

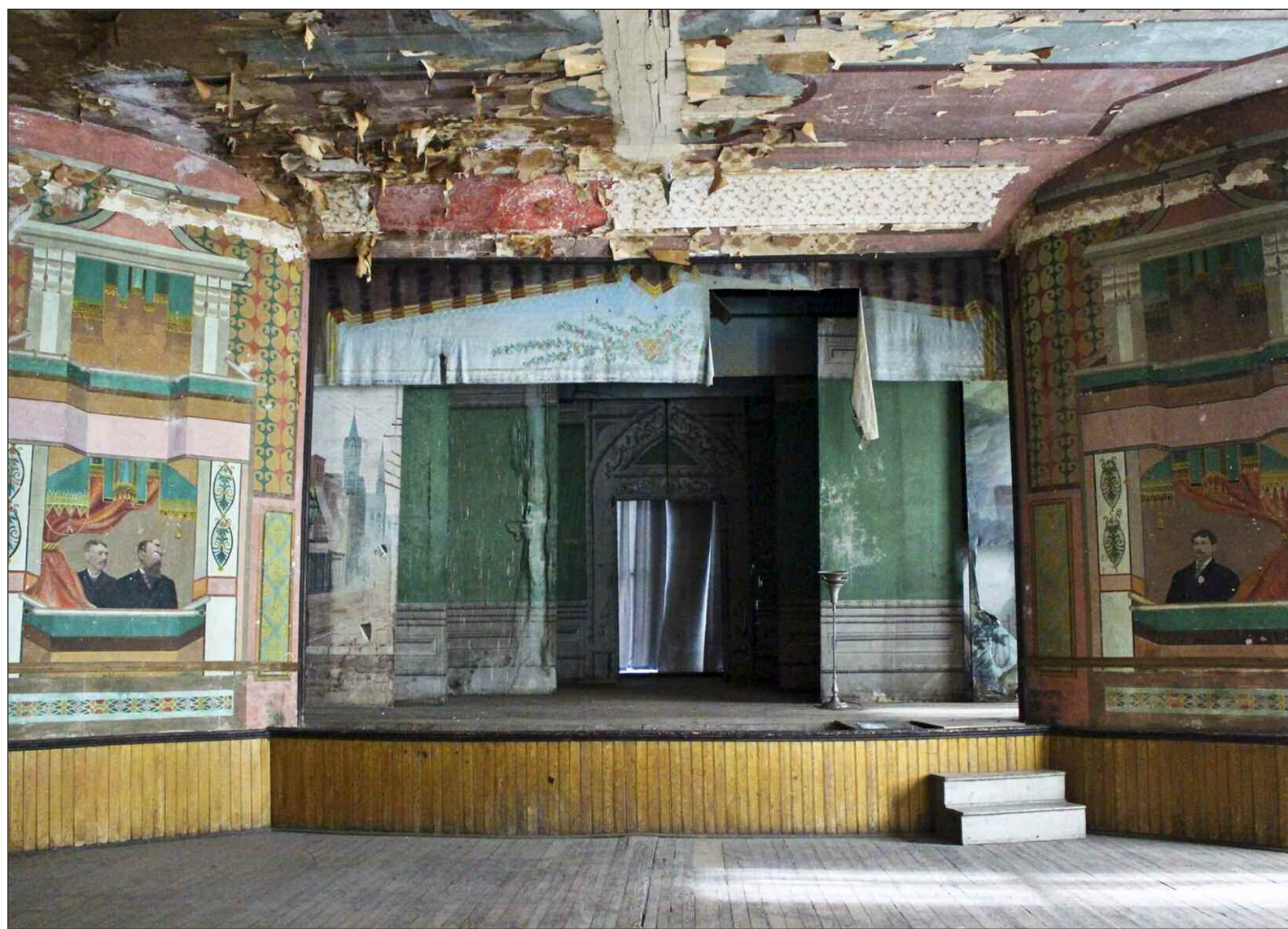
The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

www.thecr.com

\$1

Opera revival



The Commercial Review/Bailey Cline

Once a venue for community meetings and live entertainment, Fort Recovery Morvilius Opera House has been sitting unused since the late 1930s. The rise of automobiles and cinema decreased the demand for opera performances in the '30s, ultimately shuttering the second-floor room.

Effort is underway in Fort Recovery to restore facility that was constructed in 1883

By BAILEY CLINE

The Commercial Review

Fort Recovery Morvilius Opera House has sat empty since the late 1930s.

Now, after nearly 85 years, it's getting a makeover.

The Friends of the Opera House committee is raising funds for restoring the second floor of the 138-year-old Brockman Appliances building to its former glory.

Construction on the two-story building finished in 1883. About 15 years later, Russell Morvilius bought the opera house for his daughter, Fay, a traveling singer and performer. Fay Morvilius studied at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston and performed in Europe and on the Chau-



The Commercial Review/Bailey Cline

Original artwork depicting European opera houses covers the walls of the Fort Recovery Morvilius Opera House. The Friends of the Opera House committee plans to recruit a restoration artist to keep the original design intact while bringing life back to the paintings.

tauqua circuit. After her school graduations, father died, she retired to Fort Recovery for the remainder of her life.

In its prime, the opera house held high school graduations, meetings and other town activities. Local residents and traveling acts also performed plays, concerts and

vaudeville shows on its stage. In the '30s, Fort Recovery built a school gymnasium, decreasing the need for the opera house as an open space. The rise of automobiles and the cinema also diminished the demand for opera performances, and soon business at the building came to a stand still.

In 1976, the hardware store below caught on fire, but the opera house floor wasn't damaged.

Besides being used as a storage space, it's been virtually untouched for all this time.

Its walls were originally painted to look like the opera houses in Europe, with upper-class ladies and gentlemen depicted as sitting in the audience. Some-

one tried to wallpaper over the art years ago, which may have helped to preserve it.

Along with original wood floors and a patterned ceiling, there are also original backdrops and ceiling racks on stage. Signatures from past performers are scrawled on some of the backdrops.

The opera house once seated 200 on the main floor and 50 on the balcony. (The stage has two small dressing rooms on either side for performers.)

Recently, the opera house committee purchased the second floor from Mike Brockman, owner of the business Brockman Appliances located on the first floor. It is also patching the leaking roof.

See **Revival** page 2

Jay's rate is down to 3%

Unemployment is back to pre-pandemic levels

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

Unemployment is back to pre-pandemic levels.

Jay County's unemployment rate came in at 3% in December according to Indiana Department of Workforce Development estimates released Monday. That's the lowest since the county had a 2.8% unemployment rate a year earlier.

The local rate was tied for 17th lowest in the state with Montgomery, Johnson, Dubois, Carroll and Benton counties. Adams and Wells counties fared even better, with the former coming in at third lowest at 2.5 percent and the latter tied for 10th lowest at 2.9 percent.

For more than a year, unemployment in Jay County had hovered between 2.5% and 3.5%. Then, the coronavirus pandemic hit. The county's unemployment rate skyrocketed to 19.9% in April as a result of statewide shutdowns in an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19. Unemployment was at 14.3% in May and 9.6% in June and has continued on a steady decline since then.

After coming in at 3.5% in November, the 3% rate in December was its lowest point of 2020.

The state trend was similar, with unemployment peaking at 17 percent in April and declining ever since. Indiana posted an unemployment rate of 4% in December, down from 4.9% in November but up from the 3% mark in December 2019.

Only Daviess and Boone counties were better than Adams County in the December numbers as they tied for the lowest rate in the state at 2.4%.

Lake County posted the highest unemployment rate in Indiana at 6.4% last month.

See **Rate** page 2

School funding bill prompts questions

By CASEY SMITH

Associated Press/Report for America

INDIANAPOLIS — Proposals aimed at ensuring Indiana's public schools receive full funding for all students during the coronavirus pandemic have prompted criticism from virtual learning supporters and one of the state's top senators.

The widespread use of online learning since over the past year also has the leader of the Republican-dominated Indiana House advocating for giving full-time virtual schools the same state funding as traditional ones.

Similar Senate and House bills both redefine what consti-

tutes a "virtual student" and ensure there would be no reduction in per-student funding for traditionally in-person schools, regardless of whether students are receiving instruction virtually or in the classroom due to COVID-19. The bills are on the fast track to passage.

A twice-yearly count of students attending schools is used to determine how much money the state allots to each facility. According to the bills, students will not be counted as "virtual" on Feb. 1 even if most or all of their learning takes place online.

Without that change, an esti-

mated \$160 million would be on the line for schools using hybrid formats or offering instruction online only as a means to minimize the potential spread of COVID-19. Current state law caps per-pupil funding for students who take at least half their classes virtually at 85% of full in-person student funding.

House Bill 1003 is headed to the Senate after receiving House approval Tuesday, and the Senate version is headed to the full chamber after passing the Senate Appropriations Committee 9-2 Thursday.

Even with the bills on their way to easy passage, virtual

school supporters are asking why the 85% rule exists at all, noting that the legislation exempts regularly fulltime virtual schools.

"I want families that choose schools that fit their needs to be able to do so knowing that their children will receive the same funding," said school choice advocate Letrisha Weber. "Just as it isn't fair to cut funding for schools or virtual education, it isn't fair to keep existing virtual schools at the lower funding rates for teaching in a similar manner."

Weber, an Indianapolis mother of two virtual school stu-

dents, is suing the Indiana State Board of Education, alleging that a similar rule change the board made last fall to ensure schools would be fully funded for the current school year was unlawful.

Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Ryan Mishler questioned why many schools across Indiana are continuing virtual learning 10 months into the pandemic. Most private schools have brought students back to classrooms, he said, but students in public schools "can't get back in," causing them to fall behind.

See **School** page 5

Deaths

Ruth Willmann, 88, Fort Recovery
Wanda Cunnington, 68, Walkerton
Details on page 2.

Weather

Jay County had a high temperature of 27 degrees Thursday. The low was 19.

The forecast calls for a low of 22 tonight followed by a high of 36 Saturday under cloudy skies. Snow is expected Saturday night into Sunday with 5 inches or more of accumulation possible. See page 2 for an extended outlook.

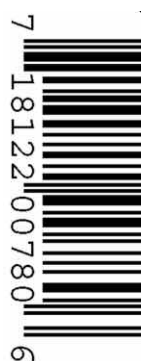
In review

Jay County Solid Waste Management District will have recycling trailers available Saturday. Trailers will be open from 9 a.m. to noon in the shopping center at 220 Lincoln St., Portland, and Dunkirk City Park.

Coming up

Saturday — Results from tonight's JCHS boys basketball game against Bluffton.

Wednesday — Coverage of Tuesday's Portland Park Board meeting.



Revival ...

Continued from page 1
Committee members are now raising funds to replace the windows and installing new heating and cooling systems, all of which is part of the first phase of the restoration plan, according to committee president Karen Meiring.
They're working with Jared Ebbing, the Mercer County director of economic development, to apply for a Target of Opportunity grant through the Ohio Office of Community Development. The grant is aimed toward funding projects and activities that don't fit within the structure of existing programs.
Friends of the Opera House committee is also applying to get in the national historic register. "When I look back to March or April — we've accomplished so

much," Meiring said of the restoration progress. The committee hosted an open house in December and tours to garner community support.
The committee met last month with an art restoration expert, who showed them how to clean without damaging the original wall designs.
Some of the other planned changes include adding updated electrical wiring, removing wallpaper attached to the walls and ceiling, sanding and re-finishing the yellow pine flooring, replacing the water-stained center stage and adding curtains and stage lights. The committee is also hoping to add an annex to the west of the structure that may include restrooms, a kitchenette and a new elevator.
Currently, the room has no

bathrooms or public elevator. There is a lift to the appliance store below that was put in the '70s, but it isn't very secure and hasn't been used in a few years, Meiring said. She estimated it will take at least five years to complete the renovations.
They're also asking the community for donations to help toward the cause. Those in the village mailing area have been sent information about signing up for the patron program, which will give naming rights to patrons for different portions of the floor.
Committee members have also opted into a debit/credit system, DipJar, which they plan to rotate through businesses in town. The machine allows those in the community to make cashless donations.

Meiring said the goal is to create a place for the community to gather.
"Gosh, I have a list of about 20 things we could use this for, but we don't want it to be a museum," she said.
She listed several options, including silent movies, small weddings or receptions, baby showers or concerts. A children's theater summer program could be hosted there as well, she added.
"We don't want it to just be a place where concerts and plays are," she said, listing other potential activities such as lectures, Farmers Institute meetings and special events pictures with the Easter Bunny.
"Being in the heart of downtown, it's the perfect spot."
The committee also wants to

feature Fay Morvilius' life along with the opera house bought for her lifestyle.
Helen LeFevre works on the committee and created a display about the opera house history and the Morvilius family for the walkthrough museum at Krenning Park. She said she's thrilled about restoring the old venue.
"You just can't find anything like that for miles around," she said. "We're just so lucky that no one destroyed it over the years, that it's still in the shape it is ... I just think when it's all done, it is going to be a focal point for our community."
Those interested in donating toward the cause or learning more can reach out to the committee via the Fort Recovery Morvilius Opera House Facebook page.

CR almanac

Saturday 1/30	Sunday 1/31	Monday 2/1	Tuesday 2/2	Wednesday 2/3
35/29	35/24	28/16	27/16	34/28
Scattered snow chances during the day turning into a snowstorm at night, creating 3 to 7 inches.	Overnight snow will continue until early Monday morning. One to 3 inches of accumulation possible.	Cooler with no snow currently projected. Temperatures down in the teens at night.	Cooler under mostly sunny skies with no snow currently projected. Some clouds at night.	Warmer under mostly cloudy skies with temperatures peaking above freezing during the day.

Lotteries

Powerball Estimated jackpot: \$30 million	22-28-32-37-38-50-51-55-56-60-62-63-70-72-75-77-78 Cash 5: 10-14-25-31-34 Estimated jackpot: \$575,000
Mega Millions Estimated jackpot: \$25 million	Ohio Midday Pick 3: 0-5-3 Pick 4: 8-3-5-4 Pick 5: 9-4-2-9-0 Evening Pick 3: 8-3-6 Pick 4: 1-6-4-6 Pick 5: 7-3-8-3-1 Rolling Cash: 3-8-22-28-34 Estimated jackpot: \$140,000
Hoosier Midday Daily Three: 9-6-9 Daily Four: 6-4-8-6 Quick Draw: 1-2-11-14-18-20-21-30-34-38-43-44-46-51-53-55-57-65-71-79 Evening Daily Three: 4-2-9 Daily Four: 2-4-2-6 Quick Draw: 2-12-21-	

Markets

Cooper Farms Fort Recovery Corn.....5.43 Wheat6.16	Central States Montpelier Corn.....5.28 Feb. corn5.30 Beans13.50 Feb. beans13.50 Wheat 6.41 March wheat 6.43
POET Biorefining Portland Corn.....5.48 Feb. corn5.48	Sunrise St. Anthony Corn.....5.14 Feb. corn5.14 Beans13.31 Feb. beans13.34 Wheat6.26 Feb. wheat6.26
The Andersons Richland Township Corn.....5.31 Feb. corn5.36 Beans13.50 Feb. beans13.50 Wheat 6.51 Feb. wheat 6.51	

Today in history

On Jan. 29, 1979, President Jimmy Carter formally welcomed Chinese Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping (dun shah-oh-ping) to the White House, following the establishment of diplomatic relations.
In 1845, Edgar Allan Poe's famous narrative poem "The Raven" ("Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary...") was first published in the New York Evening Mirror.
In 1919, the ratification of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, which launched Prohibition, was certified by Acting Secretary of State Frank L. Polk.
In 1936, the first inductees of baseball's Hall of Fame, including Ty Cobb and Babe Ruth, were named in Cooperstown, New York.
In 1963, the first charter members of the Pro Football Hall of Fame were named in Canton, Ohio.
In 1971, Fort Recovery High School's boys basketball team beat ("Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary...") was first published in the New York Evening Mirror.
In 1975, a bomb exploded inside the U.S. State Department in Washington, causing considerable damage, but injuring no one; the radical group Weather Underground claimed responsibility.
—AP and The CR

Citizen's calendar

Monday 5:30 p.m. — Portland City Council, council chambers, fire station, 1616 N. Franklin St. 7:30 p.m. — Fort Recovery Village Council, village hall, 201 S. Main St.	Park Board, council chambers, fire station, 1616 N. Franklin St. 7 p.m. — Pennville Town Council, town hall, 105 N. Washington St. 7 p.m. — Salamonina Town Council, Schoolhouse Community Center.
Tuesday 7 p.m. — Portland	

Obituaries

Ruth Willmann

May 1, 1932-Jan. 28, 2021
Ruth Willmann, age 88, of Fort Recovery, Ohio, passed away on Jan. 28, 2021, at The Gardens at St. Henry, St. Henry, Ohio.
She was born May 1, 1932, in St. Henry to the late William and Irene (Hartings) Moorman. On Nov. 28, 1953, she married the late Harold Willmann, who died Oct. 25, 2019.



Surviving are four children, Dr. Ted (Ann) Willmann of St. Henry, Lucy (Skip) Wilson of Tipp City, Ohio, Richard "Butch" (Jane) Willmann of Fort Recovery and Ginny (Dave) Robbins of Coldwater, Ohio; 18 grandchildren; 33 great-grandchildren; four siblings, Helen Umphrey of Dayton, Ohio, Henry (Wendy) Moorman of Chicago, Illinois, Marjorie (Roger) Stachler of St. Henry and Edward (Theresa) Moorman of St. Henry; three sisters-in-law, Jean Moorman of Picketon, Ohio, Rebecca Moorman of Ottoville, Ohio, and Marie Moorman of Coldwater.
Preceding her in death along with her parents and husband were a daughter, Patricia Robinson; son-in-law, Don Grant; great-granddaughter, Abigail; siblings Gerald (Eloise) Moorman, Cletus Moorman, Tom Moorman and Robert Moorman; and brother-in-law, Frank Umphrey.
Ruth was a 1950 graduate of St. Henry High School and a 1953 graduate of St. Elizabeth's School of Nursing, Dayton. She was employed at Mercer County Community Hospital, Coldwater, as a registered nurse, and retired as director of nursing.
Ruth was a member of Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church, Fort Recovery, where she served for many years as a lay distributor and lector. She was also a member of the church's Altar Rosary Sodality and the Daughters of Isabella Circle 810, Fort Recovery.
Ruth, enjoyed reading and taking an occasional trip to the casino.

She especially enjoyed and loved being surrounded by her family.
A public Mass of Christian Burial will be 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 30, 2021, at Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church, with Fr. Christian Cone-Lombarte as celebrant. All Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines will be followed during the mass which will be live streamed at fortrecove-rycatholics.org/streamspot. Burial will follow at St. Marys Cemetery, Fort Recovery.
The family would like to receive friends, but because of COVID-19 concerns, the viewing will be private at Brockman — Boeckman Funeral Home, Fort Recovery.
Contributions may be directed to the Cancer Association of Mercer County, P.O. Box 624, Celina, OH 45822, or the St. Henry Emergency Squad, 436 Western Ave., St. Henry, OH 45883.
Condolences may be expressed at brockmanboeckmanfh.com

Wanda Cunningham
Nov. 2, 1952-Nov. 14, 2020
Wanda L. Cunningham, "the butterfly lady," formerly of Walkerton, passed away Saturday, Nov. 14, 2020 at Northwest Health — LaPorte.
Wanda was born Nov. 2, 1952, in Wells County, Indiana.
On April 22, 1972, in Hartford City, she married Steven W. Cunningham; he survives.
She retired in December 2018 after 13 years of service from Wal-Mart Corporation.
Wanda enjoyed her work, especially assisting customers and also many of the employees, becoming close friends with several of them. She loved butterflies, having many of them in her home, wearing clothes with butterflies, wearing pins and always wearing them in her hair. Wanda used her love for Jesus, using the butterflies as a tool to share as opportunity arose.
Upon retiring from serving in pastoral ministry with her husband for almost 40 years, both became active members of Plymouth Wesleyan Church, and Wanda continued sewing for mis-

sions, making clothes for children, sewing robes for area nursing homes and many other sewing projects with her two sewing machines.
Wanda loved assorted crafts, assisting with Vacation Bible School for many years. She made a number of quilts with the ladies at several churches where they pastored, Christmas plays and various children's ministries. Her hands were always busy at something. Wanda loved to get others involved in ministry opportunities, whether it was helping after a house fire in the community, assisting those in need of essentials to live, assisting with finances or getting a business to donate for a needy family in a desperate situation. Opportunities were endless as she served her Lord and she wanted Him to get credit for what she could accomplish with His help. Wanda's life made a real difference in her family and in the lives of so many others. She will be sadly missed.
Surviving with her husband, Steven, are two daughters, Lydia (Thomas) Frazier of LaPorte and Liza (Bryan) McDaniels of Englewood, Florida. Also surviving are her four grandchildren, Lillian, Naomi, Eli and Luke; two sisters, Peggy (Josh) Howell of Dunkirk and Judy Rice of Bluffton; and two brothers, Gay (Doris) Barr of Hartford City and Gaylon Barr of Lynn Grove.
Wanda was preceded in death by her parents; daughter Lillian Ruth Cunningham; sister Beverly Barr; and two brothers, Tom R. Barr and Raymeth Barr.
Graveside services were held Nov. 20 at the Pennville I.O.O.F. Cemetery in Pennville, Indiana. Pastor Ed Friberg officiated.

Rate ...

Continued from page 1
LaPorte County was next at 5.9%.
Area rates are as follows:
Adams County: 2.5%, down 0.6 percentage points, second lowest.
Blackford County: 4.3%, down 0.6 percentage points, t-13th highest.
Delaware County: 4.3%,

down 0.7 percentage point, t-13th highest.
Jay County: 3%, down 0.5 percentage points, t-17th lowest.
Randolph County: 3.7%, down 0.7 percentage points, t-37th highest.
Wells County: 2.9%, down 0.7 percentage points, t-10th lowest.

Jay County Sheriff's Department
is now taking applications for
RESERVE DEPUTY
(may not be paid county employee)
Applications may be picked up at the
Jay County Sheriff's Department
224 W. Water St., Portland. E.O.E.

SERVICES

Today

Houck, Ray: 1 p.m., Willis Funeral Home, 12 Garfield, Ave., Gallipolis, Ohio.
Petschke, David: 7 p.m., Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home, 208 N. Commerce St., Portland.

Saturday

Willmann, Ruth: 10:30 a.m., Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church, 403 Sharpshurg Road, Fort Recovery.
Glassford, Dick: 11 a.m., Baird-Freeman Funeral Home, 221 N. Meridian St., Portland.
Berry, Richard: 3 p.m., The Briar Patch, 190 S. Washington St., Pennville.

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Donors will be rewarded

Blood donors are being rewarded for their good deeds. In February, donors to the American Red Cross will receive a \$5 Amazon gift card via email.

The effort comes as a measure to thank its donors for helping to ensure a stable blood supply, according to a press release from the organization.

Also, the Red Cross is testing all donations for COVID-19 antibodies. (These can appear in a donor's immune system regardless of whether or not the individual developed symptoms.) These antibodies may be able to help current coronavirus patients fight off the coronavirus.

Antibody test results are generally available within a week or two of testing through the Red Cross Blood Donor App or donor portal at RedCrossBlood.org.

The following are nearby blood drives scheduled in February:

•Berne: Noon to 6 p.m. Feb. 16 at South Adams Senior Center, 825 Hendrick St.

Taking Note

•Bryant: 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. Feb. 22 at Bryant Wesleyan Church, 209 S. Hendricks

•Redkey: 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. Feb. 16 at Redkey Faith Ministries, 9811 Indiana 67

•Bluffton: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Feb. 15 at First Presbyterian Church, 215 East Dunman Road; 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. Feb. 19 at Bluffton Regional Medical Center, 303 South Main St.; 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Bluffton-Wells County Public Library, 200 W. Washington St.

New FRHS play

One of Agatha Christie's most famous works will be on display next month in Fort Recovery.

Tickets for the Fort Recovery High School drama club's production of Christie's "And Then There Were None" will go on sale Monday.

Show dates are 7 p.m. Feb. 19, 20, 21, 26 and 27 in the Fort Recovery Elementary/Middle School auditoria. There will also be a matinee at 3 p.m. Feb. 21.

Tickets are \$6 and can be purchased at the Fort Recovery High School office beginning Monday. Because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, seating for each show will be limited to allow for social distancing.

Murder rehashed

The murder of Garnett Ginn of Portland has been unsolved for 71 years.

A new look at the case is scheduled for next month.

Mike Medler, a Portland resident and retired Indiana State Police officer and director of the Indianapolis — Marion Forensic Crime Lab, will discuss the case as part of John Jay Center for Learning's Senior Learning series. The discussion will be held via Facebook Live at 1 p.m. Thursday.

Ginn, a Portland High School teacher, was found dead in her garage in 1950.

New phrase is optimistic

By TRAVIS M. ANDREWS

The Washington Post
"When COVID is over ..."

How many times have you uttered that phrase during the past 11 or so months? We all have such grand plans, when COVID is over. Whatever it is, nearly everyone has a plan for when COVID is over.

But the thing about pandemics is they tend to drag on. Though we finally have vaccines, the wait to return to normalcy can feel interminable.

It can also bring to mind other painful waiting periods — so vividly, in fact, that in the past few days it's become a meme to compare the phrase "once COVID is over" to other events that might never arrive.

As YouTuber Alex Elm-slie tweeted, "once COVID is over" is starting to sound a lot like "when i fix my sleep schedule."

One tweeted, "when covid is over" is starting to sound a lot like "we

should hang out sometime!"

In one particularly relatable message, comedy writer Camilla Blackett tweeted, "when COVID is over" is starting to sound a lot like "when I lose 10lbs."

People have long used memes to make sense of the senseless and to fight sorrow with a touch of humor. One of 2020's more popular memes was a video clip of a troupe of Ghanaian pallbearers who dance as they carry a coffin.

It's a form of dark comedy meant to make palatable something that's too terrible to contemplate, and it's been increasingly popular online since last March.

Still, as Quartz journalist Karen Ho tweeted:

"Once COVID is over" is an optimistic but non-specific way for people to look forward to or plan for the future and try to avoid disappointment when timelines change due to various circumstances."

Dancer pines after uninterested, taken partner

DEAR ABBY: I am a middle-aged divorcee. I recently took up ballroom dancing, which has been a long-held dream, and I'm enjoying my life. However, there are few single men my age around. Most of the available men are 20 years older or 20 years younger.

From Day One, I have had a crush on one of the few men my age in the dance group. We eventually became best friends, spending all our free time together. I soon learned that he is married, but separated and looking to divorce. However, he has a crush of his own, and he talks to me about her constantly. We have so much in common, but he only has eyes for her.

I realize it isn't healthy for me to pine away for someone who

Dear Abby



doesn't think of me the way I think of him. Yet walking away would mean losing my dance partner and best friend and going back to sitting out dances, watching from the sidelines, or worse, sitting alone at home.

Do I maintain the status quo and suffer in silence over his rejection? Or would it be healthier to move on, upend my life and isolate myself from him when I have no other circle of

friends to support me? — DANCING AWAY IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR DANCING: Because of the pandemic, leave things as they are — for now. However, as soon as it's feasible, find another dance group — or two — to join. If you do, you will establish other relationships with both women and men, and have a better chance of finding what you're looking for.

.....

DEAR ABBY: My ex-wife, my son's mother, moved out a few years back and settled about six hours from us. We did halfway trips in the beginning so they could maintain a relationship, and I have even driven the whole way a few times to help with that.

Over the last two years, her

interest has diminished, and they haven't seen each other at all. I've offered the halfway trip, even offered my couch if she came the entire way, especially around holidays. She hasn't taken me up on it.

Our son is now entering his teens, and I bought him a cellphone. She has his number, but doesn't call or text. She even missed his birthday. My problem is, he has started to recognize her lack of interest, and I can tell it hurts. I thought about changing his number and cutting her off altogether, like yanking off a bandage, but I don't know what's best. Please advise. — SANE DAD IN MARYLAND

DEAR DAD: You are a loving and constant father. As

you have realized, now that your son is getting older, he is becoming increasingly aware of his mother's emotional neglect.

I do not think you should change his number and cut her off from him. She's doing a good job of doing that herself. I DO think it's important your son knows he can talk to you about anything and get honest answers.

Something is clearly wrong with his mother. He should not go through life thinking her behavior was caused by anything lacking in himself, so if and when the subject comes up, answer his questions as kindly as you can.

Community Calendar

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

Saturday

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS — Will meet at 10 a.m. upstairs at True Value Hardware, Meridian Street, Portland. For more information, call (260) 729-2532.

Monday

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

BRYANT AREA COMMUNITY CENTER — Walking from 9 to 10 a.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

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

WEST JAY COMMUNITY CENTER GROUP — Doors open at 10:30 a.m. Bingo will begin at 11 a.m. Euchre begins at 1 p.m. There is a \$1 donation for center's expenses. For more information, call (765) 768-1544.

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

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

TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY (TOPS) — Will meet for weigh-in at 5:30 p.m., with the meeting at 6 p.m., in the fellowship hall at Evangelical Methodist Church, 930 W. Main St., Portland. New members welcome. For more information, call (260) 726-5312.

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

Tuesday

BRYANT COMMUNITY CENTER EUCHRE — Will be played at 1 p.m. each Tuesday. The public is welcome.

THE LANDING — A 12-step program for those in sixth through 12th grade will meet at 5:55 p.m. each Tuesday at 2nd Chance at Life Ministries, 228 S. Meridian St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 703-0777 or (260) 726-5273.

A BETTER LIFE - BRANNA'S HOPE — A faith-based recovery group for substance abuse. Meal starts at 6 p.m. and the meeting is from 6:30 to 8 p.m. every Tuesday at the Nazarene Fellowship Building across from the Nazarene church, 249 E. Center St., Dunkirk. For more information, call Amanda Price at (765) 283-2107.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS — Will meet at 7 p.m. each Tuesday at Church of God of Prophecy, 797 N. Creagor Ave. in Portland. For more information, call (260) 766-9334.

Sudoku

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

Level: Advanced

Thursday's Solution

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

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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Portland can't dig out of flooding

To the editor:
The flooding in Portland is a Portland problem.
This all began back when the City of Portland was laid out by a greedy surveyor who was told to put Portland on the south side of the Salamonie River but he wanted the land that he owned on the north side of the river to bring him a lot of cash and he got his way and now Portland has to work this out on its own. To correct this grave error of judgment made so long ago is not going to be solved by digging a retention pond for Millers Branch.
A wise man once said words to the effect of, "If you find

Letters to the Editor

yourself in a hole, stop digging."
If a horse falls into a hole that it is unable to step out of, just pour gravel into the hole and the horse will step up onto the gravel until it is able to step out of the hole.
It is time for Portland to stop wasting money for digging and start filling. My barber's shop

is on Meridian Street and when you open his door you walk up a ramp into his shop. This works well for most of the heavy rain, however he said that his carpet got a little damp during the most recent flood. So there is a point to which you can be above flood level.
For instance, did the grass lawn around the courthouse get under water in the deepest floods of the past? Does the City of Portland on the south side of the river flood? It probably does in a few low spots, but mostly it does not. So it would seem to me that downtown Portland is a natural retention pond and it needs

filling, not digging. Even larger tile will not drain this low spot if the river is already out of its banks. Neither will digging a retention pond for Millers Branch, or even re-routing Millers Branch to the east of Portland to the river.
Every few years the city officials call for a new study and spend thousands of dollars that could have been used to fill in the hole. When they get their new study, they ignore what the engineers said because it will cost too much and do some little thing that does not fix the problem but does make the Portland residents think that something of

value is being done, only to have a new study done.
You have contracted these wise engineers to bring a solution for this problem and they know what the problem is but they will do what you want to do and take your money because you have money to spend or can get money by taxation, and if you cannot get enough from Portland taxpayers you want to throw your responsibility onto the county and make them pay for your error.
Portland is in a hole, and the only way out is up.
Sincerely,
Max Blowers
Bryant

GameStop is a tale of inequity

By HELAINE OLEN

Special To The Washington Post

Perhaps the most surprising news this week centers on GameStop, a store that we don't hear about much anymore. The video game retailer's prospects have been dimming for years: Why go to a mall, particularly amid a pandemic, when almost everything you need is available online? Sales are falling, and stores are closing. In December, the company told investors that it would close 1,000 locations by the end of March. Unsurprisingly, the Wall Street short-sellers are circling.

And then the day traders discovered the company. Day trading — a miserable creation of the dot-com boom — has returned for the age of COVID-19. It's driven by (mostly) youngish men attracted to the free trades offered by gamified, addictive apps such as Robinhood. The traders have an excess of free time and, in many cases, difficult economic prospects because of the pandemic.

In the past week, shares of GameStop have soared as newly minted traders, many of whom hang out on a Reddit board called r/wallstreetbets, piled in. (The original dot-com day traders used Yahoo Finance boards. Some things never change.) This, in turn, forced institutional short-sellers to buy even more of the stock to avoid bigger losses — a classic "short squeeze." GameStop stock is up several hundred percent for the year. On Dec. 31, the stock closed at \$18.84. When I sat down to work Tuesday morning, it opened \$88.56. It closed at \$147.98.

This isn't simply disconnected from investing fundamentals. This is disconnected from reality. Yes, some will make money along the way, but this is going to end in a financial catastrophe for many. Options trading has a way of doing that to people.

But here's where the story gets more interesting. GameStop's stock rise is also hurting the hedge funds and professional Wall Street outfits betting on GameStop's continued subpar performance. And, for some, this might be the point. As much as some of these day traders want to make a mint, they also very much want someone else to lose it. Melvin Capital, an investment firm known to be shorting GameStop, has been the

Helaine Olen



subject of no small amount of ire on r/wallstreetbets. On Monday, it ended up receiving a \$2.75 billion investment from two other hedge funds, apparently as a result of all this.

That's the thing about economic and wealth inequality: It helps to have rich friends!

It's all but a cliché to note that the wealthiest Americans have done quite well since the COVID-19 pandemic began. According to a report released Tuesday morning by the Institute for Policy Studies and Americans for Tax Fairness, the wealth of American billionaires has soared by nearly 40% since mid-March 2020. But the economic prospects for almost everyone else remains less than promising. This is particularly true for the millennials and older members of Gen Z, who appear to make up most of the day trading hordes. Millennials possess significantly less in the way of assets as baby boomers and Gen Xers did at the ages they are now, and have much more student debt. Meanwhile, Melvin Capital is down 30% this year because of a bad bet, yet gets a bailout from other rich hedge funds.

A quick tour through Reddit shows how this plays out. One poster claimed to use day trading gains to pay off a \$23,504 student loan bill. Others talk of using stimulus checks to invest. Anger is never far from the surface. "They have had this game rigged for over a 100 years," wrote one poster. "Pay back is a b----. You think we all forgot what these a----- elitists did during 2008 and the sweet bailouts they got while the rest of us suffered?" wrote another.

The GameStop follies, it turns out, aren't just a simple get-rich-quick scheme. This is a cry for help, combined with a way to even the score. If that doesn't tell us something about our age of inequality, I don't know what does.

Olen is a contributor to *Post Opinions* and serves on the advisory board of the *Economic Hardship Reporting Project*.



There needs to be accountability

By RILEY EUBANKS

The Commercial Review

Where's the accountability? Three cops who helped stop the overthrow of America Jan. 6 have now died following the attempted coup.

It was confirmed Tuesday that Jeffrey Smith, a Washington, D.C., police officer, killed himself following the insurrection, joining fellow Capitol Police officer Howard Liebenow, who also took his own life.

Brian Sicknick, another Capitol Police officer, died from physical injuries sustained from that day.

In addition to those three and the other four who died from the insurrection, more than 140 officers were injured during the mob's politically motivated charge into the U.S. Capitol building.

Countless other first responders and others who were inside that building were traumatized. They can't even have solace that lawmakers will do their part in holding those

Take it to the Bank



who aided in this insurrection responsible.

Instead, what can only be described as defectors of justice and truth are debating questions of constitutionality in the U.S. Senate while tip-toeing around what should be an open and shut case of conviction.

In the U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Rep. Jim Banks voted against articles of impeachment of President Donald Trump, whose rhetoric and blatant attempt at staying in office despite losing the November election led to the people dying.

In June, Banks told the IndyStar

he wouldn't put his name on "anything that would endanger our police officers or leave them vulnerable in the line of duty."

Well, an officer died following the actions of Jan. 6 and two killed themselves afterward. Banks had a chance to help impeach the man responsible for the insurrection.

He didn't. And more violence could ensue if Trump and his legion of domestic terrorists who stormed the Capitol in his name aren't convicted.

Banks and U.S. Sen. Mike Braun both have blood on their hands for their involvement in this outrageous and unconstitutional attempt to keep Trump as president.

Braun can rectify his deadly mistake along with Sen. Todd Young in voting to convict Trump.

Anything less than a vote to convict is a complete disregard for the rule of law and the oath they took to serve this country.

State must improve on infant mortality

Pharos-Tribune (Logansport)

Indiana is above average, but not by a measure of which anyone should be proud: infant mortality.

"Infant mortality is the number of babies who die during the first year of life per 1,000 live births," says a report by the Indiana State Department of Health. "Infant death is a critical indicator of the health of a population. It reflects the overall state of maternal health as well as the quality and accessibility of primary health care available to pregnant women and infants. The top three causes of infant deaths ... are disorders related to short gestation and low birth weight, congenital anom-

Hoosier Editorial

alies and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome."

Indiana is far above the national average and has been for quite some time.

In 2005, in the United States as a whole, the infant death rate was 6.9 per 1,000 births.

By 2011, that figure had fallen to 6.1. Indiana also has seen a drop, albeit a much slower one. In 2005, the state's rate was 8.0. By 2011, it had only fallen to

7.7. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared we had the country's fifth-highest infant mortality rate in 2010.

Last October, Gov. Eric Holcomb announced that preliminary data released by the State Department of Health shows the infant mortality rate fell from 6.8 per 1,000 live births in 2018 to 6.5 in 2019. The mortality rate among Black infants fell from 13.0 to 11.0 last year. The national mortality rate among infants was 5.7 per 1,000 in 2019.

According to the CDC, Indiana's improvement on this public-health issue now makes us seventh highest in the country.

In an effort to curb this embarrassment to our state, then-Gov. Mike Pence signed House Bill 1004 on May 4, 2015.

Health officials began a new state program known as Safety PIN — for Protecting Indiana's Newborns. It funded grants to support local programs where women could receive prenatal care and other help associated with expectant mothers.

Any movement to tackle this problem should be commended, as we did six years ago. But let this not be the only step we take. We owe it to ourselves and our children to get this one right. We can't afford not to.

The Commercial Review

HUGH N. RONALD (1911-1983), Publisher Emeritus



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We welcome letters to the editor. Letters should be 700 words or fewer, signed and include a phone number for verification purposes. We reserve the right to edit letters for content and clarity. Email letters to news@thecr.com.

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In review

Considering

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana legislators are considering a bill that would let members of state and local government boards participate in meetings virtually even after exemptions allowed by the governor's coronavirus executive orders come to an end.

The proposal would permit boards to adopt policies allowing members to attend — and vote — virtually as long as they can be seen and heard. It would require meetings with virtual participation also to allow the public to observe the meeting online.

Bill sponsor Sen. Linda Rogers, a Republican from Granger, said the measure would give board members some attendance flexibility, but would prohibit them from joining more than two consecutive meetings virtually except for limited reasons such as illness or military service.

Results in

Johnson & Johnson's long-awaited vaccine appears to protect against COVID-19 with just one shot — not as strong as some two-shot rivals but still potentially helpful for a world in dire need of more doses.

J&J said today that in the U.S. and seven other countries, the single-shot vaccine was 66% effective overall at preventing moderate to severe illness, and much more protective — 85% — against the most serious symptoms.

There was some geographic variation. The vaccine worked better in the U.S. — 72% effective against moderate to severe COVID-19 — compared to 57% in South Africa, where it was up against an easier-to-spread mutated virus.

Changing

BEIJING — China said today it will no longer recognize the British National Overseas passport as a valid travel document or form of identification amid a bitter feud with London over a plan to allow millions of Hong Kong residents a route to residency and eventual citizenship.

The announcement by Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian today throws up new uncertainty around the plan just hours after the U.K. said it would begin taking applications for what are called BNO visas beginning late Sunday.

—Associated Press

Demos reject pitch to split bill

By LISA MASCARO and JOSH BOAK
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats in Congress and the White House have rejected a Republican pitch to split President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 rescue plan into smaller chunks, with lawmakers appearing primed to muscle the sweeping economic and virus aid forward without GOP help.

Despite Biden's calls for unity, Democrats said the stubbornly high unemployment numbers and battered U.S. economy leave them unwilling to waste time courting Republican support that might not

materialize. They also don't want to curb the size and scope of a package that they say will provide desperately needed money to distribute the vaccine, reopen schools and send cash to American households and businesses.

Biden has been appealing directly to Republican and Democratic lawmakers while signaling his priority to press ahead.

"We've got a lot to do, and the first thing we've got to do is get this COVID package passed," Biden said Thursday in the Oval Office.

The standoff over Biden's first legislative priority is turning the

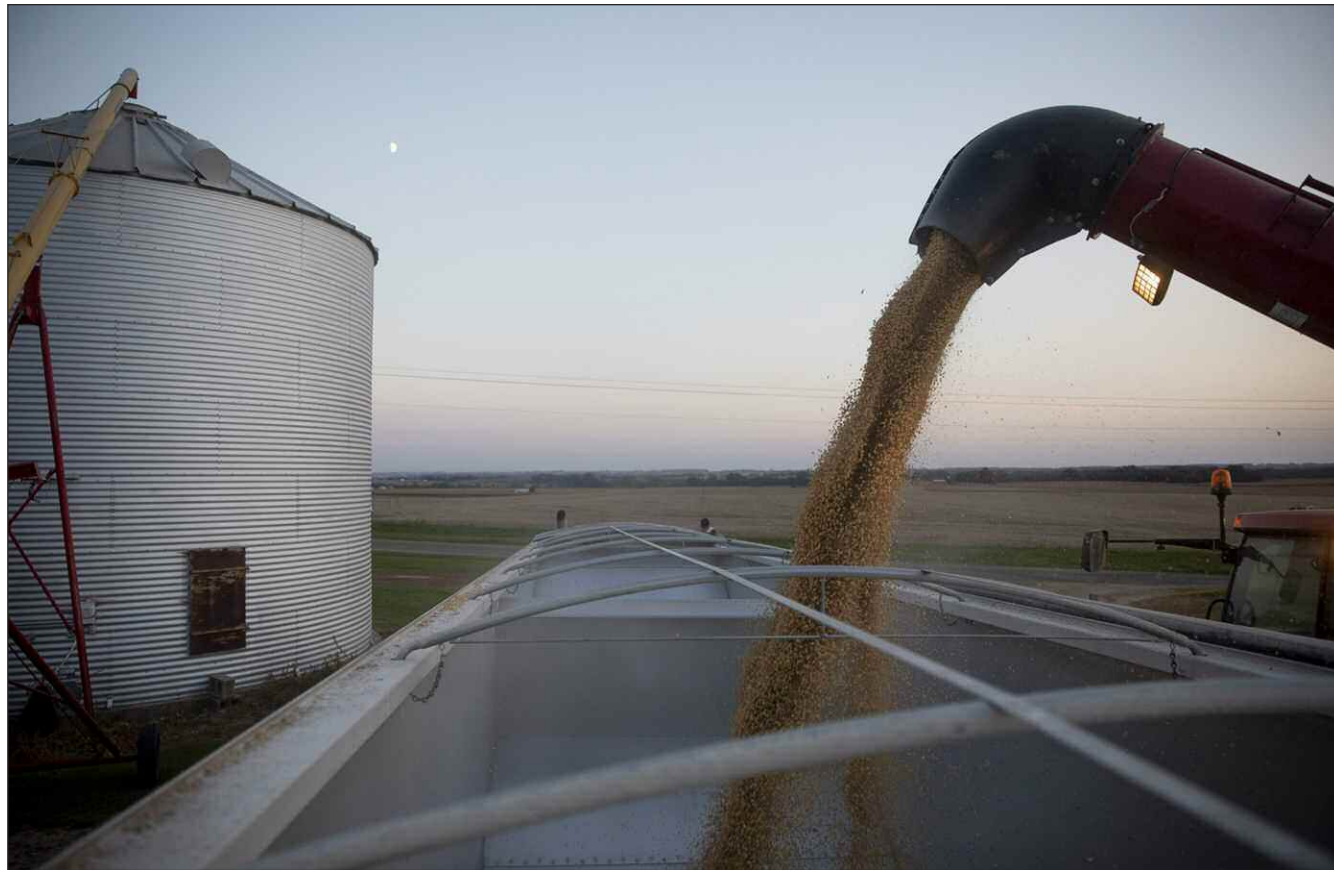
new rescue plan into a political test — of his new administration, of Democratic control of Congress and of the role of Republicans in a post-Trump political landscape.

Success would give Biden a signature accomplishment in his first 100 days in office, unleashing \$400 billion to expand vaccinations and to reopen schools, \$1,400 direct payments to households, and other priorities, including a gradual increase in the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour. Failure would be a high-profile setback early in his presidency.

Democrats in the House and Senate are operating as though

they know they are on borrowed time. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi are laying the groundwork to start the go-it-alone approach as soon as next week.

They are drafting a budget reconciliation bill that would start the process to pass the relief package with a simple 51-vote Senate majority — rather than the 60-vote threshold typically needed in the Senate to advance legislation. The goal would be passage by March, when jobless benefits, housing assistance and other aid is set to expire.



Bloomberg/Daniel Acker

Soybeans are unloaded from a grain cart during harvest in Wyanet, Illinois, on Sept. 25.

Soybean sales are soaring

By MICHAEL HIRTZER
Bloomberg

China's appetite for U.S. soy is draining silos to the point that American processors may need to import the most beans in years this summer.

Soybean sales to overseas buyers are set to exceed the government's estimates for the whole season as early as next month, according to Chicago-based consultants AgResource. Processors have also been crushing record amounts month after month. At the current pace, the U.S. is set to run out of soybeans, at least on paper.

The boom in U.S. shipments to China comes after Brazil and other countries effectively ran out of exportable supplies — prospects traders in North America are now facing. Matt Campbell, risk-management consultant at

Consultant says U.S. imports could reach highest level since 2014

StoneX in West Des Moines, Iowa, said U.S. soy imports could reach the highest level since 2014 this year amid strong demand from domestic crushers — who process the soybeans into meal used as animal feed and oil for cooking and fuel — before fresh supplies roll in from the harvest.

While it's not uncommon to see small amounts of trade among the top soy exporters — more deals are likely this year with futures prices in Chicago near a six-year high and expected to keep rising. That would

make cargoes from South America more attractive to U.S. processors.

"Every year there are some imports," Campbell said. "However, this year looks to be one of the heaviest amounts we will see."

"It is a year in which supplies have been substantial but demand is huge," John Baize, an independent analyst who also advises the U.S. Soybean Export Council, said in an interview.

The USDA on Jan. 12 more than doubled its outlook for American imports of soybeans, projecting 35

million bushels during the season that began Sept. 1, and StoneX sees it as high as 70 million. That would be the most since 72 million were brought in during the 2013-14 season.

To be sure, that's a tiny volume compared to the 2.23 billion bushels expected by the USDA to be shipped out of American ports. Prices in the U.S. will likely keep going up to the point that margins for processors are poor enough that demand is curbed.

"The U.S. really does need to curb domestic

crushing in the short term because the Brazilian crop is delayed and China is buying even more cargoes for February," said Tarso Veloso, an analyst at Chicago-based AgResource. "We expect March futures to go up to \$14.60 a bushel and even \$15 a bushel to curb domestic use."

"At the current pace of exports, the U.S. could end up with negative stocks," Veloso said. "But of course that's on paper and would never actually happen, because prices would go up first to curb demand."

The rising demand from China means American farmers will need to plant more corn and soy, Dan Basse, an analyst at AgResource, said at the Paris Grain Day conference. "We're looking at planting every arable acre, and it's still not enough to meet demand."

School ...

Continued from page 1

"I think this bill just encourages our kids to stay home and receive virtual education," said Mishler, one of two Republican senators who voted against the bill in committee Thursday. "As a senator, you can pat me on the back for giving you more money. But as a parent, I don't think I can in good conscience vote for this bill. I think it is an injustice to our kids."

Most Indiana schools offered both in-person and online options this school year, though some have gone fully virtual at times during periods of peak coronavirus spread.

Republican House Speaker Todd Huston said he has long supported giving virtual schools the same per-student funding as traditional public schools and expected the House budget plan that's being prepared would provide 100% funding for virtual school students starting next fall.

"I think the pandemic has brought some other people that maybe weren't very excited about that to see the light," Huston said Thursday.

House Democratic Leader Phil GiaQuinta of Fort Wayne said more money shouldn't be diverted from traditional public

school districts that received 2% or less in funding increases in the current state budget while Indiana also faces troubles with lagging teacher pay.

"We need to make sure we have our priorities straight, fund public education and let's keep our teachers in mind for pay raise," GiaQuinta said.

The bills for this school year's funding are temporary fixes because they would expire at the end of the spring semester. Democratic lawmakers requested extensions in addition to language that would always exempt brick-and-mortar schools from the 85% reduction in funding.

"I'm still concerned that, come next fall, we're not going to be over this yet," Sen. Karen Tallian said.

Republican Sen. Jeff Raatz, one of the Senate bill's authors, emphasized Thursday that the measure is only meant to ensure schools get money that's already been appropriated. Future state funding, he continued, should be addressed in the new state budget.

"That's something we'll deal with when it happens again," Raatz said. "We know that the students do better in classroom. In my opinion, we just leave this thing alone and go forward."

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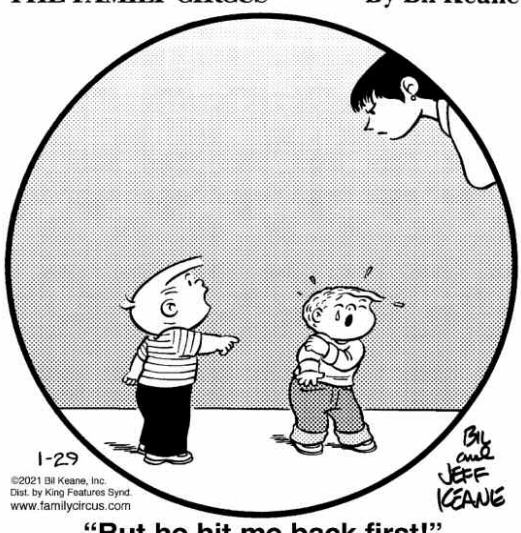
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SPEED BUMP Dave Coverly



THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



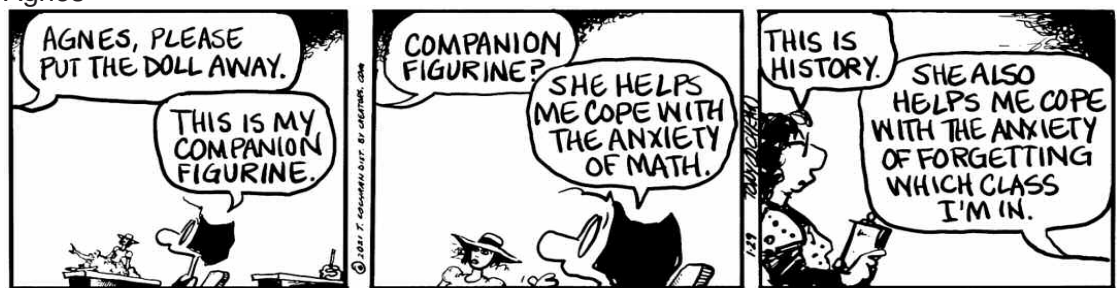
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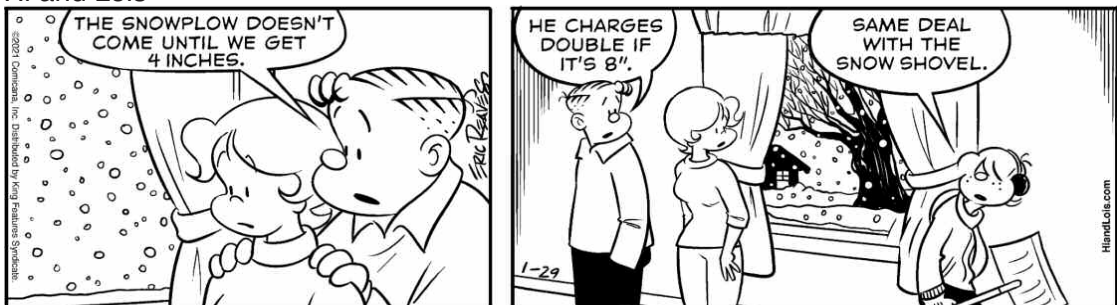
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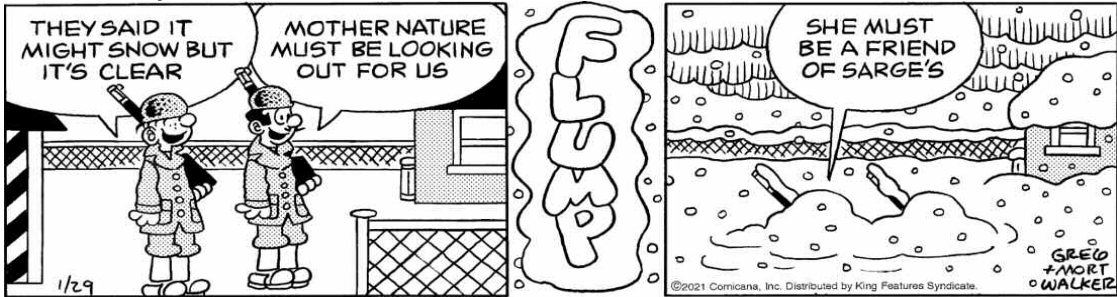
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Yesterday's answer 1-29

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Win ...

Continued from page 8
Chloe Camomile was first on bars with a 7.675 and also took the top spot in the all-around with a total of 31.65. Teusch placed first on the vault with an 8.6 and Emma Wilson won the floor with an 8.45.

Junior Macy Miller, a transfer from Delta, and Ring scored for Jay County on all four events, with Ring adding an 8.45 on the vault. Miller's top score also came on the vault as she finished just behind her teammate with an 8.4 for her half-on, full-off. She added a 7.6 on the floor exercise, a 7.125 on the balance beam and a 6.7 on the bars.

Freshmen Karci Hopkins and Makinsey Murphy handled the remainder of the scoring. Hopkins was third on the team on the floor with a 6.675 while Murphy matched Miller with an 8.4 on the vault and added a 6.2 on the balance beam.

"Makinsey Murphy, she did an outstanding job," said James. "She improved significantly on vault and beam as well. ... She did such a good job. She's working hard. All the girls are working hard."

Jay County did not have a third competitor on the bars, though James plans to add freshman Erin Ring, Kenzie's sister, to the lineup in order to help boost the team score.

Macy Miller, a Jay County High School junior, finishes her floor exercise routine Thursday during the Patriots' loss to Huntington North. Miller was second on the team and fourth overall on the floor exercise with a 7.6.



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Join ...

Continued from page 8
The win moved the Indians to 13-4 overall and 6-2 in MAC play, while the Cavaliers dipped to 6-9 (2-4 MAC).

After jumping out to an 18-0 lead heading into the second quarter, Fort Recovery went into halftime ahead 33-8. The Indians were on top 41-14 with eight minutes to play and still ran by the Cavaliers in the final eight minutes.

Kierra Wendel matched her jersey number with a game-high 20 points, and Paige Fortkamp added 10 points. Alli Vaughn was third with nine points.

Fort Recovery's junior varsity team lost in overtime, 42-40. Alexis

Wendel scored 11 points, and Cali Wendel chipped in 10 points.

Boys eke out win

BERNE — Despite only getting five individual victories, Fort Recovery's boys swim team eked out a win against the Coldwater Cavaliers on Thursday at South Adams.

The Tribe boys won 45-34, and the FRHS girls lost 99-70.

Isaac Knapke was a double winner for the FRHS boys with victories in the 100-yard freestyle and 100 backstroke. Alex Hiser also had a 50 freestyle win. Fort Recovery also won the 200 medley and 200 freestyle relays.

Audra Bubb (200 individual med-

ley), Teigen Fortkamp (100 freestyle) and Ava Bubb (500 freestyle) had the only victories for the FRHS girls.

Boys fall in semifinal

WOODBURN — Jay County Junior High School's seventh and eighth grade boys basketball teams both lost in the semifinal round of the Allen County Athletic Conference tournament on Thursday at Woodlan.

The seventh graders fell to Bluffton 43-36, and the eighth grade team lost to host Woodlan 55-35.

Jacob Monroe led the seventh graders with 10 points, and Riley Solars scored 14 points for the eighth graders.

Sports on tap

Local schedule

Today
Jay County — Boys basketball triple-header vs. Bluffton — 6 p.m.
Fort Recovery — Boys basketball vs. Coldwater — 5:30 p.m.

Saturday
Jay County — Wrestling hosts sectional — 8:30 a.m.; Gymnastics at West-

ern Invitational — noon; Boys basketball tripleheader at Blackford — 6 p.m.; Junior high girls basketball ACAC tournament TBA
Fort Recovery — Boys basketball vs. Mississinawa Valley — 6 p.m.

Monday
Jay County — Freshman boys basketball vs. New Castle — 6 p.m.; Junior high

wrestling vs. Monroe Central — 5:30 p.m.
Fort Recovery — Freshman boys basketball at Minster — 6 p.m.

TV schedule

Today
6:30 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Saint Louis at Richmond (ESPN2); Xavier at Butler (FS1)
7 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Indiana

Pacers at Charlotte Hornets (FSN)
7:30 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Milwaukee Bucks at New Orleans Pelicans (ESPN)

8:30 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: South Alabama at Georgia State (ESPN2)
9 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Iowa at Illinois (FS1)
10 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Dallas Mavericks at Utah Jazz (ESPN)

Perfect ...

Continued from page 8
South Adams coach Brett Freeman, who only had six available players, was pleased with the way his Starfires (9-12, 2-4 ACAC) fought to the finish.

"We came out second half, kept battling, battling," he said. "Obviously they've got a strong team. Of course they have the height advantage over us quite a bit."

"Us being shorthanded tonight, I thought our girls battled and fought as hard as they could."

Jay County scored the first nine points of the game while South Adams missed its first seven shots from the floor. The Starfires got 3-pointers from Macy Pries and Kristen Wynn for a respectable 11-6 deficit at the end of the first quarter.

Four points each from sisters Aubrie and Renna Schwieterman, two by Izzy Rodgers and a Gabi Bilbrey bucket helped Jay County begin the second on a 12-3 run, and the Patriots went into halftime leading 27-16.

The visitors began the third quarter with another run, this one of seven points. During the surge, Renna Schwieterman had a free throw miss the mark, ending a stretch of 20 consecutive makes from the stripe that spanned three games.

Schwieterman then drained the second of her two 3-pointers on the night, staking the Patriots to a 33-

16 advantage before Breanna Dirksen split free throws.

In the fourth, Schwieterman capped her game-high 23-point night with a fast-break bucket that gave the Patriots their biggest lead, 47-23.

"To be honest I don't think we were as focused as we needed to be and to be honest I told the kids, even me, I probably wasn't as focused as I should have been," said Comer, whose team had missed about a dozen close-range shots and was 17-of-35 (48.6%) on 2-point field goals. "We can't overlook anybody. We can't take anybody for granted because there is not a switch you just turn on and off. We have to be mentally prepared."

Madison Dirksen scored 10 points in support of Schwieterman's fourth consecutive game with 23 or more points.

Pries led South Adams with 13 points, and Wynn finished with 11 as the Starfires' starting five played the entire first half.

"Just the fact we fought," Freeman said of the biggest takeaway. "Of course they obviously have the advantage in a lot of areas and they have probably the best player in the area. I thought for the most part we did an awfully good job (and) kept them below their scoring average (of 49.3 points per game)."

"I thought, for a bunch of 5-foot-nothings, I really thought we battled."

Box score

South Adams Starfires vs. Class 3A No. 15 Jay County Patriots			
Girls varsity summary			
Jay County (17-3, 6-0 ACAC)		3-point shooting: Jay County 3-9 (RSchwieterman 2-4, Rodgers 1-4, MDirksen 0-1). South Adams 5-16 (Wynn 2-9, Pries 2-2, MSmith 1-4, ESmith 0-1).	
ASchwtrmn	2-4	0-0	4
Bilbrey	1-2	0-0	2
Rodgers	2-7	0-0	5
RSchwtrmn	9-20	3-4	23
MDirksen	5-8	0-0	10
SSaxman	1-4	0-0	2
GSaxman	0-1	0-0	0
BDirksen	0-0	1-2	1
Fields	0-0	0-0	0
Muhlnkmp	0-0	0-0	0
Mumbower	0-0	0-0	0
Shimp	0-0	0-0	0
Totals	20-46	4-6	47
	.436	.667	
South Adams (9-12, 2-4 ACAC)		Rebounds: Jay County 36 (MDirksen 8, RSchwieterman 7, Bilbrey 6, BDirksen 5, team 4, Rodgers 3, SSaxman 2, ASchwieterman). South Adams 17 (Baker 5, team 5, Wynn 3, Pries 2, MSmith 2).	
Wynn	3-13	2-2	10
Pries	5-12	1-2	13
MSmith	3-8	0-0	7
Baker	0-2	0-0	0
Hamrick	0-4	0-2	0
ESmith	0-1	0-0	0
Totals	11-40	3-6	30
	.275	.500	
Score by quarters:		Assists: Jay County 10 (ASchwieterman 2, RSchwieterman 2, BDirksen 2, Bilbrey, Rodgers, MDirksen, GSaxman). South Adams 9 (Wynn 3, Baker 2, Pries, MSmith, Hamrick, ESmith).	
Jay Co.	11	16	9
S. Adams	6	10	2
	12	30	
Blocks: Jay County 6 (MDirksen 5, RSchwieterman). South Adams 3 (Hamrick 2, Baker).		Personal fouls: Jay County 11 (ASchwieterman 2, BDirksen 2, Muhlenkamp 2, Bilbrey, RSchwieterman, MDirksen, GSaxman). South Adams 9 (Wynn 3, Baker 2, Pries, MSmith, Hamrick, ESmith).	
Turnovers: Jay County 8. South Adams 12.			

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110 HELP WANTED

THE JAY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS and Jay County Highway are taking applications for the position of Highway Department Road Foreman through 9:00AM on Monday, February 8, 2021. Must have a CDL or obtain one in 90 days. Applications may be picked up at and returned to the Jay County Auditor's Office at 120 North Court Street in Portland, Indiana. Job Description available upon request. Jay County Government is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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Contract Bridge By Steve Becker
Bidding quiz

You are declarer and bid One Club. Partner responds One Heart. What would you bid now with each of the following four hands?

1. ♠AJ ♥AQ73 ♦J8 ♣AQJ62
2. ♠A984 ♥— ♦AJ6 ♣AK9754
3. ♠AKJ2 ♥96 ♦AQ ♣AQ832
4. ♠10 ♥K95 ♦AQ83 ♣AK876

1. Four hearts. You should not risk losing a game by raising to only three hearts, an encouraging but nonforcing bid that shows about 16-18 points. You'd feel pretty silly if partner passed, since even if he has only six points he will probably make four hearts.

2. One spade. Partner's heart response adds nothing to the value of your hand. Had partner responded in diamonds or spades, the outlook would have been much more promising. The heart response warns of a

possible misfit, and until a suit fit is discovered, you should tread very gingerly. A rebid of three clubs (16-18 points) over one heart might result in missing a game in spades, and two clubs would run the same risk while severely understating your values.

3. Two spades. Here you have adequate high-card strength for a leap to three notrump, showing at least 20 points. However, the hand might play better in spades at either a game or slam, so it is wiser to show your spades en route. Partner is required to respond to the jump-shift, even with minimum values for his first response.

4. Two diamonds. Bidding one club first and following up with two diamonds constitutes a "reverse." Reverses show hands that contain at least 17 points, including distributional features. They also guarantee holding greater length in the first suit mentioned.

Here, after bidding two diamonds, you plan to support hearts on the next round and in that way identify your 1-3-4-5 distribution. This projected series of bids is more desirable than any other sequence because your hand is too good for a simple raise to two hearts, and you lack the four-card trump support needed for a jump-raise to three hearts.

Tomorrow: Mission impossible?
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Perfect in ACAC

Jay Co. girls top Starfires for unblemished conference slate

By CHRIS SCHANZ

The Commercial Review

BERNE — The fear was that perhaps the Starfires could go overlooked.

The Patriots were coming off their biggest win of the season, and sectional is set to begin in just a few days.

Jay County had one final game on its schedule, and the Starfires had a chance to spoil perfection.

It wasn't pretty, but the Jay County High School girls basketball team finished off a flawless Allen County Athletic Conference record with a 47-30 victory against the South Adams Starfires on Thursday at Stardome.

The triumph secured a 6-0 mark for the Patriots in winning the regular season ACAC title, backing up its tournament championship earlier this month.

"It's great to win the conference, be undefeated in the conference," said JCHS coach Kirk Comer, whose team was 15th in this week's Class 3A poll voting. "I'm disappointed with the intensity we had tonight, which I expected a little bit of a letdown



The Commercial Review/Chris Schanz

Jay County High School freshman Breanna Dirksen tries to shoot between South Adams defenders Cora Baker (35) and Emmerson Smith during the second half Thursday at Stardome. The Patriots won, 47-30, to end the regular season 17-3 and 6-0 in Allen County Athletic Conference play.

after (upsetting fourth-ranked Norwell on Monday). "Good regular season, 17-3.

Great group of kids. I don't even think we're close to our potential. Hopefully we can continue

to play for a while and keep getting better." See **Perfect** page 7

Two join club

MARION — A pair of boys joined the 50-second club on Thursday as the Jay County High School swim teams both topped the host Marion Giants.

The boys picked up a 104-40 victory, while the girls prevailed 92-86.

Local roundup

Kyle Sanders joined the 50-second club in the 100-yard butterfly as he was first in 59.96 seconds. Timo Minnich also joined the 50-second club with his time of 59.85 seconds as he was the runner-up in the 100 freestyle.

Sanders also won the 100 backstroke. Ralph Link was a dual winner as well, taking the top spot in the 200 individual medley and 500 freestyle. Juan Pablo Wiggins earned a win in the 200 freestyle as well.

Ashlyn Dow was a dual winner for the JCHS girls, taking the top spot in both the 200 IM and 100 butterfly. Emily Dues (200 freestyle), Abigail Johnson (100 freestyle) and Kelly Strausburg (100 backstroke) had individual wins, too.

Both the boys and girls squads won all three relays.

Indians thrash Cavs

COLDWATER, Ohio — Fort Recovery High School's girls basketball team held the Coldwater Cavaliers without a point in the opening quarter on its way to a 53-23 Midwest Athletic Conference victory Thursday at The Palace. See **Join** page 7



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Ag Outlook
Friday, April 23 (ad deadline Apr. 16)

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Ring gets senior night win

Patriots' lone senior is first in Jay's only home meet

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

A team victory wasn't in the cards for the mostly inexperienced Patriots.

But they showed improvement from their opening outing Saturday. And their lone senior was able to pick up an event win in the final home meet of her career.

Kenzie Ring's victory on the balance beam highlighted the evening as the Jay County High School gymnastics team bumped up its score by a couple of points Thursday night in a 93.825-82.275 loss to the visiting Huntington North Vikings.

"They did a lot better than they did Saturday," said JCHS coach Melynda James, whose team posted a score of 80.3 in the season-opening Northwestern Invitational. "A lot of improvements. ..."

"They have improved so much from last meet. I'm very proud of them."

Ring posted the Patriots' top score on all four events, with her 7.9 on the beam edging Huntington North's Janna Teusch by just 0.025 points. While she had one fall — an automatic half-point deduction — she was able to hit some key elements of her routine to come away with the victory.

"I landed my round-off,



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Jay County High School senior Kenzie Ring performs a back walkover Thursday night during the Patriots' lone home meet of the season. Ring scored a 7.9 on the balance beam to win the event by 0.025 points over Janna Teusch of Huntington North. The visiting Vikings took the team victory, 93.825-82.275.

and my jumps were a lot better than they normally are," said Ring, the team's only senior following Jay County's lone home meet this year. "And my dismount was a lot better."

She also hit her front handspring, front layout during her floor exercise routine to help her place second with an 8.1. She was third on the uneven

parallel bars with a 6.725 and third in the all-around with a total of 31.175 points.

While Ring won the beam for the Patriots, who will return to action Saturday at the Western Invitational, Huntington North earned the remainder of the victories with a mix of athletes. See **Win** page 7