

# The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

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\$1

## Virtual pilot approved

*New program will launch in 2025-26 school year*

By **RAY COONEY**  
The Commercial Review

Like many rural districts, Jay Schools has been looking for ways to slow its enrollment decline.

Next year, it'll try offering an online option.

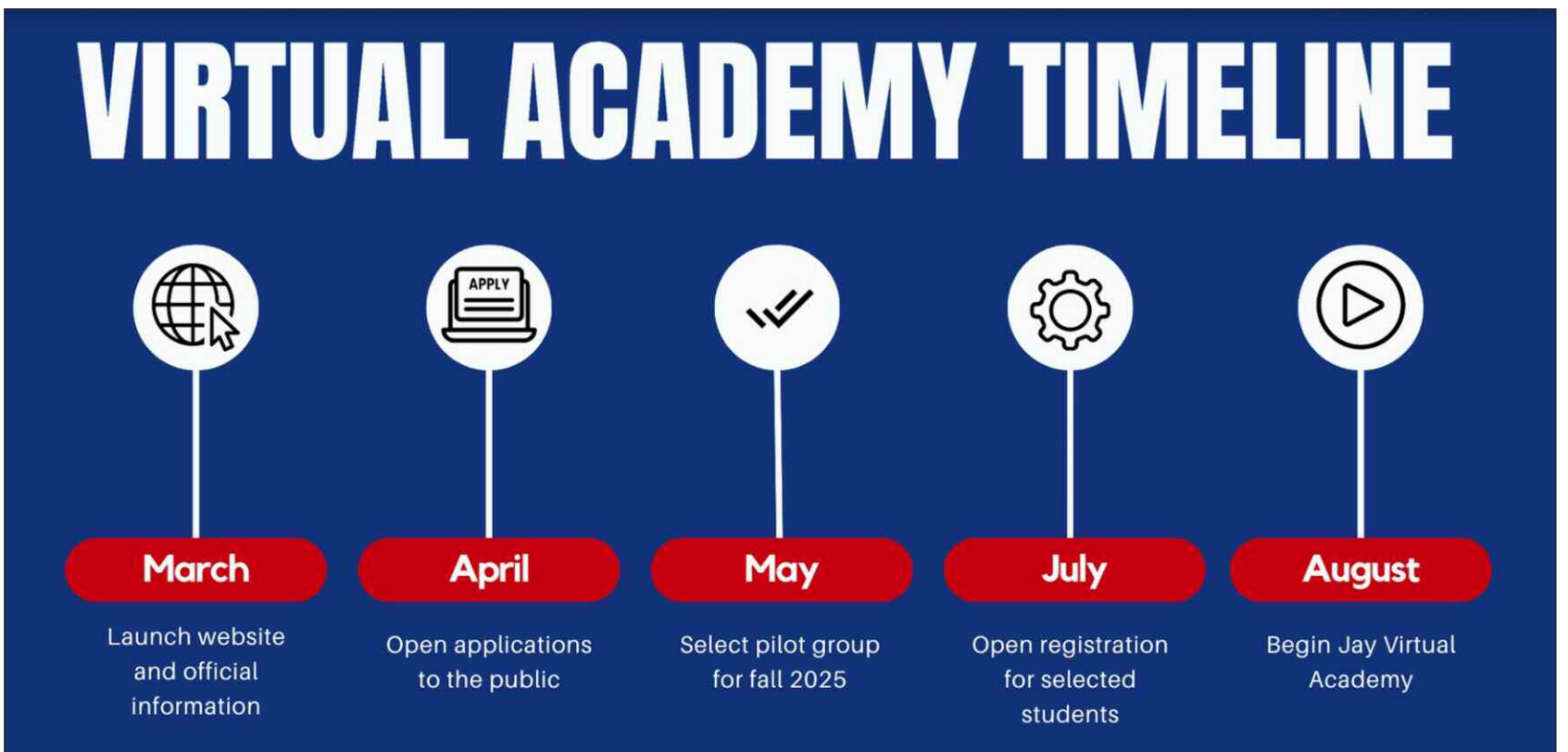
Jay School Board approved a pilot program for a new Jay County Junior-Senior High School Virtual Academy for the 2025-26 school year.

A recommendation on hiring a new Jay County High School football coach was removed from the agenda.

Jay Schools director of digital learning Katie Clark presented the reasoning behind creating a virtual academy and the plans for it moving forward. She told the board that there are currently 128 students who live in the Jay Schools district and are attending online schools. Forty-nine high school students have left the corporation for online options in the last year alone.

With schools receiving about \$7,000 per student in state funding, those who are now in other online options account for a loss of nearly \$900,000.

Clark said the hope is to keep Jay Schools students in the corporation via the virtual academy



Jay School Corporation

The graphic above shows the planned timeline for a pilot of a new Jay Virtual Academy. Plans call for a first group of a maximum of 100 students, with applications open in April and selections to be made in May.

and to offer a more robust educational experience than others might provide.

"We want our virtual school to be different," she said.

Jay Schools will contract with Edmentum's EdOptions Academy for

its virtual curriculum and also plans to have a support structure for students. It will include a success coach who checks in with students weekly, facilitates communication and monitors academic progress, an assistant principal and Clark.

Students enrolled in the virtual academy will have access to IHSAA athletics (they must be on campus for at least one core class daily in order to do so), extracurriculars, special ed accommodations, work-based learning, college and

career exploration, financial literacy and technology support. They will be required to go through an onboarding process and participate in in-person required state testing.

Clark laid out a timeline that includes launching a website for the vir-

tual academy in March, beginning to accept applications in April and selecting the pilot group in May. (It will be limited to 100 students, and those who are interested must commit to a full semester.)

See **Virtual** page 5

## Village approves rezoning property

By **BAILEY CLINE**  
The Commercial Review

FORT RECOVERY — The village stuck to its decision.

Fort Recovery Village Council approved amendments to the village's zoning map and regulations on a first reading, rezoning the property at 105 S. Elm St. to commercial and prohibiting first-floor residential use in central commercial district buildings.

Council discussed the topic at a meeting Jan. 20 during which it agreed to move forward with the ordinances, going against a recommendation from Fort Recovery Plan-

ning Commission to deny the zoning map amendment petition from property owners Brandon and Amanda Wyerick to change the property from residential to commercial.

The Wyericks are renovating the former Christ Chapel church on the property into an event center called Elm and Ivy.

Plan commission members, including mayor Dave Kaup and Neal Spencer, explained Jan. 20 if the Wyericks were to sell their property in the future, the new owner could turn the property into any of the permitted uses in the commercial district zoning rules.

They include various public, recreational, business, retail, service and entertainment uses.

Amanda Wyerick asked council Jan. 20 to rezone the property as commercial.

"Here's the reason — history and location," she said. "It hasn't been a single-family residence in all of its history, over 120 years."

Discussion came up from adjoining property owner Edna Heitkamp on Jan. 20 about potential liabilities. Brandon Wyerick noted that he is required to set up buffers — fences, shrubbery or other bar-

riers — along property lines abutting residential properties if the property is rezoned as commercial.

Also Monday, village council learned of Tom's Construction plans to begin reconstruction work on Butler Street between Fort Site and Main streets in March, several months earlier than expected.

The \$1.4 million project, partially funded by an Ohio Public Works Commission grant, calls for an "improved aggregate base and asphalt" to handle heavy truck traffic each day, as well as the following: improved curbs and sidewalks, replacing

the water main pipe, new service taps at adjoining properties including a tap for fire protection at Fort Recovery Morvilius Opera House; and a new traffic signal, pedestrian crossing equipment and fixtures at the intersection of Butler and Wayne streets.

Also, Fort Recovery Police Chief Jared Laux noted the village swore in new officer Don Bird on Feb. 1. Bird, a Fort Recovery resident, has worked in law enforcement for 13 years, previously for Mercer County Sheriff's Department and St. Henry Police Department.

See **Rezoning** page 2

## Senate passes property tax relief bill

*Gov. Braun pushed back in social media post*

By **WHITNEY DOWNARD**  
Indiana Capital Chronicle  
indianacapitalchronicle.com

Indiana Senators on Monday voted to move forward with a proposal for property tax relief over the qualms of Democrats and Indianapolis Republicans.

The bipartisan coalition wasn't enough to defeat the measure, which moved on a 37-10 vote and will get further consideration in the House.

Sen. Travis Holdman, R-Markle, spearheaded the effort, which originally mirrored the proposal pro-



Indiana Capital Chronicle/Whitney Downard

Sen. Travis Holdman, R-Markle, spearheaded Senate Bill 1, a property tax relief measure that cleared the Senate on Monday. It has received significant pushback from local government officials statewide who are concerned about losing funding.

moted by Gov. Mike Braun on the campaign trail. Earlier this month, Holdman introduced a measure that mitigated some of the losses local

units of government would have seen under that proposal, bringing the impact down from \$1.2 billion to just shy of \$300 million in the first year fol-

lowed by \$800 million the second year.

But Gov. Mike Braun pushed back on the measure on social media.

"I want to be clear on a

key point — a real tax cut means taxpayers keep more, and government takes in less. SB1 doesn't cut taxes for homeowners hit hardest by skyrocketing assessments since 2020 — it just slows down how fast their bills will increase next year."

He said local governments are set to receive \$477 million more in 2026 for a total property tax revenue of \$11 billion. The Senate version of the bill reduces that increase to \$238 million, but local government are still getting more than the year before.

"If your boss cut your raise from 5% to 2%, you'd still be making more — only politicians would call that a pay cut," Braun posted to X. "I am open to a discussion balancing the cost pressures from inflation on local government services with tax relief for homeowners, but we can't lose sight of the fact homeowners have been crushed by inflation in assessed

values while local governments have seen a windfall in revenue well beyond inflation. This bill has a long way to go before it gets my signature, and restoring meaningful tax cuts would be a step in the right direction."

Previous pushback highlighted the uncertain impact on public schools, which received 43% — or \$3.7 billion — of all property taxes in 2021. Additionally, the plan includes no relief for renters, who have seen similar double-digit increases.

Calculating property taxes relies on a complex formula dependent on assessed value, levies, school referenda and locally set tax rates — with state lawmakers largely playing a reactionary role to rein in rampant increases.

Some lawmakers supported the underlying measure and pushed for local officials to get the blame for rising bills.

See **Tax** page 5

### Deaths

**Gregory Bergman, 71**, Portland  
Details on page 2.

### Weather

Jay County had a high temperature of 21 degrees Monday. The low was 7.

Tonight's forecast calls for a 50% chance of snow with a low of 8 and wind chill values below zero. Thursday's high will be around 20.

See page 2 for an extended outlook.

### In review

Jay County Civic Theatre will host a pre-audition night for its production of the musical "Freaky Friday" from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 25, at Arts Place, 131 E. Walnut St., Portland. The event is an opportunity for newcomers to ask questions and for anyone to seek advice to help with the audition process.

### Coming up

**Thursday** — Results from the JCHS boys basketball game at Hamilton Heights.

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

**Saturday** — Results from the JCHS boys basketball game at Norwell.



# Obituaries

## Gregory Bergman

Dec. 18, 1953-Feb. 13, 2025  
Gregory "Porky" Bergman, age 71, a resident of Portland, passed away Thursday, Feb. 13, 2025, at his home.  
Porky was born Dec. 18, 1953, in Celina, Ohio, the son of Walter and Kathryn (Vonderhyde) Bergman.  
Porky retired as a truck driver at Cooper Farms.  
Throughout Porky's life, he enjoyed hauling livestock, rais-

ing and training horses and wheeling and dealing at auctions, and was considered a jack of all trades. He was a member of the VFW in Fort Recovery, a founding member of the Fort Recovery Riding Club and was an accomplished saddle bronc rider.  
Survivors include:



Bergman

Son — Trent Pearson (wife: Stacy), Fort Recovery, Ohio  
Three daughters — Crystal Marie Jutte (husband: Kevin), Celina, Ohio; Karla Marie Bergman, Portland, Indiana; and Mindy Imel (husband Craig), Portland, Indiana  
Two brothers — Calvin Bergman (wife: Teresa), Maryland; and Kevin Bergman (wife: Kim), Ansonia, Ohio  
Three sisters — Elaine Brunswick, Portland, Indiana; Becky Shreeve (husband Greg,

Salamonia, Indiana; and Miriam Major (companion David), Pennville, Indiana  
Several nieces, nephews and godchildren.  
Grandchildren — Kurt, Kerry, Kent, Kolton, Grant, Emma, Paul, Conner, Wyatt, Easton and Alyssa  
Great-grandchildren — Elsie, Clay and Arlo  
He was preceded in death by two brothers, Kenny Bergman and Kurt Bergman; a sister, Kirsten Bergman; and a great-grandchild Weston Jutte.

Private services are scheduled at a later date.  
Arrangements entrusted to Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home in Portland.  
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*The Commercial Review publishes death notices for those with a connection to our coverage area free of charge. They include the name, city, birth/death date and services. There is a charge for obituaries, which are accepted only from funeral homes or mortuary services.*

## CR almanac

Thursday 2/20	Friday 2/21	Saturday 2/22	Sunday 2/23	Monday 2/24
<b>21/13</b>	<b>25/11</b>	<b>31/21</b>	<b>37/29</b>	<b>42/36</b>
Thursday looks to be mostly cloudy with wind chills as low as -5 degrees early.	Friday's forecast shows mostly sunny skies in the morning with lows at night around 10.	Saturday looks to be mostly sunny with lows at night around 20 degrees.	Another day of mostly sunny skies on Sunday, when the high will be in the 30s.	Monday's forecast shows mostly cloudy skies with highs in the lower 40s.

## Lotteries

<p><b>Powerball</b> Monday 4-44-47-52-57 Power Ball: 9 Power Play: 4 Estimated jackpot: \$195 million</p> <p><b>Mega Millions</b> Estimated jackpot: \$145 million</p> <p><b>Hoosier</b> Monday Midday Daily Three: 0-5-2 Daily Four: 7-3-7-0 Quick Draw: 6-7-8-13-16-19-20-29-31-33-35-44-48-52-53-62-70-74-78-79 Evening Daily Three: 6-8-7</p>	<p>Daily Four: 5-1-7-8 Quick Draw: 5-11-14-23-27-29-34-35-36-40-43-50-54-55-57-61-64-68-71-80 Cash 5: 3-5-21-23-44 Estimated jackpot: \$630,500</p> <p><b>Ohio</b> Monday Midday Pick 3: 3-0-0 Pick 4: 3-3-9-3 Pick 5: 0-1-5-6-2 Evening Pick 3: 9-0-0 Pick 4: 6-0-6-7 Pick 5: 3-0-7-4-8 Rolling Cash: 5-11-12-26-37 Estimated jackpot: \$120,000</p>
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## Markets

<p><b>Cooper Farms</b> <b>Fort Recovery</b> Corn.....4.90 March corn .....4.96 April corn .....5.05</p> <p><b>POET Biorefining</b> <b>Portland</b> Corn.....4.96 March corn .....5.04 April corn .....5.15</p> <p><b>The Andersons</b> <b>Richland Township</b> Corn .....4.96 March corn .....4.96 Beans .....10.31</p>	<p>March beans .....10.36 Wheat ..... 5.50</p> <p><b>ADM</b> <b>Montpelier</b> Corn.....4.92 March corn .....4.94 Beans .....10.28 March beans .....10.32 Wheat .....5.65</p> <p><b>Heartland</b> <b>St. Anthony</b> Corn.....4.84 March corn .....4.84 Beans .....10.11 March beans .....10.16 Wheat .....5.45</p>
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## Today in history

**In 1878**, Thomas Edison patented the phonograph, the first machine to play recorded sound.  
**In 1942**, United States president Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order, directing the interment of Japanese Americans amid World War II.  
**In 1945**, United States Marines invaded Iwo Jima amid the ending stages of World War II.  
**In 1963**, American author and activist Betty Friedan published "The Feminine Mystique."

The work is renowned for sparking the second-wave feminist movement.  
**In 2016**, Andy Kohler, then a senior at Jay County High School, defeated Bloomington North's Hunter Dalton by a 9-1 major decision in the 182-pound opening round of the IHSAA Wrestling State Finals at Bankers Life Fieldhouse. He earned a medal for coming in sixth place at the next day's competition.

— The CR

## Citizen's calendar

<p><b>Today</b> 4 p.m. — Portland Board of Aviation, airport, 661 W. 100 North. 6 p.m. — Jay County Council, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland.</p> <p><b>Thursday</b> 3 p.m. — Jay County Commissioners, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland.</p> <p><b>Monday</b> 9 a.m. — Jay County Commissioners, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland. 3:45 p.m. — Jay County Solid Waste Manage-</p>	<p>ment District board, 5948 W. Indiana 67, Portland. 6 p.m. — Dunkirk Board of Works, city building, 131 S. Main St. 6:30 p.m. — Fort Recovery School Board, Community Room, high school, 400 Butler St. 7 p.m. — Dunkirk City Council, city building, 131 S. Main St.</p> <p><b>Tuesday</b> 6 p.m. — Redkey Town Council, park cabin, 50 Mooney St.</p> <p><b>Wednesday</b> 6 p.m. — Dunkirk Park Board, city building, 131 S. Main St.</p>
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# Rezoning ...

Continued from page 1  
In other business, village council:  
•OK'd transferring \$100,000 from the general fund to the street repair maintenance fund  
•Heard Mercer County Commissioners approved the annexation of approximately 7.417 acres in Gibson Township. Diller noted the village must wait 60 days after commissioners' approval before passing an ordinance accepting the annexation and setting zoning classifications. The annexation will be in effect 30 days after village council approves that ordinance. Properties included are Miracle Lanes, Mercer Health Medical Group, a portion of Wendel Poultry's property and a lot owned by Fred Westgerdes.  
•Approved a \$14,912.50 bill from PMG Consulting for Shoaf Consulting's work on water plant improvements designs.

•Heard construction on a sidewalk along Sharpburg Road connecting to Fort Recovery Middle School and Elementary — it's a Safe Routes to School project — likely won't begin until 2027. Other projects through the 100% state-funded grant include safety improvements at the First and Butler streets intersection near Fort Recovery High School and safety enhancements at the five-point intersection of Butler, Boundary, William and Third streets.  
•Approved a \$3,937.09 bill from Eagon and Associates for the site study to determine a location for a third well in the village.  
•Heard the village is looking for park department employees for the summer as well as a local resident to fill a vacant position on Fort Recovery Cemetery Board.

# Felony court news

**Burglary**  
An Indianapolis man was sentenced to five years in prison for burglary.  
Patric K. Wilson, 41, 1901 E 38th St., Indianapolis, pleaded guilty in Jay Circuit Court to the Level 5 felony. He was sentenced to 5.5 years in Indiana Department of Correction and given credit for time served.  
Wilson was assessed \$189 in court costs and ordered to pay \$7,175 in restitution to the benefit of Michael Keller. As part of his plea agreement, a Level 6 felony for theft and habitual offender enhancement were dismissed.

**Drunk driving**  
An Auburn woman was sentenced to jail for drunk driving.  
Stephanie A. Reed, 35, 1042 Susan St., pleaded guilty in Jay Superior Court to operating a vehicle while intoxicated endangering a person with a passenger younger than 18 years old, a Level 6 felony. She was

sentenced to 545 days in Jay County Jail with all but 12 days suspended and given 12 days credit for time served. Reed was fined \$25, assessed \$189.50 in court costs, ordered to pay a \$200 drug and alcohol countermeasures fee and placed on probation for 533 days. She was also ordered to submit to an evaluation within 30 days of her sentencing for substance abuse counseling.  
The court recommended Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles suspend her license for one year retroactive to July 22, 2024. As part of her plea agreement, a Level 6 felony for operating a vehicle with a blood alcohol level equivalent of 0.15% or more with a passenger younger than 18 years old was dismissed.

**Domestic battery**  
Two Indiana residents were sentenced to jail for domestic battery.  
Jamey Clark, 50, 503 E. Van Cleve, Hartford City, pleaded guilty in Jay Superior Court to domestic battery resulting in moderate bodily injury, a Level 6 felony. Clark was sentenced to 545 days in Jay County Jail with all but 78 days suspended and given 78 days credit for time served. Clark was placed on probation for 467 days, fined \$25, assessed \$189 and ordered to pay a \$50 domestic violence prevention and treatment fee. He was also ordered to submit to an evaluation within 30 days of his sentencing for substance abuse counseling.  
James M. Starr, 52, 366 West Washington St., Dunkirk, pleaded guilty in Jay Superior Court to domestic battery, a Level 6 felony. He was sentenced to one year in Jay County Jail and given 356 days credit for time served. Starr was assessed \$189 in court costs and ordered to pay a \$50 domestic violence prevention and treatment fee. As part of his plea agreement, a Class A misdemeanor for resisting law enforcement was dismissed.

See page 5

# Felony arrests

**Domestic battery**  
A Portland man was arrested Friday for domestic battery.  
Brandon L. Fisher, 42, 2824 W. 75 South, was preliminarily charged with a Level 6 felony for the alleged crime.  
He was being held without bond in Jay County Jail.

lia, and a habitual offender enhancement — were dismissed as a part of his plea agreement.  
He was being held without bond in Jay County Jail.

### SERVICES

Thursday

**Wendel**, Melvin: 10:30 a.m., Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church, 403 Sharpburg Road, Fort Recovery.  
**Mann**, Alysia: 11 a.m., Fellowship Baptist Church, 289 S. 200 West, Portland.

Friday

**Jackson**, Larry: 2 p.m., Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home, 208 N. Commerce St., Portland.

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## Tri Kappa Week

Pictured above, Tri Kappa members Pat Gibson, Linda Frantz, Jodi McKee and Mary Laux and Portland Mayor Jeff Westlake recognize Feb. 16-22 as Tri Kappa Week.

# Husband's habits encourage divorce

Dear Abby



DEAR ABBY: I've been married to my husband for 30 years. For the past five years, I've noticed that he is acting a little different. He's lost a lot of weight. I found out he's been smoking drugs. He had this problem years ago, and I thought we had it beat. But now I'm getting the impression that maybe you can't ever beat it.

My daughter gave me a tracker for my birthday. I put it in his car to see where he went, and it showed that he went to an apartment building and was there for almost an hour. I don't know who lives in that building, and I have never been there. I suspect that he's cheating on me. I can't think of another reason he would be in an apartment building in a really bad area if there wasn't something keeping him there. When I asked him where he was, he said, "Why are you asking me so many questions?"

I know my husband lies to me. I'm at my wits' end and don't know what to do. I know it will be really hard to leave if that's what I choose to do, but I guess I have no other choice. When I suggested marriage counseling, he refused. I told him he needed to do drug counseling. He said he doesn't have a problem. Clearly, he does have a problem. I told him he's too old for this. What do you think I should do? — SUSPICIOUS IN MICHIGAN

DEAR SUSPICIOUS: Before doing anything else, it is important you protect yourself. Talk to your doctor about being checked for STDs. Then tell your husband about the tracker and ask him to explain about the time he's spent at that apartment building. Was he with another woman? His drug dealer? (If it's a woman, does he plan to continue seeing her?) Depend-

ing upon the answers he gives you and whether you can believe them, you may want to talk to an attorney to determine how you want to proceed.

DEAR ABBY: My 95-year-old mother has been healthy until recently. She's in an independent living facility and is happy there. I'm the primary caretaker for her medical needs as her heart has weakened, and she's now under palliative care.

My sister "Julie," who lives out of state, has decided to place a camera in Mom's home and track and record her day and night. Although Mom doesn't mind the camera, it makes me uncomfortable to be constantly watched and monitored while visiting and assisting her. Julie gets angry if I cover the camera while I'm there. When I remove the cover, I hear the camera zoom around the room and focus on us. Am I wrong to want privacy during my visits with my mother? — CAMERA-SHY IN COLORADO

DEAR CAMERA-SHY: The point of the camera is when your mother is alone someone can keep an eye on her. If you are there, there should be no need for the camera. I will assume you have told your sister you don't want your visits monitored, and she persists in doing it anyway. Feel free to cover it while you are there, but don't forget to uncover it when you leave.

## Marriage licenses

Betty J. Buerkle, 44, Pennville, and James E. Goubeaux Jr., 38, Pennville  
Mario J.M. Espinoza, 29, Bryant, and Jessica N. Vittonel, 45, Bryant  
Zachary P. Heitkamp, 23, Saint Henry, Ohio, and Faustina M. Muhlenkamp, 23, Bryant  
Chelsea L. Burns, 32, Portland, and Dylan M. McKibben, 30, Portland  
Mykah A.R. Moore, 23, Redkey, and Zavier Somers, 26, Redkey  
Alan R. Garringer, 42, Redkey, and Alexis M. McDavid, 31, Redkey  
Ricky J. Jenkins, 68, Portland, and Dawn Ragsdell, 49, Portland

## Community Calendar

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

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

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

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

COMMUNITY REINFORCEMENT AND FAMILY TRAINING — A non-confrontational, evidence-based intervention for helping families affected by addiction meets at 4 p.m. each

Wednesday in the IU Health Jay Outpatient Behavioral Health Center, Entrance C, 510 W. Votaw St., Portland.

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

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

**Thursday**  
STITCH AND CHATTER QUILT CLUB — Meets from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month at Jay

Community Center. Show and teal is at 1 p.m. The club is open to all ages and is for anyone who wants to sew. Bring unfinished projects and a sewing machine. For more information, call Nan Weesner (260) 766-9334.

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.

EN AVANT CLUB — Meets at 1 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR SUICIDE GRIEF — Meets from 1 to 2:30 p.m. the third Thursday of each month. The support group serves to help individuals who have lost a loved one to suicide. To register, contact Stephanie Patterson at (260) 251-3259.

ORGAN TRANSPLANT SUPPORT GROUP — Will meet at 3 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month in the IU Health Blackford main conference room.

PORTLAND LIONS CLUB — Will meet at 6:30 p.m. the third Thursday of the month at Portland Lions Civic Center, 307 W. 100 North.

FORGET-ME-NOT — A support group for parents, friends and relatives who have lost a baby through miscarriage, birth or illness will meet from 7 to 9 p.m. at St. Vincent Randolph Hospital, Winchester, in community room 1. For more information, call Kimberly Sibery at (765) 964-6075 or Nikki Bosworth at (765) 584-6452.

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

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

CINCINNATUS LEAGUE — Will hold its next meeting at noon Friday, Feb. 21, at Harmony Cafe in Portland.

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## Sudoku

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

Level: Intermediate

### Tuesday's Solution

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

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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# Suburban sprawl missed something

*Editor's note: This column is being reprinted from Feb. 16, 2005. Jack had a love for his hometown and small towns in general. Unlike some of their larger, more intertwined brethren, they all have their own personalities.*

**By JACK RONALD**  
The Commercial Review

I was lost. Coming home from a state press association conference in Indianapolis, I'd avoided the tried-and-true route home.

And I'd gotten lost. Part of that was intentional, I guess. It's always fun to take a more leisurely approach to what can become a routine trip. Over the years, I've often found myself going to Indy via interstates and coming home via county roads. But this time I was lost.

## Back in the Saddle



My first mistake was to wonder how much Carmel had been transformed since the last time I passed through. The answer was that it had changed enough that I didn't recognize the place.

Moving north from the I-465 loop, I found myself in unfamiliar territory and figured I'd have to rely upon the old go-north-a-bit then go-east-a-bit method of working my way back to Jay County.

I guess I expected the clutter and sprawl of the greater metropolitan Indianapolis area.

What I hadn't counted on was the sameness of it all.

Beige subdivision after beige subdivision filled the landscape. Every retail outlet was a national chain. I could have been in the middle of Indiana or the middle of Iowa or the middle of a dozen other states for that matter.

Character, that overlooked something which gives the best small towns a unique feel all their own, was nowhere to be found.

Instead, there were overpriced cookie-cutter houses and bloated McMansions.

All of them carried pricetags that would choke any Jay County homebuyer; we're all accus-

tomed to getting plenty of house for the money. But folks were paying for location, location, location; Carmel and Fishers are apparently where they want to be.

Heading east, feeling my way through a part of Hamilton County that I used to know well 35 years ago, I found myself muttering under my breath, "You couldn't pay me enough to live here."

Too much traffic. Too much sprawl. Too much ugliness. Too much sameness. And too darned many people.

I looked down the street of yet another beige subdivision as I drove past. In every driveway sat either a mini-van or an SUV. I wondered if people occasionally found themselves walking up to

the wrong front door; they all looked so much alike.

Years ago, back in college, I remember talking with friends who had grown up in the suburbs. They loved it.

It never occurred to them that they were missing something.

And when I told them about growing up in a small town, where every house on the block looked different, where bankers and truck drivers lived across the street from one another, where I knew kids from virtually every social and economic background, they looked at me as if I had lost my mind.

That's OK.

They saw it their way. I saw it mine.

Guess I'm still crazy after all these years.

## Ethical dilemmas of AI need illumination

**The Seattle Times**  
Tribune News Service

It is the stuff of science fiction: artificial intelligence mimicking human thought.

Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

Does it portend a future where workers are free of the most mundane tasks, or an era of massive unemployment where even poetry, music and art is churned out of data centers?

When it comes to AI, parameters of the debate are hard to define. There is much at stake.

As such, it is worthwhile to review a reflection published by Pope Francis last month titled: "Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence."

Among the observations:

"... as AI models become increasingly capable of independent learning, the ability to maintain control over them to ensure that such applications serve human purposes may effectively diminish. This raises the critical question of how to ensure that AI systems are ordered for the good of people and not against them."

"AI is currently eliminating the need for some jobs that were once performed by humans. If AI is used to replace human workers rather than complement them, there is a 'substantial risk of disproportionate benefit for the few at the price of the impoverishment of many.'"

"Individual users, families, civil society, corporations, institutions, governments, and international organizations should work at their proper levels to ensure that AI is used for the good of all."

Executives at Microsoft — which has invested tens of billions of dollars into AI — joined with venture capitalists to create a company blog post on the subject just days before the November election.

"Regulation (of AI) should be implemented only if its benefits outweigh its costs," they wrote.

In a later interview with the editorial board, Microsoft President Brad Smith, one of the blog post authors, clarified that the benefits should accrue to the public, not

## Guest Editorial

*Pope Francis and others have rightly called for extensive deliberations as regulations and policies roll out.*

corporations or the government.

The board asked Smith: Is there debate about what constitutes public benefit?

"Every day and everywhere," Smith replied. "But at least that should define the terms of debate — what will benefit the public."

Three days after his inauguration, President Donald Trump signed an Executive Order "eliminating harmful Biden Administration AI policies and enhancing America's global AI dominance," according to a White House fact sheet.

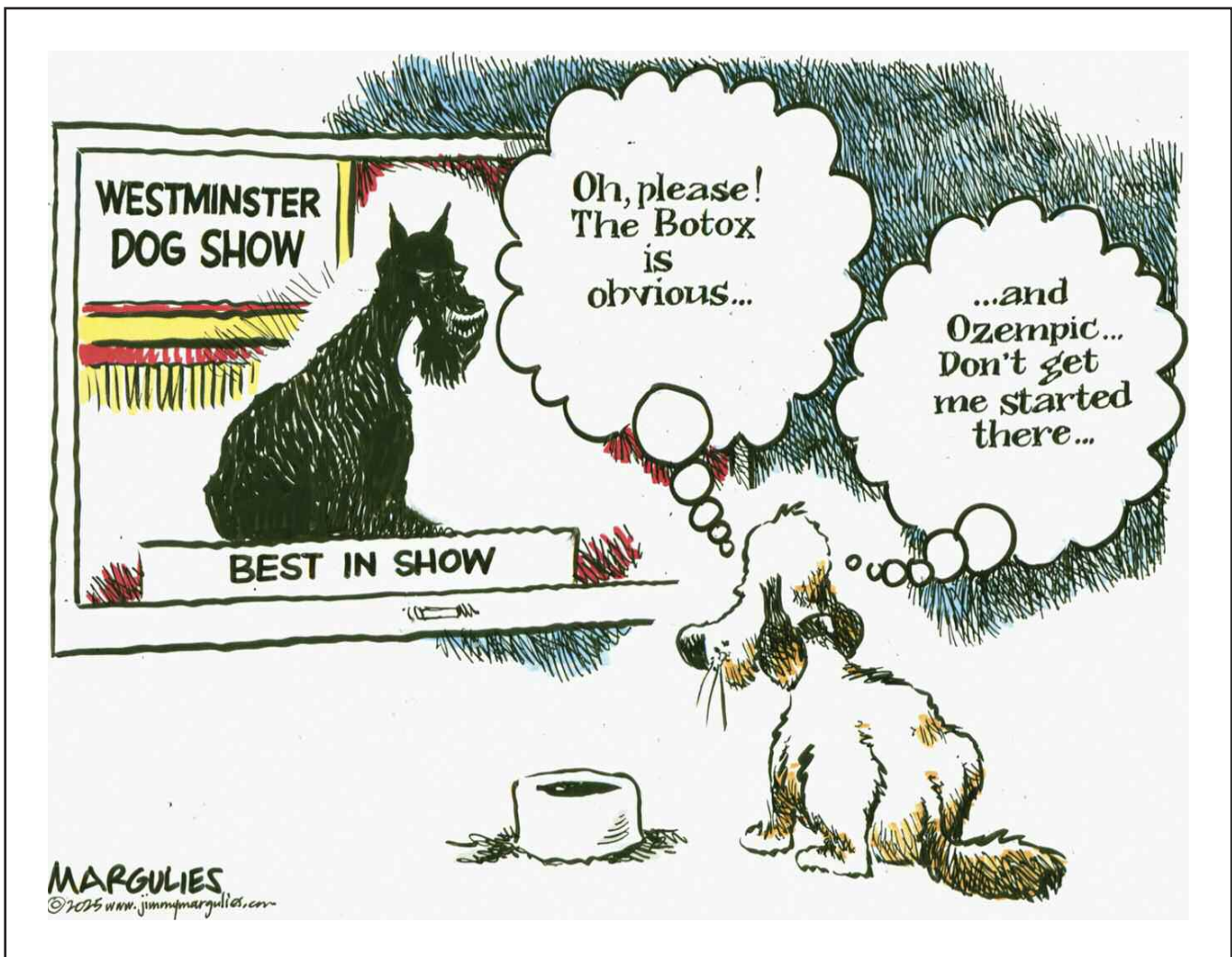
Trump named venture capitalist David Sacks to be the "White House AI and Crypto Czar."

The fact that the Trump administration lumped AI with cryptocurrency seems an odd pairing. Each has its own legal, moral and ethical questions.

Pope Francis and others have rightly called for extensive deliberations as regulations and policies roll out.

As one sci-fi author put it on social media: "I want AI to do my laundry and dishes so that I can do art and writing, not for AI to do my art and writing so that I can do my laundry and dishes."

That aspiration ought to be a goal of all AI technology yet to come.



## Home health should be protected

**By MICHELE KETELHUT**  
Indiana Capital Chronicle  
indianacapitalchronicle.com

As our state lawmakers navigate another budget season, Medicaid funding faces both state and national cuts. I've worked as a home health aide for the last seven years, and home care services made possible through Medicaid funding is an issue that touches everybody. Everybody will come to rely on care services at some point in their life or loves somebody who will.

I entered this line of work because I'm passionate about working with seniors and people with disabilities. I take great pride in my ability to build trust with folks who struggle to express themselves and communicate with others. Home care workers strive to make our clients feel understood and cared for, and often times we may be the only person our clients interact with for days at a time. At the end of the day, this job is about helping people.

I was relieved to see Gov. Mike Braun propose a budget that fully funds Medicaid. Our state has a troubling history of underestimating our Medicaid obligations and reacting by balancing our budget on the backs of working people. It is critical that this year, lawmakers get it right.

Unfortunately, it appears the governor is continuing the bad habit of unnecessary and expensive means-testing measures like increasing the frequency of checking people's Medicaid eligibility from annually to quarterly.

These measures are a costly administrative burden for the state. Strategies to kick people off Medicaid don't save us money in the long run — they just needlessly

create barriers to access to a health insurance plan that improves health outcomes and increases life expectancy.

I have seen firsthand how these programs keep people in their homes and improve their longevity and quality of life. They also save the state money in the long run because nursing facilities are much more costly. Our lawmakers must not only protect Medicaid funding from potential federal cuts but also make long-term investments in our state's home care system to make sure we have the workforce necessary to support our aging population.

Losing access to these services is devastating. You can ask any of the thousands of Hoosier families who lost a paid caregiver last year through the attendant care program as a direct result of our legislators failing to adequately fund our state's Medicaid program. Our clients depend on us to assist with their daily routines that keep their household functioning.

Home care requires skill, compassion, and an intimate level of trust with our clients. But far too often, these skills are undervalued and underpaid. Especially in Indiana, where wages for home care workers continue to lag behind neighboring states like Michigan and Illinois. In fact, there are families all over our state that desperately need home care services, but

*Our lawmakers must not only protect Medicaid funding from potential federal cuts but also make long-term investments ...*

this need is not being met because we currently don't have the workforce necessary to care for everyone who needs it.

Speaking from personal experience, I'm currently going back to school to become a nurse, because as much as I love my job, I have obligations to my own family that I struggle to meet because of long hours and low pay that result in high levels of turnover and devastating disruptions to care services.

Protecting Medicaid is about ensuring that all Hoosiers — regardless of our income or circumstances — are taken care of and have access to the care they need. I hope the governor and our state legislators will provide necessary and needed funding. This isn't just a line item in a budget, this is a lifeline for thousands of Hoosiers.

*Ketelhut lives in Lafayette and has been working for a private home care agency since 2018.*

*Indiana Capital Chronicle is an independent, nonprofit news organization. Its website is indianacapitalchronicle.com.*

# The Commercial Review



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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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## Virtual ...

Continued from page 1  
Board members had various questions, with Marcie Vormohr expressing concern about the social aspect of school that will be lacking for virtual learners.

"Parents are the ones choosing and they're already choosing virtual," said Clark. "And so we're trying to keep them as tied to us as possible. They're choosing it anyway, whether we do it or not."

Chad Towell asked about the overall financial outlook of a virtual academy. Clark indicated that the cost per student for Edmentum is about \$1,500 per semester. The school corporation would receive 85% of its regular allocation — about \$5,950 — per virtual student.

Board members Ron Laux, Donna Geesman, Chip Phillips, Jon Eads, Aaron Clark, Vormohr and Towell unanimously approved the pilot virtual academy for 2025-26.

Business manager Shannon Current presented information to the board regarding the corporation's preschool program, noting that it is running a \$382,723 deficit. Currently, 20 parents still owe more than

\$8,000 in preschool fees from the 2023-24 school year. (She suggested updating the preschool fee agreement to require the first month's fee up front and incentivize parents to pay fees on time.)

Preschool has traditionally been funded through the operations fund, state and federal special education funds and Title I money. She said the funds being used should be directed to other areas, specifically adding that Title I dollars are needed for kindergarten through sixth grade programs.

She said the process is underway to make Jay Schools eligible to accept Child Care Development Fund vouchers, which it has not done previously.

Current gave board members information from other early childhood education providers, including Westminster Preschools Portland, and offered three options for fee increases for the 2025-26 school year in an effort to come closer to balancing the budget. They break down as follows:

Existing fees — \$355 for two-day; \$480 for three-day; and \$630 for five-day

Options A (to match Westminster) — \$1,116 for two-day; \$1,674 for three-day; and \$2,790 for five-day

Option B (mid-point between Westminster and current fees) — \$736 for two-day; \$1,077 for three-day; and \$1,170 for five-day

Option C (half of Westminster fee) — \$558 for two-day; \$837 for three-day; and \$1,395 for five-day

"The goal here is to make a sustainable program that can balance the budget for it," said Gulley.

Looking ahead to March meetings, Gulley asked board members to expect a special session March 3 at the junior-senior to tour the facility as part of ongoing discussions about a potential capital project and a work session March 31 to discuss project options. The board's regular meeting is March 17. All of those meetings will begin at 5 p.m.

Gulley said he also expects the hiring of a new football coach to be on the agenda for one of the March meetings. He indicated that the hiring committee requested that the item be pulled from Monday's agenda to give it more time with the process.

Administrators would not

comment further on the football coaching situation because it is a personnel issue.

In other business, the board:

- During the Patriot Pride moment, thanked Jay County resident Larry Eads for raising funds for picnic tables and benches that will be added in the area of the new concession, restroom and locker room building.

- Accepted the resignation of Jerry Bomholt as physical education teacher and basketball coach.

- Approved the following: extracurricular assignments including Brogan Gary as interim boys basketball coach and Jay Houck as boys golf coach; overnight or out-of-state field trips for the FFA livestock, soil judging and officer teams; canceling checks more than two years old; new actions taken in response to the September tornado; and homeschool classes for this summer.

- Accepted donations of \$1,900 for Redkey Elementary School from Dunkirk Kiwanis and \$1,000 and \$800 from First Bank of Berne for the school swim teams and for benches and tables, respectively.

## Capsule Reports

### Drove off road

An Ohio semi driver complained of back pain after losing control of his vehicle and driving off Indiana 1 about 7 p.m. Monday.

Eric Rangira, 36, Columbus, was driving a 2023 Kenworth T680 north on the highway near county road 400 South when he drove across a patch of ice. Rangira lost control of the semi, causing it to leave the east side of the road and continue off-road until stopping across 400 South. He struck signs owned by Indiana Department of Transportation and Jay County Highway Department.

Rangira was evaluated by Jay Emergency Medical Service.

The vehicle he was driving — it's registered to Werner Enterprises of Omaha, Nebraska — was towed, with damage estimated between \$10,000 and \$25,000.

### Backing accident

Damage is estimated between \$2,500 and \$5,000 after a Union City man backed into an Illinois man's vehicle at Motel 6 in Portland.

James M. Stewart, 43, was backing up his 2020 Chevrolet Sonic at 1147 U.S. 27 when he struck the passenger's side of a 2008 Ford F-150 driven by 23-year-old Eli I. Conley of Watseka.

### Hit mailbox

A Geneva woman crashed her car into a mailbox along U.S. 27 in Jay County about 8:30 a.m. Monday.

Virginia L. Joyner, 88, was driving her 2010 Chrysler 300 south on the highway near county road 300 North when she lost control of her vehicle because of slick road conditions.

Her vehicle went off the east side of the highway and struck a mailbox, then swerved across the road and left the west side of the highway.

Damage is estimated between \$1,000 and \$2,500.

## Tax ...

Continued from page 1  
"I guarantee you, in 20 years, 30 years, if you're still here, you're going to deal with property tax reform up until the point we get property tax back where it belongs — at the local level of responsibility," said Sen. Jim Buck, R-Kokomo. "(Counties) bragged about not raising the rate, but they sure skimmed off all of the (assessed value) ... I hope we get to the point where we

start going to zero-base budgeting for locals.

"We've got to make the local people responsible," Buck continued.

Other Republican supporters said the bill amounted to a tax cut, earning their support.

"It's probably not my first choice of how I would deal with property taxes, but it's a cut," said Sen. Mike Gaskill, R-Pendleton. "... property tax is really a

horrible way to tax our residents. Over the last 100 years, we've had repeated examples where the property taxes have gotten out of hand at the local level due to the actions of the locals."

Gaskill pointed to seniors or those who've owned their homes for decades and saw their property values swell but might be on a fixed income.

Sen. Greg Taylor, one of two Democrats who voted in support

of the bill, likened property taxes to "financing vehicles" like mortgages. Property taxes would only decrease if home values fell, he noted. He added that property taxes pay for local services, such as road maintenance.

Rep. Jeff Thompson, R-Lizton, controls the calendar in the House Ways and Means Committee and indicated that the property tax bill could be heard as early as March 5.

## Felony court news

Continued from page 2

### Drug possession

Multiple Jay County people were sentenced to serve time for drug possession.

Curtis A. Faught, 42, 328 South Jaqua Ave., Portland, pleaded guilty in Jay Superior Court to possession of methamphetamine,

a Level 6 felony. He also admitted he is a habitual offender. Faught was sentenced to 545 days in Indiana Department of Correction and given 258 days credit for time served. Faught was fined \$25,

assessed \$189 in court costs and ordered to pay a \$200 drug abuse, prosecution, interdiction and cor-

rection fee. As part of his plea agreement, a Class C misdemeanor for possession of paraphernalia was dismissed.

Gary L. Hines, 46, Portland, pleaded guilty in Jay Superior Court to possession of methamphetamine, a Level 6 felony. He was sentenced to 545 days in Jay

County Jail. Hines was fined \$25, assessed \$189 in court costs and ordered to pay a \$200 drug abuse, prosecution, interdiction and correction fee.

### Cases dismissed

Indiana v. Curtis W. Mock, Level 6 felony

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**SPEED BUMP** Dave Coverly

“WEATHER”?  
WHAT’S “WEATHER”?

THE INVENTION OF SMALL TALK

**THE FAMILY CIRCUS** By Bil Keane

“I’m letting snowflakes cool my cocoa.”

**Contract Bridge** By Steve Becker

**Plain horse sense**

South dealer.  
North-South vulnerable.

**NORTH**  
♠ J 8 5 2  
♥ A K 7 4 3  
♦ 6  
♣ Q 7 2

**EAST**  
♠ Q 7 6 3  
♥ Q 5 2  
♦ J 2  
♣ J 9 6 5

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

The bidding:  
South West North East  
1 NT 2♦ 3♥ Pass  
3 NT  
Opening lead — seven of diamonds.  
There are hands where you’d swear declarer must have peeked at the defenders’ cards to have played as well as he did. But in most such cases, declarer’s plays are found to be based on nothing more than plain common sense.  
Consider this deal where South played in a way that might seem abnormal but made the contract as a result. He took East’s jack of diamonds with the king, led a club to the queen — on which West produced the ten — and returned a club toward his hand. When East followed with the six, declarer finessed the eight and, after it held, quickly collected 10 tricks.  
Had South played the clubs less efficiently — that is, had he simply cashed two high clubs in the expectation of a normal 3-2 division in the suit — he would have scored at most eight tricks.  
Declarer had good reason to play the clubs as he did. He recognized that he needed only four club tricks to make the contract. This meant he could afford to lose a club trick to West — who could do him no harm if the finesse lost — in order to guard against East’s holding four clubs.  
South did not really expect the eight of clubs to win the trick — the odds were distinctly against that — but he realized that, win or lose, the deep finesse assured the contract.

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TODAY IS GEORGE WASHINGTON’S BIRTHDAY

IF HE WERE ALIVE TODAY, THEY’D PROBABLY BE HAVING A BIG PARTY FOR HIM AT MOUNT VERNON

THAT HOWEVER, NEED NOT CONCERN ANYONE IN THIS CLASSROOM

YOU WOULDN’T HAVE BEEN INVITED ANYWAY!

**Rose is Rose**

I SHOVELED SNOW AND CHOPPED FIREWOOD...

MY PLAN WAS TO RELAX IN FRONT OF A WARM FIRE...ALONE!

I’LL IGNORE YOU. THAT’S JUST LIKE BEING ALONE.

**Agnes**

STILL DRINKING COFFEE?

YES... IT MAKES ME LOOK GROWN-UP AND VERY SOPHISTICATED

DOES IT STILL MAKE YOU GAG?

NOPE! FOUR SCOOPS OF SUGAR AND TWO LUMPS OF COOL WHIP REALLY HELPED

IT’S KIND OF LIKE FLUFFY SYRUP NOW.

THAT’S THE PRICE WE PAY FOR SOPHISTICATION.

**Hi and Lois**

C’MON, MOM. I’LL SHOW YOU HOW TO CHEER UP.

EMBRACE THE SUNBEAM.

**Between Friends**

I DIDN’T NECESSARILY MEAN YOU SHOULD RETIRE AND MOVE TO PARIS

MAYBE BENJIT COULD RETIRE AND MOVE HERE

HE’S NOT GOING TO DO THAT - HE’S PRESIDENT OF THE COMPANY. WHY WOULD HE GIVE THAT UP?

TO BE WITH YOU?

**Blondie**

HEV, DAD, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THESE JEANS FOR “RETRO DAY” AT SCHOOL TOMORROW?

WE JUST GOT YOU THOSE JEANS LAST MONTH!

I KNOW, I THOUGHT THEY WERE PERFECT, TOO!

**Snuffy Smith**

TO WHAT DO YA OWE YORE LONGEVITY, GRANPAW ?!

UNHEALTHY LIVIN’ !!

I’VE ALWAYS OBSERVED ALL TH’ BAD LIFESTYLES ‘ROUN’ ME AN’ DONE TH’ OPPOSITE !!

**Beetle Bailey**

HE WAS TRYING TO STAY AWAKE FOR A ZOOM MEETING

HE MUST HAVE BEEN REALLY TIRED

Z

HE EVEN TAPED HIS EYES OPEN

**CRYPTOQUIP**

NXJI WFT’GJ HFB U XJUGW  
UIK RTQYTDUA VTEDK, NXUB  
REHXB MJFMDJ YUDD WFTA  
BJJBX? VTADW NXEBJQ.

**Yesterday’s Cryptoquip:** IF A CERTAIN GROUP OF FRESHWATER FISH OWNED A VERANDA, SURELY THEY WOULD HAVE A PERCH SWING.

Today’s Cryptoquip Clue: M equals P

**CROSSWORD** By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

28 Hose

1 Indent key

4 “Spring ahead” hrs.

7 Mentor

8 Japanese bedroll

10 Rock genre

11 European peninsula

13 1980 Lennon/Ono album

16 Mercedes-Benz models

17 Barbecue site

18 Scoundrel

19 Netting

20 Helps

21 Parisian river

23 Accra’s country

25 Dumb-struck

26 Milne bruin

27 Standard

**DOWN**

1 Ballerinas’ skirts

2 United —

3 Pitcher’s warmup area

4 Persian Gulf emirate

5 Short-hand pro

6 Legal wrong

7 Earth sci.

8 Bourbon buy

9 B vitamin

10 ER workers

12 Carne — (Mexican dish)

14 Lighten

15 NFL measures

19 Prefix for “night” or “morning”

20 “That feels good!”

21 Honey bunch?

22 More spine-tingling

23 Type of dancer

24 Spray down with water

25 Suitable

26 Sucker

28 Winter coasters

29 “I — vacation!”

30 Famous

31 Drill

32 Chest-beating beast

34 Con-spiracy

35 Entice

**Solution time: 23 mins.**

Yesterday’s answer 2-19

COAL	AMI	CRAB			
AHME	NAN	HALL			
THEN	SINFONIA				
SINGLES	APISH				
TIL	HUR				
YACHT	SINATRA				
ENO	DOM	IBM			
SINKERS	SEPIA				
IYS	CAR				
UMAMI	SINUOUS				
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PITH	ARC	THIS			
SISI	SEA	SUNS			

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# Sports

## 2024-25 girls swim All-GPC team



### Graphic Printing Company Girls Swimmer of the Year Eleanor Groves Delta High School junior

Eleanor Groves was selected as the inaugural Graphic Printing Company Girls Swimmer of the Year.

"I appreciate any recognition," said Groves, who made her third consecutive state appearance in the 50- and 100-yard freestyle events. "I did a lot of weightlifting over the summer and it made me get a lot stronger. And I think having a different mindset going into the races has really helped me because I've been a more positive person."

She went on to finish 34th in the 50 freestyle with a time of 24.74 seconds and 28th in the 100 freestyle in 54.29 seconds.

Her season also included the best times of her career in both events helping the Eagles to a second-place finish in the Hoosier Heritage Conference.

"I'm still proud of myself for swimming really good at conference and getting the 23.4 and

the 51.8," Groves said. "I wish it had come at a better time, but I'm still glad I made some time drops."

Her swims broke the HHC and Delta school records in both events, finishing the 50 freestyle in 23.41 seconds and the 100 freestyle in 51.86 seconds.

Groves also participated in the 200 medley and 200 freestyle relay teams that made it to state, the latter of which climbed five places from its seed for a 27th-place finish.

"We wouldn't have a lot of these relays and stuff without her," said DHS co-head coach Alison Jackson, with coach Laura Seibold-Caudill seconding the sentiment. "She brings that speed to the team and makes them all want to work a little bit harder. When she works with everyone else, it makes her want to work harder too."

#### All-Graphic Printing Company first team

**Grier Backus**  
Delta junior

Backus finished as the top diver in the GPC's coverage area, earning her third straight sectional title before placing 10th at the regional.

**Joelle Kaup**  
Fort Recovery senior

Kaup was the only Indian to reach the district meet, swimming a 25.84-second 50-yard freestyle and finishing the 100 backstroke in 1:04.36.

**Alivia Jackson**  
Delta sophomore

The younger Jackson sister qualified for the state tournament in four events and combined with the following selections to set Delta's 400-yard freestyle relay record at 3:44.18.

**Annie Jackson**  
Delta senior

The elder Jackson sister punched her ticket to state in the 100-yard butterfly for the fourth straight year. She also advanced in the 200 IM and 200 medley and the 400 freestyle relays.

**Lora Warner**  
Delta junior

Warner found a specialty in the 100-yard backstroke, setting the Eagles' school record at the sectional and improving it to 1 minute, 00.49 seconds at state.

#### Honorable mention

Jordan Bunch, junior, Delta  
Brooklynn Byrum, freshman, Jay County

Aubrey Millspaugh, senior, Jay County  
Shiloh Bunch, freshman, Delta

## Forthofer powers Patriots sectional foe

Cole Forthofer had a big game the first time the Patriots took down a sectional opponent, scoring 18 points in a 58-56 double-overtime victory over the New Castle Trojans.

The Patriots couldn't get the center going in the next game against a potential postseason foe as he scored eight in the 60-44 loss at Delta.

When the Tigers came to town, it was a return to form as the Patriot big man powered early offense for the win.

Forthofer scored a

game-high 18 points for the Jay County High School boys basketball team as it took down a second sectional opponent on the year, beating the Yorktown Tigers 42-36 on Saturday.

The Jay County (10-8) junior came out strong, scoring 12 of the team's 17 first-quarter points. He was held to just six points the rest of the night, on a pair of buckets and two free throws. Yorktown (5-14) only managed five points in the frame, on a Mason Trammell triple

and a hoop by Jabin Barnes

Tucker Griffin followed with 11, including eight that powered a 14-11 second quarter advantage to enter halftime with a 31-16 lead.

The Tigers clawed back from the deficit by out-sourcing JCHS 11-2 in the third period, but couldn't complete the comeback in the fourth. Barnes led YHS with 12 points, half of which came in the third, while Ryan Burkholder followed with nine in the second half.

## Ryan Preece calls for safety improvements

By ALEX ZIETLOW  
The Charlotte Observer  
Tribune News Service

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — As the final laps of a thrilling Daytona 500 whizzed around him, Ryan Preece was somewhere else — physically and mentally.

Physically, after an admirable run that ended in a gnarly wreck with fewer than 10 laps to go, he stood in the infield care center grass, somehow safe.

Mentally, he was with his child. "I don't want to be the example, when it finally does get somebody," Preece said. "And I don't want it to be me. I got a 2-year-old daughter, just like a lot of us."

The driver of the No. 60 Cup car added: "Something needs to be done."

Preece was referring to the wreck he endured on Sunday at Daytona International Speedway: the one where he was knocked in the side by an out-of-control Christopher Bell, into Erik Jones, and up into the air at 190-plus miles per hour — floating and flipping upside down until he crashed into the wall, almost into the fence.

It was eerily similar to a tumble in 2023 in the Daytona summer race. In that one, he somersaulted 10 times, was transported to a local hospital, was

released and was racing the next week — bloody eyes and all.

And yet, even though this one wasn't as flashy, Preece said this wreck was scarier than his previous tumble. He did what he didn't do two years ago: show that he wasn't only fearful for his health but for his life and express his frustration that NASCAR's car let this happen again, less than two years removed from his previous scare.

He also, in a departure from his choices in 2023, called out NASCAR this time around.

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