

# The Commercial Review

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## GOP race set in middle district

# Jones gets 47.5



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Cory Jones, left, steps out of the elevator on the first floor of Jay County Courthouse on Friday morning after he was sentenced to 47.5 years in prison for the 2020 shooting death of Shanna Jones. Cory Jones in November pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter, a Level 2 felony, for the shooting.

## Jay County man was sentenced Friday morning for the 2020 shooting death of Dunkirk's Shanna Jones

By RAY COONEY  
The Commercial Review

A Jay County man who pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter in relation to the death of a Dunkirk woman will spend decades in prison.

Jay Circuit Court Judge Brian Hutchison on Friday sentenced Cory M. Jones, 45, to a total of 47.5 years in prison for the Aug. 22, 2020, shooting death of Shanna Jones.

Cory Jones pleaded guilty Nov. 19 to voluntary

manslaughter, with a habitual offender enhancement, for the fatal shooting of 47-year-old Shanna Jones. Hutchison sentenced him to 27.5 years for the voluntary manslaughter charge — the maximum is 30 years — and the maximum of an additional 20 years for the habitual offender enhancement stemming from a criminal record that dates back to the mid-1990s. He was given credit for time served since Aug. 25, 2020.

Cory Jones had previously

been charged with murder, which carries a sentence of 45 to 65 years with an advisory sentence of 55 years.

"I think that's a pretty good outcome considering all the circumstances," said Jay County prosecutor Wes Schemenaur. "It's within the range of what he would have received on a straight-up murder sentence. While it's not as much as he would have gotten had he gone to trial and been convicted of the murder and the habitual together, as the

judge pointed out, it's going to be pretty much a life sentence for him either way."

Relatives of Shanna Jones declined to make a victim's impact statement in court as part of the sentencing hearing but spoke to The Commercial Review afterward.

"It makes me feel a little bit better at night knowing that he's not going to get out any time soon and come after me," said Natasha Jones, Shanna's daughter.

See Jones page 2

Contested races are lining up on the Republican side of the ballot.

Bryan Alexander filed Friday to challenge incumbent Chad Aker in the Republican primary for Jay County Commissioner representing the middle district.

His addition to the ballot brings the total to three contested races for county-level offices in addition to a contested race for state representative in District 33. Also filing Friday were incumbent Democrat Wes Schemenaur for Jay County prosecutor and Republican Jon Eads for state convention delegate.

Alexander, a Portland resident, has held elected office in the county previously. He served two terms on Jay School Board from 2003 through 2010. He was unopposed in his 2006 bid for re-election.

Aker, also a Portland resident and current commissioners president, is seeking a second term in office. He defeated his cousin Brian Aker in the 2018 general election after knocking off incumbent Barry Hudson and Caleb Lutes in the GOP primary.

Two Republicans have also filed paperwork in Indianapolis to run for District 33 state representative, which includes the southern two-thirds of Jay County as well as all of Randolph County and part of Delaware County, setting up a rematch from 2020.

See Race page 2

## Retrospect

# Apache visited Dunkirk

Twenty-five years ago this week, local elementary school students were learning about Native American culture.

The Jan. 8, 1997, edition of The Commercial Review featured coverage of Apache warrior Nig-Kke visiting Westlawn Elementary School in Dunkirk.

Nig-Kke — the name means Dark Sky — Bright Star in Apache — spoke to students in two groups and also allowed them to get a close look at items he brought, including a pipe, tomahawk, dream-catcher and tom-tom he made when he was 9 years old. He said he had delivered similar presentations at

about a half dozen schools in Indiana and Ohio. He had previously visited Pennville and Portland.

"When an apache comes in peace, he gives something in return," Nig-Kke explained to the students. "I give each school a piece of turquoise because that says I come in peace."

Two of his main goals were to describe reservation life and encourage children to become pen pals with those on the Apache reservation.

Nig-Kke explained that as an Apache warrior he learned to live off of the land. One of the requirements was being able to survive in the desert without

taking any food or water with him.

In addition to other items, he showed students his medicine bag that had been passed down from generation to generation.

He emphasized the importance of education and said he hoped members of the Apache nation would continue to visit schools like Westlawn for years to come.

And he emphasized the importance of preservation and pride in not only his culture, but all cultures.

"We don't want to ever lose who we are," he said. "Indian or not, just be proud of who you are and where you come from."



The Commercial Review/Robert Banser

Westlawn Elementary School music teacher Kathy Nelson talks with Apache warrior Nig-Kke about how he made a tom-tom when he was a child on the Apache reservation in Arizona.

### Deaths

Sandra Blaylock, 85, Mt. Vernon  
Jeffrey Hurst, 73, Pinetop-Lakeside, Arizona  
Chris Dugan, 64, Portland  
Joan Franks, 80, Parker City  
Details on page 2.

### Weather

Jay County had a high temperature of 21 degrees Friday. The low was 5, with a wind chill of zero.  
Expect a high of 34 today under sunny skies with winds gusting to 30 miles per hour. Rain, with freezing rain possible, is expected tonight.  
See page 2 for an extended outlook.

### In review

Jay School Board will meet three times Monday.  
The board will meet in executive session at 4 p.m. at General Shanks, 414 E. Floral Ave., Portland. It hold its organizational meeting for the year at 5 p.m. and will then meet as the corporation's board of finance at 5:15 p.m.

### Coming up

Tuesday — Results from today's Jay County Invitational swim meet.  
Thursday — Coverage of Wednesday's Jay County Council meeting.







Photo provided

## Lions Club donates

Portland Lions Club treasurer Mark Tillman presents a donation for the Youth Service Bureau Christmas to PJ Corwin.

# Mixed signals stir feelings

Dear Abby



DEAR ABBY: I have been talking to my ex-boyfriend of more than 22 years. We have a grown son. We are now in our 50s and talking and texting again. I still love him, and I want a relationship with him, but I'm not sure he wants me back. I don't know if he's interested in me or just being friendly.

Can you help? At the end of our last phone call he said, "It's been a long time. Twenty-two years. We are both different people now. I don't know if it could be like it was then," and we said goodnight.

Should I wait for him to text me back? I don't even know if he's dating someone. He didn't say. Please help.

— SECOND CHANCE IN THE EAST

DEAR SECOND CHANCE:

Continue talking to your ex and let this scenario play out further. Is he initiating these calls and texts, or are you? If it's him, that's a hopeful sign. Yes, it is true you are both different people now — but that can be a plus. With the passage of time, you both may have mellowed and matured. If the discussions continue, you will find out soon enough if he's involved with someone or interested in getting back together. And remember, if he's just being "friendly," the son you share is a good reason for keeping that friendship going.

.....

DEAR ABBY: My wife is

very protective of our dog, "Spencer." I agree with her that Spencer should not receive table food. Yesterday, my wife put a large pile of dog vomit on my desk. She said it "proves" I have been feeding Spencer. Her accusation is not true.

I may have done some peculiar things in my time, but I have never put vomit on someone's desk. How should I respond? — FLABBERGASTED IN IOWA

DEAR FLABBERGASTED:

There can be various reasons for a dog having an upset stomach besides having consumed table scraps. Spencer should be checked by a veterinarian to be sure there isn't something else going on. As to your wife putting vomit on your desk, well, since you asked — I wouldn't blame you if you made it plain that SHE is in the doghouse.

.....

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.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

# Book sale begins Monday

It's almost time for a book sale.

Fort Recovery Public Library will be hosting a used book sale from Monday through Jan. 15 during regular business hours. Book and DVD donations are still being accepted.

Business hours for the library at 113 N. Wayne St., Fort Recovery, are from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday and Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Friday and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday. The library is closed on Thursday.

For more information or to

## Taking Note

inquire about acceptable donations, call the library at (419) 375-2869.

## Paws & Pages

Paws & Pages is back. Jay County Public Library will

host Paws & Pages, an opportunity for children to read to a certified therapy dog, from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday.

Each participant will have 15 minutes of reading and playtime with Sonny the chihuahua. Children may bring their own reading materials or read from books provided.

Register by calling (260) 726-7890 or while visiting the library. A parent or guardian must sign a waiver at the time of the event.

# Community Calendar

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

## Today

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

**DUNKIRK HISTORICAL SOCIETY** — Is open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the first and third Saturday of each month in the former W.E. Gaunt Jewelry building, 113 S. Main St., Dunkirk.

**MUSEUM OF THE SOLDIER** — Is open from noon to 5 p.m. the first and third Saturday and Sunday of the month. It is located at 510 E. Arch St., Portland. The website is [museumofthesoldier.com](http://museumofthesoldier.com).

## Monday

**PORTLAND BREAKFAST OPTIMISTS** — Will

meet at 7 a.m. for breakfast at Richards Restaurant.

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

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

**EUCHRE** — Will be played starting at 1 p.m. each Monday at West Jay Community Center, 125 Hoover St., Dunkirk.

**JAY COUNTY DRUG PREVENTION COALITION** — Will meet at 3:30 p.m. the second Monday of each month. For more information, call (260) 251-3259.

**PREGNANCY CARE CENTER** — Free pregnancy testing with ongoing support during and after pregnancy. The center is located at 216 S. Meridian St., Portland. Hours are 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information or to schedule an

appointment, call (260) 726-8636. Walk-ins accepted.

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

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

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

**CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP** — Will meet at 1 p.m. the first Monday of each month at Portland Place, 430 W. Lafayette St. For more information, call (800) 589-1121.

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

## Tuesday

**JAY COUNTY PASTORS AND CHAPLAINS** — Meet at 11:30 a.m. on the second Tuesday of each month in

the chapel at Indiana University Health Jay Hospital.

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

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

**JAY COUNTY CIVIC THEATRE** — Holds its regular meeting at 6 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month in the Community Room at Jay County Public Library, 315 N. Ship St., Portland.

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

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

# Sudoku

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

Level: Advanced

## Friday's Solution

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

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

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**WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?**

**For Jay County Schools January 10-14**

**Monday: Main Entrees:** Pancakes, turkey sausage, syrup  
**Alternate Entrees:** Cereal, goldfish & yogurt fun lunch, turkey & cheese salad, saltine crackers, light ranch dressing **Sides for all meals:** Hash brown patty

**Tuesday: Main Entrees:** Meatballs Marinara with spaghetti, garlic breadstick **Alternate Entrees:** Pancakes, yogurt & cheese fun lunch, turkey & cheese salad, saltine crackers, light ranch dressing **Sides for all meals:** Savory green beans

**Wednesday: Main Entrees:** Classic chicken sandwich **Alternate Entrees:** Cereal, goldfish & yogurt fun lunch, turkey & cheese salad, saltine crackers, light ranch dressing **Sides for all meals:** Seasoned corn

**Thursday: Main Entrees:** Beef nachos **Alternate Entrees:** Pancakes, yogurt & cheese fun lunch, turkey & cheese salad, saltine crackers, light ranch dressing **Sides for all meals:** Mexican style refried beans

**Friday: Main Entrees:** Jumbo crispy chicken tenders **Alternate Entrees:** Cereal, goldfish & yogurt fun lunch, turkey & cheese salad, saltine crackers, light ranch dressing **Sides for all meals:** Savory green beans

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# Team Rubicon expresses thanks

To the editor:  
Four months ago, we walked into an empty warehouse in southern Johnson County.

Down the road, thousands of Afghans were streaming into Camp Atterbury after a terrifying and traumatic escape from their country. For years, many of them worked alongside the U.S. military and/or government officials, doing what they could to help to stabilize their country.

Now they were in the United States, forced to leave everything behind because they stood by America's side.

For Team Rubicon assisting with others on Operation Allies Welcome was a new type of mission. We're a veteran-led organization built to serve at-risk and vulnerable populations affected by disasters such as tornadoes, hurricanes, floods and wildfires.

But this mission was different, it was new and there was no roadmap to refer to. Before it was over Team Rubicon would assist at 10 separate locations

## Letters to the Editor

across the United States with the ultimate task of conducting donations management support. Working in a warehouse collecting, sorting and providing donated items to recently displaced individuals all in an effort to help, all amid a pandemic.

Hoosiers demonstrated their hospitality. In just a few weeks, our warehouse was bursting with new diapers, toothbrushes and shampoos, along with an increasing number of socks, shirts and pants. Over 2 million items of donated goods were processed at the warehouse assisting Camp Atterbury. Almost the entirety were provided by the people of Indiana, each item a sacrifice of someone's

time and money, given to assist another start a new life.

In addition to the material goods came the new Team Rubicon members, people of Indiana who raised their hand, saying "pick me, I want to help." Close to 250 individual Team Rubicon volunteers assisted over the course of these four months. Many of these individuals were new to Team Rubicon, the majority of them from Indiana, and all of them willing to give of their time, ability and heart. Each was open to sweat in the heat of September and shiver in the cold of December to sort, pack and process the mountains of donated items provided through the generosity of their friends, neighbors and fellow Hoosiers.

Donations came from every corner of the state. Faith communities, charitable organizations, civic groups, businesses, families, children, veterans and others dropped off items at Indiana armories across the state and our collection site at John-

son County Park. Many of you give often, returning time and time again to demonstrate your Hoosier Hospitality.

Our mission, to receive, sort and prepare for distribution all donated items in support of Operation Allies Welcome would not have succeeded the way it did without the support of Indiana state leadership, namely Gov. Eric Holcomb along with the military leaders at Camp Atterbury, national and stage agencies and other non-governmental organizations. Each knew their role and executed their duties with the intent to serve. It has been amazing to work for and alongside each and every one involved and to witness the care and sensitivity demonstrated to our guests.

At Team Rubicon, we often say our actions are characterized by the constant pursuit to prevent or alleviate human suffering and restore human dignity — we help people on their worst day. Hoosiers, you did that. It was

you who lifted up and gave support to our Afghan guests that was beyond anything we could imagine. But you know this is only the first phase. We trust that you will continue to support our Afghan allies as they settle in your communities and across our country by continuing to demonstrate Hoosier Hospitality.

We share all of this to say thank you for stepping into the arena with us, for demonstrating that Hoosier Hospitality is more than a tag line, for meeting and exceeding the need and for giving hope and showing love to others.

May each recipient never forget your compassionate and generous giving as we will never forget all that you have shown us.

In gratitude,  
Russ Hessler, Task Force Leader  
Tyler Smith  
Liaison  
Team Rubicon  
Camp Atterbury

## Kazakh uprising also about Russia

The Washington Post

For three decades after the Soviet Union's collapse, oil- and uranium-producing Kazakhstan was, to all appearances, the most prosperous and stable of its former Central Asian republics.

To be sure, President Nursultan Nazarbayev monopolized political power, using it to enrich himself, his family and his friends. Now 81, he has remained influential even after stepping down in favor of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev nearly three years ago. The Kazakh people, better off economically than most others in their region, seemingly went along.

The United States — valuing Nazarbayev's support on nuclear non-proliferation and the Afghanistan War as well as his welcome to Western oil companies — adopted a friendly attitude toward the regime, too.

Events since Jan. 2 have shown how brittle the status quo really was. A fuel price hike triggered protests in one town that day, and the uprising quickly grew into an all-out national insurrection.

Eighteen police officers were killed, according to official reports. Meanwhile, forces loyal to Tokayev used violence, including live ammunition, against demonstrators — whom he called "terrorists" — claiming dozens of civilian lives and sending hundreds to hospitals, according to reports trickling out despite a government-imposed Internet shutdown. Tokayev has not only issued a shoot-to-kill order but also cast blame on what he called "supposedly free media outlets," portents of a coming crackdown on peaceful dissent.

Also ominously, the regime has made false charges of foreign subversion to justify a military intervention by Kazakhstan's closest ally, Vladimir Putin's Russia. The Russian boots on the ground, like Putin's support for Belarusian dictator Alexander Lukashenko against protests in 2020, demon-

## Guest Editorial

strate the strategic priority he places on propping up fellow autocrats, so as to preserve a Russian sphere of influence in the former Soviet space. To be sure, the Belarusian protests were nonviolent and Putin's assistance to Lukashenko relatively discriminate.

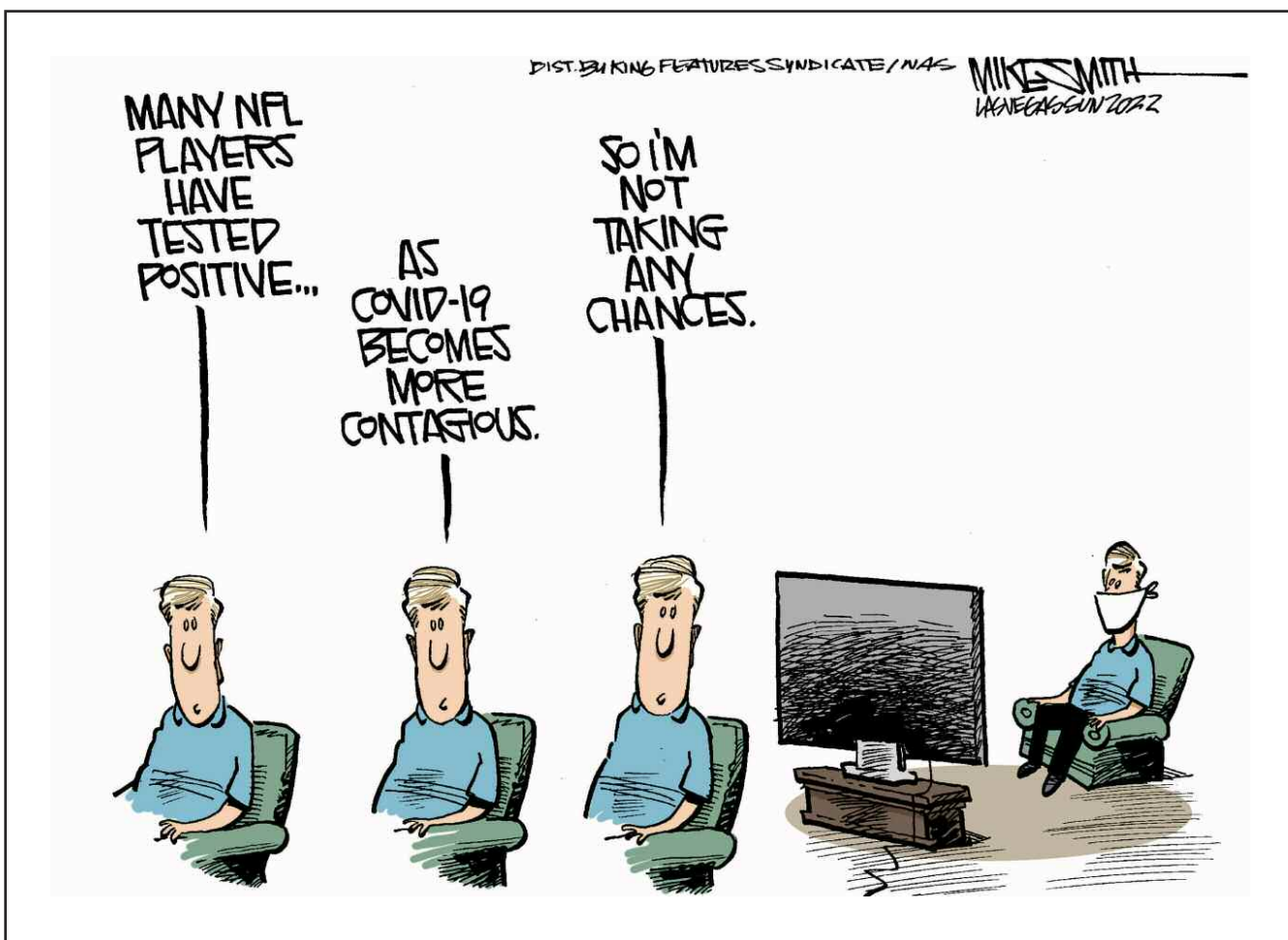
The goal, though, is consistent: prevent a repetition of the 2014 revolt that toppled a corrupt, authoritarian, pro-Moscow ruler in Ukraine. Putin undoubtedly calculates that, if it survives, Tokayev's government would be beholden to Russia.

Kazakhstan's sudden crisis might also reverberate in Ukraine, on whose borders Putin has massed roughly 100,000 troops, making accusations and demands against the United States and its allies — and refusing to rule out an invasion.

Kazakhstan could make an invasion of Ukraine less likely, by diverting Russian military resources and consuming Putin's attention. Or the Russian leader could seize on the events in Central Asia as yet another purported Western-instigated destabilization in Russia's "near abroad" and — as such — a fresh rationale for direct Russian domination of Ukraine.

No matter how Putin plays it, the Kazakh crisis provides the Biden administration a reason to double down on the principles it has already articulated ahead of U.S.-Russian negotiations Monday in Geneva. Russia's neighbors have a right to self-determination, and their peoples are entitled to human rights.

Moscow has no right to impose its will on Ukraine or any other country through force. Any attempt to do so should be met with a swift, strong and unified Western response.



## Long-term inflation has impact

By LARRY DEBOER

The property tax is the biggest source of tax revenue for most Indiana local governments, and they were worried about the effect of the COVID recession on property tax revenues.

But rising home values in 2020 will increase assessed values for tax bills in 2022. The federal COVID relief bills increased Indiana income in 2020, so the state's limit on property tax revenue will keep increasing in 2022. Tax rates are likely to fall in many jurisdictions next year, so fewer taxpayers will be eligible for tax cap credits. Local governments will collect a bigger share of their tax levies. Looks like the recession will not be a problem in 2022.

So, what should we worry about now? How about inflation?

We have no experience with high inflation. The Indiana property tax is much different today than it was during the high inflation of the 1970s. So let's try to think it through.

Suppose there is a "pure inflation," which adds the same increase to prices, incomes and property values. It couldn't happen, but it's a useful experiment to look at inflation's effect.

Suppose property values rise with inflation. Assessed values rise. The maximum levy is based on income growth, so it rises too. If the levy and assessed value rise at the same pace, tax rates are unchanged. Rising assessed values increase the constitutional tax caps, so tax bills also increase.

Inflation would be annoying, but essentially nothing happens. Local governments have enough added revenue to pay their higher costs. Taxpayers still pay the same share of



Larry DeBoer

their inflated property values and incomes in property taxes.

What could mess this up? Any part of the tax system that doesn't respond to inflation. I can think of four:

First, suppose inflation increases property values in 2021. Assessors measure this rise for assessed values in 2022. Those assessed values are used for tax bills in 2023. Assessments can't reflect today's inflation until then.

Second, the state limits property taxes to a maximum levy, which increases each year at a percentage called the maximum levy growth quotient. It's based on a six-year average of Indiana non-farm income growth, calculated by the Department of Local Government Finance. In summer 2022 the DLGF will calculate the MLGQ for 2023, based on the most recent six income growth numbers, 2016 through 2021.

That means the growth rate of the property tax levy won't begin to reflect 2021 inflation until 2023. Even then, the six-year average will include one year of high inflation, and five years of low inflation.

Inflation is raising local government costs now, in 2021. Some costs are fixed by contracts, but many must be rising. Assessments and maximum levies don't respond, so local governments won't have the revenue

to cover inflation for at least two years.

We're losing hope that the inflation will be transitory, but suppose it fades away during 2022, and is back in the 2% range by 2023. Assessments and the MLGQ will rise based on what happened in 2021. Local government budgets would begin to catch up.

What if inflation is sustained, though? Suppose it continues through 2028. At that point all six growth rates in the MLGQ would reflect inflation. Maximum levies would finally rise enough to cover cost increases.

Except for problem number three. The MLGQ has a legal maximum of 6%. If inflation is greater than that — as it is at the end of 2021 — the maximum levy can never catch up to cost increases.

Now for number four: The standard deduction for most homes is fixed at \$45,000. It's subtracted from assessed value before the tax rate is applied. If home values rise rapidly, this fixed deduction becomes less important in reducing assessed values. Taxable assessed values would rise faster than home values. Homeowner taxes would rise faster than inflation.

That's not a problem for local government budgets, but it could be a problem for local politics. Homeowners are voters, and they tend to complain when their taxes go up.

High inflation would squeeze local government budgets for a couple of years. If inflation is transitory, budgets would start to catch up in 2023. If inflation is sustained — well, let's hope not.

DeBoer is Purdue University agricultural economist.

# The Commercial Review

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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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Bloomberg/Patricia Monteiro

Soybeans are unloaded into a truck during a harvest in Ita, Sao Paulo state, Brazil, on Feb. 24, 2021. Crop forecasters have cut projections for Brazil's soybean crop, originally as high as 145 tons, to below the 137.3-ton mark it hit last year.

## La Niña cuts projections

By **TATIANA FREITAS**  
Bloomberg

The world's largest soybean producer and exporter will fail to deliver a record crop this year.

Crop forecasters have slashed their estimates for Brazil's soy output as persistent drought and heat caused losses in the nation's south. Production is now seen below last year's level, when the South American nation reaped 137.3 million tons. The harvest could have reached as much as 145 million tons this season, according to initial forecasts.

A tighter supply of the oilseed used to make everything from cooking oil to animal feed may add fuel to global food inflation. Concerns over the South America crop have caused a rally in Chicago, with soybean futures rising 13% since

December. Brazil's lower production is also likely to curb its shipments and may increase the competitiveness of U.S. exports.

Heat and dry conditions were so intense in December in Brazil's south, a region accounting for about a third of the nation's crop. That led brokerage StoneX to cut its production estimate by 7.7% to 134 million tons earlier this week. On Thursday, the local consultancy AgRural said output may be even lower at 133.4 million tons. While losses in Parana are consolidated as the crop is at a more advanced stage, yields in Rio Grande do Sul, which has a late planting, also had a big cut as adverse weather shortened the plant cycle in several areas, it said.

"Rain and lower temperatures are necessary right away to avoid more losses in the state," AgRural

added in its report. In other regions, the crop is developing well and high yields are expected in the top-growing state Mato Grosso, where reaping has started.

Lack of rain and extreme heat in southern Brazil are conditions caused by the La Niña phenomenon, which is hitting the nation's agriculture for the second year in a row. Argentina, also a major supplier of the oilseed, faces a similar weather pattern, with moisture deficits reaching at least 75% of the nation's soy next week, according to the Commodity Weather Group.

The reviews made this week on Brazil's crop estimates may signal official cuts next week, when the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Brazil's Conab are scheduled to release forecasts for the nation's crop.

## Ardagh earns sixth gold rating

A company with local ties earned another high honor.

Ardagh Group, which operates glass manufacturing facilities in Dunkirk and Winchester, has received a gold rating from EcoVadis for its "responsible and sustainable practices."

It marked the sixth time Ardagh has received the gold rating. It ranked in the 97th percentile for sustainability management systems according to EcoVadis, an independent sustainability rating platform.

"As a leader in infinitely sustainable metal and glass packaging, we have set specific goals to reduce our environmental impacts," said Ardagh chief sustainability officer John Sadlier in a press release. "They include emission reductions, renewable electricity sourcing and zero waste to landfill across our production facilities to name a few. We are delighted to have improved our EcoVadis rating and we look forward to achieving more on our sustainability journey to 2030."

Ardagh also has a goal of reaching zero emissions by 2050.

### Scout buys

Scout Clean Energy announced last week that it has purchased a solar facility.

On Thursday, Scout announced its acquisition of Blue Sky Solar from developer Renewable Energy Systems. The development, which has been approved but not yet constructed, calls for the installation of a 369 megawatt solar facility on 2,700 acres in Grundy County, Illinois.

"We are pleased to com-

### Business roundup

plete another renewables investment with the team at RES," said Scout CEO and founder Michael Rucker in a press release. "The Blue Sky project is one of the largest solar projects approved to date in the PJM and is the second Midwest solar project Scout has added to its expanding renewables portfolio this year. ... Blue Sky further diversifies our fleet across wind, solar and storage."

Scout owns and operates Bitter Ridge Wind Farm in southwest Jay County and is planning Sun Chief Solar in the same area.

### Lilly purchases

Eli Lilly has purchased exclusive rights to Entos Pharmaceuticals' Fusogenix nucleic acid delivery technology, Fierce Biotech reported this week.

Lilly is providing \$50 million up front to use the technology to research and develop therapeutics against targets in the nervous system. The companies will work together on multiple programs.

Fierce Biotech reported that Entos could get up to an additional \$500 million for reaching development and commercial goals.

"Overcoming barriers to the safe and effective delivery of [nucleic acid-based therapies] to specific target cells is essential to realizing their potential," Eli Lilly vice president of genetic medicine said in a statement.

## Rule oversteps?

By **MARK SHERMAN**  
and **JESSICA GRESKO**  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Fully vaccinated and mostly masked, the Supreme Court's conservative majority appeared skeptical Friday of the Biden administration's authority to impose a vaccine-or-testing requirement on the nation's large employers. The court seemed more open to a separate vaccine mandate for most health care workers.

The arguments in the two cases come at a time of spiking coronavirus cases because of the omicron variant, and the decision Friday by seven justices to wear masks for the first time while hearing arguments reflected the new phase of the pandemic.

An eighth justice, Sonia Sotomayor, a diabetic since childhood, didn't even appear in the courtroom, choosing to remain in her office at the court and take part remotely. Two lawyers, representing Ohio and Louisiana, argued by telephone after recent positive COVID-19 tests, state officials said.

But the COVID circumstances did not appear to outweigh the views of the court's six conservatives that the administration overstepped its authority in its vaccine-or-testing requirement for businesses with at least 100 employees.

"This is something the federal government has never done before," Chief Justice John Roberts said, casting doubt on the administration's argument that a half-century established law, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, confers such broad authority.

Roberts and Justices Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett probably hold the key to the outcome in both cases, as they have been more receptive to state-level vaccine requirements than the other three conservative justices. Bar-

### Court seems skeptical of vaccine mandate for large employers

rett and Kavanaugh also had tough questions for Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar, the administration's top Supreme Court lawyer.

The court's three liberal justices suggested support for the employer rule. Justice Elena Kagan said officials have shown "quite clearly that no other policy will prevent sickness and death to anywhere like the degree that this one will." And Justice Stephen Breyer said he found it "unbelievable" that it could be in the "public interest" to put that rule on hold. He said that on Thursday there were some 750,000 new cases in the country and that hospitals are full.

Beginning Monday, unvaccinated employees in big companies are supposed to wear masks at work, unless the court blocks enforcement. But testing requirements and potential fines for employers don't kick in until February.

Legal challenges to the policies from Republican-led states and business groups are in their early stages, but the outcome at the high court probably will determine the fate of vaccine requirements affecting more than 80 million people.

Roberts, Kavanaugh and Barrett seemed to have fewer doubts about the health care vaccine mandate. Kavanaugh said it was a "very unusual situation" that hospitals and health care organizations affected by the regulation were "not here complaining" about the rule but instead support it. "What

are we to make of that?" he asked.

The second regulation is a mandate that would apply to virtually all health care staff in the country. It covers health care providers that receive federal Medicare or Medicaid funding, potentially affecting 76,000 health care facilities as well as home health care providers. The rule has medical and religious exemptions.

Decisions by federal appeals courts in New Orleans and St. Louis have blocked the mandate in about half the states. The administration has said it is taking steps to enforce it in the rest.

"I think effectively what is at stake is whether these mandates are going to go into effect at all," said Sean Marotta, a Washington lawyer whose clients include the American Hospital Association. The trade group is not involved in the Supreme Court cases.

Both vaccine rules would exacerbate labor shortages and be costly to businesses, lawyer Scott Keller argued Friday on behalf of more than two dozen business groups. Without an immediate order from the court, "workers will quit right away," Keller said.

Administration lawyer Prelogar told the justices that COVID-19 "is the deadliest pandemic in American history and it poses a unique workplace danger." OSHA has estimated that its emergency regulation will save 6,500 lives and prevent 250,000 hospitalizations over six months.

**Don't MISS This!**

*We have a busy schedule of special sections and pages coming up. Mark your calendar so you don't miss them.*

**Cars**  
Friday, February 19 (ad deadline Feb. 12)

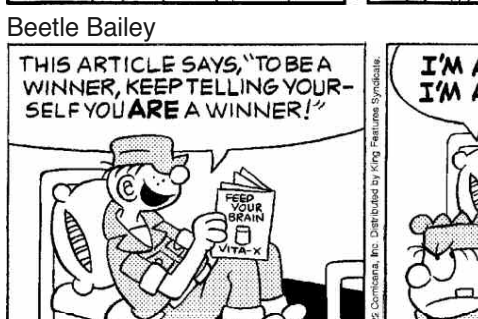
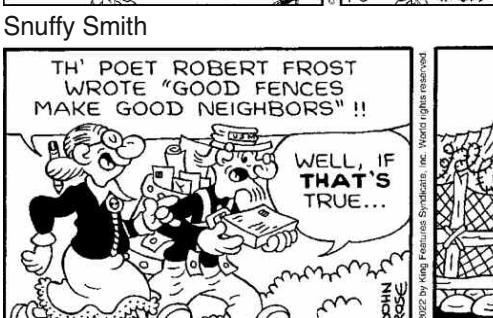
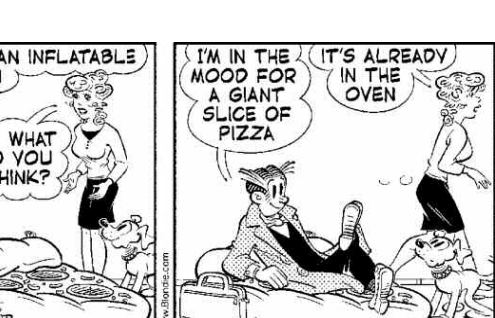
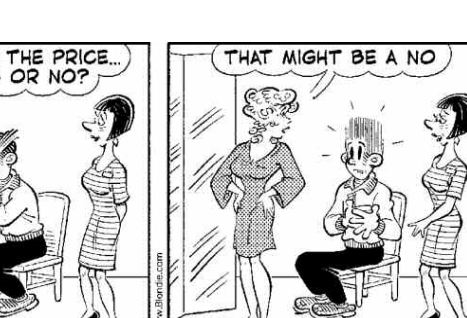
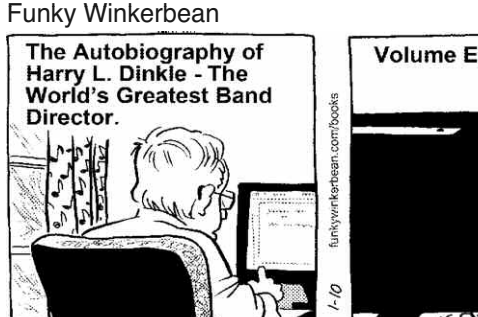
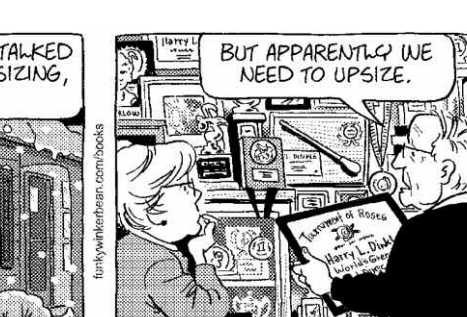
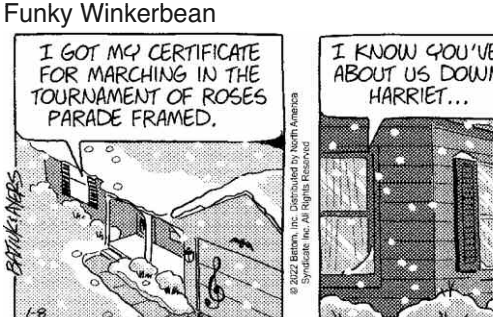
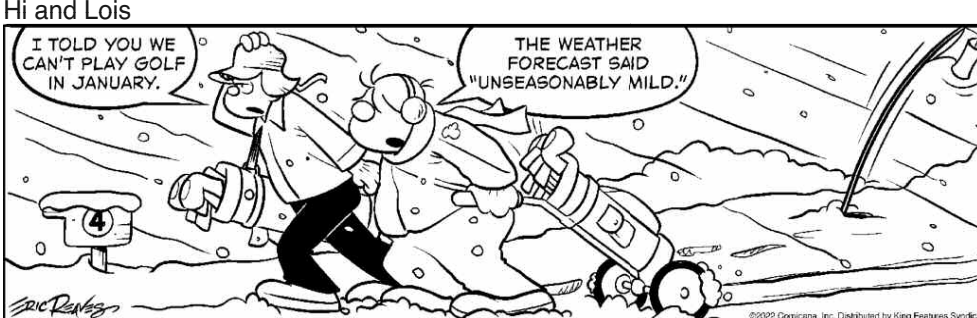
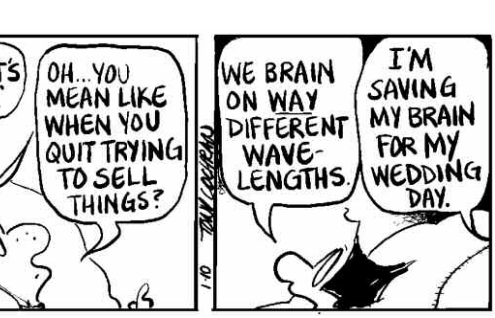
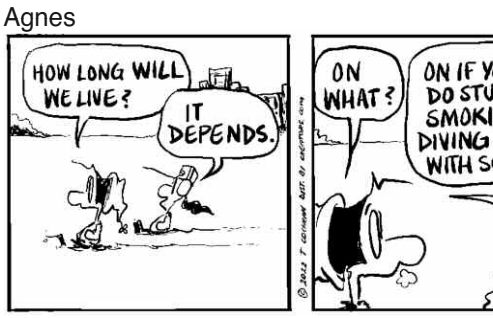
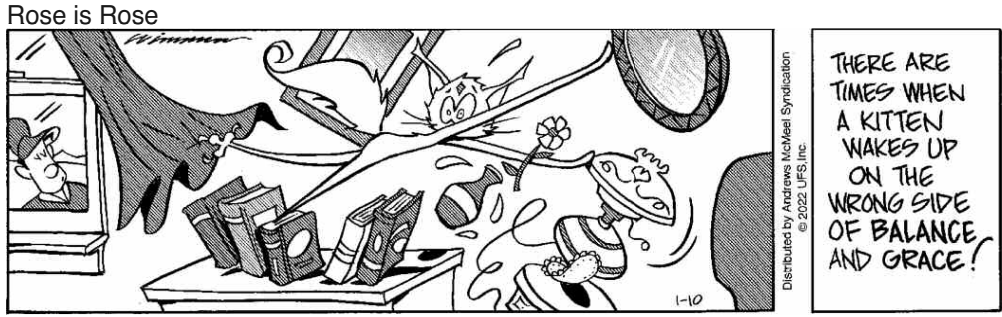
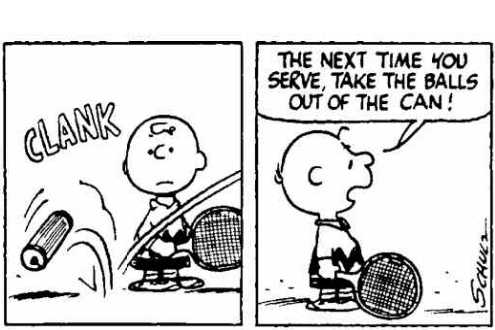
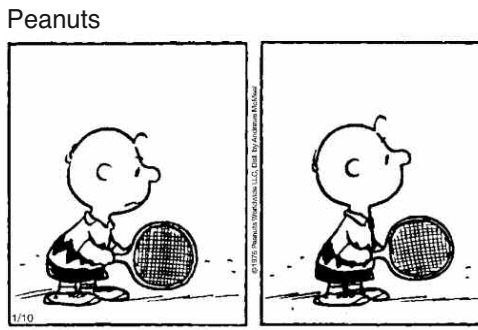
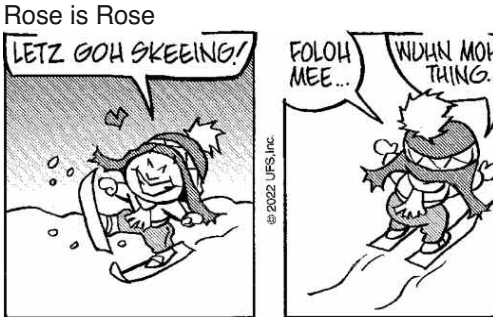
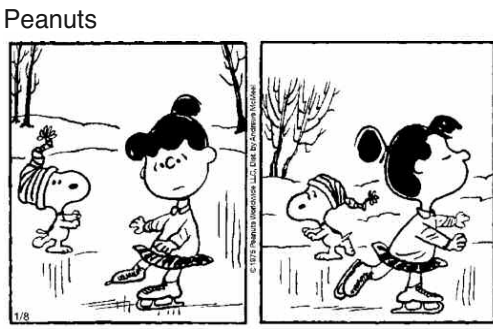
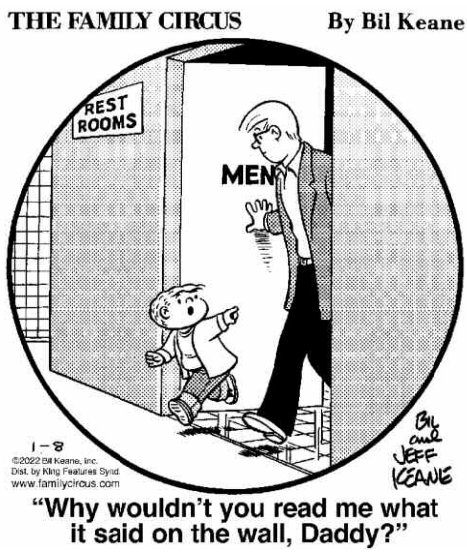
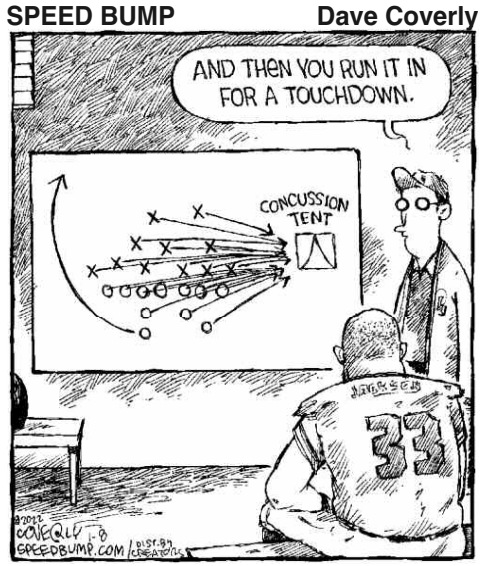
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**Laughter**

The Commercial Review *We Deliver*







## Jay cruises for 10th-straight win

*Patriots treat seniors Rodgers, Dirksen to lopsided victory*

By RAY COONEY  
The Commercial Review

Most of the Patriots' season has been about dominance.

Senior night was no different.

On the evening honoring Madison Dirksen and Izzy Rodgers, the Class 3A No. 9 Jay County High School girls basketball team

cruised past the visiting Bluffton Tigers for a 60-28 victory.

It was the Patriots' 10th straight win, with the last nine of those coming by at least 20 points.

"It was awesome," said Rodgers. "Coach told us we had to come out with a good start, not to let down. We have to have motivation."

Leading just 10-8 early — Maryn Schreiber scored all of those eight for Bluffton (6-10, 2-3 Allen County Athletic Conference) — the Patriots (13-2, 4-0 ACAC) took control with a strong close to the first quarter and stifling defense in the second. They finished the first period on a 13-2 run capped by back-to-back Rodgers 3-pointers. They then used the combination of a half-court trap and a zone defense to force seven second-quarter turnovers the helped spark a 12-0 run in which Gabi Bilbrey scored seven straight points — she finished with nine — and Renna Schwieterman buried a pair of triples.

"I thought we got off to a good start again. It helps when you're hitting shots," said JCHS coach Kirk Comer, whose team shot 17-of-29 (.586) and 8-of-11 (.727) from long distance in the first half. "We were shooting the ball really well from the 3-point line early. ..."

"I thought our half-court defense was probably as good as we've played all year."

Jay County was up 45-15 at halftime and extended its lead to 34 with three minutes left in the third quarter.

Schwieterman was blistering in the first half, making her first five 3-point attempts before finally missing one at the 1:15 mark of the second quarter. She had 22 of her 25 points in the first half and finished 6-of-9 from long distance while grabbing six rebounds, blocking three shots and dishing out three assists.

After reaching the 1,000-point mark last week, she is now just 16 points away from eclipsing 2019 graduate Shelby Caldwell for No. 3 on the program's all-time scoring list and 18 from passing Carissa Phillips for second place.

Dirksen joined Schwieterman in double figures with 10 points while grabbing a team-high eight rebounds and adding three assists. (She now has 860 points for her career, putting her within striking distance of becoming the program's fifth 1,000-point scorer.)

Rodgers scored all of her points on the first-quarter 3-pointers and also had two assists and one rebound.

"They're just a great



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Madison Dirksen, a Jay County High School senior, gets past Bluffton freshman Isabella Stout to put up a shot during the third quarter of the Patriots' 60-28 victory Friday night. Dirksen scored 10 points on Senior Night and now has 860 for her career.

asset to this team," said Comer of the two seniors, noting they've been part of 62 wins thus far in their careers.

"Madison is a great, great leader," he added. "She looks after the

younger kids. ... She's willing to do whatever it takes for us to win. ..."

"If you've never had to come back from an injury, it's a lot of work ... to develop into the player that she is today,"

he said of Rodgers, who tore her ACL during a scrimmage prior to her freshman season. "Just like Madison, (Izzy) put a lot of work in behind the scenes."

See Jay page 9

## Bama, UGA land in Indy

By MICHAEL MAROT  
AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS — Coach Nick Saban walked off Alabama's team plane Friday night to a cold, harsh reality.

When he returns to the airport for the final time this season, the Crimson Tide will either be celebrating another national championship or heading home disappointed.

Saban's top-ranked team received a warm welcome in frigid Indianapolis, arriving shortly after dusk Friday with streaks of orange and red and a bright crescent moon coloring the sky. Players scurried from the plane to buses with temperatures in the teens as drummers played tunes for Alabama before doing the same when Georgia arrived about 90 minutes later.

Even for a playoff regular like Alabama, this was a different routine.

"It's been pretty cold in Tuscaloosa the last day or two but not this cold," Saban said. "I told them to be ready for the cold. Our guys are not used to it. Fortunately, we won't be playing in it, so I told them to get used to it from the plane to the bus."

Monday night marks the first time the College Football Playoff championship game will be played in a northern city and though the Lucas Oil Stadium dome will be closed, this was not the greeting organizers hoped for.

Thursday night's wind chills dipped into negative digits and were still hovering there Friday morning. The highs Saturday and Sunday are expected to be near 40 degrees before lows are forecast to hit single digits again Monday night.

The good news is Indy's maze of indoor walkways mean players and fans won't need to be outside much if at all — just like the teams that competed in last spring's NCAA men's basketball tournament.

And in a region best-known for embracing basketball, racing and the Big Ten, the buzz heating up around town is all about the Alabama-Georgia rematch. One electronic billboard even renamed the city as Indianapolis-SEC.

"We're really pleased to have the opportunity to be in the CFP and it's a great place have it, a great venue," Saban said, noting some of his players hope to return to Indy in late February for the NFL's annual scouting combine.

Georgia coach Kirby Smart was not scheduled to speak with reporters after the Bulldogs arrived Friday. School officials cited concerns over the latest surge in COVID-19 cases. He did briefly, anyway.

# Brides Section Specials

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Contact

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## Winner claims crown

BUNKER HILL — Malory Winner lived up to her name.

Winner, a Jay County High School freshman, was the lone Patriot to claim a championship Friday for the JCHS girls wrestling team in the IHSGW North Regional at Maconaquah.

She's one of eight Patriots to earn berths to the state tournament, set for Friday in Kokomo.

See Claims page 9

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