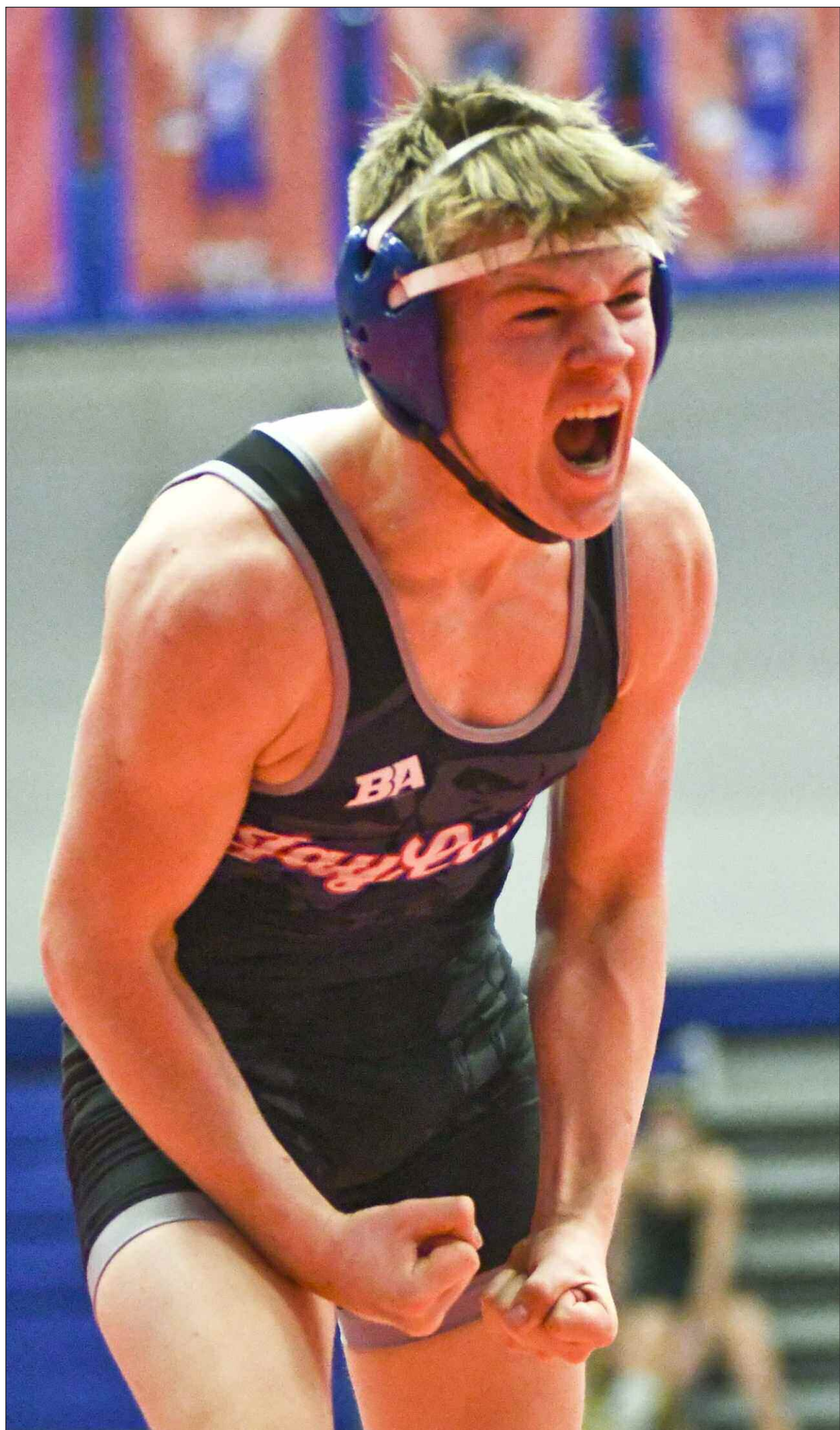


The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

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The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Pumped for semi-state

Christian Wittkamp of host Jay County High School reacts after his semifinal win during the regional tournament Saturday. The Patriots will take eight athletes to the semi-state tournament Saturday in Fort Wayne with hopes of winning their first semi-state championship since 1982. For a preview of the semi-state, see page 8.

Council OKs study contract

If grant is approved, firm will review town utilities

By BAILEY CLINE
The Commercial Review

REDKEY — The town is one step closer to securing a master utility plan.

Redkey Town Council approved a \$90,000 contract with Choice One Engineering to conduct a master utility study, contingent upon the town receiving planning grant funds, during a special meeting Thursday.

Council held a public hearing Jan. 19 and approved a resolution to apply for an Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) planning grant.

If selected for the grant — OCRA would contribute \$81,000, with Redkey paying a \$9,000 match — the town will pay Choice One to look into its water,

stormwater and wastewater utilities in order to identify issues and offer suggestions and potential funding sources in order to solve the problems. That includes regulations enforced by Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). (It will likely identify items such as combined sewer overflows, flooding problems or old water lines or valves.)

The last master utility plan for Redkey dates back to 2003, according to officials. Some grants through OCRA or IDEM require towns to have such a plan in place.

Civil engineering firms Choice One Engineering and Beam, Longest and Neff submitted proposals for the work. Both went through the procurement process per OCRA's regulations, which included providing a statement of qualifications and 30-minute interviews with a five-member committee made up of local representatives. The committee scored both companies based on a range of criteria, such as the company's understanding of the project requirements and its design approach.

See **Study** page 2

Changes made to tax measure

Bill would temporarily reduce property tax

By CASEY SMITH
Indiana Capital Chronicle
indianacapitalchronicle.com

Indiana lawmakers on Thursday approved major changes to a proposal that seeks to provide Hoosiers with temporary property tax relief.

But top GOP legislators cautioned the complex bill is still in its working stages, and other significant amendments are expected as early as next week.

The latest draft of the bill was amended in committee Thursday and

advanced 18-6 to the full House chamber.

The measure would provide multiple remedies to temporarily drop tax bills, including through a short-term property tax cap and an increase in state income tax deductions. It would also curb how much local units can raise their tax levies.

The proposal was filed by Rep. Jeff Thompson, R-Litton, who chairs the House Ways and Means Committee. He emphasized that numerous provisions in the bill won't be definitive for several more weeks.

"This is probably an end-of-April type of discussion, going right at the end, and we kind of know that going into it," he said. State lawmakers have until April 29 to finalize the state budget and close out the 2023 legislative session.

It's not clear where lawmakers stand on Thompson's bill.

See **Tax** page 2

Death toll hits 20,000

By WEEDAH HAMZAH,
MIRJAM SCHMITT
and JOHANNES SADEK

dpa
Tribune News Service

ISTANBUL — The death toll from earthquakes that devastated wide swathes of Turkey and Syria passed 20,000 on Thursday, as hope of finding survivors beneath the rubble of thousands of collapsed buildings diminished.

There were 17,134 confirmed deaths in Turkey and another 3,317 in Syria, putting the total at 20,451 — a staggering loss of life that makes it one of the deadliest tremors in decades.

More than 75,000 people were injured in the two successive powerful earthquakes that struck the region early Monday.

Hope of finding more survivors has diminished

Countless people were left without homes and unable to access basic goods and services, especially in war-torn Syria where international aid has been slow to arrive.

The Turkish government said more than 100,000 people were combing the debris fields for a fourth day, including teams from abroad.

Turkish public broadcaster TRT reported that about 8,000

people have been rescued from the rubble in Turkey so far.

Two brothers, aged 5 and 11, were found alive in Kahramanmaraş province about 84 hours after being buried in the quake, Turkish broadcaster NTV reported.

Images showed the brothers being bundled into blankets and carried away to the hospital.

See **Toll** page 5



Tribune News Service/AFP via Getty Images/Bakr Alkasem

Men recite a prayer Thursday in front of the body of a child killed in an earthquake in the town of Jandaris, in Syria's rebel-held part of Aleppo province. The 7.8-magnitude quake early Monday has killed more than 17,000 people in Turkey and war-ravaged Syria, according to officials and medics in the two countries, flattening entire neighborhoods.

Deaths

William Hemmelgarn, 80,
rural Portland
Details on page 2.

Weather

Jay County had a high temperature of 51 degrees Thursday. The low dropped to 38 overnight.

Tonight's low will be in the mid 20s. Expect sunny skies Saturday.

See page 2 for an extended outlook.

In review

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

Coming up

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

Tuesday — Coverage of Monday's Jay School Board meeting.



Obituaries

William Hemmelgarn

Aug. 10, 1942-Feb. 5, 2023
William Roman "Bill" Hemmelgarn, who was born on Aug. 10, 1942, in New Weston, Ohio, to Clem H. and Julia (Saalman) Hemmelgarn, passed away Feb. 5, 2023.

He was married to MaryLou (Schacht) Hemmelgarn for 51 years.

Bill is survived by daughter Leslie and Jerome Muh-

lenkamp, Fort Recovery, Ohio; and son Greg and Kelly Hemmelgarn, Portland, Indiana; grandkids Grant Muhlenkamp, Gabriel Muhlenkamp and Valerie Muhlenkamp, all of Fort Recovery, Ohio, and Finn Hemmelgarn, Tuck Hemmelgarn and Sawyer Hemmelgarn, all of Portland, Indiana; and three great-grand-



Hemmelgarn

children with one on the way. He is also survived by sister Marlene Knapke, Coldwater, Ohio, and brother David Hemmelgarn, Portland, Indiana.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and brothers Thomas Hemmelgarn and Larry Hemmelgarn.

Bill owned and operated his farm in rural Portland, Indiana, and worked for Avco New Idea in Coldwater, Ohio, for 42 years until his retirement in 2002. After retirement, he drove a

truck for Cooper Farms until 2011.

He was a great dad who liked to play ball in the yard, shoot basketball, take walks in the family woods, ride bikes, swim and ride his Gator or 4 wheeler. He was always up for an adventure and we loved to play jokes on him. He always had a great laugh and everyone knew him by that. He loves playing with the grandkids and watching their sporting events. He will be sadly missed. There will be no arrange-

ments, just a private family affair at some point. Please keep him in your prayers.

.....
The Commercial Review publishes death notices for those with a connection to our coverage area free of charge. They include the name, city of residence, birth/death date and time/date/location of services.

There is a charge for obituaries, which are accepted only from funeral homes or mortuary services.

CR almanac

Saturday 2/11	Sunday 2/12	Monday 2/13	Tuesday 2/14	Wednesday 2/15
40/25	48/31	49/28	52/45	63/48
Saturday's forecast shows sunny skies with a high around 40 degrees.	Sunny, with a low near freezing in the low 30s. The high may hit 48 degrees.	Monday looks to be mostly sunny throughout the day with a low of 28 at night.	Tuesday has a slight chance of rain, with a higher chance (60%) at night.	There's a 20% chance of rain throughout the day. Otherwise, partly sunny.

Study ...

Continued from page 1
Jodi Hayes of Jay County Development Corporation noted Choice One Engineering scored the highest during the process, and she asked council to approve a contract with the firm contingent upon receiving the OCRA grant.

"If we do not get the grant, you're not out anything," she explained, not-

ing the contract will not be signed until after the release of funds. "This is just a little bit of formality that OCRA requires us to do."

The grant application is due Wednesday. Hayes said it will likely take at least three months to hear back from OCRA.

Council member Chance Retter proposed the board

write a letter of support for the project. Hayes agreed, noting she has received one from former council member Dottie Quakenbush, with a few others from local residents on the way. She pointed out the grant application's upcoming deadline and that she would need the letter soon.

Council members Erik

Hammers and Retter as well as clerk-treasurer Mary Eley shared positive remarks about Choice One Engineering, which operates out of Sidney, Ohio, and Loveland, Ohio.

"They've always done excellent work here," said Retter.

Council approved the contract contingent upon being awarded the grant.

Lotteries

Powerball Estimated jackpot: \$34 million	14-15-17-31-35-40-42-44-47-51-52-54-65-71-75-77 Cash 5: 10-12-13-31-34 Estimated jackpot: \$893,500
Mega Millions Estimated jackpot: \$50 million	Ohio Midday Pick 3: 4-6-5 Pick 4: 7-9-8-5 Pick 5: 0-4-7-9-6 Evening Pick 3: 0-4-9 Pick 4: 5-6-3-9 Pick 5: 5-6-9-7-2 Rolling Cash: 3-7-10-14-23 Estimated jackpot: \$100,000
Hoosier Midday Daily Three: 0-3-4 Daily Four: 2-6-7-6 Quick Draw: 5-7-13-20-22-23-25-29-39-51-54-56-58-61-69-74-76-77-78-80 Evening Daily Three: 3-0-9 Daily Four: 5-4-1-2 Quick Draw: 4-6-7-13-	

Markets

Cooper Farms Fort Recovery Corn.....6.90 March corn.....6.90 Wheat.....7.70	Wheat.....7.24 July wheat.....7.72
POET Biorefining Portland Corn.....6.92 March corn.....6.95 April corn.....6.99	Central States Montpelier Corn.....6.78 Late Feb. corn.....6.78 Beans.....15.17 Late Feb. beans.....15.20 Wheat.....7.71
The Andersons Richland Township Corn.....6.85 March corn.....6.85 Beans.....15.14 March beans.....15.24	Heartland St. Anthony Corn.....6.49 March corn.....6.54 Beans.....14.93 March beans.....14.98 Wheat.....7.38

Today in history

In 1840, Britain's Queen Victoria married Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.

In 1936, Nazi Germany's Reichstag passed a law investigating the Gestapo secret police with absolute authority, exempt from any legal review.

In 1959, a major tornado ripped through the St. Louis area, killing 21 people and causing heavy damage.

In 1972, Olive Calhoun was elected president of The Graphic Printing Company Benefit Association during its annual meeting. Dan Grober was elected vice president.

In 1981, eight people were killed when a fire set by a busboy broke out at the Las Vegas Hilton hotel-casino.

In 1989, Ron Brown was elected the first Black chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

In 1992, boxer Mike Tyson was convicted in Indianapolis of raping Desiree Washington, a Miss Black America contestant.

In 2021, renewable energy firm Invenegy presented plans to Jay County Council for a proposed solar farm in northwest Jay County. The 155-megawatt Skycrest Solar was approved but supply chain issues have pushed back the start of construction.

—The CR

Citizen's calendar

Monday 9 a.m. — Jay County Commissioners, commissioners' room, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland. 3:45 p.m. — Jay County Election Board, voting room, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland. 4 p.m. — Jay County Public Library Board of Trustees, community room, library, 315 N. Ship St., Portland. 5 p.m. — Jay School Board, General Shanks, 414 E. Floral Ave., Portland.	6 p.m. — Dunkirk Board of Works, city building, 131 S. Main St., Dunkirk. 7 p.m. — Dunkirk City Council, city building, 131 S. Main St.
Tuesday 7 a.m. — Portland Fireman's Pension Board, Portland Fire Department, 1616 N. Franklin St. 5:30 p.m. — Portland Board of Zoning Appeals, Community Resource Center, 118 S. Meridian St., Portland.	

Off road

A Portland woman drove a truck off the side of Indiana 67, causing her to hit a guardrail and fence about 1:25 p.m. Wednesday.

Naomi D. Beiswanger, 39, was driving south on the highway near the intersection with county road 100 West when she attempted to grab an item from her purse, according to a Jay County Sheriff's Office report. The 2020 Ford F-250 she was driving went off the right side of the road, crashing into a guardrail and fence

owned by Robert Gordon of rural Redkey.

Beiswanger sustained a bruise on her arm. The vehicle she was driving is registered to DNA Family Farms of Portland, and it was towed.

Damage is estimated between \$50,000 and \$100,000.

Intersection crash

Damage is estimated between \$10,000 and \$25,000 after a Dunkirk man drove into an oncoming vehicle

at the intersection of Indiana 1 and county road 200 South about 7:15 a.m. Wednesday.

Michael D. Cline, 37, was driving a 2011 GMC Sierra east on county road 200 South. He told police his vision was impaired by heavy fog, and he didn't see the stop sign at the intersection with Indiana 1. He continued through the crossing, crashing into a southbound 2005 Ford Escape driven by 51-year-old Chad M. Tomlinson of Dunkirk.

See page 5

Tax ...

Continued from page 1
The GOP-dominated legislature has so far expressed hesitation about addressing property tax spikes in the current session.

Leadership in the House and Senate have suggested they will wait until bills are mailed out before deciding whether to take any action at all on property taxes in the current legislative session.

What does seem certain, however, is that any property tax relief legislation is unlikely to affect taxpayer bills due May 10. Those taxes are expected to go up an average of at least \$228.

Thompon's original bill temporarily reduced the homestead tax cap for taxes payable in 2024 and gradually increased the cap back to 1% over four years. It also provided a supplemental homestead credit to be applied to tax bills after all other credits are applied.

That reduction in the property tax cap was cut in half in an extensive amendment adopted unanimously by the House Ways and Means Committee.

Now, Thompson's bill sets caps at 0.95% for property taxes payable in 2024, and 0.975% in 2025.

The homestead tax credit was also deleted.

Instead, the new version of Thompson's bill increases the homeowners and renters deductions on Hoosiers' income taxes by \$1,000 each — up to \$3,500 for residential property owners and \$4,000 for renters.

"This thing has lots of moving parts," Thompson

said. "I consider none of them real, real drastic — some may."

Local governments additionally have a new option to create their own property tax relief. Changes at the local level could take effect as early as this fall. But the bill, as written, does not offer locals any state support.

"But it's not the total responsibility of the state," said Rep. Bob Cherry, R-Greenfield. "We have local officials, too ... it's a combination — we're just trying to do our part."

Another provision in the bill would establish a two-year process to decrease the rate of levy growth in 2024 and 2025.

The extent to which local governments can increase their annual budgets — and how much they can collect in taxes — is based on the six-year average of nonagricultural income across the state.

The State Budget Agency calculated a 5% maximum levy growth quotient for 2023 property tax levies. It was the highest rate in 20 years, largely due to income growth and inflation in 2021.

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SERVICES

Monday Brelsford, Kim: 11 a.m., Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home, 208 N. Commerce St., Portland.
May 13 Warrick, Clarice: 11 a.m., West Richmond Friends Meeting, 609 W. Main St., Richmond.
Service listings provided by PROGRESSIVE OFFICE PRODUCTS 120 N. Meridian St. Portland, Indiana 47371 (260) 726-9201 progressiveofficeproducts.com

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Students make FR honor roll

Fort Recovery High School has announced its honor roll for the first semester.

Making the honor roll were seniors Elizabeth Alig, Danielle Braun, Megan Diller, Ngan Do, Jacob Heitkamp, Chase Kaiser, Megan Knapke, Alayna Laux, Megan Metzger, Miranda Metzger, Sophie Pearson, Alexis Wendel and Faith Wendel.

Also juniors Natalie Brunswick, Chloe Bubb, Alex Dues, Megan Evers, Teigen Fortkamp, Carson Grube, Paige Guggenbiller, Trevor Heitkamp, Troy Homan, Abby Keller, Ella Kremer, Saige Leuthold, Mara Pearson, Marissa Schoen, Brynn Stammen and Ellie Will.

Also sophomores Drew Backs, Nicole Braun, Mason Diller, Kassidy

Dues, Ava Englehardt, Marlee Fiely, Ava Grisez, Kayla Heitkamp, Kyle Huntsman, Eva Kahlig, Joelle Kaup, Bailie Muhlenkamp, Kennedy Muhlenkamp, Karlie Niekamp, Ben Reinhard, Anna Roessner, Ella Schoen, Eowyn Vela, Mara Wenning and Emma Will.

Also freshmen Gabe Acheson, Evvie Briner, Rylee Bubb, Elisa Evers, Alivia Grube, Brodie Hart, Aubrie Heitkamp, Jameson Heitkamp, Madison Heitkamp, Olivia Knapke, Brylee Kremer, Cora Kremer, Lily Schwieterman, Megan Weitzel, Georgia Wenning and Leah Wuebker.

Students who made the honor roll with all As and Bs will be published at a later date.



Photo provided

Opera house donation

Fort Recovery Lumber recently donated \$10,000 toward restoring Fort Recovery Morvilius Opera House, a 140-year-old building. Pictured above, Chris Moeller and Brian Bubb of Fort Recovery Lumber present the check to Kim Rammel, chairman of the Fort Recovery Opera House committee.

Stranger's message shocks woman

DEAR ABBY: I had pretty much an ideal childhood. My parents have never had issues that I ever saw. We went to church every Sunday, gathered with family often, etc. I'm now grown, and my parents are in their mid-80s.

Out of the blue, I got a message on social media from a woman who says she's my father's daughter from when he was 17 years old, before he met my mom. She found out through DNA testing. She is very nice about whether I tell my parents about her. Their health is beginning to deteriorate, and I don't want to stress them more than they can handle. At the same time, I don't know if it is right for me to withhold this information from my dad. I feel so alone in making this choice, so please give me any advice. — SECRET-HOLDER IN GEORGIA

Dear Abby



DEAR SECRET-HOLDER: Your father may be unaware that he fathered a child at 17. (Back then, an out-of-wedlock pregnancy was sometimes kept secret and the baby placed for adoption.) He should be given the information privately so he can decide if he would like to meet his daughter and whether, at this late date, your mother needs to know.

DEAR ABBY: My fiancée and

I began dating 2 1/2 years ago. We are in our late 50s. We moved in together four months ago and took out an equity loan for improvements on the house. Until we moved in, we were planning our future together, traveling and having fun. Once we moved in, however, everything changed.

Two months later, she came to me saying "something is not right." She says she loves me, she's attracted to me and doesn't want me to leave. She says I treat her like she's never been treated before, and I'm so good to her (her words). But I feel like I have been put into the friend zone. This usually happens after a couple of dates, not years. It's tearing her up because she doesn't want to feel this way, and it has me stumped about how to handle it. Is it cold

feet? — BAD CHANGE IN NEW YORK

DEAR BAD CHANGE: I don't know, you don't know and it is possible that SHE can't identify what's "wrong" either. Do not procrastinate. Get a referral to a licensed marriage and family therapist for pre-marital counseling. If the two of you do this, whatever is bothering her will be revealed. If she refuses to go, seek counseling without her. (I hope there is no prepayment penalty on that loan.)

DEAR ABBY: I am a friendly person who can get along with most everyone. I am petite in height — 4-foot-8, to be exact. Recently, while my husband and I were at a social gathering, one of the male guests approached me and commented, "Who let a child

in here?" I was not only hurt, but also offended at his rudeness. My husband is much taller than I am, and he has never mistaken me for a child. I'm tired of being judged for my height. Any thoughts? — TINY BUT A TRUE ADULT

DEAR TINY: Was the guest who said it drunk? I can't otherwise account for his egregious breach of etiquette in making a comment about the appearance of another guest at the gathering. I hope you ignore his tasteless comment. (What a nitwit.)

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 DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Community Calendar

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

Thursday
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.

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.

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. at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, 218 E. High St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 251-3336 or (260) 729-7000.

Sunday
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 Sunday at The Rock Church, 1605 N. Meridian St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 766-2006.

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

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.

DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP — Meets at 3 p.m. on the second Monday of each month at Mercer Health in Coldwater, Ohio.

JAY COUNTY DRUG PREVENTION COALITION — Will meet at 3:30 p.m. the second Monday of each month at Portland Fire Department, 1616 N. Franklin St. For more information, call (260) 251-3259.

TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY (TOPS) — Will meet for weigh-in at 4:30 p.m., with the meeting at 5 p.m., at Trinity United Methodist Church, 323 S. Meridian St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 726-5924.

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.

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.

Sudoku

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

Level: Advanced

Thursday's Solution

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

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.

IT PAYS

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in
Special sections

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

Spring Home Improvement
Friday, March 17 (ad deadline Mar. 10)

FRHS Spring Sports
Friday, March 24 (ad deadline Mar. 17)

Motorsports
Friday, May 29 (ad deadline May 22)

JCHS Spring Sports
Wednesday, April 5 (ad deadline Mar. 29)

Teacher Appreciation (new this year)
Friday, April 14 (ad deadline Apr. 7)

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How do you preserve lost history?

By EUNICE TROTTER

Indiana Capital Chronicle
indianacapitalchronicle.com

Imagine reading a book with chapters torn out. Or watching a movie that's missing scenes. Or trying to describe a family when you've not met all of its members.

That's what it's like trying to understand Indiana's history without knowing key stories.

Like the story of Mary Bateman Clark.

Mary was a slave who was brought to Indiana from Kentucky in 1814 and given her freedom ... sort of. Although no longer a slave, she was immediately forced into indentured servitude, first with Benjamin J. Harrison, then with Gen. Washington Johnston, one of the most influential men in the state.

A practice common in Ameri-

Eunice Trotter



ca throughout the 18th century, indentured servitude was a contractual agreement in which one person worked for another for no pay to resolve a debt, such as the cost of passage to the states, or to learn a trade.

The difference between that model and Mary's servitude is that hers was not voluntary. In a practice that allowed Whites to get around rules prohibiting slavery, Blacks often were forced to sign indenture contracts they could not read, binding them to decades of work

without pay. Refusing to sign likely meant being returned to slavery in the South.

Fortunately, abolitionist attorney Amory Kinney was willing to fight Mary's indenture. While the suit he filed, Mary Clark, a woman of color vs. General W. Johnston, lost in the Knox County Circuit Court, Kinney successfully appealed the decision before the Indiana Supreme Court in 1821. The case created a precedent that others were able to use to effectively put an end to indentured servitude in Indiana.

As a result of Mary's contributions, a historical marker now stands in her honor at the Knox County Courthouse in Vincennes, a fitting acknowledgment of a remarkable story that's even more remarkable to me because, as I discovered several years ago, Mary was my

great-great-great-grandmother. But her story isn't just a part of my family's story; it's a part of Indiana's story, a story that is not complete without her. In 2020, I published the book Black in Indiana to fill in that gap.

I am aware that, by knowing Mary Bateman Clark's story and its connection to my family, I'm an exception among Black Hoosiers. Many don't know their roots and, if they do, the history doesn't go much beyond their grandparents. I have become increasingly aware of this challenge since I joined Indiana Landmarks last year to lead the organization's Black Heritage Preservation Program. As we seek to save and celebrate places significant to the state's Black history, we first need to identify the history.

That's why I'm asking you to contact us if you know about stories or places that could help fill those gaps. You don't have to be a researcher or a writer; just contact us at shareyourstory@indianalandmarks.org to share your story.

Indiana's history is not complete without the story of Black Indiana, and that story starts with Black families. After all, as I discovered, digging deeper into the stories of your family might allow you to uncover a history maker like Mary Bateman Clark. And, even if you don't, it will allow you to fill in missing chapters of the story of Indiana.

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Indiana Capital Chronicle is an independent, nonprofit news organization. Its website is indianacapitalchronicle.com.

Don't necessarily blame presidents

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Tribune News Service

Controversies surrounding the discovery of classified documents in the personal quarters of President Joe Biden, former President Donald Trump and former Vice President Mike Pence have helped some misperceptions flourish about how those documents wind up in places they shouldn't be.

The fact that classified documents have been located in storage areas belonging to the three leaders doesn't mean they were the ones who packed them up and hauled them away. Much as Republicans want to demonize Biden and Democrats want to vilify Trump for the documents' discovery, there's much more to the story of how they got mishandled.

If willful disregard of the law was involved, there absolutely should be legal accountability regardless of the person's current or former standing. It also matters whether the people under investigation deliberately withheld documents or obstructed federal authorities from retrieving them. On that score, Trump so far appears to be the only one who claimed a right to keep documents that belong to the government.

Pence has decided to fall on his sword.

"During the closing days of the administration, when materials were boxed and assembled, some of which were shipped to our personal residence, mistakes were made," Pence told Fox News last week, adding, "I take full responsibility for it, and we're going to continue to support every appropriate inquiry into it."

Pence's statement of contrition and responsibility comes in stark contrast to Trump's refusal to admit any error while insisting he possessed the ability to declassify documents just by thinking about it. The Biden White House, meanwhile, is able to hide behind the existence of an ongoing investigation to avoid explaining how Biden might have mishandled his documents, including some dating back to his Senate days.

Despite Pence's full-throated mea culpa, it's

Guest Editorial

There's plenty of blame to go around, including the lower-level officials who failed to keep tabs on where sensitive documents were placed.

not as if he picked up a classified folder and tucked it under his waistband to sneak it out of his office. Nor did he personally pack all the boxes as he vacated the vice presidential suite. Security-cleared government movers swoop down in droves to pack up the president's and vice president's belongings quickly to make way for their successors to move in on Inauguration Day. Although documents aren't supposed to be in that mix, the frenzy of packing and moving creates a range of possibilities.

Biden was obviously too quick to condemn Trump's handling of top-secret and other classified documents before making sure his own personal spaces were document-free (which they weren't). The difference is that Biden and Pence opened the door for federal agents to ensure there weren't more documents. Trump slammed it shut, forcing the FBI to obtain a search warrant.

There's plenty of blame to go around, including the lower-level officials who failed to keep tabs on where sensitive documents were placed. But Trump is the only one asserting he had a right to keep them. Therein lies the difference.



GOP is too thirsty for cuts

By TERESA GHILARDUCCI

Bloomberg Opinion
Tribune News Service

At President Joe Biden's State of the Union Speech, congressional Republicans tried to distance themselves from plans to cut Social Security. Don't believe it. Plenty of Republicans are determined to cut Social Security — even though 84% of Republicans and 86% of Democrats want those retirement benefits to increase. Things are already bad enough for retirees and older workers. Benefit cuts would only make them worse.

Make no mistake: House Republicans want to take advantage of the debt limit vote due this spring to cut Social Security. That's behind their proposal to create a commission to explore ways to trim Social Security costs. And last week, former Vice President Mike Pence said in a private meeting that the government should partially privatize the program — which will cut benefits for most families, including those who most rely on them.

It seems Republicans have forgotten the lessons of 2005, when newly reelected President George W. Bush proposed privatizing Social Security only to abandon the idea after his ratings plunged further each time he brought it up.

And it seems they have also forgotten the lessons of 1983, when President Ronald Reagan and a Democratic Congress raised the retirement age to 67 and increased taxes to shore up the program. That deal was based on bright hopes that pensions and 401(k)s would expand to pick up the slack, and that older workers would find accommodating labor markets. Those hopes never panned out.

Now, poverty rates among older Americans are increasing just when

Teresa Ghilarducci



tens of millions of boomers are reaching their early 60s and 70s. Americans age 55 to 64 now work significantly more hours per week than their peers in other wealthy nations. Nonetheless, earlier this month the newly appointed House Budget Committee Chairman Jodey Arrington (a Republican of Texas) said he sees a new Social Security Commission as repeat of the 1983 deal.

I expect House Republicans to pick up on the plan recently proposed by the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a right-leaning Washington think tank. The CRFB would like to raise the Social Security retirement age to 70, which effectively acts as a benefit cut of about 13% to 15% for people forced out of work and into retirement way before age 70.

Today, fewer than 5% of Social Security claimants claim at age 70 — even though they leave money on the table by claiming earlier. About 49% of men and 52% of women see big reductions in monthly benefits for taking their Social Security before normal retirement age (67 for those born in 1960 or later).

Even if they prefer to keep working, most older men and women retire earlier than they want to; they get laid off, they face physical or mental difficulties working; or they need to care for an ailing spouse. Raising the retirement age to some aspirational number ignores this reality.

And many people who work past 70

— or even 80 — do so because they feel they can't afford to stop. Do Republicans expect further benefit cuts to help people like 82-year-old Warren Marion, a Walmart cashier who finally planned to retire after a viral TikTok video and GoFundMe campaign netted him more than \$100,000? Tik-Tokker Rory McCarty posted the video saying, "I was astounded seeing this little older man still grinding. Working 8- to 9-hour shifts." Marion said he planned to use the money to pay off debt, including his house. McCarty copied the idea from a fundraising campaign that helped a different octogenarian Walmart worker to retire — one Carman Kelley, who pushed a shopping cart in lieu of a walker.

Republicans and Democrats alike should be ashamed that America's retirement security has eroded into random acts of kindness and GoFundMe pensions.

Cutting benefits in 1983 was a mistake. Most people approaching retirement now have nothing or next to nothing in a retirement account. And the vast majority of people over 62 (79%) — who had just started their careers in 1983 — don't have enough potential sources of income from anywhere to maintain their pre-retirement standard of living.

More than 50% of older Americans get most of their income from Social Security. Even though the average check is only \$1,676, the program is still the major force reducing retirement wealth inequality.

Cutting Social Security benefits isn't an idea whose time has come. It's an idea whose time has come and gone.

.....
Ghilarducci is the Schwartz Professor of Economics at the New School for Social Research.

The Commercial Review



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Toll ...

Continued from page 1
There was also good news from Hatay province: Three people were recovered alive there Thursday, the state-run Anadolu news agency reported.

But while dramatic success stories still trickled in, the crucial 72-hour survival window for trapped victims had long passed and work was shifting to the recovery of bodies.

To help the hard-to-reach earthquake victims in northwestern Syria, six trucks carrying U.N. relief supplies arrived Thursday. The vehicles departed from Turkey and passed through the only remaining open border crossing at Bab al-Hawa, according to the United Nations.

Activists in Syria reported that these were aid shipments that had already been planned before Monday's earthquakes. Urgently needed equipment for rescue teams in Syria was not included — instead goods such as detergent were on board.

Ubadah Zekra, a coordinator with Syria's White Helmets rescuers, painted a bleak picture.

"We are using our hands and shovels to remove the rubble. Some of us have only slept not more than six hours in the last 70 hours ... Our hearts are broken but the teams are determined to try to save as many lives as we can."

He told dpa some responders had recovered the bodies of friends and family members.

The White Helmets reported Thursday evening that three children were found alive in the ruins of their home in a village west of the city of Idlib. Their mother died. Their father, who was not at the house at the time of the quake, survived.

The region was hit first by a first quake of magnitude 7.7 early on Monday morning, according to measurements by the German Research Centre for Geosciences, or GFZ. Then around noon there was another of magnitude 7.6 — which was initially measured at 7.5 — as well as hundreds of aftershocks since then.

The World Bank on Thursday pledged \$1.78 billion to help relief and recovery efforts in Turkey.

"On behalf of the World Bank Group, we express our deepest condolences to the people of Turkiye and Syria for the great loss you have suffered as a result of the devastating earthquakes," World Bank group President David Malpass said.

"We are providing immediate assistance and preparing a rapid assess-

ment of the urgent and massive needs on the ground. This will identify priority areas for the country's recovery and reconstruction as we prepare operations to support those needs."

He said immediate assistance of \$780 million would be offered through two existing projects in Turkey, while \$1 billion in operations would be used to support people affected.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited the hard-hit city of Gaziantep on Thursday, where 944 of more than 6,400 buildings were destroyed.

A three-month state of emergency came into force in 10 quake-hit provinces in Turkey's southeast after a vote in parliament Thursday.

According to the Anadolu news agency, the emergency declaration can oblige public institutions, organizations or people to hand over equipment, land, buildings, vehicles or medicines, among other things.

The measure will also help crack down on those "sowing discord and strife," Erdogan said, noting that there had been instances of looting.

Under the measure, Erdogan's Cabinet can decide to impose curfews and vehicle traffic can also be banned at certain times or in certain areas. Gatherings and demonstrations can be prohibited.

The 27 leaders of the European Union declared their solidarity with Turkey's people who "are experiencing a harrowing ordeal" in a letter to Erdogan.

The letter vows to provide more aid and states that the bloc's leaders "stand ready to further step up" their future support to Turkey, according to an EU official who shared details of the text.

EU leaders also held a minute's silence at an EU summit in Brussels for the earthquake victims in Turkey and Syria, while EU Crisis Commissioner Janez Lenarcic visited the city of Gaziantep in southern Turkey.

The number of dead could rise considerably, according to experts.

"Quick projections based on empirical damage models suggest between 11,800 to around 67,000 fatalities," said German researcher Andreas Schäfer of the Geophysical Institute at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, or KIT.

That is calculated from historical comparisons, current data on building infrastructure and population, and factors such as the time of day, he said.



Tribune News Service/U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Tyler Thompson

At odds over balloon

Sailors assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group 2 recover a high-altitude surveillance balloon Sunday off the coast of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. China has accused the U.S. of exaggerating the dispute over a balloon the Biden administration says was conducting surveillance, signaling the nations remain at odds over an issue that has rekindled tensions. The Biden administration presented the new evidence in a State Department fact sheet on the balloon's capabilities and in open hearings and closed briefings on Capitol Hill Thursday as they sought to counter China's insistence that it was a harmless weather-monitoring device that blew off course.

Capsule Reports

Continued from page 2
Tomlinson complained of lower arm pain. Cline's vehicle is registered to Ohio Valley Gas Corporation of Winchester.

Both vehicles were towed.

Left of center

A Pennville man crashed his truck into another Pennville man's vehicle along

county road 400 North

about 7:30 a.m. Wednesday. Larry L. Moser, 80, was driving west on the road near county road 750 West when his 2002 Dodge

line. His vehicle struck the side of a westbound 2009 Ford Escape, driven by 66-year-old Max A. McClain.

Damage is estimated between \$2,500 and \$5,000.

Felony arrests

Battery

Two Portland residents were arrested Thursday for battery.

Melissa M. Buzzard, 31, 846 E. 400 South, and Alex L. Derrickson, 32, 115 W. Jack Imel Ave., were each preliminarily charged with Level 6 felonies.

Buzzard is being held on a \$5,000 bond in Jay County Jail. Derrickson's bond at Jay County Jail is \$3,000.

Residential entry

A Union City woman was arrested Thursday for residential entry.

Coyota N. Rohrer, 31, 13018 Hillgrove/Fort

Recovery Road, was preliminarily charged with a Level 6 felony, along with two Class A misdemeanors for public intoxication and disorderly conduct.

She's being held on a \$4,500 bond in Jay County Jail.

Drug possession

A Bryant woman was arrested Wednesday for possession of methamphetamine.

Kimberly S. Hurst, 57, 118 E. Main St., was preliminarily charged with a Level 6 felony.

She's being held in Jay County Jail on a \$3,000 bond.

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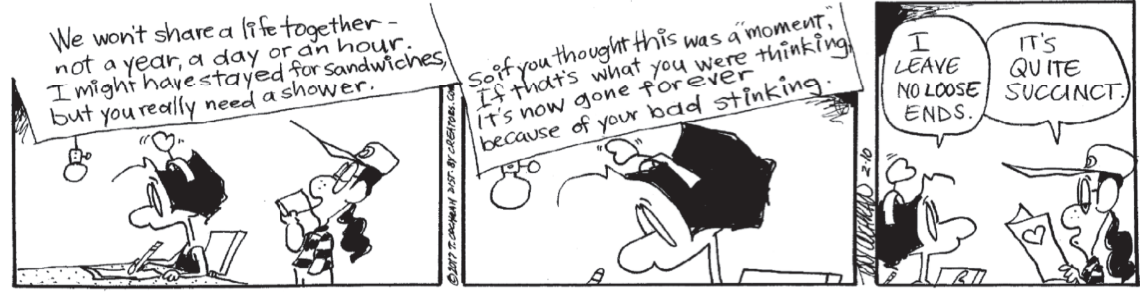
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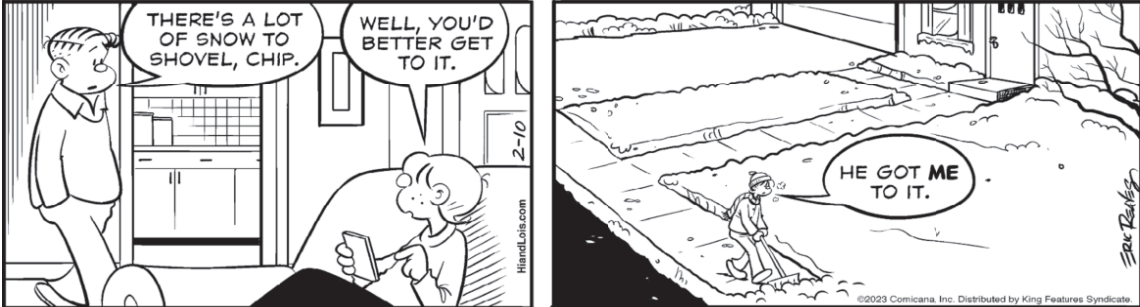
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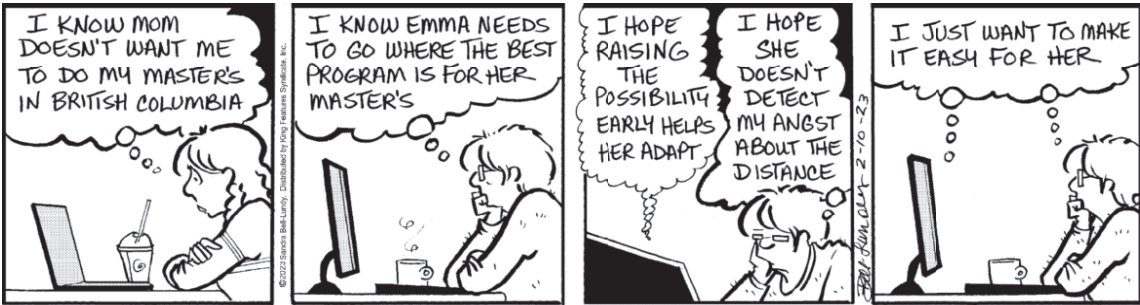
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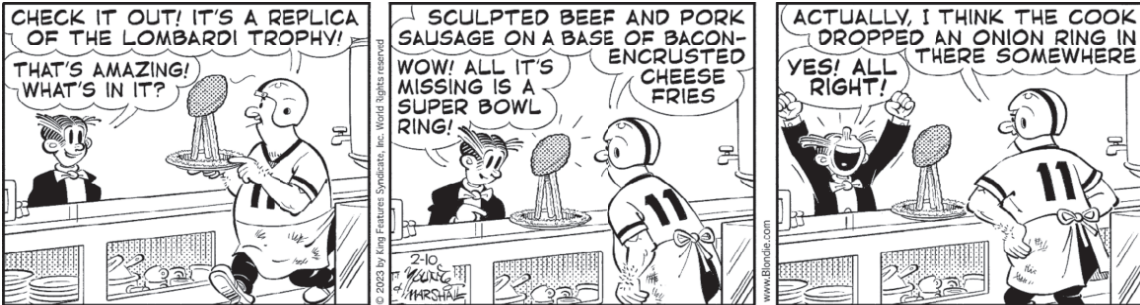
Hi and Lois



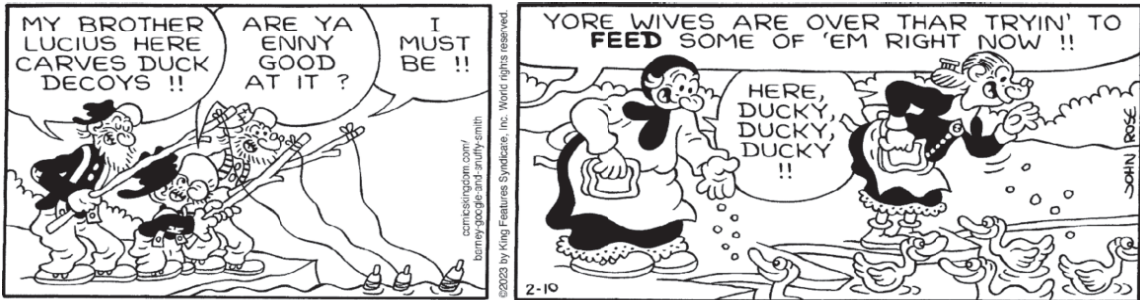
Between Friends



Blondie



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Contract Bridge By Steve Becker

Test your play

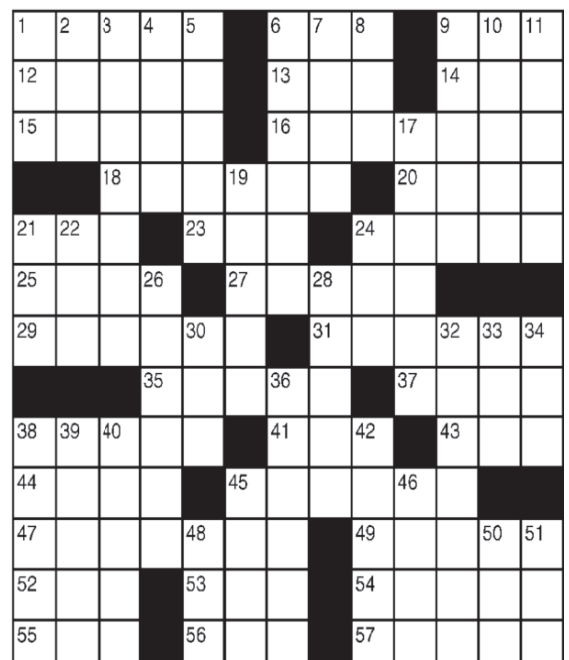
1. You are declarer with the West hand at Seven Diamonds, and North leads the jack of hearts. How would you play the hand? WEST EAST ... 2. You are declarer with the West hand at Three Notrump, and North leads the three of spades. How would you play the hand? WEST EAST ...

2-10 CRYPTOQUIP

DGJW, FEJAF QAZD CDEJBC GZYJWO CIQA LZVVAJWA ZFFAF VIE Z SIYASP NISD IV AWAEOP: BAETP NAETP. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: HOW MIGHT IT FEEL WHEN YOU WATCH SOMEBODY BENCH-PRESS A BARBELL AT A RECORD WEIGHT? UPLIFTING. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals G

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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Eyes on the title



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Jay Co. is among contenders for championship as it sends eight to semi-state tourney at coliseum

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

Everyone to the ticket round. More wrestlers to state. Winning the semi-state championship.

Those goals are laid out in front of the Patriots.

But they understand everything Saturday is a process. So the focus, cliché as it may be, is one match at a time, one take-down at a time, even one position at a time.

Jay County High School's wrestling team is one of the top contenders to add another championship to its postseason as it takes eight athletes to the New Haven semi-state tournament at

Five earn academic all-state

Five Jay County wrestlers earned Academic All-State honors today from the Indiana High School Wrestling Coaches Association.

Two Patriot girls — Jenae Jacobs and Willow Hardy — were named to the IHSWCA Academic All-State first team. Second-team honors went to Cameron Clark,

Conner Specht and Tony Wood of the boys team.

In order to earn the honor, an athlete must be a junior or senior with a grade point average of 3.25 or higher.

8:30 a.m. Saturday at Allen County War Memorial Coliseum.

"We definitely want to win this tournament," said JCHS junior Tony Wood, a 2022 semi-state runner-up and two-time state

qualifier. "I think we have a really good shot. I think our guys know that. I think it's just going to help us wrestle better there and look to win every match we can."

"Everybody needs to just go and wrestle their best and not hold back on anything," added fellow junior Cody Rowles, a 2021 state qualifier.

See Title page 7

FRHS keeps up hot streak

NEW KNOXVILLE — The first two-thirds of the season were rough for the Indians.

Heading into the tournament, they're on a roll.

Fort Recovery High School's girls basketball team picked up its fifth win in its last seven games and its first

Local roundup

Midwest Athletic Conference win of the season, topping the New Knoxville Rangers 39-29.

A strong start helped the Indians (7-14, 1-8 Midwest Athletic Conference), who opened 2-14 but have topped Franklin Monroe, Indiana Lake, Troy Christian, Celina and New Knoxville since Jan. 21. They built an eight-point advantage that slipped to three at halftime before the Indians gradually opened the lead again in the second half.

Cali Wendel's 19 points paced Fort Recovery, which will open the sectional tournament against Coldwater at 6 p.m. Wednesday at Lincolnview. Kennedy Muhlenkamp followed with nine points and Karlie Niekamp had seven.

Three in second

OSSIAN — A trio of second-place finishes led the Jay County junior high boys swim team to a runner-up finish with 358 points Thursday at the Norwell Invitational.

The host Knights won with 505 points while Bluffton was third in the eight-team field with 308.

Raif Beiswanger led the Patriots with a pair of top-three efforts, including second place with a time of 1 minute, 9.27 seconds, in the 100-yard individual medley. He was also third in the 100 freestyle in 1:03.67.

See Roundup page 7

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