

The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

www.thecr.com

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The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Puppy love

First grader Carter Brown grins while picking up a puppy Thursday afternoon during a visit to the Fort Recovery FFA petting zoo at Fort Recovery High School as part of the chapter's celebration of National FFA Week. Because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the petting zoo was open to students only this year.

Boyd murder trial moved

New dates are set for September

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

The trial for a Portland man charged with murder has been pushed back again.

During a pretrial conference Thursday, Jay Circuit Court Judge Brian Hutchison set new trial dates for Roger Boyd for Sept. 20 and 21. Boyd is charged with the Sept. 5 murder of James P. Miller, 49, Montpelier.

He also faced a charge of criminal confinement while armed with a deadly weapon, a Level 3 felony.

A final pretrial conference is scheduled for Aug. 29.

Jay County currently has five murder trials slated for this year. The first of those is slated to begin March 15 as Esther J. Stephen faces a murder charge for the Jan. 12, 2020, shooting of Shea Briar of Portland.

Boyd's trial most recently was scheduled to begin April 5. It was originally set for early February, but was initially delayed because Indiana Supreme Court suspended jury trials statewide until March 1 because of the potential spread of COVID-19.

Boyd, who previously served as K-9 officer for Jay County Sheriff's Office and for Dunkirk Police Department, was arrested shortly after Miller was shot in the early morning hours of Sept. 5 outside 1215 S. Bridge St., Portland. Miller was pronounced dead at the scene.

Police say Boyd, 35, Portland, admitted at the scene to shooting Miller, according to court documents.

See Trial page 2

Uhrick gives gift to foundation

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

A major gift has been made toward the cause of literacy.

The Portland Foundation announced Thursday that it received a gift of nearly \$100,000 from the estate of Timothy Joe Uhrick to establish the Herman C. Uhrick, Dorothy Uhrick and Timothy Joe Uhrick Literacy Fund.

Timothy Uhrick dropped out of school when he turned 16 in the late 1950s, his uncle Rich Frank explained. He never learned to read.

"And so he regretted that," Frank said.

Nearly \$100,000 from estate will go to support literacy in Jay County

The fund that is named for Timothy Uhrick, who died June 19, 2020, and his parents will provide support for programs for the advancement of literacy for Jay County residents.

"We are honored that Tim Uhrick entrusted The Portland Foundation to fulfill his philanthropic

legacy for the community," said The Portland Foundation executive director Doug Inman said in a press release. "We are humbled by the fact that since Tim could not read, he left a gift so that other people would not have to face the same challenges he did."

Uhrick served in the National Guard and was a member of the American Legion. He had worked at J&P Custom Plating in Portland.

A decade ago, The Portland Foundation's assets stood at just over \$20 million. At its 2011 annual meeting Inman noted that

the board had set a goal of having a total endowment of \$35 million by this year.

It has far surpassed that, as Uhrick's gift pushed the foundation's total assets to more than \$43 million.

"Oh wow," said Inman when reminded of the decade-old target. "I'm in awe of our community and its generosity."

"Per capita, the endowment for 20,000 Jay County residents is over \$2,000 per person, which is unprecedented. It allows the foundation to make a significant impact on a daily basis in Jay County."



The Commercial Review/Bailey Cline

Amy Blakely took over as director of Jay County Emergency Management in January. She's been busy this month as more than a foot of snow led to instituting a travel warning and working with Jay County Commissioners to declare state of emergency.

Emergency leader

By BAILEY CLINE

The Commercial Review

Jay County Emergency Management has a new director.

Amy Blakely, a Redkey resident, started near the end of January as the new department head after former director Jessica Ooten moved to a full-time position with Jay Emergency Medical Services.

Blakely's department is specifically designed to deal with natural disaster protocol, including weather, and getting information out to the public. This also extends to the coronavirus pandemic and distributing extra personal protective equipment to county departments. Planning is a huge part of the job, she noted.

"I've always been interested in the big picture, which is what Emergency Management does, as far

Redkey's Blakely stepped into new role in January

as planning for events, planning for disasters," Blakely said. "I'm a planner by nature, so it's just a natural fit."

And with the recent snowy weather and road conditions, she's had her hands full. Blakely has been posting updates to the department's Facebook page every day and coordinating with Jay County Sheriff's Office, Jay County Highway Department, Jay School Corporation and local media for travel notices and cancellations.

Making connections and planning are a huge

part of the job, Blakely explained. She emphasized that her role is a group effort with different departments.

"I'm a big 'we' person. We will manage this," she said.

Blakely worked part time for Jay Emergency Medical Service for three years in the 1990s. She also trained for the K-9 unit in Adams County while working at the police department.

For the last three years, she's been working in the sheriff's business office at the courthouse.

See Leader page 5

Deaths

Arthur Clark, 71, rural Redkey
Details on page 2.

Weather

Jay County had a high temperature of 41 degrees Thursday. The low was 27.
Tonight's low will be in the mid 30s. Rain is expected early Saturday with the high climbing to 51. The low will be 40.
See page 2 for an extended forecast.

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 Bellmont.

Tuesday — Coverage of Monday's Portland City Council meeting.



Obituaries

Arthur Clark

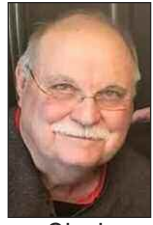
April 23, 1949-Feb. 23, 2021 Arthur "Bud" Clark, age 71, a resident of rural Redkey, passed away Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2021 at IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital in Muncie.

He was a 1968 graduate of Dunkirk High School and completed his Carpenter's Union apprenticeship in Muncie. He then taught classes at Ivy Tech in Muncie for students going through the apprenticeship. In 1972, he started Clark Contract-

ing where he specialized in the design and building of construction projects.

He enjoyed spending time with his family and going to area car shows with his 1969 Ford Cobra Mustang. He was a member of the Redkey Masonic Lodge #298 and the Fort Wayne Scottish Rite.

Arthur "Bud" Clark was born April 23, 1949, in Redkey,



Clark

Indiana, the son of Richard and Ruby (Denney) Connor. He was married to Linda Champ on April 26, 1970.

Survivors include: His beloved wife of 50 years — Linda Clark, Redkey Daughter — Aimee Flynn (fiancé: Marty Howard), New Castle Son — Ryan Clark (fiancé: Chelsie Foster), Dunkirk Two grandsons — Dustin Flynn (partner: Shannon) and Champ Clark Two brothers — Robert Cum-

mings (wife: Pat), Little Rock, Arkansas, and Darrell Cummings (Pei Ming), Fishers Sister — Sandra Bilbrey, Union City, Ohio

Visitation for friends and family will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Monday in the Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home in Portland. Funeral services will follow at 2 p.m. Pastor Glenn Greiner will officiate and burial will follow in the Hillcrest Cemetery, Redkey. Masonic services will be conducted at 1:45 p.m.

Monday by the Redkey Masonic Lodge.

Condolences may be directed to williamsonspencer.com.

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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

Table with 5 columns: Saturday 2/27, Sunday 2/28, Monday 3/1, Tuesday 3/2, Wednesday 3/3. Includes weather icons and temperature forecasts.

Lotteries

Table listing lottery results for Powerball, Mega Millions, Hoosier, and Ohio. Includes estimated jackpots and winning numbers.

Markets

Table listing commodity prices for various crops like Corn, Wheat, Beans, and Soybeans across different regions.

Today in history

On Feb. 26, 1993, a truck bomb built by Islamic extremists exploded in the parking garage of the North Tower of New York's World Trade Center, killing six people and injuring more than 1,000 others. ... In 1904, the United States and Panama proclaimed a treaty under which the U.S. agreed to undertake efforts to build a ship canal across the Panama isthmus. ... In 1945, authorities ordered a midnight curfew at nightclubs, bars and other places of entertainment across the nation. ... In 1952, Prime Minister Winston Churchill announced that Britain had developed its own atomic bomb. ... In 1966, South Korean troops sent to fight in the Vietnam War massacred at least 380 civilians in Go Dai hamlet. ... In 1971, Dunkirk High School's boys basketball team advanced to the sectional championship game with a 73-61 victory over Pennville. ... In 1994, a jury in San Antonio acquitted 11 followers of David Koresh of murder, rejecting claims they had ambushed federal agents; five were convicted of voluntary manslaughter. ... In 2017, at the 89th Academy Awards, "Moonlight," an LGBT coming of age drama, won three Oscars, including best picture of 2016 (in a startling gaffe, the musical "La La Land" was mistakenly announced as the best picture winner before the error was corrected). —AP and The CR

Citizen's calendar

Monday 5:30 p.m. — Portland City Council, council chambers, fire station, auditorium, Jay County Junior-Senior High School, 2072 W. Indiana 27, Portland. 7:30 p.m. — Fort Recovery Village Council, village hall, 201 S. Main St.



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Back with Bantz

Arts Place hosted its first live performance in more than 11 months Thursday night as Ken Bantz of Portland took the stage. While the seats in Hall-Moser Theatre were empty, Arts Place used some of its new equipment from its ongoing renovation and expansion project to live stream the concert on its Facebook and YouTube pages.

Capsule Reports

Putting on the press

Indiana State Police announced this week that troopers will be cracking down on dangerous and impaired driving. State police will be conducting "high-visibility patrols showing zero tolerance" for aggressive driving, speeding and driving under the influence. The statewide effort begins today and runs through March 21. "Dangerous and impaired driving continues to be a problem, especially around high-risk events like St. Patrick's Day and the NCAA Tournament," said Josh Watson, district commander of the Pendleton State Police Post in a press release. "However you celebrate this year, do so responsibly. Slow down, buckle up and if you drink, don't drive. It's that simple."

Deer hit

Wild animals in the road caused two accidents Thursday evening. Quenten M. Bollinger, 23, Portland, was driving north on county road 250 West near the intersection with Mount Pleasant Road about 8:30 p.m. Thursday when a deer ran into the roadway. Bollinger wasn't able to stop before hitting the animal, causing between \$2,500 and \$5,000 in damage to his 2016 Ford Escape.

Sign struck

A Portland man drove into a sign at the intersection of Meridian and Arch streets about 5:15 p.m. Thursday. Joseph R. Ruchgy, 63, told Portland Police he was driving his 2007 Chevrolet Silverado south on Meridian Street when he blacked out and drove into an Indiana Department of Transportation street sign. Damage is estimated less than \$1,000.

Flooded, icy roads

A Winchester woman driving on Indiana 1 slid off the highway and into a ditch about 6:25 a.m. Thursday. Tania L. Lewis, 28, was driving north on the highway when she came to a small flooded spot just north of the intersection with county road 150 South. Despite road closed and high water signs, she continued with her 2007 Dodge Ram through the water, according to a Jay County Sheriff's Office report. She made it through the flooded area and onto an icy patch on the highway before her vehicle slid off the road into the east ditch and rolled onto its drivers side. Lewis' vehicle was towed, with damage estimated between \$10,000 and \$25,000.

Trial ...

Continued from page 1 They say Boyd told them the shooting was in self defense and he believed Miller had a weapon. Police say they found no such weapon. Miller's girlfriend, Nicole L. Burke, was later found in the basement of the home. According to

the documents, she told police she was standing in the driveway after the shooting and Boyd ordered her into the house and told her to go to the basement. Brittney Shewmake, Boyd's girlfriend and the owner of the 1215 S. Bridge St. property, is also charged with criminal confinement, a

Level 3 felony, in connection with the incident. (Her trial is scheduled to begin June 10.) Court documents indicate that she was inside the house with two children, ages 3 and 5, at the time of the shooting. In Indiana, murder carries a sentence of 45 to 65 years with an advisory sentence of 55 years.

Deeds

Ruth M. Nieport to Ruth M. Nieport Trust, warranty deed — Section 21, Tracts 1 and 2, Jefferson Township; Part of Section 16, Tract 2, Jefferson Township Ruth M. Nieport to Ruth M. Nieport Trust, warranty deed — Part of Section 16, Tracts 1 and 2, Jefferson Township Hutton Exchange Portland IN LLC to MDC Coast 20 LLC, warranty deed — Part of Lot 6, Baker Addition, Portland Aaron Loy to Kelly and Danny Zigler, warranty deed — Part of Lot 1, Jackson and Reed Subdivision, Portland Orla E. Smith Revocable Living Trust and Annabelle E. Smith Revocable Living Trust to Michael E. Slusser and Linda D. Arnold, warranty deed — Part of Section 9, Tract B, Noble Township, 0.35 acres Michael E. Slusser and Linda D. Arnold to Orla E. Smith Revocable Living Trust and Annabelle E. Smith Revocable Living Trust, warranty deed —

Part of Section 9, Tract A, Noble Township, 0.35 acres Barbara J. Stolz to Ronald L. and Jacquelyn S. Thorne, corrective deed — Part of Section 16, Knox Township, 2.33 acres Roy S. Bunch and Dean H. Allen to Kevin E. Franklin, warranty deed — Lots 24 and 25, Manning and Evans Subdivision, Dunkirk Clayton Harris and Regina A. Jewell to Ryan K. and Chad K. Homan, warranty deed — Part of Section 27, Knox Township, 78.64 acres Brian N. and Jennifer L.

Bailey to themselves, quit claim deed — Part of Section 19, Noble Township, 3.297 acres Dave and Susie Lambert to Windgate Properties LLC, tax title deed — Lot 94, Woodlawn Park Addition Charles Ripley to Windgate Properties LLC, tax title deed — Section 33, Wayne Township, Portland Billy R. Caldwell and Lana K. Jones to Windgate Properties LLC, tax title deed — Lots 137, 138 and 139, Mt. Auburn Addition, Dunkirk See page 5

Hiemerl Farms SEEKING FULL/PART TIME FEED TRUCK DRIVER Full benefits with paid holiday and vacation Pay base off of experience If interested call 260-251-7578 or 419-942-7500

SERVICES Today Shawver, Diane: 2:30 p.m., Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home, 208 N. Commerce St., Portland. Saturday Dutcher, Cynthia: 1 p.m., MJS Mortuaries, 109 S. Meridian St., Redkey. Raszowski, Edward: 3 p.m., Pleasant Hill Church, 9945 N. 800 East, Union City. Sunday Hudson, Stephen: 2 p.m., Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home, 208 N. Commerce St., Portland. Monday Clark, Arthur: 2 p.m., Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home, 208 N. Commerce St., Portland. Service listings provided by PROGRESSIVE OFFICE PRODUCTS 120 N. Meridian St. Portland, Indiana 47371 (260) 726-9201 progressiveofficeproducts.com

Opinions should not corrupt truth

To the editor:

As I read Aaron Loy's letter to the editor in the Feb. 17 edition of The Commercial Review, I found myself agreeing with much of what Mr. Loy expressed in his opinion.

James Madison's wisdom to fight for the inclusion of a bill of rights that incorporated a foundational right of free speech in our Constitution was truly one of the more critical and prescient additions to our nation's most sacred document. Mr. Loy is absolutely correct in expressing support for there being a

Letters to the Editor

necessity for a difference of opinion in a democratic society.

In an age of "alternative facts" and "fake news," that necessity is even more apparent and pertinent. The relevance of fact and truth is an expressed sentiment in Michiko Kaku-

tani's "The Death of Truth" and also in "How Democracies Die," by Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt.

As I read Mr. Loy's letter, rambling around in the dark recesses of my gray matter was the often-quoted late Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan's counsel: "You are entitled to your own opinion but not your own facts." After ruminating on the late senator's wise admonition, I decided to offer an opinion on opinions.

It is my considered opinion that there are two kinds of opin-

ion. One type is subjective, based on what you think. The other is objective, based on demonstrable truth or fact.

For example: "Trump won the election," is subjective, based on what you think. "Trump lost the election," is objective, based on demonstrable fact or truth. The utmost importance of truth or fact is apparent as given in my example.

The perilous perniciousness of clinging to "alternate facts" or the unmitigated and unrelenting assault on the First Amendment right of a free press by the

egregious and derisive term "fake news" seems to me self-evident as to how fragile truth and fact can become in the wrong hands. The aspirations of a narcissistic megalomaniac who would be king or the rantings of a bloviating, porcine windbag snollygoster of mendacity, just two examples.

Please, by all means, express your opinion, but don't let the perfidy of thought corrupt the faithfulness of truth or the trustworthiness of fact.

Michael Kinser
Portland

Georgia presents Biden's 1st crisis

By ELI LAKE
Bloomberg Opinion

President Joe Biden has promised a foreign policy that aligns America's power with its values. The crisis in the former Soviet republic of Georgia is the administration's first test of that principle, and so far it is failing.

Long-simmering tensions between the ruling Georgian Dream Party and a coalition of opposition parties boiled over on Tuesday when authorities arrested the leader of the largest opposition faction, Nika Melia. It was a show of force that saw hundreds of police officers raid party headquarters in Tbilisi.

That arrest was a direct provocation. Melia had been charged with organizing a riot in 2019, when he participated in civil demonstrations in Tbilisi. But far more protesters were injured on that day because of the overreaction of security forces. Thus far none of the security forces — or those who ordered them to disperse the crowd — have been charged. So controversial was Melia's arrest that last week the Georgian Dream prime minister resigned at the prospect of arresting Melia, saying it would "endanger the future of Georgia's democratic and economic development."

A crisis such as this demands both stern words from the U.S. and a plan to punish the ruling government. Georgia is not a basket case. While it has backslid from democracy in recent years, the country still has a vibrant opposition and a largely free media.

And the Biden administration has leverage because the U.S. continues to provide substantial aid to Georgia. From 2010 to 2019, U.S. non-military assistance to Georgia averaged about \$64 million per year. The U.S. provided nearly \$265 million in military aid to Georgia in this same period.

And yet the first response from the State Department was tepid. Spokesman Ned Price on Tuesday condemned Melia's arrest, but then said: "We, again, call on all parties to exercise restraint and to avoid any actions or rhetoric that could escalate tensions or result in violence."

This sends a dangerous message, suggesting that both sides are responsible for the current crisis. This is simply not true. Georgia's opposition parties are refusing to be seated in the new parliament because there are still serious questions about the October elections. Meanwhile, despite an agreement reached last March, the government has opened

Eli Lake



While it has backslid from democracy in recent years, the country still has a vibrant opposition and a largely free media.

new politicized cases against opposition leaders.

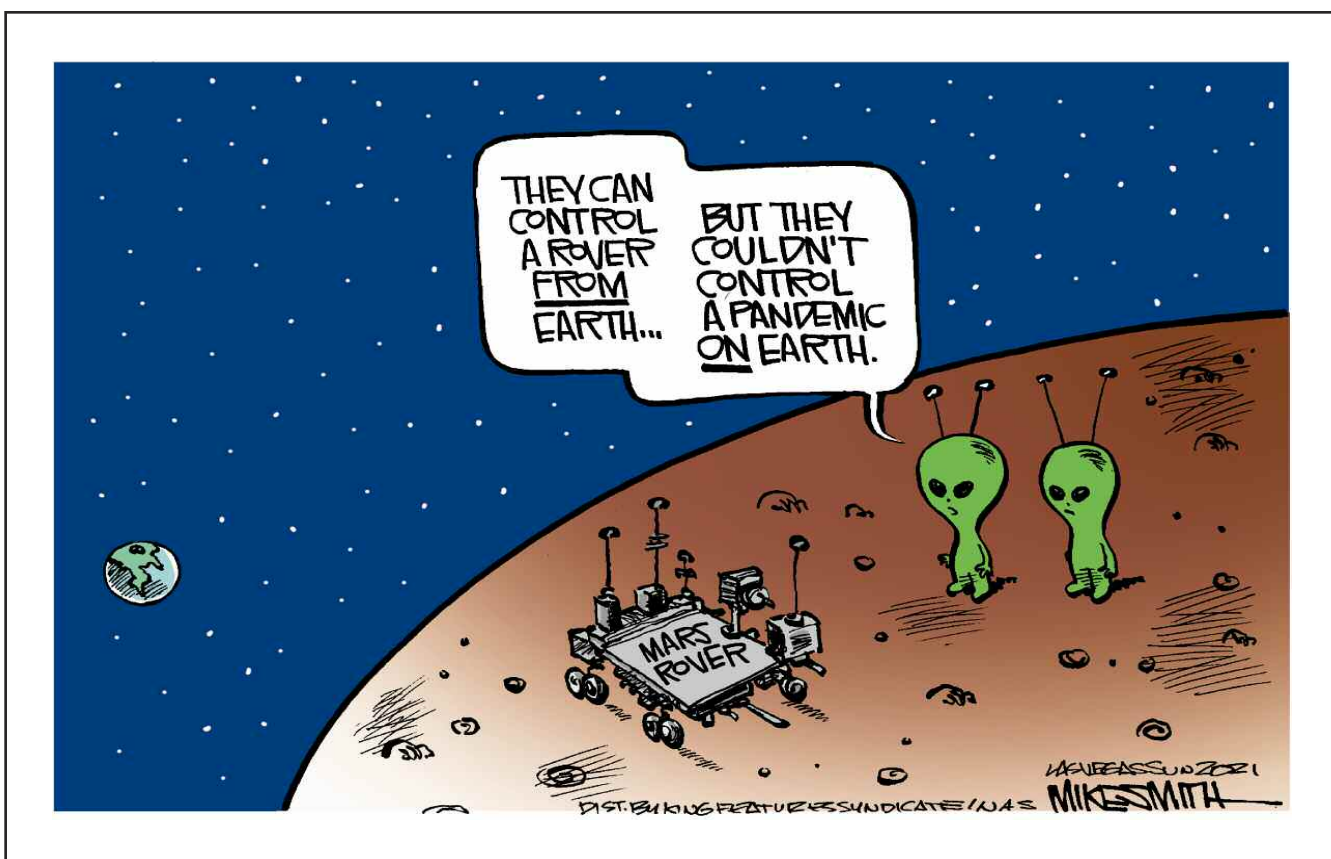
Giga Bokeria, a leader of a smaller opposition party, European Georgia, told me that the U.S. and Europe should support calls from the opposition for a new election and take a hard line against the government for breaching the earlier agreement on politicized prosecutions from March.

Another problem with the U.S.'s initial response is that it fails to hold the founder of Georgia's ruling party and its wealthiest citizen, Bidzina Ivanishvili, accountable for his role in the crisis. If Europe and the U.S. are satisfied with releasing Melia from prison, but say nothing about abuses in the October election, then the regime essentially has an incentive to take more hostages.

At the very least, the U.S. should begin the process of accounting for Ivanishvili's substantial overseas wealth. Even though the notoriously reclusive Ivanishvili announced last month that he was resigning as chairman of the Georgian Dream Party, most observers still believe that he calls the shots. If he credibly fears the U.S. government can complicate the management of his fortune, he may reassess his strategy of attempting to snuff out the remnants of his political opposition.

This was a step Biden's predecessor never took in Georgia. If Biden wants to make good on his promise that America is back as a global leader, he cannot be neutral in the battle for Georgia's democratic soul.

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Lake is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering national security and foreign policy.



Recovery is in hands of distributors

By MICHAEL J. HICKS

I've spent several days over the past month providing economic forecasts on Zoom. In this pandemic year, I gave a forecast for the five states of the Great Lakes region and seven metro areas. This is a broad set of forecasts, but the pandemic makes the forecast easier to explain. The evidence is very clear that the disease caused a sharp, historically unprecedented decline in economic activity before any state took action to slow the virus's spread.

The states that are recovering better today are not those with the lightest government action, but those who suffered the least spread of the virus. I don't yet know if it was government action or luck that reduced spread; that's the work of epidemiologists. Still, the economic evidence is overwhelming. It was always the virus that caused the recession.

The looming universal availability of the vaccine means that we face a potential end to the pandemic. So, the real start of the recovery is in the hands of vaccine distributors, not economic policymakers.

Viewers of my forecast asked many questions, but two dominated every presentation. These were, quite predictably, concerning the size of the federal debt and the long-term consequences of COVID. These are big questions, worth answering.

The U.S. federal government debt rose faster and higher under Mr. Trump's presidency than in any time in history. It is now at 125 percent of annual U.S. Gross Domestic Product. That's not far off the European Union's or UK's debt level, and less than half that of Japan's. China is very deeply indebted, but the level masked its debt through state-owned enterprises and local governments that are really extensions of the central government.

The size of the debt isn't the big worry; it is the repayment costs that matter. Our debt is almost exclusively issued as bonds, which are then bought and sold on financial markets. If buyers lose confidence in our ability or willingness to repay these bonds, they'll demand a higher interest rate. In that way, it is like any lender and borrower arrangement.

Right now, 6-month U.S. Bonds are selling at an interest rate of 0.05 percent. In other words, buyers are so

Michael J. Hicks



eager to own these bonds that they are willing to receive a negative interest rate after adjusting for inflation. As long as borrowers are willing to pay us to lend them money, we should be pleased to take on more debt.

Obviously, this happy circumstance is temporary. Interest rates will rise, and as they do, a higher proportion of our annual tax revenues will be dedicated to servicing that debt. We should worry about our debt situation before that happens. I am sure Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen is considering every way possible to issue long-term debt at low rates.

I have been a critic of government debt all my adult life, but today it is among our least pressing concerns. That will change, but we have time to adjust. To be fair, we probably will not. With both political parties having wholly abandoned fiscal conservatism as a guiding principle, I expect it'll take a crisis for us to react. That is at least years away.

The second question about long-term COVID changes mostly involved the location decisions of businesses and families. Today, 23 percent of all workers and nearly three out of four office workers are still working remotely. The technology and workplace requirements of a vast home workforce have accelerated by decades. Commercial office space values and family choices about where to live are about to undergo major changes.

Indianapolis firm Salesforce announced that most workers will not return to offices. No doubt this will affect other businesses and government operations. If a business can sustain productivity, it is far less expensive to permit employees to work at home. I would not be surprised if one out of five workers nationwide work at least part-time at home after the pandemic subsides.

The location decisions of families change with home-based work. Even if workers must be in the office one day per week, the opportunity to live

farther from the office will be alluring. This likely means less densely populated urban centers. However, easing the daily commute will not necessarily cause metropolitan places to shrink. In contrast, less congestion and a broader geographic choice of residences could swell metro areas. I'd expect demand for housing in the outer fringe of metro places to rise, as workers relocate away from the city core, but close enough for that weekly commute.

The aftermath of COVID will ease the need to be proximal to a city center, and that means workers will substitute other preferences in their location choices. Those are certain to be related to higher quality of life. Chief among the factors that determine higher quality of life are the quality of local public services, particularly public schools. Right behind that are safe neighborhoods and other factors that attracted people before COVID.

So, if your community had good schools (ranked A or a high B), safe neighborhoods, access to trails and are still within an easy drive to a large metropolitan center, you should expect faster growth. That's a good thing for places like Shelbyville, Kokomo or Daleville.

But, if you do not have high-quality schools, then your prospects are no better than they were before COVID, and may well be worse. Municipal areas near an urban core with below-average schools expect declining population as families relocate to more attractive places.

This means the geography of large metropolitan areas will expand over the next decade, perhaps much faster than anticipated. COVID has not changed Americans' preferences; it has changed their ability to act on those preferences. This means that municipal governments that were successful in making their communities more attractive to residents may well see accelerated growth over the coming decade. Those that did not will surely experience accelerated declines.

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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

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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RAY COONEY
Editor and publisher

BRIAN DODD
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"Were it left for me to decide whether we should have government without newspapers or newspapers without government I should not hesitate to prefer the latter." — Thomas Jefferson

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U.S. strikes facilities in Syria

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA, LOLITA C. BALDOR, and ROBERT BURNS
Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A U.S. airstrike in Syria targeted facilities belonging to a powerful Iranian-backed Iraqi armed group, killing one of their militiamen and wounding a number of others, an Iraqi militia official said today.

The Pentagon said the strikes were retaliation for a rocket attack in Iraq earlier this month that killed one civilian contractor and wounded a U.S. service member and other coalition troops.

The Iraqi militia official told

The Associated Press that the strikes against the Kataeb Hezbollah, or Hezbollah Brigades, hit an area along the border between the Syrian site of Boukamal facing Qaim on the Iraqi side. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak of the attack. Syria war monitoring groups said the strikes hit trucks moving weapons to a base for Iranian-backed militias in Boukamal.

"I'm confident in the target that we went after, we know what we hit," Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told reporters flying with him from California to Washington, shortly after the airstrikes

which were carried out Thursday evening Eastern Standard Time.

The airstrike was the first military action undertaken by the Biden administration, which in its first weeks has emphasized its intent to put more focus on the challenges posed by China, even as Mideast threats persist. Biden's decision to attack in Syria did not appear to signal an intention to widen U.S. military involvement in the region but rather to demonstrate a will to defend U.S. troops in Iraq.

The U.S. has in the past targeted facilities in Syria belonging to Kataeb Hezbollah, which it has

blamed for numerous attacks targeting U.S. personnel and interests in Iraq. The Iraqi Kataeb is separate from the Lebanese Hezbollah movement.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based group that monitors the war in Syria, said the strikes targeted a shipment of weapons that were being taken by trucks entering Syrian territories from Iraq. The group said 22 fighters from the Popular Mobilization Forces, an Iraqi umbrella group of mostly Shiite paramilitaries that includes Kataeb Hezbollah, were killed. The report could not be independently verified.

Defense Secretary Austin said he was "confident" the U.S. had hit back at the "the same Shia militants that conducted the strikes," referring to a Feb. 15 rocket attack in northern Iraq that killed one civilian contractor and wounded a U.S. service member and other coalition personnel.

Austin said he had recommended the action to President Joe Biden.

"We said a number of times that we will respond on our timeline," Austin said. "We wanted to be sure of the connectivity and we wanted to be sure that we had the right targets."

In review

Escaped

NEW CASTLE, Ind. — One of two inmates who escaped from an eastern Indiana jail remains, authorities said.

Jacob Dean Vanpelt, 26, escaped from the Henry County Jail around 9:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sheriff's Maj. Jay Davis said.

The other escapee, Blake Adrian Michael Tutrow, 21, was captured at a nearby apartment complex. Davis said.

The inmates escaped through an unsecured door while a security check was being conducted, he said.

—Associated Press

Finalized

WASHINGTON — The Federal Communications Commission late Thursday finalized a \$3.2 billion program that will provide a monthly discount to millions of cash-starved Americans struggling to pay their Internet bills — the country's most ambitious effort yet to close the digital divide amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The first-of-its-kind emergency program aims to support families who are at or near the poverty line, workers who have recently lost their jobs, and students who receive some federal assistance to subsidize their higher-education costs. Many of these Americans will see their Internet bills reduced by as much as \$50 a month in credits paid to their Internet service providers, and residents of tribal areas are eligible for even larger discounts.

—Washington Post

Damaged

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — An explosion struck an Israeli-owned cargo ship sailing out of the Middle East today, an unexplained blast renewing concerns about ship security amid escalating tensions between the U.S. and Iran.

The crew and vessel were safe, according to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, which is run by the British navy. The explosion forced the vessel to head to the nearest port.

The site of the blast, the Gulf of Oman, saw a series of explosions in 2019 that the U.S. Navy blamed on Iran against the backdrop of steeply rising threats between former President Donald Trump and Iranian leaders. Tehran denied the accusations, which came after Trump abandoned Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers and reimposed harsh sanctions on the country.

—Associated Press

Taking priority

Mexican troops secure the coronavirus vaccination site in San Pedro el Alto. The government of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador is prioritizing the country's poorest citizens, using the vaccine as a kind of reparation for years of marginalization.



Washington Post/Kevin Sieff

Leader ...

Continued from page 1
She worked as a 911 operator in the county for 15 years prior.

She's also been the preparedness coordinator at Jay County Health Department for eight years.

Ooten, who previously held the director role for about two years, is now working as an emergency medical technician with Jay Emergency Medical Service. She

explained she wanted to return to a more hands-on job.

"I enjoy all aspects of public safety, really," she said. "But I really found my love for being with patients in the EMS ... being there for (patients) in their worst time, that's kinda what drives me personally ..."

Blakely's familiarity with the role made the transition go smoothly, Ooten continued.

Her time as a 911 operator, including several years as assistant director, helped Blakely to establish the relationships she now uses regularly. She also learned how to manage a budget and payroll while working at the sheriff's business office.

Something she recalls about working in the 911 department is how often residents would call asking about the weather.

Before, she would recommend those individuals to other sources. Now, she's the one making decisions and posting online about weather and disaster information.

Local residents curious about natural disaster procedures or weather conditions can check the Jay County Emergency Management Facebook page or call (260) 726-6908.

Minimum wage bump is a no-go

By ALAN FRAM
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats are ready to shove a \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package through the House today, despite a setback that means a minimum wage boost is unlikely to be in the final version.

A near party-line vote seemed certain on the measure, Biden's first crack at his initial legislative goal of acting decisively against the pandemic.

The bill would provide millions of people with \$1,400 direct payments. It contains billions of dollars for vaccines and COVID-19 testing, schools, state and local governments, the ailing restaurant and airline industries and emergency jobless benefits.

Republicans oppose the sweeping measure, saying it's too expensive and not targeted enough at the people and businesses that most need it.

Deeds

Continued from page 1
Ryan A. Clark to Windgate Properties LLC, tax title deed — Lot 6, Sullivan George Addition, Dunkirk

John C. Turner to Raymond Castillo, quit claim deed — Lot 19, Votaws West Addition, Portland

Credit Suisse First Boston Mortgage Securities Corporation, Home Equity Asset Trust, Home Equity Pass-Through Certificates and U.S. Bank

National Association to Gilberto C. Montes-Sarmiento and Cinthia P. Mendez-Sandoval, warranty deed — Lot 46, south Portland

Madison R. Valentine to Alden H. Glessner, warranty deed — Part of Lot 1, Railroad Addition, Dunkirk

Bernard E. Rupe Jr. (deceased) and Heidi M. Rupe to Heidi M. Rupe, deed affidavit — Part of Lot 78, south Portland

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Fort Recovery High School freshman Mara Pearson defends Minster senior Janae Hoying during the first quarter of the Division IV district semifinal on Thursday at Wapakoneta. The Indians lost, 50-32.



The Commercial Review/Chris Schanz

Spartans improve resume with win over No. 4 OSU

By LARRY LAGE

AP Sports Writer
EAST LANSING, Mich. — Tom Izzo walked into the locker room with fists in the air and an ear-to-ear grin on his face, welcoming water getting doused on him by Michigan State's players celebrating what clearly was not just another win.

Aaron Henry had 18 points to help the Spartans improve their chances of making the NCAA Tournament with a 71-67 win over No. 4 Ohio State on Thursday night, two days after Izzo's team beat No. 5 Illinois by nine points.

The Hall of Fame coach led Michigan State to the national championship in 2000, early in a string of 22 straight NCAA Tournaments that includes eight trips to the Final Four.

This year, though, it looked as if the Spartans (13-9, 7-9 Big Ten) would not make their usual appearance in the NCAA Tournament until their recent surge with three straight wins.

And that's why Izzo had no problem with the postgame celebration.

"There would've been days I would've chewed them out for that," he said.

Michigan State beat top-five teams in consecutive conference games for the first time in program history.

The Spartans rallied from a nine-point, second-half deficit against Ohio State with Gabe Brown finishing with 11 points and Josh Langford making key plays at both ends of the court.

The Buckeyes (18-6, 12-6) closed the game without coach Chris Holtmann, who was ejected for arguing with officials when he was called for a second technical foul with 1.4 seconds left.

"I'm not going to talk specifically about the officiating," Holtmann said.

Ohio State's E.J. Liddell had 18 points on 4 of 13 shooting and Duane Washington scored 17 on 7 of 16 shooting.

"We had trouble finishing around the baskets," Holtmann said.

C.J. Walker scored 12 points and Justice Sueing added 10 for the Buckeyes.

The Buckeyes went ahead 49-40 midway through the second half, but Henry and Langford would not let them pull away as Michigan State outscored them 15-6 to pull into a 55-all tie with 6:42 left.

Malik Hall made free throws to put the Spartans ahead 64-63 with 2:23 to go. Henry followed with a jumper to give them a three-point lead with 1:08 remaining.

Both teams took turns making free throws until Michigan State's Joey Hauser missed the first of two free throws.

That gave the Buckeyes the ball with 12.8 seconds left and a chance to tie or win the game in regulation. Washington came up short, defended by Langford, on a layup with about five seconds left to trigger Holtmann's second technical.

"Give Michigan State credit," Holtmann said. "They were more physical."

Michigan State was coming off an 81-72 win over No. 5 Illinois at home on Tuesday and started strong against the Buckeyes, leading 11-6 a few minutes into the game. Henry went to the bench with 6:45 left in the first half after getting called for a second foul and scoring nine points, leading to the Buckeyes leading 38-33 at halftime.

Hampers ...

Continued from page 10
The Indians got within two, 9-7, in the final two minutes, but another turnover and a missed 3-pointer aided in Minster (21-1) ending on a 5-0 run.

During the second quarter, Kierra Wendel made a jumper from the left elbow to make it 17-11 nearly two minutes in. But the Wildcat defense flexed its muscles again, all the while hitting shots at the other end.

Ella Mescher drained a 3-pointer from the left wing, then Ivy Wolf followed with a step-back triple to make it 23-11. Mason Pohl added two points before Mescher and Wolf both got easy baskets on Tribe turnovers. After Wendel's basket, the Indians committed six turnovers and the Wildcats ended the half on a 14-2 run.

"We won a bunch of deflections," Wiss said. "Through the first quarter and a half, we had seven defensive deflections. In the last four minutes, we had 12. Those defensive deflections led to some easy ones that really gave us a cushion at halftime."

Fort Recovery, which

trailed 31-13 and shot just 5-of-13 (38.5%) at intermission, was able to get a little bit of offense going in the third quarter as it outscored Minster 10-7. Wendel made a 3-pointer from the left wing, while Brenna Homan, Ali Vaughn and Mara Pearson had two points each.

Down 15 after three quarters, the Indians never managed to get closer than a baker's dozen during the fourth and finished the night with 21 turnovers.

"You have to be pretty mentally tough to continue to play in a game when they don't stop," Gann said. "(Minster) isn't a team that's going to stop. This isn't a team that's going to pull their starters out. That just wears on you."

"Early we were running them hard (and) trying to get them out for breaks. By the end of the game, playing this pace and asking the girls to play really aggressive, we knew we were eventually going to run out of steam. I think the fourth quarter we just looked really tired."

Wendel, Vaughn and Pearson led the Indians,

Box score			
No. 4 Minster Wildcats vs. Fort Recovery Indians			
Division IV district semifinal at Wapakoneta			
Girls varsity summary			
Fort Recovery (16-7)			
	FG-FGA	FT-FTA	PTS
Homan	0-2	2-2	2
Fortkamp	2-6	1-2	5
KWendel	3-7	0-0	7
Vaughn	2-8	3-3	7
Rammel	1-2	0-0	2
Pearson	3-4	1-2	7
HWendel	0-0	0-0	0
Guggenbllr	1-2	0-0	2
AWendel	0-0	0-0	0
Allig	0-0	0-0	0
Totals	12-31	7-9	32
	.387	.778	
Minster 21-1			
	FG-FGA	FT-FTA	PTS
Wolf	7-15	1-1	18
Hoying	4-10	0-0	9
Pohl	1-5	0-0	2
Mescher	6-12	0-0	14
Prenger	1-3	2-2	4
Heuker	0-3	0-0	0
Boldiges	0-1	0-0	0
Meiring	1-3	0-0	3
Lamm	0-0	0-0	0
Clune	0-0	0-0	0
Wiss	0-0	0-0	0
KOldiges	0-1	0-0	0
Niemeyer	0-0	0-0	0
Totals	20-53	3-3	50
	.377	1.00	
Score by quarters:			
Fort Rec. 7 6 10 9 — 32			
Minster 14 17 7 12 — 50			
3-point shooting: Fort Recovery 1-8 (KWendel 1-4, Homan 0-1, Fortkamp 0-1, Rammel 0-1, Guggenbiller 0-1), Minster 7-21 (Wolf 3-7, Mescher 2-3, Hoying 1-4, Meiring 1-2, Pohl 0-2, Heuker 0-2, Prenger 0-1).			
Rebounds: Fort Recovery 26 (Vaughn 8, Rammel 4, team 4, Homan 3, KWendel 3, Fortkamp 2, Pearson, Guggenbiller). Minster 28 (Wolf 6, Hoying 4, Mescher 4, team 4, Pohl 3, PRenger 3, BOldiges 2, Meiring, KOldiges).			
Assists: Fort Recovery 5 (Homan 2, KWendel 2, Vaughn). Minster 11 (Hoying 6, Wolf 3, Mescher, Prenger).			
Blocks: Fort Recovery 2 (KWendel, Vaughn). Minster 0.			
Personal fouls: Fort Recovery 11 (Vaughn 3, Guggenbiller 3, Homan 2, Fortkamp, Rammel, Pearson). Minster 8 (Heuker 3, Mescher 2, Hoying, Pohl, BOldiges).			
Turnovers: Fort Recovery 21, Minster 10.			

who finished 12-for-31 (38.7%) from the field, with seven points apiece.

Wolf, the three-time MAC player of the year and

future Miami (Ohio) Red-Hawk, had a game-high 18 points.

Mescher contributed 14 points for Minster.

Sports on tap

Local schedule

Today
Jay County — Boys basketball triple-header vs. Bellmont — 6 p.m.
Fort Recovery — Boys basketball sectional final at St. Henry — 7 p.m.

Saturday
Jay County — Gymnastics sectional at Concordia — noon; Junior high wrestling hosts Jay County Invitational — 9:30 p.m.

Monday
Jay County — Junior high wrestling at Blackford — 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday
Jay County — Boys basketball sectional quarterfinal vs. Delta at New Castle — 7:30 p.m.
Fort Recovery — Boys basketball district semifinal vs. TBA at Wapakoneta — 5:30 p.m.

Thursday
Jay County — Junior high swimming at Bluffton — 6 p.m.

March 5
Jay County — Boys basketball sectional semifinal vs. Burriss at New Castle — 7 p.m. (TBD)
Fort Recovery — Boys basketball district final at Wapakoneta — 7 p.m. (TBD)

TV schedule

Today
7 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Purdue at Penn State (FS1); Richmond at St. Louis (ESPN2)
7:30 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Indiana Pacers at Boston Celtics (ESPN/FSN)
9 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Nevada at Utah State (FS1); Georgia State at South Alabama (ESPN2)
10 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Portland Trail Blazers at Los Angeles Lakers (ESPN)
11 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: UC Santa Barbara at UC Riverside (ESPN2)

Saturday
Noon — Men's College Basketball: Texas at Texas Tech (CBS); Tennessee at Auburn (ESPN); Georgetown at DePaul (FS1)
2 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Illinois at Wisconsin (ESPN); LSU at Arkansas (ESPN2)
2:30 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Marquette at UConn (FOX)
3 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Oklahoma State at Oklahoma (ABC); Washington at Arizona (CBS)
4 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Kansas State at West Virginia (ESPN2); Florida State at North Carolina (ESPN); Florida at Kentucky (CBS)
5 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Creighton at Xavier (FOX)
6 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Louisville at Duke (ESPN)
7 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Minnesota at Nebraska (BTN)
7 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Indiana Pacers at New York Knicks (FSN)
8 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Baylor at Kansas (ESPN); USC at Utah (ESPN2)
8:30 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Dallas Mavericks at Brooklyn Nets (ABC)
10 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Loyola Marymount at Gonzaga (ESPN); UCLA at Colorado (ESPN2); Oregon at California (FS1)

Sunday
Noon — Men's College Basketball: Villanova at Butler (CBS)
1 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Memphis at Cincinnati (ESPN)
2 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Michigan State at Maryland (CBS)
3:30 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Los Angeles Clippers at Milwaukee Bucks (ABC)
4 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Iowa at Ohio State (CBS)
7 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Nevada at Utah State (FS1)
8 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Golden State Warriors at Los Angeles Lakers (ESPN)

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Sports

First half hampers Fort in semifinal

Thirteen turnovers and just five field goals in first 16 minutes spells disaster in 50-32 loss to No. 4 Minster

By CHRIS SCHANZ

The Commercial Review
WAPAKONETA, Ohio — The Tribe defense is usually giving other teams fits.

Thursday, the Wildcats were not intimidated by the pressure. And their tenacity while the Indians had the ball was a little too suffocating at times.

Fort Recovery High School's girls basketball team committed 13 first-half turnovers and, when it was able to keep the ball, struggled to make shots in a 50-32 loss to Midwest Athletic Conference rival Minster on Thursday in the Division IV district semifinal at Wapakoneta.

"Obviously, Minster is good," said FRHS coach Holly Gann, whose team ends the year 16-7. "The girls played hard. I don't think any coach can be disappointed when the girls go out and do what you want ... (The girls) just gave it their all tonight and unfortunately it didn't fall in our favor."

"We had opportunities. We had our chances. They were able to multiply on them and we just didn't."

Minster, which is ranked fourth in the state and is the district's top seed, advance to the regional championship game at 7:30 p.m. Saturday against New Knoxville. The Rangers defeated Marion Local 32-27 in the second All-MAC semifinal later Thursday night.

"I'm happy to be coming back on Saturday," said Minster coach Mike Wiss, whose team will play New Knoxville in the district final for the third straight season.

Fort Recovery (16-7), which fell to Minster 58-27 during the regular season and has lost to the Wildcats in district play three out of the last four seasons, struggled early offensively as it turned the ball over on four of its first eight possessions.

See **Hampers** page 9



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32



Fort Recovery High School senior Paige Fortkamp (14) reaches to grab an offensive rebound between Mason Pohl (22) and Jenna Heuker of Minster during the first quarter of the Division IV district semifinal on Thursday at Wapakoneta. The Indians had their season end with a 50-32 loss to the fourth-ranked Wildcats.

The Commercial Review/Chris Schanz



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