

The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

www.thecr.com

\$1

Celebrating volunteerism



The Commercial Review/Bailey Cline

Brian Ison speaks at The Portland Foundation annual meeting Wednesday. Ison and Brandon Swoveland were presented the Jack Cole Award for Volunteerism at the meeting. Ison, who won the award for 2020, serves in multiple leadership roles across the county, including as president of the Portland Junior League and Chamber Leadership Academy boards.

Portland police officer resigns

Video alleged Clark sought sex with a minor

By BAILEY CLINE

The Commercial Review

A Portland police officer has resigned after being suspended last week.

Portland Police Chief Josh Stephenson reported this morning that officer Joshua Clark has resigned from the department.

Clark's resignation came six days after he was suspended because a Predator Catchers video on Facebook alleged he messaged, planned to meet and discussed engaging in sexual conduct with an Avon minor. The video was posted on the evening of May 13 and Clark was suspended the same night.

According to comments made in the video, Clark, 36, messaged a 14-year-old "girl" and agreed to meet with her at an Olive Garden restaurant. (He was actually messaging the Predator Catchers team.) He allegedly indicated he was 17 and made sexual comments via text. He also told the team when they confronted him he didn't believe the "girl" was 14. The team alleged that he asked her to delete the texts stating her age.

"I'm an idiot," Clark repeated during the video.

No charges have been filed against Clark in Hendricks or Jay counties as of this morning. Avon Police Department has an ongoing investigation into the matter.

See Resigns page 2

Ison, Swoveland get Cole award

By BAILEY CLINE

The Commercial Review

A pair of volunteers were honored for their efforts Wednesday.

The Portland Foundation presented the Jack Cole Award for Volunteerism to Brandon Swoveland for 2019 and Brian Ison for 2020 at its annual meeting.

"We have two awards to give this year," executive director Doug Inman said, noting the foundation did not meet last year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Swoveland, a Jay County Sheriff's Office reserve, serves as a volunteer firefighter and a

volunteer with Jay County Rescue 19 and Jay County Emergency Management.

"I as well others have observed Brandon for years working on the sidelines and in the shadows," Inman read from his nomination letter. "That tells you something about him

because he does this all for free."

Ison is president of the Portland Junior League board and Chamber Leadership Academy board, vice president of the Jay Community Center board and a member of Portland Park Board.

See Volunteerism page 2

Airport projects approved

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

Runway extension work is slated to begin June 1. There will be some taxiway, hangar and striping improvements to go along with it.

Portland Board of Aviation on Wednesday approved nearly \$60,000 in projects for Portland Municipal Airport.

Board members John Lyons, Faron Parr, Clyde Bray and Mitch Sutton approved two improvement projects involving concrete work — one to repair taxiways that run between the hangars at the airport and another for a section of hangar floor.

Dalton's Concrete Construction was awarded the taxiway work at a cost of \$43,676. Its quote came in about \$12,500 under that of KBL Transport.

Mercer Concrete had the low

quote for the hangar floor project at a cost of \$3,060. Dalton's and KBL were the others who offered quotes for the work.

The board also approved spending \$15,368.75 to have Axtells re-mark 3,000 feet of the airport's runway. The company was already contract to re-stripe the other 1,000 feet of the existing runway that will be shut down during the extension project later this year. It agreed to do the additional work at the same cost per square foot of paint.

Site preparation work for the first phase of the runway extension project to 5,500 feet from the current 4,000 feet is scheduled to begin next week. Construction work is slated to start June 1 — it is contracted for 150 days — and a groundbreaking ceremony will be held at the airport at 3 p.m. June 2. The board OK'd a notice for HIS Constructors of Indi-

anapolis to proceed with the project on that timeline.

The first phase of runway extension involves leveling the land to the west of the current runway and enclosing 555 feet of Alexander Ditch. It will be completed this year.

The second phase, which is scheduled for 2022, includes paving and lighting. Jason Clearwaters of engineering firm Butler, Fairman & Seufert told the board he expects to bid that part of the project this summer.

In other business, the board: • Heard the following from Tavzel: the airport is planning to host a fly-in this summer; Dunkirk resident and Sonrise Aviation employee Trent Finnerly of Dunkirk received his private pilot's license last week; the airport sold 3,998 gallons of fuel in April for a total of \$15,203.03.

• Paid claims totaling \$13,932.46.



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Thanking Frantz

Jay School Board president Phil Ford (left) and Jay Schools superintendent Jeremy Gulley share a laugh with school board attorney Phil Frantz during Monday's meeting. Frantz, who is retiring this week, was honored for his decades of service to the school board.

Jay remains orange in state COVID-19 metrics

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

The number of new cases of COVID-19 has come down since a spike during the first half of the month, but the positivity rate continued to rise.

The result was that the county stayed in the sec-

ond-highest risk level in the state's metrics.

Jay County was rated "orange" (high risk for the spread of coronavirus) for the second consecutive week in Indiana State Department of Health's update released Wednesday.

The county posted a

seven-day positivity rate of 13.75%, up four percentage points from last week. The rate had been as low as 1.87% in March.

Its cases per 100,000 residents dipped to 137 this week, down from 229 last week. Still, the number is significantly higher than

the low point of 23 two months ago.

Jay County recorded 86 new cases of COVID-19 through the first 18 days of May, already surpassing the full-month totals for February, March and April. (There were 215 new cases of the disease in January.)

The local spike in cases came from May 5 through 8, with 40 reported in that four-day span. The average has dropped to 3.3 cases per day in the 10 days since then.

Jay County was one of just three in Indiana to be rated orange, joining

Jasper and Lawrence counties. Forty-one counties, including Delaware, were rated "yellow" (moderate risk) and the remaining 48, including Adams, Wells, Blackford and Randolph, were rated "blue" (low risk).

See Orange page 2

Weather

The high temperature in Jay County was 79 degrees Wednesday. The low was 61.

Tonight's forecast calls for a low of 63.

Expect mostly sunny skies

Friday with a high of 85. Highs are expected to stay in the 80s through at least the middle of next week.

See page 2 for an extended outlook.

In review

Fighting between Israelis and Palestinians in the area of the Gaza Strip has topped headlines recently. What are your thoughts on the conflict?

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

Coming up

Friday — Results from tonight's girls tennis sectional championship match.

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



Volunteerism ...

Continued from page 1 He previously served as president of the John Jay Center for Learning board of directors...

years, Inman reported. About \$1.8 million in gifts were received, and grants and scholarships totaling \$2.8 million were awarded.

added. After delaying nine months because of the coronavirus pandemic, the foundation started its implementation phase for the project last week.



The Commercial Review/Bailey Cline

Brian Ison (2020) and Brandon Swoveland (2019) were honored as winners of the Jack Cole Award for Volunteerism during The Portland Foundation's annual meeting Wednesday at John Jay Center for Learning.

CR almanac

Table with 5 columns (Friday to Tuesday) showing weather forecasts with icons and temperature ranges.

Lotteries

- Powerball: 11-13-55-56-69, Estimated jackpot: \$218 million. Mega Millions: 44-47-60-63-71-74, Estimated jackpot: \$515 million. Hoosier: 11-12-13-22-27-29-33-34-41-44-47-60-63-71-74, Estimated jackpot: \$8.6 million.

Markets

- Cooper Farms Fort Recovery: Corn 7.00, Wheat 6.60. POET Biorefining Portland: Corn 7.15, June corn 7.15. The Andersons Richland Township: Corn 7.00, June corn 7.00, Beans 15.77, June beans 15.77, Wheat 6.69, June wheat 6.69.

Today in history

On May 20, 1927, Charles Lindbergh took off from Roosevelt Field on Long Island, New York, aboard the Spirit of St. Louis on his historic solo flight to France.

Citizen's calendar

- Today 6 p.m. — Redkey Town Council, park cabin, 200 S. Mooney St. Monday 9 a.m. — Jay County Commissioners' room, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland. 3:30 p.m. — Jay County Solid Waste Management District, 5948 W. Indiana 67, Portland.

Capsule Reports

Failed to yield Damage is estimated between \$50,000 and \$100,000 after a Ridgeville woman failed to yield to oncoming traffic on Indiana 67 at 3 p.m. Saturday.

Deer hit A Pennville woman drove into a deer on Indiana 18 about 12:10 p.m. Saturday. Amy L. Bell, 43, was driving her 2012 Chevrolet Tra-

verse on the highway near county road 550 West when the animal ran into the roadway from a woods to the south. She wasn't able to stop before colliding her vehicle with it.

Bell's vehicle was towed, with damage estimated between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

Resigns ...

Continued from page 1 Clarks' badge and weapons have been obtained by the Portland department, according to a press release from Portland Mayor John Boggs.

"Although these incidents can be troubling to the public process and question the integrity of the department, it is important to note that these incidents are rare nationwide and this one incident should not distract the public's overall

opinion of the Portland Police Department," Boggs said in the release. A Portland Board of Works special meeting that was scheduled for 4 p.m. Monday to discuss Clark's employment has been canceled.

Orange ...

Continued from page 1 Vaccination clinics continue to be open at Jay County Health Department and IU Health Jay. Appointments can be made online at ourshot.in.gov or by calling the state's 2-1-1 telephone assistance service.

Jay School Corporation superintendent Jeremy Gulley also announced Wednesday that with the expiration of Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb's executive order May 31, masks will no longer be required in schools beginning June 1.

Felony arrests

Resisting law A Portland man was arrested Monday for resisting law enforcement. Edgar J. Serna, 19, 113 E. Washington St., was charged a Level 6 felony for the offense.

Holder Bedding advertisement featuring a white adjustable bed, 'Made in Muncie for over 70 years' badge, and contact info: 765-747-8103, 1815 N Granville Ave Muncie.

Maintaining nuisance Three Portland residents were arrested Friday for maintaining a common nuisance. Corey L. Ellsworth, 34, 511 E. High St., was preliminarily charged a Level 6 felony for the crime and a Class B misdemeanor for possession of marijuana.

FREE Mammogram Screenings advertisement with eligibility requirements and scheduling info: www HOLDERBEDDING.NET

Chanelle R. Gierhart, 30, 6769 W. 400 S., was preliminarily charged a Level 6 felony for the crime. She was also preliminarily charged a Class B misdemeanor for possession of paraphernalia and a Class C misdemeanor for possession of paraphernalia.



Contact for Lions has been changed

To the editor:
This letter is to let everyone know that the Dunkirk Lions Club no longer has Kent Taylor as its secretary/treasurer. He moved south over a year ago.

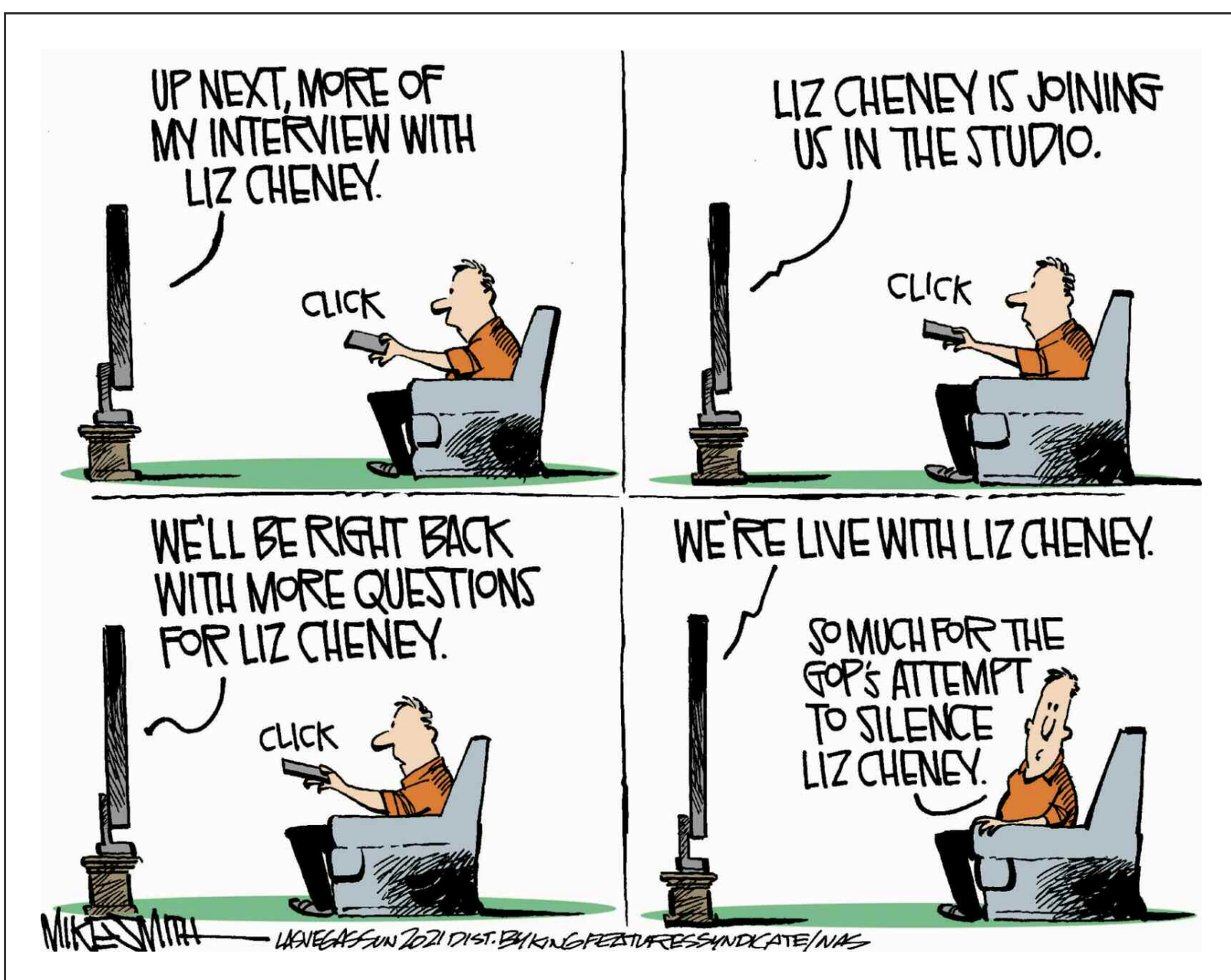
As a result, any correspondence sent to him regarding the Dunkirk Lions Club is at the Dunkirk Post Office and can't be released to current president/treasurer Ray Jones.

Letters to the Editor

Any correspondence can be sent to:
Dunkirk Lions Club
Dunkirk Scout Cabin
205 Commerce St.
Dunkirk, IN 47336
Or you can call Ray Jones at (765) 748-0355.

The Dunkirk Lions Club is also in need of a good wood or metal building at least 10 feet by 10 feet to 10 feet by 14 feet that can be moved — donated or cheap — to store glassware and nickel pitch booth.

Thank you.
Rosetta Soske
Secretary
Dunkirk Lions Club



Mental health is crucial

By JENNY MCNEECE
Vincennes Sun-Commercial

I suffer from anxiety and depression.

That's not something very easy for me to admit. Yet here we are.

I was always a rather anxious kid, always worried about what everyone else thought, always worried about whether or not I was good enough, always worried about this test or that quiz or some other big assignment. I thought I had to be perfect, pleasing to everyone around me.

While many memories from my childhood and adolescence are now blurred, that constant struggle with worry remains embedded, woven throughout every fiber.

Then, my family suffered a tragic loss just as I was entering high school, and that's when what I call "the doom" moved in. I'd never experienced sadness or longing like that before. It was consuming, overwhelming. And there were many a morning I wondered whether or not I would survive at all.

Those feelings stuck with me. They're with me now, all the time. There's always "the doom," some unknown, untouchable fear that I can't explain and barely touch. It's real and yet it's not.

Because I struggled so much with that unexpected loss as a teenager, my parents thought it best I "talk to someone," as we so often say when we refer to mental health counseling.

Always eager to please, I did, and thus began what is now a life-long relationship with my own mental health.

I remember talking to Dr. Fred — as everyone so affectionately called him — in his quaint office, tucked into a corner of his rural and charming historic home, my frame slight in his high-backed, yellow fabric-lined chair. His little dog, a yorkie, would often curl up and sleep at my feet.

It was a safe space, a place for me to talk openly about my grief in — what I would later discover — was an attempt to take hold of it, examine it, understand it and, if possible, put it down for awhile.

Jenny McNeece



Through college and into adulthood, I continued seeing Dr. Fred from time to time. I worked through break-ups, more loss and, later, divorce. I talked through the struggles of new relationships, new challenges and even the fear that often comes with personal success.

Months — or even years — would go by when I wouldn't seek therapy at all, but I would always, at some point, feel that craving — a longing for that sense of ease and weightlessness that so often comes with an hour spent amid the trees, in his little office, tucked into that high-backed chair.

The other day, I had a conversation with a woman who was offering me a bit of praise for my writing, particularly these pieces where I show you a bit of my heart. She said to me, "You just always seem, especially for someone so young, to really have it all together."

I'll admit, I laughed, because most days I feel like I'm hanging on by the thinnest of threads. The hours and the days go by in a blur and I wonder if I'm making any difference to anyone at all.

But then I realized, maybe I do have, at least some of it, together. And if I do, it's because I gave myself the greatest gift when I succumbed to my parents' plea all those years ago.

Over the years, during all of those hours and minutes spent talking and listening to Dr. Fred, locking away every whisper of advice and nudge toward self-awareness, I gave myself a tool box, so to speak — a collection of resources and knowledge I can draw upon when things get tough.

When I find myself in a disagreement, I know to stop talking and to actively listen instead.

I know how I need to be loved in return.

I know well the importance of respect.

I know my mental health requires the setting of boundaries.

I know that when I feel "the doom" set in, I can fight it by getting up and finding five things for which I am grateful.

I know the value of a long walk at sunset or an hour spent giving to someone other than myself.

And all of these tools came from my choice to embrace my mental health, not to run from it, all those years ago. Because understanding why we feel the way we feel — and why others respond to us in the ways they do — is imperative to our overall health and well-being.

May marks Mental Health Awareness Month, something that's been observed in the U.S. every year since 1949.

Yet I'm only recently seeing more and more people be brave enough to speak about it among friends, to colleagues and to post about it on their social media platforms.

According to Mental Health America, 19% of Americans say they struggle with mental health. The Centers for Disease Control says one in every six Americans will suffer from depression or anxiety.

Suicide rates increased an astonishing 33% between 1999 and 2019; it's now the tenth-leading cause of death in the U.S. That's one person — one soul — every 11 minutes.

This is not rare. It's not elusive. And resources are out there for the taking. So wouldn't we all be better served to stop speaking in hushed voices when we or someone we love needs to "talk to someone?"

No one is ever faulted for seeing a physician for chronic headaches or high blood pressure, yet stigma remains around embracing our own mental health.

Yet I assure you, it's just as important.

.....
This column was provided to The Commercial Review through the Hoosier State Press Association Information Network.

Let's pause to remember lessons

By COLBERT I. KING
The Washington Post

It is hard to imagine that the anniversary of the Supreme Court's ruling in Brown v. Board of Education could come and go without being duly noted in the halls of Washington or the national press. But, sadly, that is the case.

The landmark school desegregation decision, reached unanimously on May 17, 1954, is also a cornerstone in U.S. history. The Brown decision not only established that it was illegal to segregate public schools on the basis of race; it also overturned the 1896 Supreme Court decision in Plessy v. Ferguson that permitted segregation in public facilities across the board, so long as it could be maintained that the facilities for Whites and Blacks were somehow "equal." The Brown decision destroyed Plessy's "separate but equal" doctrine.

The court plainly declared: "Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

It was a momentous enough occasion that Edna West Payton, principal of our all-Black Francis Jr. High School in the West End section of D.C., convened an afternoon assembly of ninth-graders in the school auditorium to notify us of the victory over segregation. She tried to alert us, as best she could, to the changes and challenges that awaited us in the upcoming school year — let alone those that would confront us for the rest of our lives.

But 67 years later, the mission of integrating U.S. public schools remains unachieved. Racial inequalities have not been erased — racial and economic divides seem as entrenched as ever. Abject racism and resistance are there, like the air. Witness the renewed assault on voting rights coming from the right. Police violence

Colbert I. King



Racial inequalities have not been erased — racial and economic divides seem as entrenched as ever.

against Black citizens defines our time.

Still, Brown led to the Montgomery bus boycott, and sit-ins and a civil rights movement that kicked Jim Crow laws in the teeth. The spirit of Brown found life in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which paved the way for the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the 1968 Fair Housing Act, and the election to state legislatures, Congress and the White House of political leaders who fundamentally changed the color of American public servants.

We should never pass up an opportunity to tell this story. Yet today, the Brown decision remains separated from the news, and — judging from its treatment — unequal in importance, even for a brief moment, to issues that command America's attention.

What does this treatment of Brown tell us about ourselves?
.....
King is a Washington Post columnist who won the Pulitzer Prize for Commentary.

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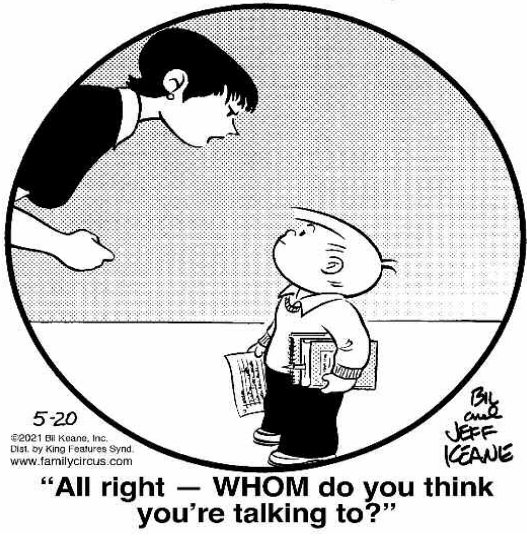
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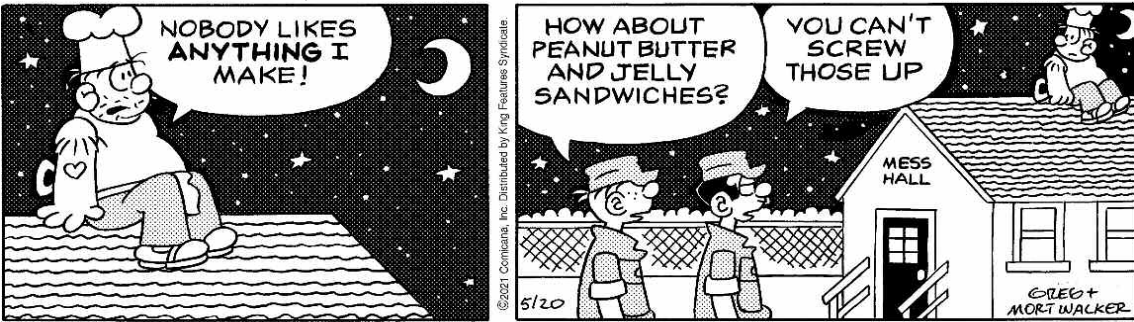
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Jay squeaks into final

By CHRIS SCHANZ
The Commercial Review

Exactly a month ago, the Patriots didn't lose a set to the Golden Falcons.

A lot can change in four weeks.

Heavily favored to win the program's first sectional title in six years, the Jay County High School girls tennis team squeaked by the Winchester Golden Falcons 3-2 Wednesday in the sectional semifinal.

"Winning is good, but we have to get better," said JCHS coach Dave Cramer, whose team improves to 10-5 and advances to the sectional championship today against the Union City Indians, who defeated the Randolph Southern Rebels 4-1 in the other semifinal Wednesday night.

On April 19, Jay County beat four-time defending sectional champion Winchester 5-0. (The Patriots topped all three sectional rivals by a 5-0 margin this season.)

One of those victories was a 6-2, 6-2 win at No. 1 doubles on the efforts of Madison Dirksen and Rachel Muhlenkamp.

But that's the spot where Winchester flipped the script the most. Sophomore

'Winning is good, but we have to get better.'

—Dave Cramer, JCHS girls tennis coach



Mabrey McIntire and Morgan Williams played with much more aggressiveness than a month earlier.

The Golden Falcon duo turned that loss into a 6-3, 6-1 win, during which Dirksen and Muhlenkamp weren't able to match the gusto of their competition nor keep momentum on their side.

"Their No. 1 doubles made some major improvements," Cramer said. "We handled them earlier. They outplayed us real easy tonight."

Winchester also reversed fortune at No. 3 singles thanks to sophomore Reagan Riggan.

Riggan, who lost to Kierston Blunk 6-4, 6-1 in their first meeting, jumped ahead early and grabbed the opening set, 6-3. Riggan kept momentum in the second set, winning it 6-3 despite the overall team match having already been decided.

See Squeaks page 7

Junior League kicks off season

Rain washed away the start of the season Monday.

Weiler-Wilson Park was finally bustling with action Tuesday.

Portland Junior League kicked off its 2021 season Tuesday, and Display Craft, Fisher Packing, Cook's Nursery and Pioneer Packaging all emerged victorious.

Stella Skirvin led Display Craft in its 9-0 minor softball victory against Craven Nutrition with a double and a single. Opal Garrett, Ava Peterson, Kendal Schemenaur, Avery Snow and Emery Forthofer all had two singles.

Natalie May accounted for Craven's only hit.

In the same division, Ayla Jackson knocked in a pair of runs to lead Fisher past CrossRoads Financial Federal Credit Union 9-6.

Kadilynn Stout and Madysen Taylor each contributed RBIs for Fisher.

Layla Armstrong doubled, singled and scored twice to pace CrossRoads. Kenady Lyons chipped in two runs, while Hailee Randall and Jade Plessinger both had one run.

A trio of batters went 3-

Junior League roundup

for-3 with two RBIs in helping Cook's get past Barnett's Auto Parts 10-7 in Rookie baseball action.

Connor Richman, Beckham Hough and Griffin Lambert were all 3-for-3 with a pair of RBIs. Lambert and Hough each scored three times, while Ashton Conn and Richman each scored twice.

Cody Klopfenstein led Barnett's with four hits and two RBIs. Zayden Jester, Tucker Hemmelgarn, Sawyer Hemmelgarn and Jordan Wendel all had two hits in the loss.

Also in the Rookie division, Pioneer Packaging totaled 23 hits in cruising to a 17-2 victory against Williams Auto Parts.

Koda Johnson, Brady Long and Bently Berry were each 3-for-3 for Pioneer.

LJ Carter led Williams with his 3-for-3 effort, while Parker Huntsman and Liam Schreiber were both 2-for-2.

See Kicks page 7

Sixth inning propels Patriots

Before the rains came May 7, the Patriots managed just three hits in four innings.

They trailed the Jets 2-0 when the game was postponed.

As it was picked up Wednesday, the Patriot offense finally decided to show up.

A five-run sixth inning carried the Jay County High School baseball team to a come-from-behind, 5-2 victory over the Adams Central Jets in a continuation of a game from a couple weeks earlier.

The win moves the Patriots to 12-7 on the season, and they finish Allen County Athletic Conference play 4-2.

As Jay County still

trailed Adams Central 2-0 heading to the bottom of the sixth inning, Quinn Faulkner and Sam Myers led off the frame with back-to-back singles.

Crosby Heniser drove them in on a two-run double to left field to tie the game.

A walk and a hit by pitch — both with two outs — loaded the bases for Dusty Pearson, and he played the eventual game-winning runs on a bases-clearing double to center.

Pearson finished the game with two hits and three RBIs, while Myers chipped in three singles.

Sam Dunlavy picked up the win in relief. He allowed one hit and struck out two in three innings of work.

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