

# The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

www.thecr.com

\$1

## Enchanted FR



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Cinderella (Leah Wuebker) meets the prince (Zach Schoenlein) and his steward (Gavin Heitkamp) as they search for the girl whose foot will fit the glass slipper during Tuesday's rehearsal for the Fort Recovery High School production of the musical "Cinderella." Performances are slated for 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 2 p.m. Sunday, in the Fort Recovery Elementary/Middle School auditoria. Tickets are \$8 for students and \$10 for adults.

### Students will bring humorous, heartwarming 'Cinderella' musical to the stage this weekend

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

Helpful animals.  
Cackling stepsisters.

A prince in search of his true love.

Fort Recovery High School will bring a classic fairy tale to the stage this weekend with its production of the musical "Cinderella."

"The kids have been working hard," said director Reid Knuth. "There's so many different versions of Cinderella out there that each one's a little different. ... It's not just like the Disney movie."

Fort Recovery will be performing the Enchanted version — performances will be at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 2 p.m. Sunday in the Fort Recovery Elementary/Middle School auditoria — which has the same songs as the original Rodgers and Hammerstein show but is based on the 1997 film with Brandy performing as Cinderella. Songs and the script have been updated



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

The cast of Fort Recovery's production of "Cinderella" was responsible for costumes, set design and choreography for the show. "All of it is kid-driven," said director Reid Knuth.

for more of a pop and contemporary feel.

The story is well-known. Cinderella is left to live with her stepmother and two stepsisters following the death of her father. She is treated more as servant than daughter.

When a ball is called to find a wife for the prince, she is able to attend through the help of her magical fairy godmother and some woodland friends. She and the prince make a connection, but she rushes to leave before the magic wears off at midnight

leaving only a glass slipper behind.

With only the slipper to go by, the search for the prince's one true love ensues.

That search is Knuth's favorite part of the show.

See **Enchanted** page 2

## State leaves counties on the hook

*DOC out of money to pay jails for holding prisoners*

By NIKI KELLY

Indiana Capital Chronicle  
indianacapitalchronicle.com

The Indiana Department of Correction has run out of money to pay county jails for holding low-level felons and state prisoners.

County jails haven't received payments in months, and there are still four months left in the July-to-June fiscal year.

"It's very disappointing," said Tippecanoe County Sheriff Robert Goldsmith, who is also president of the Indiana Sheriffs' Association. "As far as on their end, and why they're not able to pay, I don't understand that part of it enough to even get mad."

Indiana Department of Correction Spokeswoman Annie Goeller confirmed Monday that "funding for this expense has been exhausted for State Fiscal Year 2025. IDOC is working with the State Budget Agency on available options. We are continuing to communicate with counties about this issue."

The appropriation in the current state budget, which ends June 30, was \$34 million annually for the county jail maintenance contingency fund. The fund reimburses sheriffs for two groups of offenders: anyone convicted of a Level 6 felony, as well as anyone being held on higher felonies or parole for IDOC.

Of that amount, up to \$25.3 million was set aside for the Level 6 felons at a rate of \$40 per day. This group of offenders used to be sent to state prisons until a criminal justice overhaul in 2013. After that, low-level felons were kept in local jails at state expense.

IDOC said it spent \$34.6 million in fiscal year 2024 and \$34 million already in fiscal year 2025.

Rep. Greg Stuerwald, R-Avon, said he was surprised to find out Monday, during a committee hearing for unrelated legislation, that IDOC had run out of money. He told that Capital Chronicle on Tuesday that lawmakers will offer back pay and increase the per diem rate.

"Everything owed will be paid," he said.

See **Hook** page 2

## Tensions with Ukraine are on the rise

dpa

Tribune News Service

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has accused U.S. President Donald Trump of "living in a disinformation space" created by Russia, as tensions between Kyiv and Washington escalate.

His pointed remark, made at a press conference on Wednesday, came a day after Trump falsely blamed Ukraine for Russia's invasion and suggested Zelenskyy could have already ended the war if he had wanted to.

Trump also implied that Zelen-

### Trump implied that Zelenskyy should be removed from power

skyy should be removed from power, echoing a Kremlin narrative that seeks to undermine the Ukrainian leader's legitimacy. "If someone wants to replace me right now, then it won't work,"

Zelenskyy said, citing approval ratings above 50% in opinion polls.

The comments follow reports that Russia and the United States discussed the possibility of elec-

tions in Ukraine during high-level talks in Riyadh on Tuesday.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov had exchanged views on the matter but added that the decision "cannot be made in Moscow or Washington."

"Ukraine has been under martial law since Russia's full-scale invasion, postponing presidential and parliamentary elections and restricting political activity. Many in Ukraine believe that holding elections amid ongoing

conflict would be impractical and unfair, as it would be difficult to ensure the participation of soldiers and displaced civilians.

However, for Moscow, pushing the narrative of elections could be a way to delegitimize Zelenskyy and sway Trump's administration into minimizing his role in any future peace negotiations.

Trump has recently taken positions aligning with Russia's stance on ending the war, including ruling out NATO membership for Ukraine and dismissing the possibility of returning to Ukraine's pre-2014 borders.

#### Deaths

David Wendel, 68, Portland  
Details on page 2.

#### Weather

The low in Jay County dipped to 5 degrees Tuesday. The high was 16.

Tonight's low will be 12. Expect partly cloudy skies Friday with a high in the mid 20s. The low will be around 10 on Friday night.

See page 2 for an extended outlook.

#### In review

Jay County Public Library will host an adult puzzle team competition at 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 25. Teams of up to four will compete to put together a 300-piece puzzle.

To register for the competition, call (260) 726-4890 or stop in at the library, 315 N. Ship St., Portland.

#### Coming up

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

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

**Tuesday** — Coverage of Monday's Jay County Commissioners meeting.



# Obituaries

## David Wendel

Feb. 14, 1957-Feb. 17, 2025

David A. Wendel of Portland, Indiana, passed away unexpectedly on Monday, Feb. 17, 2025, at the age of 68.

He was born Feb. 14, 1957, in Jay County.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Christa (Barga) Wendel; his sisters Becky Timmerman (Mike), Nancy Moser (Scott), Jane Kaup (Kenneth) and Amy

Durham (Steve); sister-in-law Jackie Gerber; brother Andy Wendel (Katy); and his in-laws Gary Barga (Jane), Carol Petske (Steve), Janette Minch (Joe), Cynthia Linder (Bill) and Jerry Barga (Leigh Ann).

Dave was preceded in death by his parents Orville and Joann



Wendel

Wendel; mother- and father-in-law Ivan and Ella Mae Barga; brother Edward Wendel; and nephew Jonathan Wendel.

Dave owned and operated Wendel's Carpet and Upholstery Cleaning. He also owned and operated the Padua Pub for 7½ years.

Dave loved to go fishing and especially loved to pick on all of his nieces and nephews and great-nieces and great-nephews. He also found joy in getting the

kids to pick on Christa with him. He will be deeply missed by all that he came in contact with.

Mass of Christian Burial will be on Monday, Feb. 24, at 10 a.m. in the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church with Fr. Marty Sandhage presiding. Burial will follow in the Green Park Cemetery. Visitation will be on Sunday from noon to 4 p.m. and Monday from 9 to 9:45 a.m. in the Baird-Freeman Funeral Home.

Memorials can be for Masses

or Jay Emergency Medical Services.

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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 of residence, birth/death date and time/date/location of services.

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

# CR almanac

Friday 2/21	Saturday 2/22	Sunday 2/23	Monday 2/24	Tuesday 2/25
<b>28/11</b>	<b>30/18</b>	<b>37/30</b>	<b>44/35</b>	<b>45/33</b>
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 looks to be mostly cloudy skies with highs in the lower 40s.	Tuesday's forecast shows mostly cloudy skies with highs in the mid 40s.

## Lotteries

<b>Powerball</b> Estimated jackpot: \$195 million	Evening Daily Three: 6-4-7 Daily Four: 3-4-6-7 Quick Draw: 3-6-7-24-34-35-36-39-40-41-45-48-51-54-56-58-69-70-73-76
<b>Mega Millions</b> 1-20-25-58-61 Mega Ball: 22 Megaplier: 2 Estimated jackpot: \$165 million	<b>Ohio</b> Tuesday Midday Pick 3: 1-7-5 Pick 4: 3-3-0-7 Pick 5: 9-0-0-8-2
<b>Hoosier</b> Tuesday Midday Daily Three: 9-5-4 Daily Four: 8-9-4-5 Quick Draw: 3-6-7-12-20-21-23-28-30-42-45-47-51-61-67-69-75-78-79-80	Evening Pick 3: 8-9-5 Pick 4: 7-1-3-9 Pick 5: 9-0-2-9-9 Rolling Cash: 31-32-34-35-38 Estimated jackpot: \$100,000

## Markets

<b>Cooper Farms Fort Recovery</b> Corn.....4.96 March corn.....5.02 April corn.....5.12	March beans .....10.39 Wheat ..... 5.55
<b>POET Biorefining Portland</b> Corn.....5.02 March corn.....5.10 April corn.....5.22	<b>ADM Montpelier</b> Corn.....4.98 March corn.....5.00 Beans .....10.30 March beans .....10.34 Wheat .....5.69
<b>The Andersons Richland Township</b> Corn .....5.02 March corn .....5.02 Beans .....10.34	<b>Heartland St. Anthony</b> Corn.....4.90 March corn .....4.90 Beans .....10.14 March beans .....10.19 Wheat .....5.50

## Today in history

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

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

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

In 1962, John Glenn

became the first American to orbit Earth. Glenn was the oldest of seven astronauts selected by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for Project Mercury, a series of crewed spaceflights between 1961 and 1963.

In 2014, Jay County High School boys swim team members picked up five No. 1 seeds in the sectional finals, with two coming from Josh Lykins and James Keen.

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

— The CR

## Citizen's calendar

<b>Today</b> 3 p.m. - Jay County Commissioners, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland.	6 p.m. - Dunkirk Board of Works, city building, 131 S. Main St.
<b>Monday</b> 9 a.m. - Jay County Commissioners, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland. 3:45 p.m. - Jay County Solid Waste Management District board, 5948 W. Indiana 67, Portland.	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.
<b>Tuesday</b> 6 p.m. - Redkey Town Council, park cabin, 50 Mooney St.	

# Enchanted ...

Continued from page 1  
"I kind of gave free rein to the actors," he said. "They just kind of go and do their thing. It's a little different every night and it's always funny."

While "Cinderella" is a love story at its heart, there's plenty of humor throughout.

The steward, played by Gavin Heitkamp, brings his own dry brand of humor, often while trying to fight off the advances of the stepmother (Megan Weitzel).

The stepsisters, portrayed by Carley Buckland and Ashlyn Cantu, offer the more in-your-face variety of the laughs with their constant cackling and general lack of self-awareness.

"It's so fun," said Buckland. "I love it. It's like

something I'm not used to and just getting to boss her around, boss Cinderella around, eye roll, it's amazing. I love it."

"You get to react more and be as dramatic as you can, and I like that a lot," added Cantu.

In between the humorous moments, both Cinderella and the prince (Zach Schoenlein) struggle to find themselves. They long to break free from their boring everyday lives and find that possibility in each other.

"There's a lot of really funny moments but there's also a lot of really heartwarming moments," said junior Leah Wuebker, who portrays the title character. "It really covers all the bases."

Wuebker gets to make the progression for the

girl tucked in her own little corner to a princess ready for the spotlight. Her favorite moment in the show is when that transformation happens with the help of Fairy Godmother (Grace Lochtefeld), as Cinderella sheds her drab dress for a dazzling ball gown in front of the audience's eyes.

"It's amazing. It's really great being able to portray all her different emotions," Wuebker said. "She's very submissive to her stepmother, but then she really starts to break out of her shell once she realizes what she's worth and that she's worth more than what her stepmother says. It's really just fun to play that part."

The cast — it also includes Finley Thomp-

son as Young Cinderella, Chase Fiely as King Maximilian and Cora Kremer as Queen Constantina — is responsible for much more than just their lines and songs on stage. Just about everything the audience sees comes from the students.

"The kids have been putting in a lot of work," said Knuth. "One of the things that we do at the high school that I don't think is standard is the kids do a lot of the design. All the set, all the costumes, all the choreography were done by kids. All of it is kid-driven."

Tickets are \$8 for students and \$10 for adults and will be available at the door. Children ages 5 and younger will be admitted for free.

# Hook ...

Continued from page 1  
Goldsmith just found out about the lack of money last week. The last time his county was paid by the state was in August, which was the March billing.

He said on Tuesday that his jail currently has 30 offenders waiting to be transferred to IDOC or serving their Level 6 sentence — and the county is getting no reimbursement.

Goldsmith said he is glad to hear lawmakers are considering an increase in the per diem rate of \$40 in the next state budget. The House Republican version hikes the rate to \$43 a day.

"I'm just appreciative that they're willing to sit at the table and have these conversations," he said.

Steve Luce, executive director of the Indiana Sheriffs' Association, said he is focusing on getting a new billing system in place for the next fiscal year. Luce said the current system involves a formula instead of a true billing system using actual counts.

He's also seeking an increase. Luce noted it costs the state \$79 a day to house a prisoner, so IDOC is saving money by leaving prisoners in county jails.

He said that overall, there are

about 2,500 IDOC holds annually, and they stay for varying lengths of time depending on their sentence.

"I don't think they underestimated it. I think they did, but not on purpose, because we have had some changes," Luce said. "We haven't had a consistent formula."

The association will continue to push for an increase in the budget "because we are still losing money, and it's coming on the taxpayers. So, what we're trying to do is be fair and also work with them through the things that need to be fixed."

# Felony arrests

## Resisting law

A Union City woman was arrested Tuesday for resisting law enforcement.

Jessica M. Lewis, 41, 625

N. State Line St., was preliminarily charged with a Level 6 felony.

She was being held on a \$3,000 bond in Jay County Jail.

# Felony courts

## Conspiracy

A Dunkirk man was sentenced to more than a year in jail after pleading guilty to conspiracy to commit theft.

Seth N. Mills, 28, 216 East Commerce St., pleaded guilty in Jay Superior

Court to two counts of conspiracy to commit theft, both Level 6 felonies. He was sentenced to 545 days in Jay County Jail and given 28 days credit for time served.

Mills was fined \$25 and assessed \$189 in court costs.

# Capsule Reports

## Pole hit

Damage is estimated between \$5,000 and \$10,000 after an Ohio man lost control of his vehicle and struck a pole about 8:10 p.m. Monday.

Brent M. Sutter, 21, Saint Henry, was driving his 2004 Honda Pilot east on Division Road just west of county road 300 East when he lost traction with the road. He crossed over the west-bound lane and went into a ditch on the north side of the road then crossed county road 300 East, according to a Jay County Sheriff's Office report. His front passenger side struck a utility pole registered to Jay County REMC.

His vehicle was towed.

53-year-old Jason W. Phillips.

Damage is estimated between \$2,500 and \$5,000.

## SERVICES

### Thursday

**Wendel, Melvin:** 10:30 a.m., Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church, 403 Sharpsburg Road, Fort Recovery.

**Mann, Alysa:** 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.

### Monday

**Wendel, David:** 10 a.m., Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, 506 E. Walnut St., Portland.

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# It's time to focus on heart health

By **KERRY TORRES**

February is American Heart Month, a time to focus on heart health and also raise awareness about the risks of heart disease and the importance of identifying and managing heart conditions. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), heart disease is the leading cause of death in men, women and most racial and ethnic groups. In addition, high blood pressure is the leading cause of heart disease

## Your Health Matters



which puts nearly half of adults in the United States at risk for heart disease and stroke.

### What causes high blood pressure?

There are numerous factors that can cause

high blood pressure. Some factors cannot be controlled such as age and genetics, and other health conditions such as pregnancy and diabetes. However, there are factors that can be controlled such as physical inactivity, obesity or being overweight, consuming large amounts of alcohol, consuming large amounts of caffeine, and smoking. If you have high blood pressure, it is important to talk with your health care provider on ways to control it.

### How can I prevent high blood pressure?

While there are factors that contribute to high blood pressure which cannot be controlled, there are numerous things you can do to improve not only high blood pressure but your overall health. Some of these include eating a low-sodium healthy diet, staying a healthy weight, getting at least 150 minutes a week of physical activity and not smoking. It is also important to limit how much alcohol you drink, get enough

sleep and manage your stress.

### Why is it important to manage high blood pressure?

High blood pressure, or hypertension, causes excess pressure on the artery walls which can damage blood vessels and organs. The higher the blood pressure and the longer it goes unmanaged, the more damage that can be done. Some complications of high blood pressure include heart attack or stroke, aneurysm, heart

failure, kidney problems, eye problems, metabolic syndrome, changes in memory or understanding, and dementia.

It is important to regularly get your blood pressure checked to ensure it is within normal range. According to the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association, normal blood pressure is 120/80 mm Hg or lower.

.....  
*Kerry Torres is a nurse practitioner at IU Health Jay Family Practice.*

# Bride wants mother, aunt to walk down aisle

DEAR ABBY: My 25-year-old niece is getting married in four months. Five years ago, she lost her father in a tragic accident while her parents were on vacation. Since that time, she has come out as gay and grown closer to me than to her mom (my sister).

I was always close to my sister and both of her daughters while they were growing up and helped out financially when times were tough. My sister recently remarried and plans to move to another state with her new husband prior to the wedding.

My niece has asked me to walk her down the aisle along with my sister. My sister said it's disrespectful to her since she is the

## Dear Abby



mother. I don't want to hurt my sister or my niece. My niece says it's both of us or neither one. (There are no grandparents.)

I told her I want to sit with my husband for the wedding and that her mom should walk her down the aisle. The other bride's parents will be walking their daughter down the aisle. I know it's my niece's wedding and she

should have what she wants, but I feel stuck in the middle. Any suggestions? — TORN IN TWO IN MASSACHUSETTS

**DEAR TORN:** I do have one. You have already told your niece you would prefer to sit with your husband rather than cause resentment from your sister. Your niece feels strongly about having you walk with her, and it is her wedding. You might suggest walking her halfway down the aisle and then handing her off to her mother. But leave the final decision where it belongs — which is with the bride.

.....  
DEAR ABBY: I'm a 19-year-old

guy and live with my parents. We have this neighbor, "Ed," who, until recently, was friends with my dad. We've hung out with him several times and have even gone over to each other's houses to watch sports games and eat dinner.

The problem is, Ed has become very overbearing and strange. He has always been a little off the wall, which, at first, we both found hilarious. But since then, his foul language and vulgarities have rubbed us the wrong way. He's disrespectful to his wife and son, which I know isn't my business, but Dad and I are over it. Lately, Ed has been constantly calling and texting my dad. Now he has started tex-

ting me asking why my father isn't responding. I don't know how he got my number. Last month, Ed walked into our house through our sliding glass door while I was home alone watching TV.

Dad seems to want to just ignore the issue, but I think it's the wrong move. Should I approach this nosy and indignant neighbor? — UNEASY IN ILLINOIS

**DEAR UNEASY:** No, you should not. Keep that sliding glass door locked. And, if you receive any more texts from this man, block him. You are not required to discuss your father's or your change in attitude with him.

## Sudoku

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

Level: Intermediate

### Wednesday's Solution

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

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

## Community Calendar

Notices will appear in Community Calendar as space is available. To submit an item, email [news@thecr.com](mailto:news@thecr.com).

### Today

**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.

### 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 - BRITANNIA'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 Community Center.

**Home Idea Center**  
901 Industrial Dr.  
Ft. Recovery, OH  
419-375-4951  
[www.ehomeidea.com](http://www.ehomeidea.com)

**Baird Freeman Funeral Home**  
221 N. Meridian St.  
Portland, IN  
260-726-7171

**Sisters Sweet Escape**  
41 W 275 S  
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260-202-9591

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# Perhaps penny's time has passed

**Enid News & Eagle (Oklahoma)**  
Tribune News Service  
It probably is time to stop making pennies.  
While President Donald Trump and Department of Government Efficiency czar Elon Musk have been turning off federal spending taps left and right without congressional approval, they may have stumbled into something that works for almost everyone.  
We've heard for a long time that

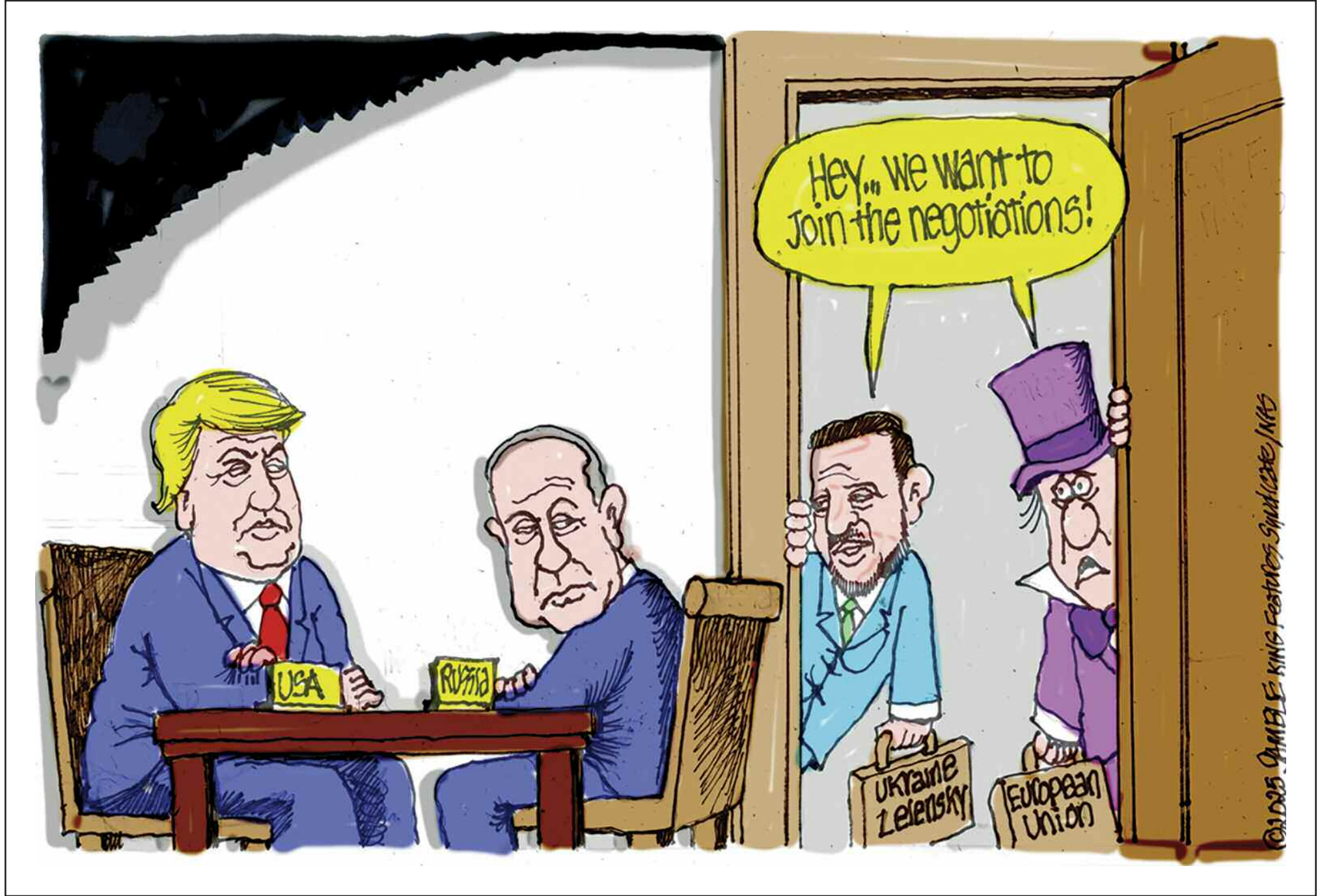
## Guest Editorial

the penny costs more to make than what it's worth. While that's also true of the nickel, the penny could be more easily removed from circulation.

The elimination of the one-cent denomination can't happen all at once.  
There would be:  
• a point in which the Treasury stops minting pennies.  
• a point in which retailers and the like start rounding to five.  
• a point in which the penny is pulled from circulation.  
And, a lot of people still aren't sure if it's another one of these things that can be completed by executive order. Many of the

moves from Trump, Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency may not stand up to legal scrutiny in the short term, but who can say if a lot of the cuts they're making won't be supported by Congress or the Supreme Court by the time it's all over?  
And, it will run into hurdles.  
Like many of these cuts, this will disproportionately affect poor people, at least in the beginning. When you're having to

scrape your cents together, a sudden rounding could diminish buying power. But, at some point, the rounding would even out for everyone.  
Many other countries have cut out lower denomination coins and even the United States got rid of its half penny almost 200 years ago. If we got along without a half penny for 200 years, we know inflation has certainly outpaced the need for a penny.



# Turn focus to improving access for the poor

By **MICHAEL J. HICKS**

I am thankful that the U.S., and especially Indiana, finds itself at a turning point in diversity, equity and inclusion policies. Gov. Mike Braun signed an executive order ending DEI in state government, because much of it has been rightly adjudicated as unconstitutional. No doubt it will soon be extinguished in state universities and local government.

At the same time, President Donald Trump illustrated the dangers of a DEI hire by appointing a ridiculously unqualified Christian nationalist to become the secretary of defense. This might lead us to suppose that deepest intentions of many DEI opponents are less motivated by the Constitution than by the types of people who benefit. We must do better.

It's necessary to think about DEI in a constructive way and consider what policies are both constitutional and might occasion more equal opportunity for all Americans. It's also useful to revisit the ugliness of what DEI has become.

Students v. Harvard, the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that will effectively end DEI in government-funded activities, exposed raw discrimination by Harvard against Asian students. This is something that every Asian-American knows is ubiquitous in college admissions. Harvard is a private school, so it is free to discriminate, as long as it doesn't take federal money. It has chosen to take the money.

Most public universities have a similar track record, whether or

**Michael J. Hicks**



not it has reached the courts. They must comply with Students v. Harvard.

DEI training in many workplaces and universities devolved from honest efforts to explain differential outcomes by race or gender — things most Americans would benefit from learning — to racist propaganda. Thankfully, in most places, the worst of that is behind us. But, it also should make us ask some questions. How can we ensure that everyone has equal access to schooling, health care and economic opportunity?

The end of DEI should make those of us who distrusted it push for legal and fair policies to improve access to opportunity for all Americans. We should begin by admitting some facts.

I'll focus on educational opportunity. Life is easier for kids and young adults who were raised by parents with some affluence. Those kids are more likely to receive good health care and are more likely to live in better school districts. They have access to more academic support when they struggle, and they're more likely to have more resources to participate in, and excel at, sports.

American communities cluster by income, so kids from more

affluent families are more likely to be surrounded by more people with higher education and income. This gives them more exposure to career and educational options and all other types of advantages.

These advantages accrue to kids regardless of their race. However, income is not distributed equally across races, or indeed within races. The income gap between ethnic groups of whites is actually larger than the income gap between white and Black Americans. Self-identified Appalachian ancestry (Scots-Irish) do worse than those of Ethiopian and Haitian ancestry.

It was lazy for DEI programs to focus on race when worried about equal access. Race is a covariate of income, but income differences dominate our access problems. So, what policies might offer more opportunity for poorer kids?

First, we should boost academic requirements for all kids at a very early age. Poorly performing schools shackle kids to a culture of low expectations. I'm with Thucydides, who said, "There is no need to suppose that human beings differ very much one from another; but it is true that the ones who come out on top are the ones who have been trained in the hardest school."

It's worth noting that harder schools, whether K-12 or colleges, are enjoying record enrollment, while those with softening standards are losing students.

Second, we should use the PSAT and SAT as a tool for college admissions. The use of stan-

dardized tests was designed to mitigate the effects of poverty and have been rigorously researched. At best, SAT-optional policies have no effect. At worst, they pressure down standards for college admissions and merit non-academic factors that favor high-income students. Time to end this fad on campus.

Third, we should offer unconditional acceptance to all state universities for students in the top 15 percent of their class. Texas does this (at 10 percent) and it means good kids from bad schools get to attend college in state.

Fourth, we should charge school corporations state tuition for any of their graduates who have to take remedial English or mathematics at state universities. This will provide a financial carrot for schools to ensure everyone who might go to college is ready out of high school. And yes, this will require a statewide exam and some exemptions (say, for kids who don't attend college right away).

Fifth, we should redirect DEI money to summer supplement programs for new students from low-income households. These summer bootcamps should pay low-income students to take two months of math and writing courses and provide them with room and board at the college they will attend.

These, and many other programs that focus on family income and local economic conditions, offer the possibility of improving access to education for low-income students. It is almost certain that these programs

would be offered to a higher share of Black and Hispanic students than white students. But, they treat a poor white kid from rural Perry County the same as a poor Black kid from Gary.

That's the point of the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause.

To be fair, Indiana already does some of this well. Take our school funding formula, for example. There's no racial component to the formulas. We provide a base level of funding per student, then supplement it based on measures of poverty, need for special education and places with high levels of people who didn't learn English at home. Nearly all the variation between schools is because of the poverty formulas.

In this wholly colorblind formula, the average Black student receives \$1,013 more per year for education than the average white student, and the average Hispanic student \$623 more. This may not be the right amount to address poverty, but it is a good-faith attempt by the legislature to provide better educational outcomes to lower-income students without regard to their race, gender or national origin.

It is time for more good-faith efforts to live up to the broad promises of our founding.

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.

# The Commercial Review



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**SPEED BUMP** Dave Coverly

**THE FAMILY CIRCUS** By Bil Keane

**Contract Bridge** By Steve Becker

**Good play overcomes bad luck**

South dealer. Both sides vulnerable.

**NORTH**  
 ♠ Q J 10 8  
 ♥ 9 8 3  
 ♦ A 9 4  
 ♣ K Q 5

**EAST**  
 ♠ 9  
 ♥ Q J 10 7 2  
 ♦ 7 5 2  
 ♣ A 8 4 3

**SOUTH**  
 ♠ A K 7 5 4 2  
 ♥ K 4  
 ♦ K J 6 3  
 ♣ 6

The bidding:  
 South West North East  
 1♠ Pass 3♠ Pass  
 4♠

Opening lead — jack of clubs.

Luck plays a big part in many deals, but there are quite a few occasions when good play can overcome bad luck. Consider this case where the East-West cards are badly stacked against declarer in four spades.

Let's say South covers West's jack-of-clubs lead with the queen, losing to East's ace, and back comes the queen of hearts. South's king is taken by West's ace, and a heart is returned to East's ten, followed by a third round of hearts. Declarer ruffs, draws trump and later goes down one when a diamond finesse loses to West's queen.

Without a doubt, South was very unlucky. The ace of clubs, ace of hearts and queen of diamonds were all badly placed. Had any one of those cards been in the opposite hand, South would have made the contract easily.

Nevertheless, South should have made four spades. His error occurred on the very first trick, when he should have played the five of clubs from dummy rather than the queen! Once East is credited with the ace of clubs after West leads the jack, playing low from dummy is clearly correct.

West's jack will presumably win the trick, but whatever he plays next, South has the situation fully under control. Let's say West shifts to a trump. Dummy wins and leads the king of clubs through ruffing East's ace and establishing a club trick on which declarer can later discard a heart. South thus loses only a club, a heart and a diamond.

Note that East cannot stop the contract by overtaking West's jack of clubs with the ace at trick one and returning a heart. If he does that, South loses a club and two hearts right away, but later discards two diamonds on the K-Q of clubs to finish with 10 tricks.

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AGPQ LPM HIB LPTT P KWIBO  
 IC OVIOTV YC QGVH PWV  
 APQLGYMK P OIQPQI UPLN

WPLV? UOVL-QPQVWU.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN YOU'VE GOT A HEAVY AND MUSCULAR BUILD, WHAT MIGHT PEOPLE CALL YOUR TEETH? BURLY WHITES.  
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: L equals C

**Agnes**

**Hi and Lois**

**CROSSWORD** By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**  
 1 A deadly sin  
 5 "O Sole —"  
 8 Bar fight souvenir  
 12 Sandwich treat  
 13 "Bow-wow!"  
 14 Ginormous  
 15 Kvetch  
 16 Half- (latte option)  
 17 "Roots" author  
 18 Largest U.S. state  
 20 Homer's son  
 22 Makeup applicator  
 26 Seine city  
 29 WWII service person  
 30 Seminary subj.  
 31 Serving customers  
 32 Volleyball barrier  
 33 Self-referential

**DOWN**  
 1 "Livin' La Vida —"  
 2 Russian river  
 3 Antitoxins  
 4 Tennis tactic  
 5 Showy parrot  
 6 Roth svgs.  
 7 Quirky plan  
 8 Pointy  
 9 Like some pearls  
 10 Candle count  
 11 Actor Harrison  
 19 Decks in the ring

**Solution time: 24 mins.**

**Between Friends**

**Blondie**

**Snuffy Smith**

**Beetle Bailey**

**Beetle Bailey**

**Yesterday's answer 2-20**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12					13			14			
15					16			17			
18			19			20	21				
		22			23			24	25		
26	27	28				29			30		
31					32			33			
34					35			36			
37			38				39				
		40					41		42	43	44
45	46				47	48			49		
50					51				52		
53					54				55		

**Snuffy Smith**

**Beetle Bailey**

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**FRHS boys bowling earned first ever trip to state, see story below**

**Jay hosts boys swim sectional prelims tonight, see Sports on tap**

# Sports

## District lockdown

*Fort Recovery earns first district finals berth in seven years behind Muhlenkamp's defense and a career night from Homan*

By **ANDREW BALKO**  
The Commercial Review

COVINGTON, Ohio — The Indians knew Ava Astorino and Addie Wallen like to fire away from beyond the arc.

With that knowledge, Cameron Muhlenkamp made sure to lock down Astorino the entire night while Kennedy Muhlenkamp and Karlie Niekamp held down Wallen.

On the other end of the floor, Bridget Homan found a way to drop three of her own triples en route to a career night and the victory.

The fourth-seeded Fort Recovery High School's girls basketball team held the No. 2 seed West Liberty-Salem Tigers to just 19.2% from 3-point range to pull out a 40-31 OHSAA Division VI Southwest 2 District semifinal victory on Tuesday night at Covington.

The victory earns the Tribe (12-12) its first trip to the district finals, which will be held Saturday at 5:30 p.m. against third-seeded Arcanum at Monroe, since it fell to Minster in 2018.

"It feels great," said FRHS coach Tyler Deitsch, noting his team's growth after a slow start that included losing four of the first five games. "It's one step at a time and now we're at that goal step. It's awesome the work that these girls have put in. ...

"They were definitely the higher seed, but we felt we had the athletes and players to be able to go out and handle ourselves. ... They had three really good guards that gave us some trouble. We were really expecting (Astorino) to do a lot against us and that's why Cameron was on her and shut her down most of the night which was awesome."

The junior leads West-Liberty

Salem (16-8) with 12.2 points per game.

Astorino does a majority of her damage from behind the arc, but Cameron Muhlenkamp stayed home on the shooter to try to prevent her from getting high-quality looks. As a result, the Tiger shot just 1-of-10 from beyond the arc and 2-of-13 (15.4%).

Astorino's lone triple came in the third quarter, when the Indian sophomore got switched off.

"We knew that her go-to move was a stepback three, so I knew that if I was up on her the whole night and didn't give her any space, she wouldn't be able to hit it," Cameron Muhlenkamp said. "I had my hand in her face the whole time, so she didn't have much room to get it off. ... It felt really good to lock her up."

Astorino's backcourt mate, Wallen, didn't do much better. While the freshman, who averages 11.5 points per game, finished with a team-high 13 points, she shot 4-of-19 (21.1%) from the field with Kennedy Muhlenkamp and Niekamp taking turns guarding her.

As a team, WLSHS shot 5-of-26 from deep.

While the Tigers struggled from deep, Fort Recovery got a few key threes in the second and third quarters.

Kennedy Muhlenkamp put the first 3-pointer home after the ball was passed to Niekamp at the free-throw line and then kicked out to the senior at the 5:58 mark. Cameron Muhlenkamp and Homan hit triples on back-to-back possessions that gave FRHS a 13-11 advantage and forced the Tigers out of their 2-3 zone that was giving Niekamp and Kennedy Muhlenkamp problems getting to the rim.

See **Team** page 7



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Bridget Homan of the Fort Recovery High School girls basketball team splits West Liberty-Salem's Addie Wallen (13) and Ava Poppe during the OHSAA Division VI Southwest 2 District opener Tuesday. Homan scored a career-high 17 points to lift the Indians past WLSHS 40-31.

## Tribe bowlers earn state berth

BEAVERCREEK, Ohio — The Tribe didn't finish quite as high as they would have liked in the Midwest Athletic Conference, but the Indians still had their postseason goals in front of them.

Those goals have now been realized.

The Fort Recovery High School boys bowling team clinched its first trip to the state tournament after knocking down a total of 4,164 pins to place fourth at the OHSAA Division II Southwest District meet at Beaver-Vu Bowl on Tuesday morning.

The Indians claimed the final spot at the state, as the top four teams and top four individuals not already on advancing teams

move on to compete at H.P. Lanes in Columbus at 10:45 a.m. on March 1. Northwestern won the Southwest District with 4,499 total pins. Clinton-Massie was the runner-up with 4,327 and Benjamin Logan had 4,228 to move on as well. Shawnee was the first team left behind as their 4,089 came up 75 pins short.

Riley Grieshop had a career day, rolling games of 223, 226 and 253 for a 702 series. The senior finished, trailing Cointon-Massie's Mason Keck by only six pins, while Cooper Crouch of Riverside ran away with the crown at 760.

The next-best Indian came in 31st as Gabe Acheson rolled a 217 to start the day en route to a 618 series.

Freshman Leland Wilson took advantage of his opportunity in the lineup, opening with a 222-pin game, followed up by games of 189 and 180 to capture the 37th-best series.

Garrett Diller placed 118th with a 402 series. (He didn't bowl in the first game, but rolled a 234 in the second.)

Bowling one game each, Eli Lennartz, A.J. Siefring and Reece LeFevre finished 136th, 137th and 138th with scores of 178, 177 and 173, respectively.

Fort Recovery got just enough from the six Baker games, racking up the fourth-most pins at 1,187. It shot above 200 three times, including a pair of 235s in the third and fifth games.

## Knapp puts Patriots to bed

ARCADIA — The Patriots didn't have any trouble scoring against the Huskies. The problem resided in trying to contain Rees Knapp.

Jay County High School's boys basketball team gave up 25 points to Knapp as it fell to sectional-foe Hamilton Heights 72-64 on Tuesday.

The Husky junior scored at least five points in each period, including eight to power a 14-point fourth quarter to stave a Jay County (10-9) comeback.

JCHS gave up 22 points in the first quarter, as three Huskies (12-8) scored at least two buckets, including Gavin Saunders who had eight of his 13. The Patriots only managed 11 in the period before going down 39-21 at the intermission.

Both teams scored 19 points in the third quarter to preserve HHHS' 18-

point lead. Jay County managed to put up 24 points in the final period, but the deficit was too much to overcome. Tucker Griffin hit a trio of 3-pointers to lead JCHS in the period.

Gradin Swoveland was Jay County's leading scorer with 18 points, followed by Griffin and Eli Dirksen with 13 each. (All of Dirksen's buckets came in the second half.)

Cole Forthofer was the only other Patriot in double figures, scoring 10 points, while Jayden Comer had eight and Brock Wasson hit one shot.

Along with Knapp and Saunders, Jack Kaka-suleff reached double figures with 14 points.

Jay County will travel to Ossian to take on Norwell tomorrow before finishing the final week of the regular season against Winchester and Bellmont.



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