 a.m.

Redeemer Lutheran
Malin and Elm streets, Bryant
Father Dan Layden
(260) 997-6787
Services: 9:30 a.m.

Redkey Faith Ministries
9811 W. Indiana 67, southwest of Redkey
Rev. Craig and Robin Cotherman
(765) 369-2920
Services: 10 a.m.
RedkeyFaith.org

Redkey First Christian
Union and Malin streets
Jeff Hammers
(765) 468-6172
Services: 10:30 a.m.
Sunday school: 9:30 a.m.

Redkey United Methodist
122 W. Main St.
Lori McIntosh
(765) 369-2085
Services: 10:30 a.m.

Redkey Church of the Nazarene
801 W. High St.
Fred Stevens
(765) 369-2676
redkeynaz.org
Services: 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m., 6:30 p.m. Wednesday

River of Life
722 W. Main St., Portland
Susan Hathaway
(260) 729-1095
Services: 10:30 a.m.

The ROCK
1605 N. Meridian St., Portland
Matt Ransom
(260) 726-7474
Services: 10 a.m.
matt@therockjkc.org

Salamonia Church of Christ
3900 S. 600 East
Bruce Phillips
(260) 335-2017
Services: 9 a.m.

Second Chance at Life Ministries
228 S. Meridian St., Portland
Dave Keen (260) 251-8792
Mike Eads (260) 703-0733
Services: 10:30 a.m.

St. Joseph Catholic
1689 St. Joe Road, Fort Recovery
Rev. Alexander Witt
Services: 7:30 a.m. Sunday

St. Mary's Catholic
346 S. Broad St., Dunkirk
Rev. Kevin Hurley
Services: 5 p.m. Saturday, 5:30 p.m. Thursday

St. Paul Catholic
517 Meiring Road, Fort Recovery
Rev. Alexander Witt
Services: 11 a.m. Sunday

St. Peter Catholic
1477 Philothea Road, Fort Recovery
Rev. Alexander Witt
Services: 9 a.m. Sunday

Sugar Grove Nazarene
3984 N. 550 West, Portland
Pastor Mike Heckman
(615) 517-1017
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
Services: 10:30 a.m.
Bible study: 6 p.m. Wednesday

Sugar Grove Church
County roads 600 South and 1150 West, Dunkirk
Scott McClain
Services: 9 a.m.

Temple Baptist
17920 Indiana 167, Dunkirk
John Elam
(765) 768-7708
Sunday school: 10 a.m.
Services: 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., 7 p.m. Wednesday
7pillarsdirector@gmail.com
templebaptistin.com

The Church at Westchester
4487 E. 400 North
(260) 726-6311
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
Services: 10:35 a.m.
churchatwestchester.org

Trinity Lutheran
301 N. Wayne St., Fort Recovery
Robin Owen
(419) 375-4498
Services: 9 a.m. (contemporary service, fourth Sunday)
pastorrobino@gmail.com

Trinity ArchBridge Church
323 S. Meridian St., Portland
Dan Vore
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Services: 10:15 a.m.
portlandtrinity.com

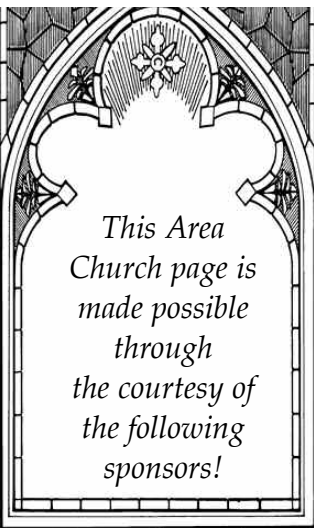
Union Chapel
6200 N. 375 West, Bryant
Interim Pastor Chris Kruckow
(260) 849-0687
Services: 10:20 a.m., 6 p.m.

Union Chapel Church of the Nazarene
County road 900 North (Jay-Wells county line)
Fred Stevens
Services: 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m.

Walnut Corner
County roads 200 North and 500 West
Steve Rogers
(260) 251-1113
Services: 10:30 a.m.
Sunday school: 9:30 a.m.

West Walnut Church of Christ
204 W. Walnut St., Portland
Gil Alicea
(260) 726-4691
Services: 10 a.m.
westwalnutchurchofchrist.org

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
Robin Owen
218 E. High St., Portland
(260) 726-8832
zionlutheranportland@gmail.com
Services: 10:30 a.m.



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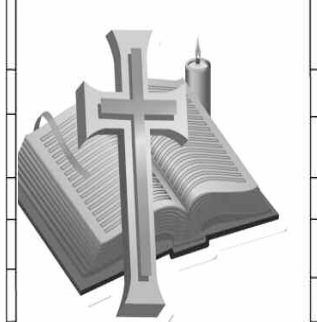
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EAST
♠ 6 2
♥ Q 8
♦ 5 2
♣ A K Q J 10 9 8

SOUTH
♠ A K Q 10 8 4 3
♥ K 10 9 6
♦ 4
♣ 3

The bidding:
East 3 NT
South 4♠
West 5♣
North 6♣

some gambling of her own by raising the ante to six spades. She reasoned that, given the bidding by the opponents, South had at most one club. This proved to be a good decision when South proceeded to make the slam on a squeeze.

West led a club, and East won and continued the suit, ruffed by declarer. South played four rounds of trump, West discarding a club and two diamonds. Declarer then finessed the queen of diamonds, cashed the ace and ruffed a diamond to produce this position:

North
♥ A 5 4
♦ 9

South
♠ 8
♥ K 10 9

When South next played the eight of spades, West was forced to discard a heart. As a result, declarer lost no heart tricks and so made the slam.

At the other table, the Danish pair holding the North-South cards stopped at four spades, giving the Irish a substantial pickup on the deal.

Tomorrow: Bidding quiz.
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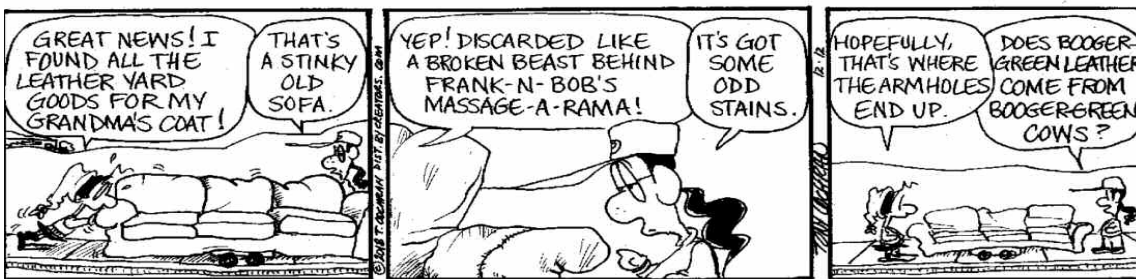
Peanuts



Rose is Rose



Agnes



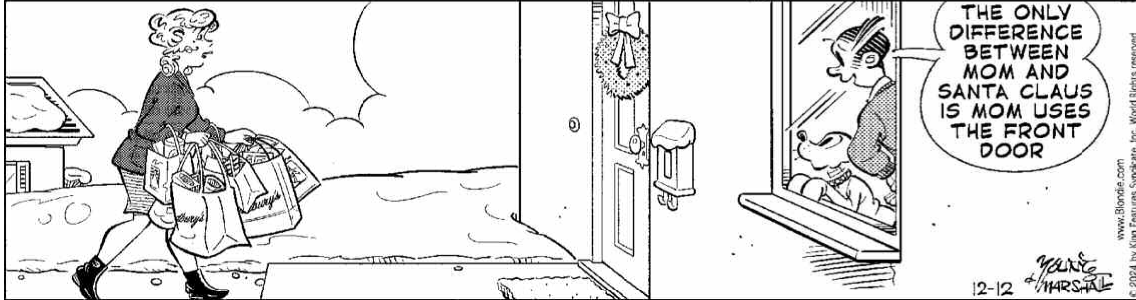
Hi and Lois



Between Friends



Blondie



Snuffy Smith



Beetle Bailey



12-12

CRYPTOQUIP

RBXR HXZK YL HLYSDU DYQLKZ

BDU QLA TLUIFYS XR RBD

AUDXZ AXIDUK. RBFYSC TDUD

SDRRFYS CRXHD.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHENEVER GENEROUS PEOPLE GIFT ME WITH BOTTLES OF WINE, I BELIEVE I AM ALWAYS VERY GRAPE-FUL.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals H

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

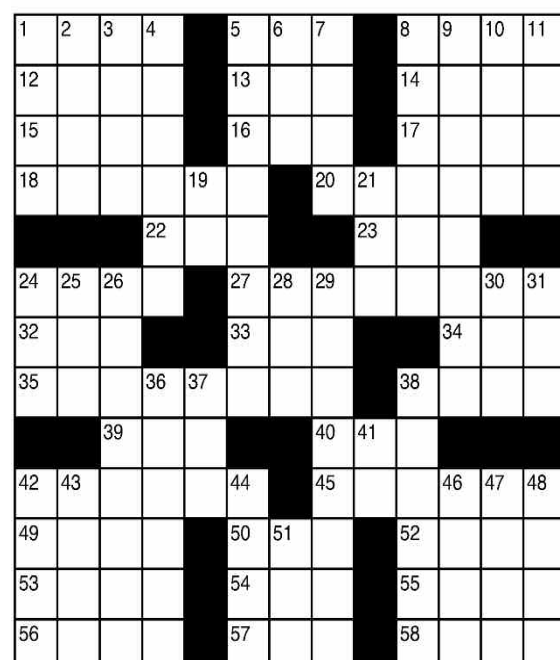
ACROSS
1 Bath powder
5 Snoop
8 Has
12 "The Time Machine" people
13 Chowd down
14 Leak out slowly
15 Starting quartet
16 Logical beginning?
17 Entreaty
18 Get by
20 Planets
22 Knock
23 Fresh
24 Life stories
27 Nudniks
32 Request
33 — long way
34 Brit's restroom
35 Raze
38 Lost traction
39 One of us
40 Actress Thurman

DOWN
2 Rain makers?
45 Maidens of myth
49 Erstwhile
50 WNBA star — Wilson
52 Borscht veggie
53 Latin 101 word
54 Campaigned
55 Farm measure (down)
57 — Dhabi
58 Distort
DOWN
1 Squad

2 Actress Jessica
3 Canal feature
4 Autumnal drinks
5 Samoan port
6 Numbered rd.
7 Cry of pain
8 Fish-eating hawk
9 "Oho!"
10 Must have
11 Relaxing resorts
19 Opposite of nyet
21 Lennon's partner
24 Belfry critter
25 British verb ending
26 "I heard you the first time!"
28 At once
29 Mork's sign-off
30 French monarch
31 Turf
36 Awakens harshly
37 Flop
38 Brazilian dances
41 "Heavens!"
42 Furnace fuel
43 Tibetan monk
44 Country singer Evans
46 Quick kiss
47 "Present!"
48 Hearty dish
51 Poke

Solution time: 24 mins.

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



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Close calls



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Jay County High School's Jason Landers gets Izaiah Hudson of Yorktown in a headlock during the 150-pound match in the second round of a double dual on Tuesday. Landers' pin of Hudson in 3 minutes, 39 seconds marked his second victory of the day, which was only matched by Jacob Robinson and Alan Ortiz.

Patriots get key victories in final seconds to beat No. 8 Yorktown, fall to top-ranked Delta's lightweight dominance

By ANDREW BALKO

The Commercial Review

The Patriots knew they had a pair of huge matches ahead of them against ranked opponents.

They just couldn't get enough going against the Eagles, but managed to narrowly take down the Tigers.

The Jay County High School boys wrestling team hosted three teams for a double dual on Tuesday, falling to the Delta Eagles 49-18 but managed to eke out a 39-37 victory over the Yorktown Tigers. The Winchester Golden Falcons also attended but did not wrestle against the Patriots.

"Not bad," said JCHS coach Eric Myers about how he felt post match. "We're just young and inexperienced and like I told them, 'We're going to have some good days and we're going to have some tougher days.'"

"It could have been worse. We were able to pull out the Yorktown match. There were just a couple of spots in that Delta match where we just need to be a little bit tougher. I feel like we took a step back in our technique and I feel like that happens every season. You'd like for them to wrestle perfect all year long. You start off the year good, then you hit

a point where ... you take a step back in some of your technique and you need to reinforce some things and that's where we are right now."

With just three weight classes left, the Patriots (5-3) held a 33-27 lead over Yorktown. First up was the 126 contest, which pitted Cooper Glassford against Carter Gregory. The Jay County sophomore struck first, working his way around Gregory for a takedown in 23 seconds, but an escape and single-leg takedown put the Tiger up one point. Glassford would get one more escape before the end of the period to go

into the second knotted up at 4-4.

Gregory chose to start down and managed to escape almost immediately, but 81 seconds passed before another score would happen as Glassford was awarded a point for a hand locking violation. He would get three more points on a single-leg takedown to enter the final period up 8-5.

Glassford started down in the third period and got the escape five seconds in. As the clock ticked away, the JCHS sophomore started to look for opportunities to attack to try and score more than just a decision. With less than 30

seconds left, the wrestlers went down to the mat with a shot from Glassford that Gregory countered. A secondary shot got Glassford the takedown with 19 seconds left that he was able to work for the pin with just five seconds remaining to put the Patriots up 39-27.

"In the back of my head I was thinking about the team state," said Glassford, noting that the Patriots didn't automatically qualify for the event this season and will need to be voted in. "Once I got that ankle pass and he turned his back I was like, 'I've got to get this pin. This is going to help determine if

we get to team state or not.' Myers even talks to us about that and the difference between getting a pin and a major. ... I knew it would be tough and to say the least I went out there, things were a little chippy at first, but I really fixed some things and ended up getting the fall."

The pin mattered for Jay County as the Tigers took the final two matches with a Jayden Cline fall (3:08) over Alex Rivers in the 132 weight class and 15-4 major decision from No. 10 Sam Moiser over A.J. Heskett in the 138 contest, leaving Yorktown two points short.

See Close page 9

Schwieterman, Brunswick can't lead JCHS past Bearcats

MUNCIE — Hallie Schwieterman did her thing, getting her offensive numbers back over 20 points.

She also got offensive support from Elizabeth Brunswick.

It just wasn't enough to keep an eight-year streak against the Bearcats alive.

The Jay County High School girls basketball team fell to the Muncie Central Bearcats 50-45 on Tuesday, snapping an eight-game winning streak that dates back to the 2016-17 season.

Schwieterman led the way with 25 points, bouncing back from a 13-point performance against Fort Recovery.

Local roundup

The Patriots (3-5) also got a lift from Brunswick, who scored a career-high 12 points. The freshman's previous high was eight points, scored on Dec. 3 against Northeastern. It also marks the first time one of the JCHS freshmen broke double figures this season.

Rounding out the score,

Amelia Heath had four points, Alexis Sibray added three and Raylin Hummer contributed two.

Heath led Jay County with nine rebounds, followed by Brunswick with seven and Gabi Petro with five. Schwieterman stole the ball 10 times in the game.

The Patriots have now dropped four straight, the first time they've done so since early in the 2019-20 season.

Tribe falls

FORT LORAMIE, Ohio — A rough third quarter held the Fort Recovery boys basketball

team back as Fort Loramie defeated it 56-38 on Tuesday.

The Indians got outscored by nine points in the first half after only putting up four in the first quarter, followed by 10 in the second. But it was the third quarter, which Fort Loramie won 20-9 that put the game out of sight for FRHS. Five players scored for FLHS in the period.

Briggs Overman and Brody Barga led the Indians (0-2) with nine points apiece. Barga did a bulk of his scoring in the second period with three made shots, while Overman's scoring was distributed throughout the game.

With only two quarters to play, Braylon Dilworth followed with eight second-half points for Fort Recovery.

Landon Drees scored a game-high 15 points for Fort Loramie, including eight in the fourth quarter. FLHS had six more players to put up six or more points.

Pats sweep

The Jay County Junior High School girls basketball teams swept Elwood on Tuesday, with the eighth grade team picking up a dominant 43-4 victory and the seventh graders pulling out a 24-10 defeat.

See Roundup page 9

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Close ...

Continued from page 8
Glassford flipped his result from the Delta match as he fell earlier in the day. JCHS had three more wrestlers – Griffin Byrum (113 weight class), Brice Coy (190) and Freddie Lingo (215) – flip to secure wins in the second match. (Byrum and Coy both fell to ranked opponents.)

Jason Landers, Jacob Robinson and Alan Ortiz all went perfect on the day for Jay County.

Landers took down Delta's Brayden Swain with a 12-0 major decision in the 144 match and followed it up with a fall (3:39) over Izaiah Hudson in the 150 contest.

Ortiz quickly dispatched Caleb Thurston of Delta in the 285 weight class with a pin in 30 seconds. His match against Yorktown's Wyatt Roach went the distance with the junior pulling off an 8-6 victory after narrowly countering a final shot from Roach with 10 seconds remaining.

"That's a tough kid," Myers said about Roach. "Ortiz had to beat him to get out of regional. Just a different style that Alan has to adjust to and he was able to pull off the win there. He hasn't wrestled as many lighter heavy-weights. Sometimes you get a guy who doesn't move quite as well and other times it will be a lighter guy who will actually take some shots. Alan has to adjust there and figure out how to wrestle those two different matches."

Similar to Ortiz's match with Yorktown, Robinson's match with Delta came down to the buzzer. Through the first two periods, Robinson built a 6-2 lead on Zeke Witter, with a pair of single-leg takedowns. He only gave points on a pair of escapes but he did get a stalling warning.

In the third period,

Robinson chose to start on the bottom and escaped after 25 seconds. Witter got around him near the 1:00 mark to get back into striking distance at 7-5. Five seconds later, he let go of Robinson to go for a tie with another takedown.

With 50 seconds left, Robinson got called for stalling again, cutting his lead to 8-6, meaning a takedown would lose the match for him. Witter nearly got the takedown, but play was stopped just short of it for a full Nelson with 24 seconds left. From there, Robinson was able to kill time and take the match.

"There was definitely a lot of nerves," Robinson said. "I used to go to Delta in middle school and I knew that kid pretty well. There's definitely a lot of tension between these two teams and nerves got to me. ... Those are the times of the match where you just have to think about your team and really dig deep and not let go because that could change the outcome of the match."

Freshman Caleb Sibray owned the only other victory on the day, picking off Lincoln Mann of Delta in the 165 weight class with a victory by fall in 1:12.

With the Allen County Athletic Conference duals coming up on Saturday, Myers will look for his team to clean up some of the controllables to avoid giving away free points.

"We're still wrestling fairly physical and we're somewhat aggressive," Myers said. "We just wrestled with our head down on the mat a lot on bottom and we weren't finishing periods real well. We were giving up escapes with 2-3 seconds left where we just need to hold on but we're giving up that extra point there. That's easy things we need to clean up. We just need to make sure our kids are aware of it."



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Jacob Robinson works for a single-leg takedown of Delta's Zeke Witter in the 150-pound contest on Tuesday. Robinson, who went to Delta in middle school and knew Witter, pulled off an 8-6 decision, narrowly avoiding being taken down in the closing seconds of the match.

Joe Burrow's home burglarized during game

By DAVID MATTHEWS
New York Daily News
Tribune News Service

Cincinnati Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow has become the latest star athlete to have his home broken into during a game.

The burglary happened Monday night at Burrow's residence in Anderson Township, Ohio, while the quarterback was in Texas facing off against the Dallas Cowboys for "Monday Night Football."

According to the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, a 22-year-old woman who works for Burrow called 911 around 11 p.m. after arriving at the home to find a bedroom window broken, the room ransacked and several items missing.

Neither the value of the stolen items nor what exactly was taken from the home was reported.

Burrow is just the latest in a recent string of sports

Bengals quarterback was most recent in string of break-ins targeted at star athletes

stars to have their home burglarized. In early October, Kansas City Chiefs star Patrick Mahomes' mansion was broken into, as was Travis Kelce's less than 24 hours later. The latter break-in happened as the Chiefs faced off in a home game against the New Orleans Saints.

In the NBA, Milwaukee Bucks forward Bobby Portis and Minnesota Timberwolves guard Mike Conley Jr. have also reported burglaries in recent months.

In a November memo obtained by The Associated Press, the NFL issued a

security alert saying the homes of professional athletes had become "increasingly targeted for burglaries," urging its players to take additional precautions to safeguard their belongings.

The NBA said the FBI has connected to at least some of the burglaries to "transnational South American Theft Groups" that are "reportedly well-organized, sophisticated rings that incorporate advanced techniques and technologies, including pre-surveillance, drones and signal jamming devices."

Roundup ...

Continued from page 8
Karsyn Schwieterman led the eight graders with 18 points, followed by Charlee Peters with 11. Claudia Dirksen came two points short of double figures at eight.

Rounding out the scoring, Kendall Schemenaur and Gabby Friddle each

had two, while Alivya Schwiterman and Bristol Kahlig each hit a free throw.

Brenna Weitzel and Boo Towell both scored 10 points in the seventh grade game. Their efforts were supported by Bella Barnett and Emmi Clark with one bucket each.

Sports on tap

Local schedule

Today
Jay County — Swim vs. Norwell — 6 p.m.; Girls wrestling vs. New Haven — 6 p.m.; Junior high girls basketball at Bluffton — 6 p.m.; Junior high boys basketball vs. Bluffton — 6 p.m.
Fort Recovery — Swim at Trotwood — 5:30 p.m.; Girls basketball vs. Marion Local — 6 p.m.; Middle school girls basketball at Mississinawa Valley — 5:30 p.m.

Friday
Jay County — Girls basketball (varsity only) vs. Adams Central — 6:30 p.m.

TV sports

Today
1 p.m. — College volleyball: Missouri vs. Kentucky (ESPN2)

3:30 p.m. — College volleyball: Oregon vs. Pitt (ESPN2)
7 p.m. — College volleyball: Florida at Stanford (ESPN2)
7 p.m. — Women's college basketball: UConn at Notre Dame (ESPN)
7:30 p.m. — College basketball: Iowa State at Iowa (FS1)
8 p.m. — NHL: San Jose Sharks at St. Louis Blues (FDSN Indiana)
9:30 p.m. — College volleyball: Louisville at Purdue (ESPN2)
11 p.m. — NFL: Los Angeles Rams at San Francisco 49ers (FOX)

Philadelphia 76ers (FDSN Indiana)
7 p.m. — College volleyball: Texas A&M at Wisconsin (ESPN2)
8 p.m. — College basketball: Indiana at Nebraska (FOX)
8:30 p.m. — College hockey: Michigan State at Minnesota (BTN)
9 p.m. — College football: Idaho at Montana State (ESPN)
9:30 p.m. — College volleyball: Dayton at Nebraska (ESPN2)

Local notes

Grand re-opening
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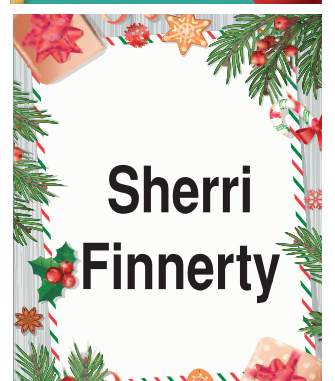
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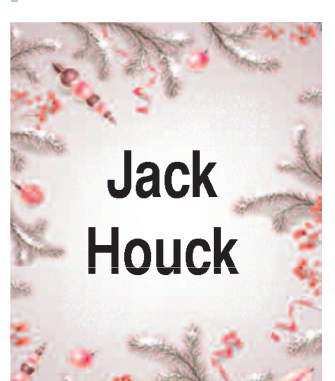
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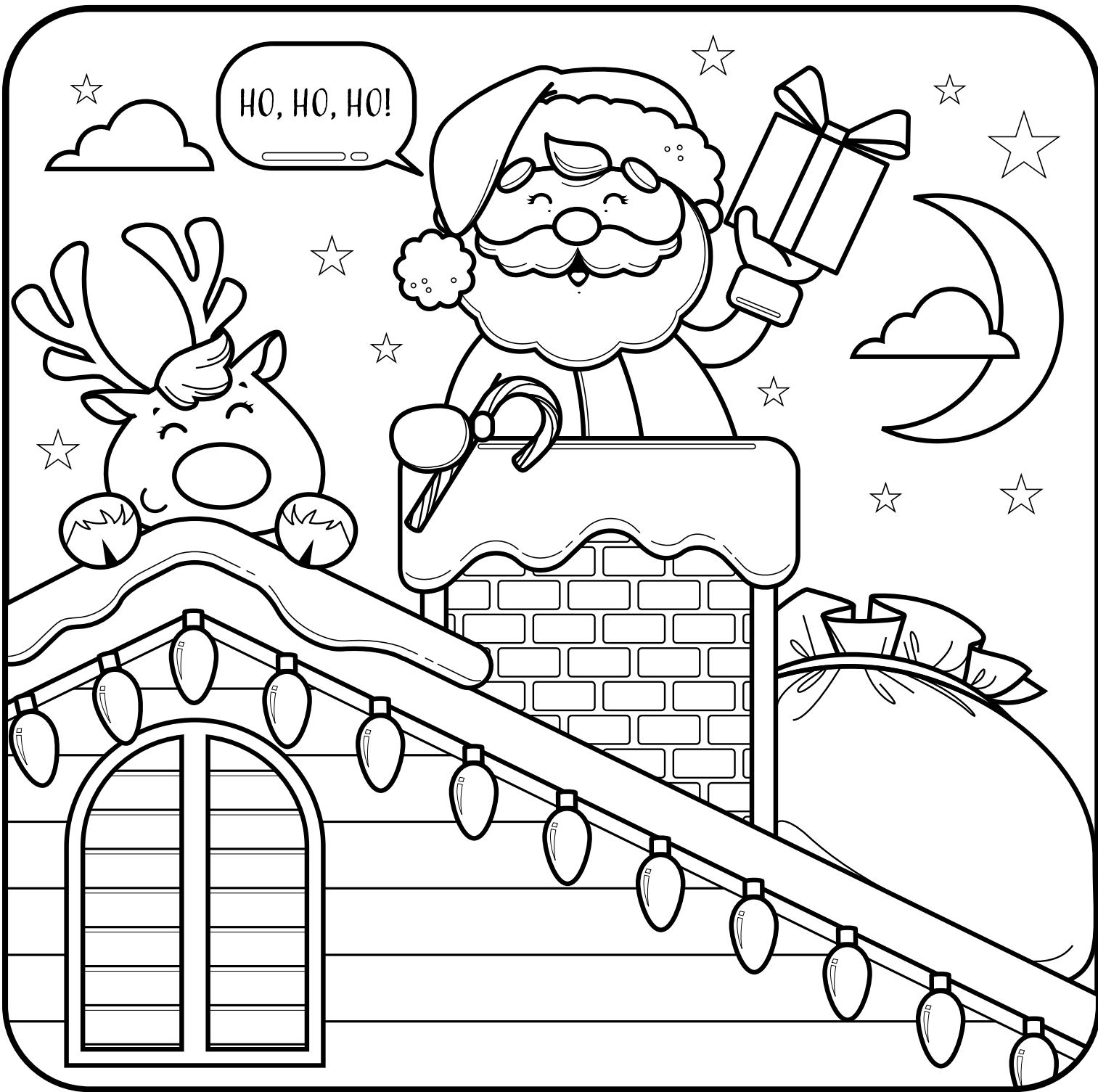
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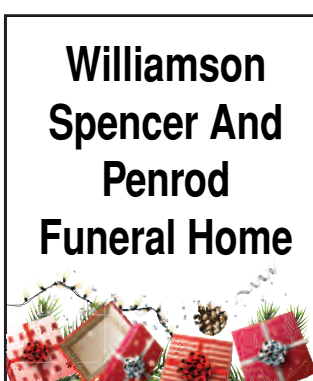
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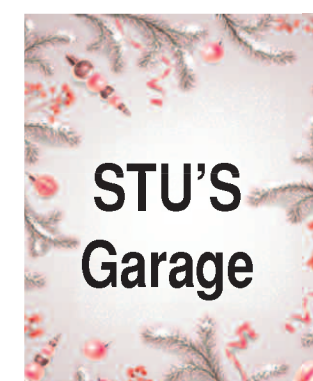
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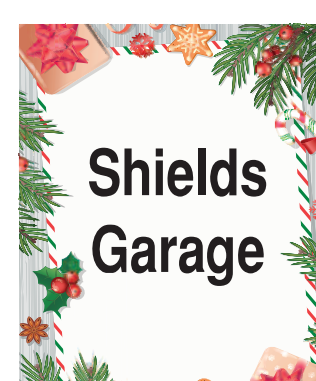
**Portland
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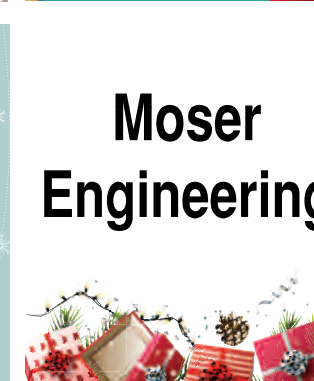
**Youth
Service
Bureau**



**Shields
Garage**



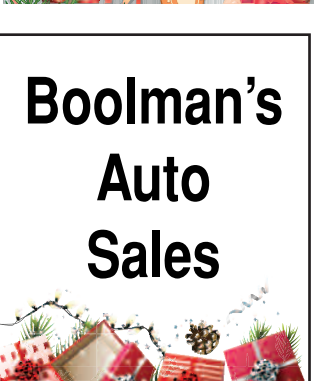
**Grube
Auction**



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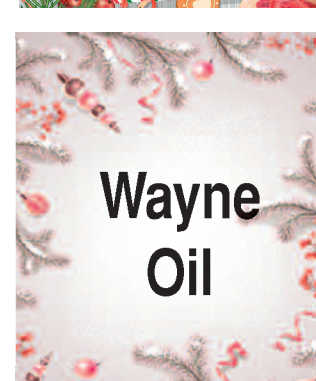
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