

The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

www.thecr.com

\$1

Ready to reopen

By BAILEY CLINE

The Commercial Review
Local government offices are open to the public again.

Jay County Commissioners signed a resolution Wednesday during a special meeting to reopen Jay County Courthouse and all county offices and departments without need of an appointment.

Regular business operations at the building will began today.

Former commissioners Mike Leonhard and Chuck Huffman and commissioner Chad Aker signed a resolution at an emergency meeting Nov. 30 enacting restrictions in response to coronavirus concerns. At that time, Jay had been in the severe risk category (2.5 on a three-point scale) for several weeks on the Indiana State Department of Health's COVID-19 ratings.

Huffman had proposed a resolution at a previous meeting to protect county employees and prevent further spread of the virus. He said concerns about cases and hospitals filling as well as courthouse employees' safety warranted action.

Previously, the courthouse was only open to appointments, and county government business was limited to essential work only. Employees or members of the public entering were required to wear facial covers and social distance.

It's been more than three months since that decision, and since then, the numbers have changed.

Jay has been ranked "blue" (minimal risk for the spread of coronavirus) since Feb. 17 (see related story).

Commissioners Rex Journay, Brian McGalliard and Aker agreed Monday to meet for a few minutes before their joint-executive session with Jay County Council to sign the resolution into effect.

The new resolution is



The Commercial Review/Bailey Cline

Jay County Commissioners met briefly Wednesday to reopen Jay County Courthouse, as well as all county offices and departments. The courthouse had been limited to visits by appointment only since late November because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

modeled after a similar measure passed June 22, which went into effect July 6. All offices and departments are open to the public, county employees are required to wear facial coverings and social distance and also wash their hands and sanitize frequently.

Each office and department is in charge of cleaning its respective offices and work areas. Courthouse superintendent Bruce Sutton is in charge of keeping the courthouse main areas clean. He's also tasked with providing disinfectant to all offices and departments as needed.

Commissioners passed the resolution unanimously. "Anything we can do to get closer to back to normalcy, I'm happy with," Aker commented after the meeting. "I think people know the risks, so, people can make that decision (to visit the courthouse) for themselves."

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Jay stays blue

County is rated low risk for fourth week in a row

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review
Jay County is "blue" for the fourth week in a row.

The county continued to be rated at low risk for spread of coronavirus in the Indiana State Department of Health update Wednesday. It marked the fourth consecutive week with a blue rating locally.

Also Wednesday, the state department of health announced teachers and other school employees, regardless of age, will be able to get coronavirus vaccines through Indiana's clinics beginning next week.

While remaining at the lowest level in the state's metrics, Jay County's numbers went up in the statistics used to create those ratings. Its cases per 100,000 residents doubled to 48 from 24 the previous week and its positivity rate ticked up to 2.7% from 1.87%.

After no counties were in the "orange" (high risk) range last week, Tipton moved back to that section this week. Sixty-one counties, including Adams, Wells, Blackford, Delaware and Randolph, were blue, and the other 30 were "yellow" (moderate risk).

The coronavirus vaccine is currently available to Hoosiers 50 or older. The expansion to school personnel includes aides, bus drivers, cafeteria workers and substitute teachers.

Indiana has been focused on getting vaccinations to older residents and health care workers in an effort to prevent serious illness and death.

"We had a plan. We were executing that plan very methodically. We were using data to drive all of our decisions about who was most at-risk," Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb said Wednesday. "Our federal partners have said you need to add (teachers) in to any site, and so we will do that."

Jay County continues to have vaccination clinics available at the health department, IU Health Jay and Walmart. The vaccination at the health department runs from 11:15 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays as well as 8:30 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Saturdays, and the clinic at the hospital has appointments from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Appointments can be made by visiting ourshot.in.gov or calling the state's 2-1-1 telephone assistance service.

See Blue page 2

Council discusses impact of \$15 wage

Auditor wants to be prepared if significant increase is implemented

... there probably needs to be some sort of adjustment."

There hasn't been a federal minimum wage adjustment in America since 2009, when it was raised from \$6.55 per hour to the current \$7.25 per hour.

A jump to \$10 or even \$12 minimum wage would not impact local government workers, but a \$15 minimum wage would, Culy explained.

Currently, the county's lowest paying job is \$12.10 per hour. There are at least two other classifications that are below \$15 an hour as well.

"I'm not trying to get into a political debate, I'm just saying it's been talked about, it's something that we cannot completely ignore," Culy said.

Council member Ted Champ responded, "No, I don't think we're going to ignore it, but I don't think they have the votes to go to \$15."

See Wage page 2



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Poles in waiting

New utility poles were stacked along the north side of county road 200 South just west of Indiana 167 this week awaiting installation in the area.

By BAILEY CLINE

The Commercial Review
If the federal minimum wage increased, Jay County officials want to be ready.

County auditor Anna Culy brought up the topic to Jay County Council on Wednesday.

"We don't know what's going to happen," she said, addressing the national proposal for a \$15 minimum wage. "If it does go through

Weather

Jay County's high temperature climbed to 68 degrees Wednesday. The low was 50.

Rain is expected tonight with the low dropping into the upper 30s and winds gusting to 20

miles per hour. Expect mostly sunny skies Friday with a high near 55. Highs this weekend will be around 50.

See page 2 for an extended outlook.

In review

Plans for U.S. Aggregates to expand to the north of its current site has come up at multiple recent meetings. What are your thoughts on the proposed project?

Send letters to the editor to rcooney@thecr.com. There is a 700-word maximum.

Coming up

Friday — Developed ground needs to be repurposed. Eye on the Pie.

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



Boards line up to oppose expansion

AP and staff reports

INDIANAPOLIS — Local school leaders across Indiana are lining up against a Republican-backed school funding plan over concerns it would give private schools a big financial boost at the detriment of traditional public schools.

Projected to cost \$144 million, the voucher expansion and a new program allowing parents to directly spend state money on their child's education expenses would siphon more than one-third of the proposed state funding hike for Indiana schools.

In response, at least 65 public school boards, including Jay School Board, have passed formal resolutions against the proposed legislation through a campaign organized by the Indiana School Boards Association. Terry Spradlin, the association's executive director, said that more than a third of the state's 289 school districts are expected to adopt resolutions before legislators finalize the budget next month.

"Folks are speaking up and

speaking out locally and that's what we're encouraging them to do," he said. "We're arguing that now's not the time for additional expansion. We want public funds to fund public schools. We want them to support public education and have the dollars follow the child."

In addition to urban school districts around Indianapolis, Fort Wayne and Evansville, dozens of smaller school corporations have also signaled their dissent.

Jay School Board held a special meeting March 1 for the sole purpose of addressing the proposed legislation.

"This needs to die. This needs to go away," said Jay School

Board president Phil Ford during the meeting. "It doesn't need to be amended or scaled back, it needs to die. And as you contact your legislators, I hope you will tell them that. ...

"It's a bad move for Jay County. It's a bad move for rural schools. It's amazing to me that one of the authors of this bill is a rural resident in our area."

The board and Jay Classroom Teachers Association also collaborated on a letter to the editor in opposition to vouchers and other programs that allow tax dollars to be directed to private schools.

In what's believed to be the

first and largest meeting of its kind in Indiana, members of eight school boards in rural northern Indiana gathered last week to each pass respective resolutions. Five other school boards sent representatives or administrators to the meeting, though they did not hold votes.

"Some may ask, 'Why are we meeting on these bills when many of us don't have private or charter schools in our districts, or even close to our districts?'" North White Superintendent Nick Eccles said during last week's meeting. "My response is simple: Any of us can have a charter or private school move into our districts at any time, which can greatly cripple our budgets."

Thirty-three of Indiana's 92 counties do not have a voucher program option, and another 31 counties only have one private school taking part in the program, Spradlin said. Nearly all of those students are instead educated through public schools, meaning "those dol-

lars should come back home and support our kids," he said.

"Increasing the funds for those programs from ... that's taking away and diverting money that could go to our schools, our students, our families, our constituents and our communities," Spradlin said. "We can tinker around the edges with these fringe programs that educate a few, and a small percentage of children, or we can invest in our public education system with 1 million of our citizens enrolled in those schools."

Republicans, who dominate the Legislature, say their proposal gives parents more choices over how to educate their children, while Democrats and other opponents argue that it further drains funding from traditional school districts while they are struggling to find ways to boost the state's lagging teacher pay.

The debate comes as the state Senate is considering both the state budget plan and school voucher expansion bill approved by the House last month.

CR almanac

Friday 3/12	Saturday 3/13	Sunday 3/14	Monday 3/15	Tuesday 3/16
55/32	50/35	47/31	42/32	46/30
Temperatures will begin to drop under mostly sunny skies. There will be 5 to 10 mph winds.	Mostly cloudy by day and night, with cooler temperatures through the rest of the weekend.	40% chance of rain at night. Otherwise mostly cloudy with cool temperatures.	50% chance of snow and rain during the day and night. Skies will be mostly cloudy.	Skies will be mostly cloudy during the day and clear by the evening. Temperatures in the high 40s.

Lotteries

Powerball
17-18-37-44-53
Power Ball: 18
Power Play: 3
Estimated jackpot: \$169 million

47-49-56-71-75-76-79
Cash 5: 7-9-27-30-43
Hoosier Lotto: 1-10-11-15-20-39
Estimated jackpot: \$7 million

Mega Millions
Estimated jackpot: \$79 million

Hoosier
Midday
Daily Three: 0-2-4
Daily Four: 0-4-8-5
Quick Draw: 3-4-6-11-13-14-24-27-36-43-47-48-54-61-65-67-69-73-74-76
Evening
Daily Three: 5-6-5
Daily Four: 6-6-7-0
Quick Draw: 3-7-9-19-26-29-32-33-34-40-41-45-46

Ohio
Midday
Pick 3: 9-9-6
Pick 4: 7-3-7-5
Pick 5: 7-0-7-3-4
Evening
Pick 3: 3-2-0
Pick 4: 1-9-4-8
Pick 5: 7-3-6-7-3
Rolling Cash: 1-4-9-23-26
Classic Lotto: 7-10-15-18-43-48
Kicker: 2-1-1-9-9-8
Estimated jackpot: \$5.6 million

Markets

Cooper Farms Fort Recovery Corn.....5.39 Wheat6.06	Central States Montpelier Corn.....5.33 April corn5.35 Beans14.13 April beans14.13 Wheat6.27 July wheat 6.02
POET Biorefining Portland Corn.....5.48 April corn5.53	Sunrise St. Anthony Corn.....5.38 April corn5.42 Beans14.09 April beans14.14 Wheat5.90 April wheat6.45
The Andersons Richland Township Corn.....5.42 April corn5.42 Beans14.25 April beans14.18 Wheat 6.41 April wheat 6.41	

Today in history

On March 11, 1918, what were believed to be the first confirmed U.S. cases of a deadly global flu pandemic were reported among U.S. Army soldiers stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas; 46 would die. (The worldwide outbreak of influenza claimed an estimated 20 to 40 million lives.)

In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Lend-Lease Bill, providing war supplies to countries fighting the Axis.

In 1976, Sheller Globe's Employee's Scholarship and Welfare Committee announced that it would give eight \$300 college scholarships and eight \$200 scholarships for qualified students of its employees.

—AP and The CR

Citizen's calendar

Thursday
7 p.m. — Jay County Plan Commission, Community Resource Center, 118 S. Meridian St., Portland.

Monday
4 p.m. — Jay School Board executive session, General Shanks, 414 E. Floral Ave., Portland.

5 p.m. — Jay School Board, General Shanks, 414 E. Floral Ave., Portland.

5:30 p.m. — Portland City Council, council chambers, fire station, 1616 N. Franklin St.

'Reason' duet

Paige Bihn sings and plays the piano Sunday during Cabaret 2021, which featured performances from the Fort Recovery High School junior high and high school choirs. Bihn performed a duet of Calum Scott's "You are the Reason."

The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Wage ...

Continued from page 1

The \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief bill that was passed by the House of Representatives on Wednesday afternoon originally had language including a minimum wage bump when it was originally introduced. (However, in order to gain enough support for the bill, Democrats removed the provision that called for a federal minimum-wage increase to \$15 hourly by 2025.)

Still, another proposal could appear again at the U.S. Capitol at some point for approval.

Several council members voiced a need for a minimum wage increase to some extent Wednesday.

Council member Faron Parr said after the meeting \$15 does "seem like a lot," although he advocated for that amount jumping to around \$9 or \$10.

"I mean, really, how it's gotten by so long at \$7.25, it's like, you can't hire anybody at \$7.25," he said.

Council member Mike Rockwell also said after the meeting that the minimum wage should be tied to inflation and adjusted as needed.

"And that would fix it for the long term, not have this every 10 years and have this big fight about it," he said.

Despite discussion, council took no immediate action on the matter.

Council also appropriated \$5,000 for Jay County Humane Society to pay for a rendering of its proposed new facility. (Commissioners agreed to give the organization the funding at the end of February.)

In other business, council members, Jeanne Houchins, Matt Minnich, Ray Newton, Amy Runyon Barrett, Rockwell, Parr and Champ: Made the following additional appropriations: \$300,000 for coronavirus-related equipment, including a \$149,000 body scanner for Jay County Jail; \$26,344.75 to Jay County Fairgrounds for the northern restroom construction project and \$23,075.76 for Jay Emergency Medical Service's new ventilator and LUCAS chest compression system (the department bought two last year with CARES Act funding).

•Transferred the following: \$497.50 from the travel and mileage fund to computer maintenance fund for Jay County Prosecutor's Office; \$2.30 from Social Security to Public Employees' Retirement Fund for Jay County Community Corrections; \$2,500 from repair buildings and structures to machinery and equipment and office supplies for Jay County Courthouse.

•Appointed Minnich as the council representative at Jay County Plan Commission meetings.

Blue ...

Continued from page 1

Thus far, 3,354 first doses of coronavirus vaccines have been administered in Jay County. Nearly 2,000 have been fully vaccinated.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated its COVID-19 guidelines this week, noting that those who are fully vaccinated can gather with other vaccinated individuals indoors without wearing a mask or social distancing. The CDC also noted that those who are vaccinated can gather with those who are considered at low risk for severe illness, such as grandparents visiting healthy children and grandchildren.

In public spaces, however, mask wearing and social distancing are still recommended. Other key guidelines include frequent hand washing, avoiding large crowds and staying home when sick.

Holcomb did not make any additional changes to state COVID-19 restrictions.

"We'll get there ... I'm very optimistic," he said. "But I'm laser-focused on Indiana, and I want to make sure we continue to do the things that are responsible in terms of the effects it has on our public health at large."

SERVICES

Friday
Hardymon, Nancy: 2 p.m., Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home, 208 N. Commerce St., Portland.

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Celebration can now be enjoyed

By DIANA DOLECKI

Special to The Commercial Review

It is a beautiful day outside today. Better yet, the temperatures are supposed to be reasonably warm the rest of the week.

Grandson Jacob has a birthday next week. I went to the local store and purchased the exact toy his mom told me to get. I even have a birthday card for him. This is uncharacteristic of me. I am usually still searching for presents and cards the day of the actual birthday. Now the challenge is to get stuff to the post office in time. Wish me luck.

Jacob is the one who reminds me so much of my brother, Michael. Both are avid fishermen.

Neither of them is afraid of

As I See It



any kind of wildlife and each will willingly pick up things like snakes that are better left alone. They each have a heart of gold.

I still cherish the photograph of a toddler Jacob, sitting in an empty diaper box which was his boat. He is holding a tape measure that was his fishing pole. Assorted toys were strewn on the floor representing fish and water. The kid does have an active imagination.

It is baseball season in Texas. Jacob and his little brother, Nicholas, are both on baseball teams. They are both good at smacking the ball. This past week Nicholas hit a foul ball that ended up bouncing off the top of a spectator's car. He winced when he saw it. Jacob got several good hits and no cars were involved. Nicholas also "took one for the team" when he got hit in the shoulder by a ball. I'm sure it hurt but he didn't writhe around in pain nearly as much as the pros do.

I have learned not to ask who won the game. It is enough that they enjoy themselves.

This will probably be the last year I am told to buy toys for the boys. When they turn 13 I give them the choice of cash or

presents. Jacob will be 13 next year. I would rather give presents but I have to admit it is a lot easier and cheaper to send a check.

Jacob is the one we worry about. He is the one who went through brain surgery and now has to give himself daily shots and medicines to counteract the damages. The treatments seem to be working as he looks taller and slimmer than he was in the last set of photos I saw. He has not allowed the possibility of the growth coming back to limit any portion of his life. We could all learn to cope as well as he does.

During the last blast of winter Jacob's family was without electricity for a while. Their well house froze, so they were

without a good source of water until they got it fixed. My daughter's step-sister and her baby girl were visiting. Jacob discovered that the baby liked to lie on a blanket while he pulled her around the kitchen.

The water and electricity are once again doing what they are supposed to. The grandchildren go to school during the day, and to baseball most evenings. For my daughter's family things are returning to normal.

They still wear masks, wash their hands often and use hand sanitizer when possible. I doubt if they can stay 6 feet apart or even 3 feet. But for now they are safe and Jacob can enjoy his birthday celebration.

Former nanny tired of hiding relationship

DEAR ABBY: I am an out-and-proud lesbian who recently celebrated 10 years as a couple and three years of marriage to my wife. I worked as a professional nanny for many years, and I'm still extremely close to the first family I worked for. Although we have known each other for years, they still ask me not to mention my marriage when I'm around their kids. They refer to my wife as my "roommate." It's all I can do to bite my tongue. I have ignored this for too long.

I recently invited them over to

Dear Abby



see my new home. Because of their conservative views, I warned them in advance about the wedding photos I have displayed. I'm not ashamed of my life. I am extremely proud of

myself and my wife. I am hurt and offended by their requests. I feel they only accept certain parts of me.

I realize it's unhealthy to continue this way, but I'm terrified of losing them. I'm usually a straightforward person. I feel open communication is important with everyone else in my life. But I have lost relationships before because, no matter how respectful I tried to be, honesty can sometimes be hard to hear. How can I be honest without angering this couple, and what's

the best way to start this conversation?—OUTSPOKEN NANNY

DEAR NANNY: If your former employers think they can censor their children's world to omit the fact that perfectly nice people, including one they love, are gay, they're dreaming. Kids today are very worldly. When the parents started calling your wife your roommate, you should have corrected them then and TOLD them it was offensive and hurtful. Invite them to your home

and leave your wedding photos displayed. Why you are terrified that your relationship with them will end because you're living your authentic life mystifies me. If they can't handle the truth, you and your wife are better off without them.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.Dear-Abby.com.

Sudoku

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

Level: Intermediate

Wednesday's Solution

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

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

Community Calendar

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

Today

PIKE FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS — Will meet at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, March 11, at Richards Restaurant in Portland.

CELEBRATE RECOVERY — A 12-step Christian recovery program meets at 10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. each Thursday at A Second Chance At Life Ministries, 228 S. Meridian St. in Portland. For more information, call Brenda Eads at (260) 726-9625 or Dave Keen at (260) 251-8792.

SENIOR CITIZENS CARD CLUB — Will meet at 1 p.m. on the first, second, third and fifth Thursday of each month at Jay Community Center.

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

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

A BETTER LIFE - BRIANNA'S HOPE — A faith-based recovery group for all kinds of addictions, will meet from 6:30 to 8 p.m. each Thursday at The Rock Church, 1605 N. Meridian St., Portland. Come early for a meal. For more information, call (260) 766-2006.

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

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 break-

fast 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.

EUCHRE — For those 55 and older from 12:30 to 3 p.m. at West Jay Community Center in Dunkirk.

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.

JAY COUNTY DRUG PREVENTION COALITION — Will meet at 3:30 p.m. the third Monday of each month in room 106 at John Jay Center for Learning, 101 S. Meridian St. in Portland. For more information, call (260) 251-3259.

BREAD OF LIFE COM-

MUNITY 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.

PORTLAND EVENING OPTIMIST CLUB — Will meet at 6 p.m. the first and third Monday of each month at Richards Restaurant.

PENN HUSKY HOOSIER HOTSHOTS 4-H CLUB — Will meet at 6:30 p.m. Monday, March 15, at Pennville United Methodist Church.

Dr. Thomas Banta
1413 W. Votaw St.,
Portland
260-726-7822

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Fortkampfoam.com

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www.allcircuitelectrical.com

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Facebook page should be a forum

To the editor:

I am a resident of District 33 and am represented by JD Prescott.

On Feb. 22, I checked into my representative's Facebook page to see if he had posted any updates on the current legislative session that was in process. Rep. Prescott had made a post at 2:26 p.m. regarding House Bill 1005, which will affect school funding in the coming years if passed.

Many people were making comments and asking questions regarding this piece of

Letters to the Editor

legislation as well as Rep. Prescott's commitment to our public schools. As a concerned constituent, I asked a question regarding Prescott's voting record on previous school-related issues as well as other legislation he has voted against.

JD Prescott then proceeded to block me from his Facebook page so that I was no longer able to participate in the discussion.

I feel this is a blatant violation and restriction of my First Amendment rights to freely converse in political discussion with my representative. I did not violate any of Facebook's rules regarding inappropriate language, threats or any other behavior that would constitute a violation.

In a time when public events are highly restricted and tech-

nology is increasingly used to communicate, laws have been slow to adapt. Federal courts have determined that it was illegal for higher profile politicians like former President Donald Trump and U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio Cortez to block constituents on social media.

Per the American Civil Liberties Union website, "the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the interactive portion of a public official's Facebook page is a 'public forum,' so an official cannot block people from it

because of the opinions they hold."

Prescott's post was made as a government official discussing legislation and should be open to comment from all constituents whether they agree with Rep. Prescott or not.

I encourage JD Prescott to unblock myself and any other constituents he has blocked and act as a true representative of his district. He should be promoting all our voices, not silencing them.

Brandon Kloer
Portland

Lawmakers, leave prosecutors alone

Herald Republican
(Angola)

In the latest episode of "pro-local-control" lawmakers doing the exact opposite, Indiana senators advanced a bill that would allow the Indiana attorney general to go over the heads of local prosecutors.

Senate Bill 200, authored by Sen. Mike Young, R-Indianapolis, "permits the attorney general to request the appointment of a special prosecuting attorney if a prosecuting attorney is categorically refusing to prosecute certain crimes."

Although Young will claim otherwise, most people recognize the bill was filed primarily to try to overrule Marion County Prosecutor Ryan Mears' decision to no longer prosecute people for possession of small amounts of marijuana.

That policy does not prevent prosecutions for larger amounts, dealing or other charges like driving while intoxicated.

While some states are legalizing recreational use of marijuana outright — with Virginia poised to maybe become the next — other states or localities have moved to reduce or even eliminate penalties on smalltime users.

Indiana, as it usually does, is moving in a regressive fashion on those progressive policies.

Minorities are disproportionately charged with marijuana offenses — Black Americans are more than three times as likely to be arrested for marijuana use than white Americans, even though Blacks and whites use marijuana at nearly equal rates.

Possession of marijuana less than 30 grams, the type of charge Marion County isn't focusing on, is a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by up to a year in jail and a fine up to \$5,000.

Those cases take up as much time on the court calendar and in the prosecutor's workload but typically end up with little punishment and more burden to the community corrections and probation departments, as well as financial burden on offenders.

In the interest of equity, effort and time, Marion County decided to de-emphasize minor marijuana charges.

All prosecutors have discretion to charge what they want and at what level they feel rises to the circumstances and their ability to prove in court. Prosecutors may have different opinions and attitudes about certain types of crimes, being more lenient on some while going after

Hoosier Editorial

All prosecutors have discretion to charge what they want and at what level they feel rises to the circumstances and their ability to prove in court.

others harder. Like any job, prosecutors have limited staff and time and aim to do the most public good with the resources available.

First, Young's bill aims to essentially overrule local prosecutorial discretion at the whim of the attorney general's office.

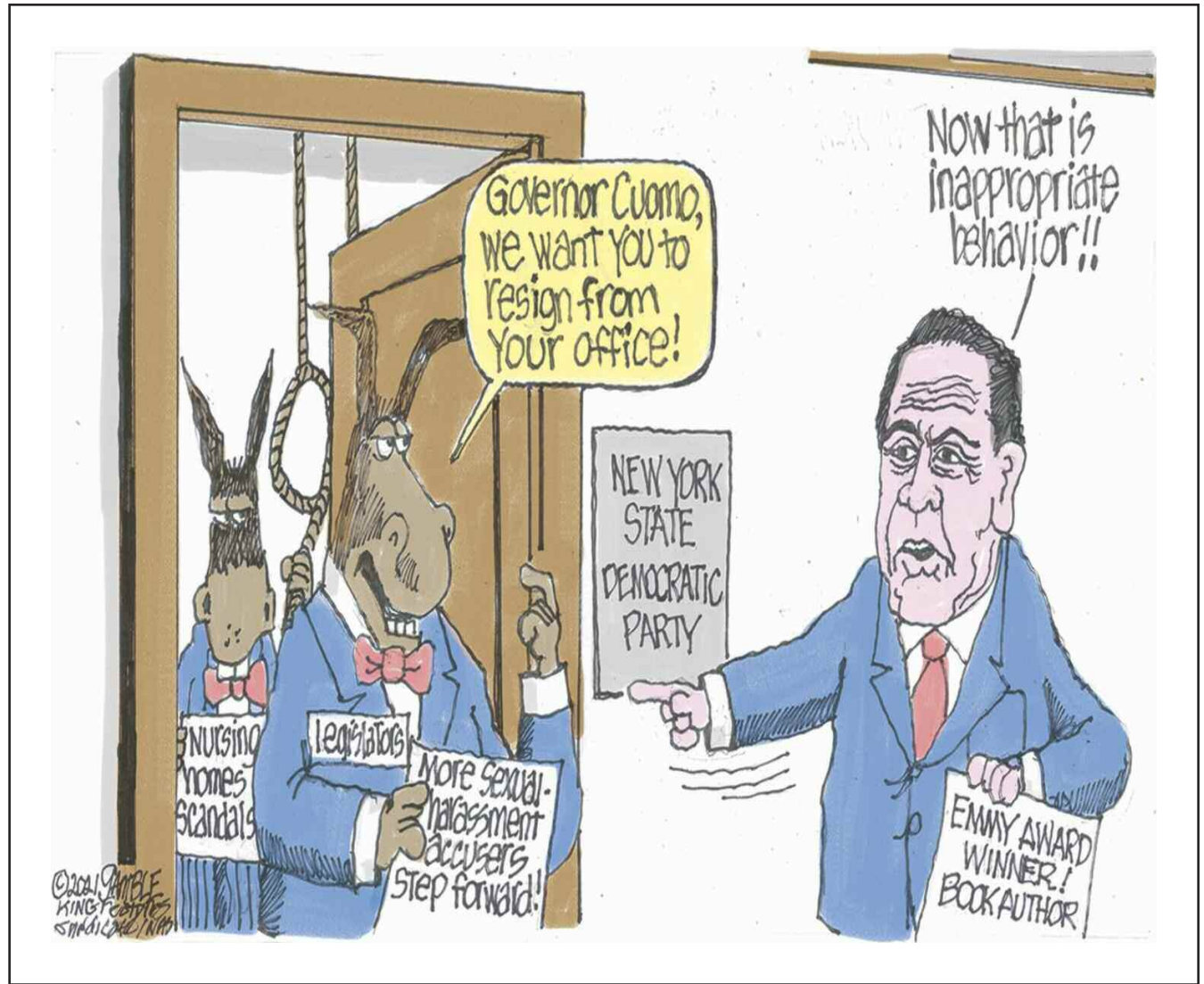
Second, it overrules the will of voters who choose who to elect or not into the prosecutor's office every four years.

Mears was elected into the prosecutor's office in Indianapolis because a majority of the voters in the city agreed with his vision of enforcing the law more so than the other guy. If Indianapolis residents think marijuana should be prosecuted more harshly, they'll have plenty of opportunity to voice that opinion the next time elections come up.

And third, it's a waste of resources. How many people and how much money is the Indiana attorney general likely to spend hiring special prosecutors to go after people carrying a couple joints to land a sentence that's likely to include probation, some fines and maybe a weekend in jail?

Nationally, 67% of Americans believe marijuana should be decriminalized, according to a 2019 poll by the Pew Research Center. That's been a majority position since around 2010, a decade ago.

Indiana lawmakers should oppose efforts to strip local control from prosecutors and reject attempts to cling to unequal legal enforcement of a crime that most Americans don't even believe should be a crime any longer.



USPS, farms could help each other

By KATHERINE DEVINE
Special To The Washington Post

Every year, about 17 million tons of crops perish before ever making it off U.S. farms, even as millions of Americans face hunger. What's more, when we waste food, we also waste the land, water and other resources that produced it, at a time when human activity is already altering our planet in drastic and dangerous ways.

The pandemic has only exacerbated the country's food insecurity. The closure of restaurants and schools, along with disrupted supply chains, has left many farmers in dire straits. Meanwhile, online grocery shopping has grown by leaps and bounds during the pandemic, yet access to fresh fruit and vegetables and affordability remain barriers for many consumers.

A potential solution could come, quite literally, in the mail.

At World Wildlife Fund's Markets Institute, we're proposing a new business model that leverages the U.S. Postal Service's vast logistical network to deliver fresh produce from local farmers who have excess harvest or are seeking new markets. The Farmers Post initiative would create new revenue streams for farmers, provide more consumers with access to affordable food and reduce some of the environmental pressures imposed by the current food system.

Under the Farmers Post model, USPS drivers would pick up boxes of locally and seasonably available produce from farms along their usual routes and deliver them right to people's front doors — no extra trips or other changes in behavior needed on either the consumer or producer side. They could also deliver bulk orders to designated drop-off locations, to meet the needs of consumers for whom home delivery is not an

Katherine Devine



ideal option.

Americans are constantly being told they should eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, but the sad fact is that, for many people, fresh produce is a luxury. Farmers Post could bring nutritious food within closer reach for many consumers, particularly rural communities, housebound individuals and other underserved populations. The federal agency already delivers across the country to towns, cities and suburbs, to rich and poor alike — and all at standardized, cost-competitive rates.

The government could further incentivize participation by approving the use of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits to cover this service. The need is clearly there: In 2020, the number of SNAP beneficiaries rose by 6 million, or roughly 15 percent. Yet SNAP benefits are not accepted by most online grocery delivery platforms, and even where they are accepted, they still don't cover service and delivery fees, which can be a prohibitive cost for many consumers.

As for farmers, the initiative would help them diversify their income streams, reduce on-farm loss and eschew typical supply-chain markups and other costs that make it difficult to competitively price their food. And just imagine if, in the future, Farmers Post evolved into a subscription service: In such a scenario, farmers would be able to more accurately assess consumer demand

and plan their crop planting accordingly. That means a stable income and less waste, something both farmers and our planet desperately need.

The Postal Service would stand to benefit as well. During a period in which the agency faces severe funding challenges, Farmers Post could open the door to billions of dollars in additional annual revenue.

Of course, it's not all that simple. The Farmers Post initiative would likely need a third-party service to create and manage an online interface for consumers, aggregate participating farmers, provide customer service and more — all of which incur costs that would need to be further explored.

The idea comes with inherent limitations as well. Seasonality and regionality would mean less variety for consumers than what they might find in a store, although existing platforms face these same challenges. Also, produce has a short shelf life: to ensure delivery of fresh food by the following day, USPS drivers could deliver only from local farms to homes or other locations within close-by Zip codes. Even so, the Postal Service's unmatched reach means the service would likely be available to most Americans.

The pandemic has shone a spotlight on our broken food system: farmers feeling the pinch, families experiencing food insecurity and a nation squandering its ecological wealth to produce food no one eats. New vaccines will wind down the pandemic. Who knew a 246-year-old government service could help with the rest?

.....
Devine is the director of business case development at the World Wildlife Fund's Markets Institute.

The Commercial Review

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VOLUME 148—NUMBER 224
THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 11, 2021

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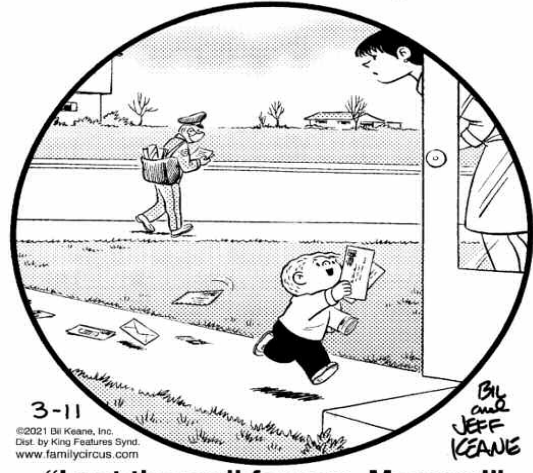
SPEED BUMP

Dave Coverly



THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane

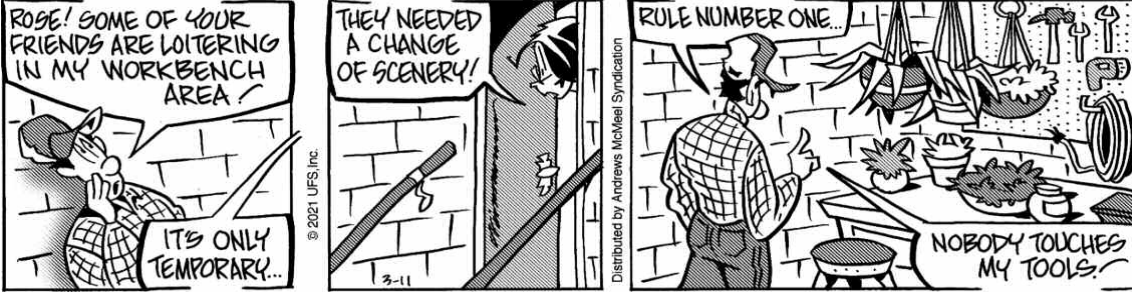


3-11
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Rose is Rose



Agnes



Hi and Lois



Funky Winkerbean



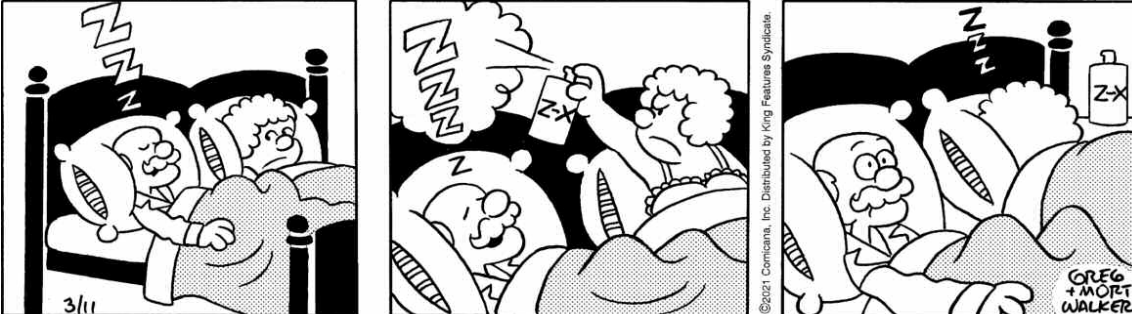
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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Rani's dress
5 Soda
8 Wild guess
12 Avocado dip, for short
13 Santa winds
14 Give a hoot
15 Verifiable
16 Decks in the ring
17 "Downton Abbey" role
18 Deli meat
20 Walmart competitor
22 Auto fuel
23 Galley item
24 Just adorable
27 Computer screen features
32 Simile part
33 PC program
34 Roman 1051
35 Soho resident
38 Whispered "Hey!"

DOWN
1 Boot camp VIPs
2 Mystique
3 Actor Julia
4 Glacial period
5 Islam-abad's country
6 Yoko of music
7 Bygone days
8 Orna-mental beetle
9 Geometric puzzles
10 "Rule, Britannia!" composer
11 Tempo
19 Cellist Yo-Yo
21 Fine, at NASA
24 Western st.
25 Mil. morale booster
26 Fits
28 Mimic
29 Sunless bronzer
30 "Treasure Island" monogram
31 Command to Fido
36 Ted of "Cheers"
37 Praise in verse
38 Hit with snowballs, say
41 You and I
42 Mrs. Dithers of "Blondie"

Solution time: 24 mins.

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Yesterday's answer 3-11

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
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Federer returns with win after a year off

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — After more than a year out, Roger Federer started his 24th season on tour with a win. It was far from easy for the former No. 1, though, as he was pushed hard by Dan Evans at the Qatar Open before winning the second-round match 7-6 (8), 3-6, 7-5 on Wednesday. It was Federer's first match in 405 days after having knee surgery following the 2020 Australian Open. "Feels good to be back," Federer said in an on-court interview.

"I'm happy to be standing here regardless of if I won or lost. But obviously winning feels better." Playing for nearly 2 1/2 hours tested the 39-year-old Swiss player's stamina following his long break. Federer saved a set point at 6-5 down in the first-set tiebreaker and saved two break points at 3-3 in the deciding set before sealing the win with a break of Evans' serve. He showed flashes of his usual brilliance along the way, clinching the first set with a perfect cross-court backhand winner as

Evans charged into the net. Having failed to convert a match point at 5-4 in the decider, he used another backhand down the line to clinch the win on his second attempt. Federer said he used Evans as a training partner as he prepared for his comeback, playing more than 20 sets against the Briton in the previous weeks. "It has been a long and tough road for me. I enjoyed it though," the 20-time Grand Slam champion said. "It has been a huge challenge of mine in my tennis

career and to come back at my age is not something that is very simple." Federer will play Nikoloz Basilashvili in the quarterfinals after the Georgian beat Malek Jaziri 6-2, 6-2. Top-seeded Dominic Thiem rallied to beat Australian Open semifinalist Aslan Karatsev 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-2 for a place in the quarters. Thiem's next opponent is fifth-seeded Roberto Bautista Agut, who didn't face a single break point in his 6-4, 6-3 win against

Alexander Bublik of Kazakhstan. Third-seeded Andrey Rublev advanced without taking to the court after his opponent Richard Gasquet withdrew with a leg injury. Denis Shapovalov won an all-Canadian match against Vasek Pospisil 7-5, 6-4. That sets up a quarterfinal against Taylor Fritz of the U.S., who upset sixth-seeded David Goffin 6-1, 5-7, 7-6 (9). Fritz saved a match point at 6-5 down in the decider and twice more in the tiebreaker.

Drives ...

Continued from page 8
"It felt amazing," he said. "We've been waiting for this game for I think it was 470 days. Everybody was just hungry to play." And as the saying goes, Homan got to eat that day. He finished with 75 yards on 11 touches and the one reception. He had six carries for 46 yards on the game's final drive when the Cougars were running out the clock in a 24-10 victory. "It's really special," Homan said. "I've been grinding in the weight room and putting everything I could on the field just to get that one chance. "I think I took advantage of it today." While Homan didn't lead the team in carries — Eli Wallace had 18 rushes for 69 yards and a touchdown — he paced USF in rushing yards. After a day like that, he should certainly get more opportunities. "Great day for Mr.

Homan," Cougar coach Kevin Donley said. "It was a day Donley wasn't even sure the Cougars would get. "Guys, I was wondering if it would ever happen again," he told media after the game. "I'm so grateful. Give thanks to the good Lord for the opportunity to play a great game." There was a wide range of feelings Saturday. The piles of snow reminded us it was still technically winter, but once the game underway the calendar month was meaningless. It seemed more like a late fall afternoon rather than early March. Seeing Homan with his trademark running style — a bruiser when he needs to be but shifty when the situation calls for it — was reminiscent of his glory days wearing purple and grey at Fort Recovery. Meaningful football should be in the spring; it was the same, but different.

The Commercial Review/Chris Schanz

Homan is a Harrier

Fort Recovery High School senior Brenna Homan signed her national letter of intent on Wednesday to play softball for the Miami University-Hamilton Harriers. Pictured front row from left are brother Troy Homan, father Todd Homan, Brenna, mother Michele Homan and brother Ross Homan. Back row are Harrier coach Rick Walker, FRHS athletic trainer Jill Schneider, FRHS softball coach Ryan Thien and her travel coach Casey Canan.

Sports on tap

Scoreboard

Men's college basketball
Oklahoma 79, Iowa State 73
Syracuse 89, N.C. State 68
Georgetown 68, Marquette 49
Arizona St. 64, Washington St. 59
UNLV 80, Air Force 52
Butler 70, Xavier 69 F/OT
Kansas State 71, TCU 50
Duke 70, Louisville 56

Minnesota 51, Northwestern 46
Utah 98, Washington 95
DePaul 70, Providence 62
North Carolina 101, Notre Dame 59
Penn State 72, Nebraska 66
California 76, Stanford 58
Miami 67, Clemson 64

NBA basketball
Memphis 127, Washington 112
Dallas 115, San Antonio 104

Local schedule

Friday
Jay County — Junior high swimming hosts ACAC championships — 5:30 p.m.

TV schedule

Today
11:30 a.m. — Men's College Basketball: Michigan State vs. Maryland (BTN); Oklahoma State vs. West Virginia (ESPN)

Noon — Men's College Basketball: Georgetown vs. Villanova (FS1); Syracuse vs. Virginia (ESPN2)
2 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Minnesota vs. Ohio State (BTN)
2:30 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Kansas State vs. Baylor (ESPN); Miami vs. Georgia Tech (ESPN2)
3 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Seton Hall vs. St. John's (FS1)
6 p.m. — Men's College Basketball:

Butler vs. Creighton (FS1)
6:30 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Indiana vs. Rutgers (BTN); Oklahoma at Kansas (ESPN2); Duke vs. Florida State (ESPN)
7:30 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Boston Celtics at Brooklyn Nets (TNT)
9 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: DePaul vs. UConn (FS1); Penn State vs. Wisconsin (BTN); Texas Tech vs. Texas (ESPN2)

10 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Golden State Warriors at Los Angeles Clippers (TNT)
11:30 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: California vs. Colorado (ESPN)
Friday
10:30 p.m. — NBA Basketball: Indiana Pacers at Los Angeles Lakers (FSN)
3 p.m. — Men's College Basketball: Cincinnati vs. SMU (ESPN2)

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♥J 9 7 6
♦Q 9 3
♠9 7 2
EAST
♠A 9 8 4 2
♥Q 5 4
♦J 10 6
♠J 10
The bidding:
South West North East
3♥ Pass 3♥ Pass
4♠ Pass 4♠ Pass
Opening lead — three of spades.
There are many instances where a defender has to hope that a certain lie of the cards exists without any assurance that it actually does. In these cases, the defender simply adopts the stoic philosophy that if the situation he's hoping for does not exist, nothing else could be done to alter the outcome. Consider West's predicament early in the play of today's deal where South reached five clubs on the bidding shown. The opening spade lead was taken by East's ace, and his four-of-spades return was covered by the ten and jack, putting West on lead at trick three. It was obvious to West that if South's presumed seven-card club suit was headed by the K-Q-J or K-Q-10, the contract could not be defeated, since declarer would inevitably score seven club tricks plus the A-K of hearts and A-K of diamonds. He therefore had to hope South's clubs were not solid. West reasoned further that if his partner had the K-x of clubs, the contract would fail no matter what he did next. But if East held either the Q-x or J-10 of clubs, it was essential to force dummy to ruff a spade at this point. Accordingly, West returned the king of spades at trick three. Declarer ruffed with dummy's ace, but later had to lose a club to West's nine for a down one. Although West had no choice but to lead a third round of spades under the circumstances, it is important to note that after winning the jack of spades at trick two, West knew for sure that South had at least one more spade. Declarer's spade holding was revealed by East's return of the four — his original fourth-best spade — on the second trick. With only one lower spade — the deuce — unaccounted for at that point, East could not have started with more than five spades, marking declarer with at least three cards in the suit. Tomorrow: Bidding quiz. ©2021 King Features Syndicate Inc.

Local schedule

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ORDINANCE AMENDING STOP INTERSECTIONS BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Jay County, Indiana that the Jay County Code of Ordinances, Title VII, Chapter 71, Schedule I, Stop Intersections, is amended to add the following stop intersections:
1. County Road 200 S shall stop at County Road 700 E. This shall now become a 4-way stop intersection.
2. County Road 200 S shall stop at County Road 300 E. This shall now become a 4-way stop intersection.
3. County Road 600 E shall stop at County Road 200 S. This shall now become a 4-way stop intersection.
Penalty: The penalty for violation of this ordinance is set forth in Title VII, Chapter 70.99 in the Jay County Code of Ordinances. PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Commissioners of Jay County, Indiana on this 8th day of March, 2021.
Chad Aker
Brian McGalliard
Rex Jornay
Attest:
Anna Culy, Auditor
CR 3-11-2021
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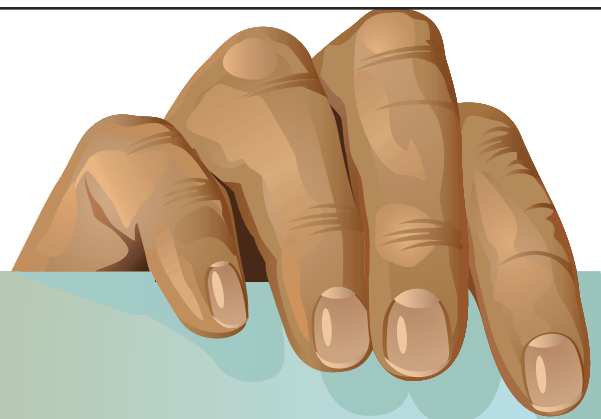
260 PUBLIC AUCTION

PUBLIC AUCTION
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SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 2021
11:00 A.M.
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P W N U B P U H Z W U X
U Z M N L G Z W G L S Z M A N Y D Z N I
S N N X B Q K Y: I B Q Y D Z Y H P U B Y D A.
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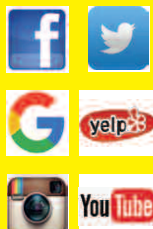
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Spring football was the same, but different

By CHRIS SCHANZ
The Commercial Review

Not a single cloud could be seen in the sky over Bishop D'Arcy Stadium on the campus of University of Saint Francis.

The parking lot had stereos blaring, grills cooking and the smell of tailgate food permeated the air.

Inside the stadium, more music was blaring as the Cougars prepared for their first game of the season.

Just before kickoff, there was a slight breeze to accompany the brisk, 43-degree temperature.

It was a beautiful fall — err, “spring,” but still actually winter — afternoon for college football.

When it came to the season opener for the USF football team Saturday, most of it felt out of the ordinary. Then again, what in the last year hasn't? Later that night, 128 high school boys basketball teams would be competing for sectional championships.

Behind the benches were mounds of snow that had been removed from the playing surface weeks earlier. There, in Fort Wayne, football to be played for the first time in 469 days after NAIA moved the national championships for fall sports to the spring because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. In August, USF announced it would play football in the spring.

“It's weird,” Ethan Theurer, a Saint Francis sophomore and 2018 Jay County High School graduate, said of spring football. “It's nothing like I've done before. Luckily it's getting a little warmer now.”

“Today was pretty good.”

It was a slow start for both teams on offense despite Taylor losing 37-14 to second-ranked Marian the week earlier. The game was tied 3-3 at halftime.

After intermission, however, the Cougars, and one local athlete in particular, got rolling.

Will Homan, a 2018 Fort Recovery product, broke his ankle before his freshman season and re-shirted. In 2019, he had only a few carries, but they came in the waning moments of a 59-20 blowout.

Homan saw the field when it mattered Saturday and he made the most of his opportunity, just

Line Drives



‘It's weird. It's nothing like I've done before. Luckily it's getting a little warmer now. Today was pretty good.’

—Ethan Theurer, Saint Francis sophomore and 2018 Jay County graduate

like he did as a sophomore for Fort Recovery when starting running back Kyle Schroer went down with an ankle injury.

When Schroer, then a senior, got hurt in a play-off game in 2015, Homan went on to rewrite the Fort Recovery record book for rushing over the course of the next two-plus seasons.

On Homan's second play from scrimmage Saturday, the 5-foot, 9-inch shifty back rumbled for 28 yards, the team's longest play of the day. He shed one tackle just past the line of scrimmage, and tried to get rid of another defender but was eventually brought down.

That same quarter, Homan recorded the first touchdown of his career, a 1-yard score two plays after the USF defense blocked a Taylor punt.

Then, Homan had himself a day. On the next Cougar drive, quarterback Matt Crable rolled to his right and connected with Homan in the end zone for a 24-yard TD pass, Homan's first career reception, first TD catch and second score of the day.

See Drives page 7

Harris, Butler win in overtime

NEW YORK (AP) — Chuck Harris was clutch for Butler, drilling a straightaway 3-pointer and then sinking the game-winning free throws with three seconds left in overtime as the tenth-seeded Bulldogs ousted Xavier 70-69 in the Big East tournament on Wednesday night.

The win moves Butler (10-14) into a quarterfinal against second-seeded and No. 17-ranked Creighton on Thursday. The teams split their regular-season games.

Xavier (13-8), the tournament seventh seed, shot the lights out in the first half, making 17 of 29 shots (59%) and building a 40-26 halftime lead.

Harris, who was 0-of-6 shooting by halftime, came alive with an early 3-pointer in the second half as Butler began a long climb back into the game. Bryce Golden added 20 points, with 12 in the second half, and Bryce Nze 19.

Dwon Odom and Zach Freemantle led Xavier with 14 points each, a

career-high for Odom. Paul Scruggs and Colby Jones added 10 each.

Scruggs made two free throws to lift Xavier into a 69-68 lead with 18 seconds left in overtime. He had gone scoreless from 7:33 of the first half until the first minute of overtime.

Harris made a 3 to put Butler ahead 62-59, its first lead since 9-7. Bo Hodges added another 3 and it was 65-61. Counting a pair of free throws to force overtime at 59-59, Harris scored 10 of Butler's last 13 points.

For a nine-minute span of the second half, Butler outscored Xavier 18-7. The Musketeers missed 12 of 15 shots in that stretch.

Nze, despite being listed as questionable to play because of an ankle injury, scored 13 of Butler's 26 points in the first half. He made 7 of 9 shots including a career-high 4-of-4 shooting from behind the 3-point arc as Butler closed to 52-45 with 7:38 remaining. His last two 3s pulled Butler to 50-40 and then 52-45.

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