

The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

www.thecr.com

\$1

Bridge will not stay in place

Group still hopes to relocate structure

By **RAY COONEY**

The Commercial Review

The “Big Blue Bridge” will not be staying in place.

Whether it will be moved elsewhere or scrapped still remains a question.

Rural Portland resident Jenny Bricker presented Portland City Council with her latest update on the bridge Monday, saying Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) has decided to move forward with its removal.

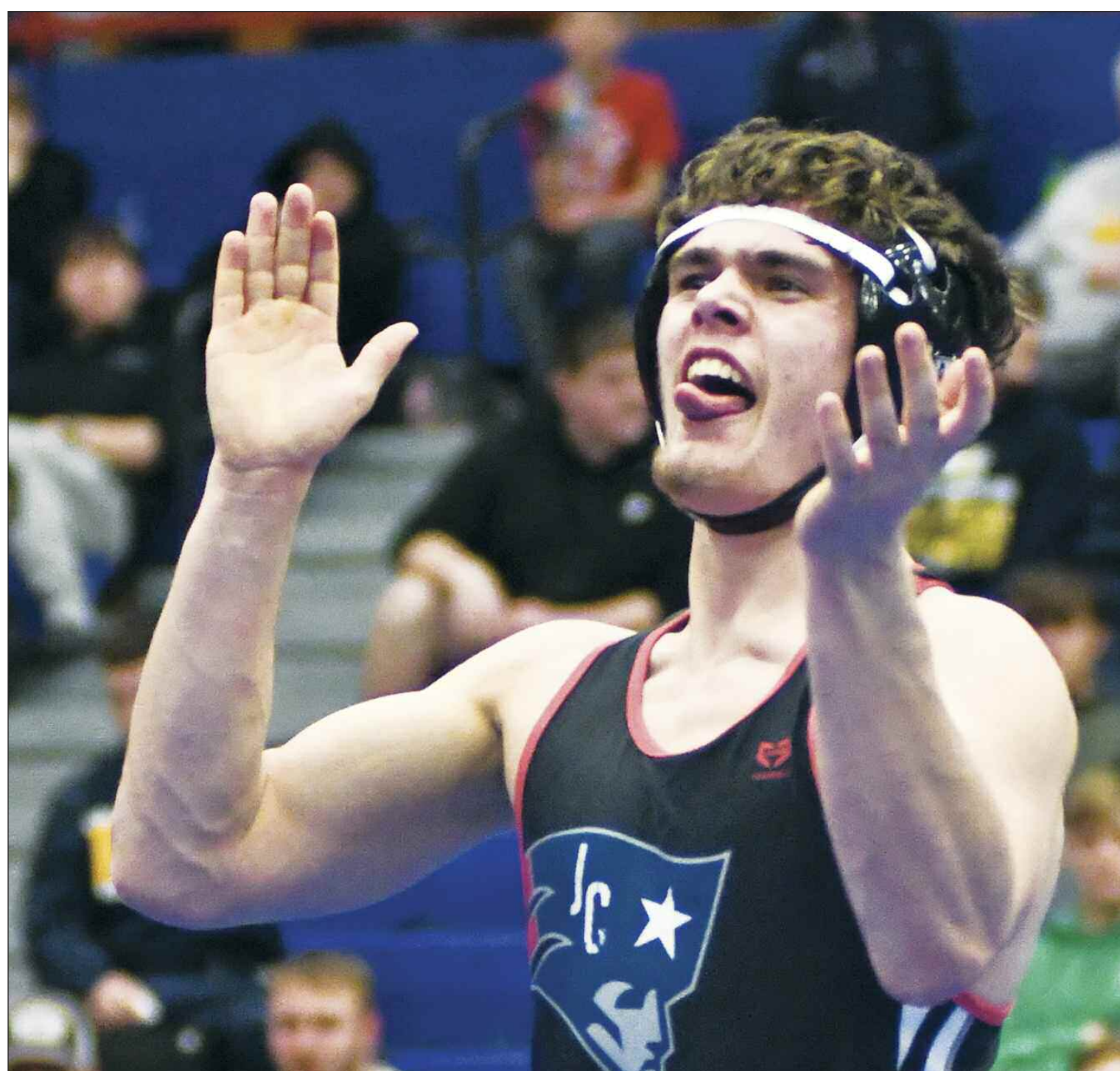
INDOT has a project scheduled for this spring to remove the Indiana 26 (Water Street) bridge over the Salamonie River on the eastern edge of Portland. It would be replaced with a new concrete structure.

Bricker, who has led a group attempting to save the bridge, explained that she and several local government leaders were informed at a recent meeting that INDOT officials said the cost of the project continues to rise — an estimated \$4.3 million to replace the bridge and an estimated \$5.7 million to restore it in place. INDOT will not change its plans to replace the bridge, she added, but has offered to dismantle the bridge and move it to be stored if a local government unit will commit in writing by March 15 to covering the cost of that process. The bridge could then be relocated.

The price tag for dismantling, cataloging and moving the bridge to be stored — Bricker suggested Jay County Fairgrounds and said she has other options if that does not work out — is \$500,000. INDOT would need to be reimbursed within one year of the removal, which is expected in May.

Bricker asked council members Kent McClung, Janet Powers, Don Gillespie, Michele Brewster, Matt Goldsworthy, Mike Aker and Dave Golden to consider accepting financial responsibility for that \$500,000.

See **Bridge** page 2



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Championship clap

No. 11 Cameron Clark of host Jay County High School claps as he looks toward the Patriot fans after defeating Delta’s 15th-ranked Kolten Rhonemus in the 145-pound regional championship match Saturday. His title was the third in a row for the Patriots — Ethan Reiley won at 132 pounds and Tony Wood stayed undefeated with his victory at 138 pounds — as they won their first regional crown since 1988. For more on the regional, see page 8.

Fort Recovery to get 2nd signal

By **BAILEY CLINE**

The Commercial Review

FORT RECOVERY — The village will be getting a new traffic signal soon.

Fort Recovery Village Council agreed Monday to move forward with plans for installing a device at the intersection of Elm (Ohio 49) and Butler (Ohio 119) streets.

Mercer County Commissioners recently awarded \$300,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funds to the village for the traffic signal.

Village administrator Randy

County contributed funds for light at Ohio 49 and Ohio 119

Diller noted Choice Once Engineering proposed engineering work for the project at a cost of \$28,650. The company has also reached out to Ohio Department of Transportation to get the OK

to install the device at the intersection.

Council members agreed to contract with Choice One Engineering for the project and authorized Diller to sign an

agreement with commissioners for the funding.

“We will be moving as quickly as we can with that,” Diller said.

Council also learned PMG Consulting started its study of the village’s water plant Monday. The Maryland company has been contracted for \$27,000 to complete a study, which should be finished in about 120 days. Depending on the results, the village may consider other treatment options. (The village’s current treatment plan is nearly 40 years old.)

See **Fort Recovery** page 2



Tribune News Service/Getty Images/Ilyas Akengin

Rescue workers and volunteers pull out a survivor from the rubble Monday in Diyarbakir, Turkey, after an earthquake struck the country’s south-east. It was one of Turkey’s biggest quakes in at least a century, as search and rescue work continue in several major cities.

Toll passes 4,000

By **SELCAN HACAOLU**

and **FIRAT KOZOK**

Bloomberg News

Tribune News Service

Rescue teams from overseas began deploying in Turkey on Tuesday after a pair of powerful earthquakes a day earlier killed at least 4,000 people in the country and neighboring Syria, leaving millions to suffer without power or heat throughout a snowy night.

As dawn neared, people in both countries were set to spend a second day searching through the ruins of thousands of buildings left damaged or demolished by a magnitude 7.7 quake that hit near the Turkish city of Gaziantep on Monday morning. Another temblor measured at 7.6 struck

Rescue teams from throughout region are headed to help in Turkey

nearby just nine hours later, according to Turkey’s disaster response management agency, known as AFAD.

Rescue teams from Romania, Switzerland, Azerbaijan and Lebanon have been sent to the quake zone, Turkey’s Vice President Fuat Oktay said, part of a broad international effort to quickly respond to the crisis. Chinese media

said the government will offer \$5.9 million in assistance.

Turkey’s defense ministry said the military has started evacuating some of the injured via navy ships from the Iskenderun port in the easternmost corner of the Mediterranean while working to set up field hospitals in the quake zone.

See **Toll** page 5

Deaths

Lois Keller, 82, Portland
Ricardo Alvarado, 31, Geneva
Richard Dailey, 79, Linn Grove
Details on page 2.

Weather

Jay County had a high temperature of 46 degrees Monday. The low was 37.
Tonight’s low will be 29. Expect mostly cloudy skies Wednesday with a high in the upper 40s.
See page 2 for an extended outlook.

In review

Howard County Republicans recently chose Portland native Joni DeLon to fill the Kokomo City Council Second District seat, which was open following the death of council member Lynn Rudolph. DeLon is a 1976 Jay County High School graduate. She also filed to run for the seat in this year’s election.

Coming up

Wednesday — Coverage of tonight’s Portland Park Board meeting.

Friday — Preview of the JCHS wrestlers at the semi-state tournament.



Bridge ...

Continued from page 1
She also asked that the city consider contributing \$100,000 to the effort, with a goal of bringing in the remaining amount needed via fundraising.
Powers asked about the estimated cost of putting the bridge back together in a new location — Bricker suggested across the pond at Hudson Family Park — after it is dismantled and stored.
That is estimated at \$2 million, Bricker said. She said donations, fundraisers and grants could be pursued to cover the cost.
Council took no action on the issue.
Answering questions from multiple council members, city attorney Wes Schemenaur said the next step in the process toward a Wendy's being built at

514 N. Meridian St. is a request for a zoning variance.
He explained that initial design of the Wendy's parking lot does not comply with the city's zoning ordinance, which requires the Race Street entrance to be at least 70 feet from Meridian Street. Wenzak, the firm that has purchased the land with plans to open a Wendy's, will seek a zoning variance to allow the design to move forward during a board of zoning appeals meeting set for 5:30 p.m. Feb. 14 at Community Resource Center.
If approved, construction is ready to move forward. If denied, the planned fast-food restaurant would need to be redesigned to comply with the city's zoning ordinance.
Answering a question from

McClung, Schemenaur said Phase I and Phase II environmental studies have been completed on the property and show no environmental issues.
In other business, council:
•Heard from Boggs that a start date has not yet been set for the planned Meridian Street storm sewer project. The mayor said after the meeting that the planned INDOT paving of Meridian Street (U.S. 27) through the city for this year has been moved to 2024, which eliminates previous time constraints to complete the sewer work.
•Was informed by the mayor that he is hoping to have Indiana Brownfields remove a petroleum tank from the southeast side of the Bailey Building property on Main Street on the west side of the downtown area. The city is

in the process of accepting bids for demolition of the structure. (Indiana Brownfields has already committed to removing three petroleum tanks from the former Sheller-Globe south building at 510 S. Bridge St.)
•Again discussed on-call pay with wastewater department superintendent Brad Clayton, who last month proposed implementing \$300 and a take-home vehicle for employees required to be available if problems arise at the treatment plant. Council members and Boggs expressed concern about making sure any such policy change is equitable across departments. Boggs ultimately said he will consider the request as he puts together his proposed salary ordinance later this year.
•Approved the following:

Updates to police department rules and regulations regarding beards and use of Jay County Sheriff's Office's firing range; A \$5,000 contribution to Arts Place's summer concert series at Hudson Family Park.
•Received clarification for Portland assistant police chief Michael Brewster that golf carts will need to be inspected each year in order to receive a permit. (He noted that permits issued in 2022 are good through April 30.)
•Heard McClung clarify policies for public comment and meetings. Those interested in speaking need to request to be on the agenda by 4 p.m. on the Wednesday prior to the meeting. (Public comment is also allowed when council is considering an ordinance.)

CR almanac

Wednesday 2/8	Thursday 2/9	Friday 2/10	Saturday 2/11	Sunday 2/12
46/41	57/33	42/26	35/25	46/36
Partly sunny, with rain and up to 30 mph winds slated for the evening.	Wind gusts could reach as high as 50 mph with an 80% chance of showers.	There's a 40% chance of rain in the afternoon under mostly cloudy skies.	Partly sunny with a high in the mid 30s. At night, mostly clear.	Sunny skies are in the forecast for Sunday with a high in the mid to upper 40s.

Lotteries

Powerball Monday 5-11-22-23-69 Powerball: 7 Power Play: 2 Estimated jackpot: \$20 million	19-21-23-26-29-31-40-41-44-48-49-60-63-71-72-73 Cash 5: 9-17-18-32-45 Estimated jackpot: \$786,000
Mega Millions Estimated jackpot: \$31 million	Ohio Monday Midday Pick 3: 6-6-0 Pick 4: 5-6-4-4 Pick 5: 6-7-6-2-3 Evening Pick 3: 6-1-6 Pick 4: 6-1-6-2 Pick 5: 4-3-5-2-9 Rolling Cash 5: 1-8-10-15-25 Estimated jackpot: \$120,000 Classic Lotto: 6-8-14-32-41-46 Kicker: 2-1-5-2-4-8 Jackpot: \$5 million
Hoosier Monday Midday Daily Three: 5-9-5 Daily Four: 7-1-6-8 Quick Draw: 2-5-6-7-10-11-12-13-19-26-27-38-39-53-55-57-61-67-69-70 Evening Daily Three: 1-3-1 Daily Four: 0-9-5-4 Quick Draw: 4-5-10-11-	

Markets

Cooper Farms Fort Recovery Corn.....6.86 March corn.....6.88 Wheat.....7.43	Wheat.....6.96 July wheat.....7.46
POET Biorefining Portland Corn.....6.91 March corn.....6.93 April corn.....6.98	Central States Montpelier Corn.....6.75 Late Feb. corn.....6.75 Beans.....15.04 Late Feb. beans.....15.06 Wheat.....7.47
The Andersons Richland Township Corn.....6.87 March corn.....6.87 Beans.....15.03 March beans.....15.13	Heartland St. Anthony Corn.....6.46 March corn.....6.51 Beans.....14.81 March beans.....14.86 Wheat.....7.11

Today in history

In 1812, Charles Dickens was born in Landport, Portsmouth, in the United Kingdom. Dickens wrote "A Christmas Carol" and "Oliver Twist," the former of which has had dozens of film adaptations.
In 1964, the Beatles landed in New York City, launching the musical event known as the British Invasion.
In 2011, Portland Mayor Bruce Hosier announced Fort Recovery Industries pur-

chased a building in Portland Industrial Park for \$383,554.63. (The sale had been finalized three days earlier.) It included 8 acres around the building on county road 100 North just east of U.S. 27.
In 2022, Portland City Council allocated \$100,000 in economic development funds from Bitter Ridge Wind Farm to Portland Park Board to be used for repairs at Portland Water Park.
—The CR

Citizen's calendar

Today
4 p.m. — Jay County Development Corporation, Community Resource Center, 118 S. Meridian St., Portland.
5:30 p.m. — Portland Park Board, council chambers, fire station, 1616 N. Franklin St.
7 p.m. — Pennville Town Council, town hall, 105 N. Washington St.
7 p.m. — Salamonia

Town Council, school-house community center.
Wednesday
6 p.m. — Jay County Commissioners and Jay County Council joint session, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland.
6:45 p.m. — Jay County Council, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland.

Obituaries

Lois Keller
Oct. 14, 1940-Feb. 3, 2023
Lois A. Keller, age 82, a resident of Portland, passed away Friday, Feb. 3, 2023, at IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital in Muncie.
Lois spent most of her life working hard on the family farm and raising her family. She was also employed by Ball State University for 20 years.
Lois Keller was born Oct. 14, 1940, in Muncie, Indiana, the daughter of Lurton and Elsie (Jones) Boyd.
Survivors include the love of her life, Gary Keller Sr., Portland; six children, Tammy (Lennie) Thomas, Winchester, Terry Keller, Portland,

Tracy (Neal) Snyder, Muncie, Gary (Linda) Keller Jr., Milwaukee, Mike (Dawn) Keller, Portland, and Randy (Jennifer) Keller, Pennville; and one sister, Marilyn, Murfreesboro, Tennessee. She was also a proud grandmother of 12 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.
Visitation for family and friends will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. on Thursday in the Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home in Portland.
Ricardo Alvarado, Geneva, Aug. 3,



1991-Feb. 2, 2023. Services will be at 8 p.m. Tuesday at Downing & Glancy Funeral Home, 100 N. Washington Street, Geneva.
Richard Dailey, Linn Grove, who worked in Geneva, Jan. 12, 1944-Feb. 4, 2023. Services will be at 11 a.m. Thursday at Downing & Glancy Funeral Home, 100 N. Washington Street, Geneva.
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The Commercial Review publishes death notices for those with a connection to our coverage area free of charge. They include the name, city of residence, birth/death date and time/date/location of services. There is a charge for obituaries, which are accepted only from funeral homes or mortuary services.

Fort Recovery ...

Continued from page 1
Fort Recovery has also been looking into the future of its wastewater treatment, with a study from Poggemeyer Design Group suggesting it shift to a mechanical plant.
Diller noted the village's next step is to complete a rate study, which would look at the village's history. That would include how Cooper Farms — Liquid Egg Products has impacted the system and how the village's wastewater may change in coming years.
He reminded council that testing at wastewater lagoons continues to show low levels of hydrogen sulfide. Kainos Ag has been applying a product to the lagoons for months in an effort to reduce the odor that had been an issue earlier this year. Although Diller likened the product to a miracle solution, he said it's hard to tell if any of the village's current efforts will meet new EPA requirements on ammonia, phosphorus and E. coli limits.
Per Ohio Environmental Protection Agency's guidelines, the village is also working on installing supervisory control and data acquisition equipment at its water plant, pump stations and wastewater lagoons, allowing workers to monitor conditions via computer or phone.
Also Monday, Diller said the village has submitted a funding request through Ohio Department of Transportation's Systemic Safety Funding program. If awarded a grant, the village would use the funds to reconstruct Butler Street from George Street to the western edge of town. Reconstruction would include lowering the hill along the west portion of the road, new sidewalks, curbs and street lights, and extending a sidewalk to the driveway to Ambassador Park. Additional safety work would also be included, improving conditions for pedestrians at Elm and Center streets and First and Butler streets.

The grant — it is offered through the department's Highway Safety Program — would cover 90% of the cost for the construction, which has been cut from original plans to reconstruct the majority of Butler Street (Ohio 119).
ODOT previously awarded more than a \$1 million Transportation Alternatives Program grant to the village to complete the project. Miscommunication between parties and inflation resulted in the cost being significantly higher than expected — \$4.6 million up from the estimated \$3.1 million.
The village decided to relinquish its grant dollars back to the state in December and look for other funding revenues. The Systemic Safety Funding grant was also awarded to Fort Recovery in 2022 for its plans to create a multi-use trail along Ohio 49 and Sharpsburg Road. It is scheduled to be constructed in 2025 or 2026.
In other business, council members Greg Schmitz, Scott Pearson, Luke Knapke, Al Post,

Cliff Wendel and Erik Fiely:
•Heard the village has purchased the former Fort Recovery High School baseball field — it is being replaced by a new field on the east side of Fort Recovery Elementary/Middle School — located on the west side of Water Street just north of Fort Recovery Street Department.
•Were reminded the village is applying for another

grant through the Small Government Program offered by Ohio Public Works Commission. If awarded, the village may consider reconstructing portions of Gwendolyn and Wiggs streets, estimated at \$457,000, as well as reconstructing two blocks of Main Street and making some repairs to portions of Butler Street in the next year.
See **Fort Recovery** page 5

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Jay County Sheriff's Department

is now taking applications for

Custodial and light Maintenance.

Monday-Friday 7:00am-3:30pm
Benefits included \$16.78/hr
Accepting Applications Until February 10th
Applications may be picked up at the
Jay County Sheriff's Department
224 W. Water St., Portland. E.O.E.

Priorities change over the years

By **DIANA DOLECKI**

Special to The Commercial Review

As I See It



The good news is that our son-in-law came through his recent surgery just fine and is now on the mend. More good news is that the sun is shining. Even more good news is that I have a birthday coming up.

Most of the time the only thing we do for birthdays is to go out to eat. It has been a long time since we expected gifts. I am not sure about the others but the last thing I need is more stuff.

When Mom was still alive we would gather at her house to celebrate the February birthdays. There were five or six of us who were born in what seems like the

longest month of the year. I usually chose to go down there toward the end of the month as that was when most of the birthdays were.

The one time I went down on my own birthday, Mom said I had upset my brother, Michael, because I didn't come back a couple weeks later for his birthday. I asked him about it and he said he didn't care one way or another. Even so I didn't make that mistake ever again.

I would bake us a cake and maybe some cookies. We would exchange gifts, eat cake and play cards. We would cheat, sometimes intentionally and sometimes not. In later years Mom would keep score and as often as not, her math skills would let us win even when we shouldn't have. We learned quickly to never correct her math.

We were a noisy bunch and even those who didn't play cards would cheer for Mom to win and coach the rest of us if we made an exceptionally foolish move. If the weather was unseasonably warm we would carry a card table out to the top of the driveway and play outside. I have no idea what the neigh-

bors thought about all the noise.

Last year we met at an Indian restaurant in Richmond. We had not been there before. I ordered the same thing as my brother, David, because he is not known to tolerate excessively spicy cuisine. I was surprised that I liked the food as much as I did.

We didn't play cards or have birthday cake, but we did catch up on each other's lives and plans for the future. We were a lot quieter than we used to be. I guess we finally outgrew the need to shout.

David and his wife got me a gift, and when I opened it a bunch of plastic butterflies flew out. Then David told the staff he would pay extra for

them to sing Happy Birthday to me. That is the first and only time I have ever had people sing to me.

As far as I know this year will be much quieter. There are no plans to meet anyone anywhere. I expect the day to be one of those that get lost in time as being just another day.

I talked to a long-time girlfriend the other day. She said she also has a birthday coming up. She will be 80. She said that she is expecting it to be just another day for her. Maybe I should bake her a cake and invite her to go out to eat. The problem with that is that she lives several hours away. Instead of meeting her somewhere for a good meal, I intend to find a

birthday card to send to her and leave it at that.

I find it a bit unnerving to realize that I am the oldest in my immediate family. I am older than my brothers, my cousins and many of the friends I had as a child. The older I get the faster time goes and birthdays and other holidays take on less and less importance.

I like to think that I don't miss those raucous get-togethers, but a part of me does.

It seems peculiar that things that used to be important aren't important anymore. In fact, important things aren't things at all. The truly important things are the people who love us and the experiences we have when we are together.

Grandparents barely try to see grandkids

DEAR ABBY: I'm 33 with a wonderful husband and amazing kids, ages 4 and 6. I have a close bond with my parents. We live in a city about 80 miles from them. It seems like we are always the ones to do the visiting, and I have to practically beg them to visit me for one overnight visit a year. My house is smaller than theirs, but we offer up our bedroom for their stay. Meanwhile, because my brother still lives at home with my parents, I sleep on an air mattress when I'm there.

Abby, I bend myself into a pretzel to make it work for them, and yet there are always excuses why they won't visit. Mom tells me she misses the kids, but she invariably expects me to pack a bag and head that way. It's frustrating. Sometimes our budget is so tight, I don't have the luxury of spending an extra \$70-plus in gas for a trip. My financial situation is not her burden, so I never mention it. I brought up just once in the past that she rarely visits, and she really does believe in her head that she visits at least twice a year. When I cor-

rected her, she blew up. I'm not sure how to feel about this. Sometimes it hurts inside like a rejection, and other times I feel like I need to tell myself to grow up. So here I am — in the middle, with grandkids who love their grandparents, grandparents who love their grandkids and, if I don't play the mom-taxi, how will they see each other? —

MOM-TAXI IN TENNESSEE
DEAR MOM-TAXI: They won't. And when your mother asks why you have stopped coming, point out that fuel is costly and your budget is very tight. Then suggest that if she wants her grandchildren to remember her when she and your dad are gone, they need to make more of an effort to

visit you more than once a year. If their hesitancy is because your house isn't comfortable, suggest they stay at a nearby hotel or motel.

visit you more than once a year. If their hesitancy is because your house isn't comfortable, suggest they stay at a nearby hotel or motel.

P.S. If your mother gets lonely between visits, she can always video chat, as countless other grandparents do today.

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have been married more than 40 years. As he's grown older, he has become the stereotypical "grumpy old man." Although he can be thoughtful, like giving me flowers for my birthday, he's increasingly moody, impatient and angry. He often rants about politics and other things and won't stop trying to impose his views on me. I agree with some of his opinions, but he gets upset if I disagree.

Because I don't want an argument, I either don't respond or leave the room, which also upsets him. Sometimes he apologizes because he knows his ranting upsets me, but shortly after, he resumes doing it. I love him

and do a lot of things for him, but living with him can be a downer. Can you suggest any strategies for coping with my "grumpy old man"? — ENDURING IT IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

DEAR ENDURING IT: Schedule an annual physical exam for yourself and your grumpy old man. Behavioral changes in an older person should not be minimized or ignored because they could be a symptom of physical (or mental) illness. Once you know what you are dealing with, take your cues from the doctor or spend less time one-on-one with your husband and tell him why.

DEAR ABBY: What's the best way to decline handshakes? In social settings, I often find myself ready to dine, hands washed and sanitized, only for someone to thrust their hand toward me expecting a handshake. The last thing I want before handling my food is to shake anyone's hand.

In one instance, a man who

was hosting the gathering with his wife returned from a bike ride as we were approaching the dinner table and offered me his sweaty hand. Refusing elicited a dirty look from my partner and an expression of bewilderment on the face of the bicyclist. Please advise. — KEEPING CLEAN IN THE WEST

DEAR KEEPING CLEAN: If this is of any comfort, you are far from the only person who dislikes shaking hands. Over the years, I have received letters from many others who share your concern. Some are afraid of COVID; others simply dislike the physical contact. (In some cultures, handshaking is never done.) Some individuals avoid it by placing their palms together, leaning forward a bit, smiling and saying something like, "Great to see you!" or, in your case, "So how was that bike ride?" If you don't do this already, keep a small bottle of hand sanitizer on your person to use when you're out of options.

Community Calendar

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

Today
BRYANT COMMUNITY CENTER EUCHRE — Will be played at 1 p.m. each Tuesday.
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.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS — Will meet at 7 p.m. at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, 218 E. High St., Portland. For more information, call (567) 279-8352 or (260) 729-7000.
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.

Wednesday
WEDNESDAY MORNING BREAKFAST CLUB — Will meet at 8 a.m. in the east room of Richards Restaurant. All women are invited to attend. Includes activities and devotional time.
PING PONG — Will be

played from 11 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays at West Jay Community Center.
BRYANT/NEW CORYDON SENIOR CITIZENS — Will meet at 11:30 a.m. Wednesday at the Bryant Community Center for a carry-in dinner. Meat is provided.
PORTLAND ROTARY CLUB — Will meet at noon each Wednesday at Harmony Cafe, 121 N. Meridian St.
JAY COUNTY CIVIC THEATRE — Holds its regular meeting at 5:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the board room at Arts Place, 131 E. Walnut St., Portland.
CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP — For caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias, the group will meet at 6 p.m. the second Wednesday of each month at Blackford Community Hospital conference room, 410 Pilgrim Boulevard in Hartford City. For more information, call Joni Slentz or Lisa Garrett at (765) 348-1072 or (800) 272-3900.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP — New Beginnings, a support group for friends and families of alcoholics, will meet at 6:30 p.m. each Wednesday in the Zion Lutheran Church, 218 E. High St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 726-8229.

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 Wednesday at Redkey United Methodist Church, 122 W. Main St. Come early for a meal. For more information, call Pastor Randy Davis at (765) 369-2085.

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.

Sudoku

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

Level: Beginner

Saturday's Solution

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

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

...TO ADVERTISE

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)

The Commercial Review
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Mark calendar for the benefit

To the editor:
Please mark your calendar for Friday, Feb. 17, to attend the eighth Mandy Theurer Memorial Benefit.

Letters to the Editor

The fundraising dinner, which is donation based, consists of pulled pork, cheesy potatoes, green beans and dessert.

This event is in memory of Mandy, who was in a single-car accident that ended her life at 26 years of age. All money raised is used to help members of our community who may need a helping hand — scholarships for graduating seniors, hygiene bags for sixth graders in our county, cancer

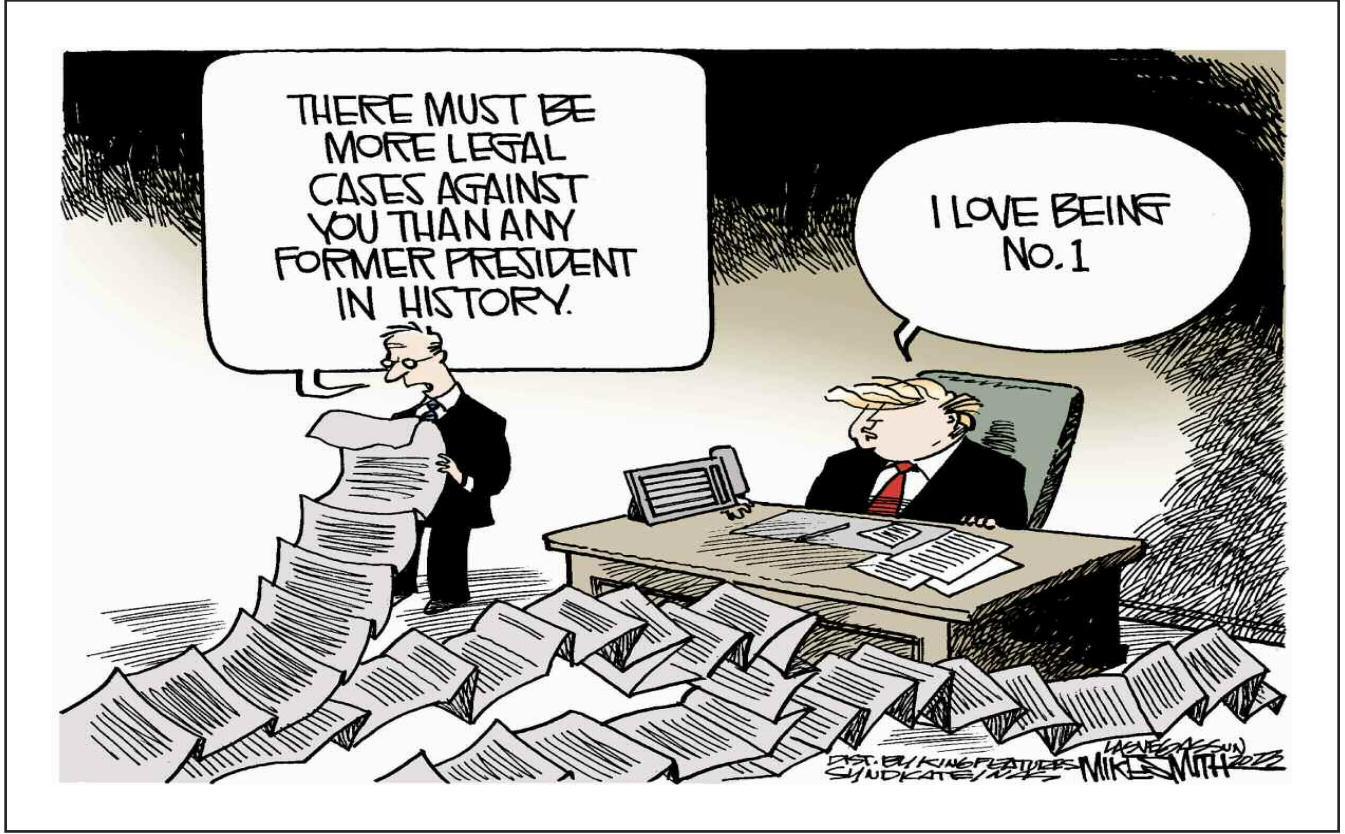
patients and others in need.

The dinner will be at Jay Community Center from 5 to 7 p.m. There will be a bounce house and a silent auction as well.

We will be dining in person this year with carryout available.

We look forward to seeing you on Feb. 17.

Roger and Charlene Theurer
Madison Township



Bill would restrict monopolies

By MICHAEL J. HICKS

Indiana's hospital industry is among the most monopolized in the United States, with several federal healthcare regions facing no competition.

The wholly predictable result is that prices for routine medical procedures are among the highest in the world. Not surprisingly, tax filings with the IRS reveal that Indiana's not-for-profit hospitals are among the most profitable businesses in the United States. To be fair, they tell an entirely different story in press releases and to reporters. I'll let you judge to whom they are telling the truth.

One result of this monopolization is that Hoosiers pay a lot more for most common medical procedures. A whopping 97% of outpatient visits to the six biggest hospital systems are charged rates that are above the national average. Dozens of studies, from think tanks, universities and consultants have reported these facts. The most recent study, commissioned by the Indiana legislature, was performed by some of the world's best healthcare economists at UC Berkeley. They report not merely higher prices, but that hospital system mergers caused price increases of almost 20% for local residents.

The monopolization of Indiana's healthcare industry is so extensive that the six biggest hospital systems are no longer really hospital systems. They are in fact, diverse conglomerates that have acquired so many physician practices, clinics and outpatient services that no new hospital system can enter the market. In the jargon of anti-trust economics, it is one of the most extensive examples of 'vertical integration' since the Gilded Age monopolies.

These conglomerates are so lucrative that just last year, one of them made a nearly half-billion-dollar donation to Indiana University to mask its profits and still was more profitable than Walmart. In a typical year, these firms together deliver more than \$2 billion or more to investment funds. These not-for-profit firms are shoveling money to Wall Street and tax havens in the Caribbean. In the last year before COVID, Indiana's hospital profits alone accounted for a whopping 27% of all the state's economic growth.

If this decade is as lucrative as the last 10 years, these 'hospitals' will generate more money in investment income than they do providing healthcare. This will force them to change their industrial classification from hospitals to financial investment firms. This outflow of income has slowed the Hoosier economy and made access to medical care more difficult for everyone. Indeed, part of the reason Hoosiers are less healthy than average Ameri-

Michael J. Hicks



icans is that accessing medical care is prohibitively expensive.

Fortunately, the General Assembly has legislation that will go a long way in restoring competitive prices in Indiana healthcare. Though I think Indiana's large hospital systems should still fear anti-trust litigation, these bills should be an easy vote for legislators. In my reading of the proposed laws, they do two big things to reduce the negative effects of hospital monopolies.

First, HB1004 makes it far more difficult for hospital monopolies to prevent competition from other providers. The legislation ends non-compete clauses that force out physicians from rural communities and make opening a new clinic impossible in most markets. These non-compete clauses are a textbook example of artificial barriers to entry. The legislation also prevents hospitals from charging higher facility fees for doctors' visits, and they prohibit contracts that force physicians to steer patients to in-network clinics.

These laws also provide a tax incentive for new healthcare providers and ban the practice of hospital systems dictating medical care guidelines to their physicians. Altogether, these laws provide a huge step towards dismantling the monopolies that've been built up over the past decade. But, the really important parts are the price benchmarks for the industry.

Hoosiers pay much more for medical care than the average American. In some markets, like Fort Wayne, consumers pay more than 50% more for many procedures than do average Americans. HB1004 would set a benchmark at the average national price for all procedures. Hospitals that charge more than the national average will face a financial penalty.

Faithful readers will know that I am a free market economist. I am deeply uncomfortable with government interfering in free markets. However, Indiana's hospital monopolies are not remotely free markets. Ignoring these monopolies violates the core principles of free market advocates.

Indiana has six large hospital systems and dozens of smaller independent hospitals. Among the large network systems are plentiful evidence of monopolies. Among the smaller independent hospitals, the reverse is true. The independent hospitals actually charge less for procedures in

places with less competition. That's the intent behind the not-for-profit legislation. So, House Bill 1004 treats system and independent providers differently, as it should.

The legislature has approached this problem deliberately, focusing on developing a good understanding of the many issues surrounding hospital monopolies. They've patiently waited for four very detailed think tank studies of individual pricing patterns in hospitals. They have collected studies from other academic research centers, think tanks and advocacy groups on all sides. They kept getting the same answer; the hospital monopolies are the immediate problem.

The General Assembly even asked the industry to develop its own path towards more competitive pricing. The industry ignored that simple request. One reason they can so easily snub the legislature is that hospital monopolies are the most powerful industry in Indiana. They make billions in profits, hire dozens of lobbyists and flood their local boards with university and not-for-profit leaders. It even turns out that IRS filings on donations by hospitals to local groups reveals an uncomfortable overlap with board members. One might go so far as to speculate that board members find it hard to raise difficult questions about hospital pricing, knowing how much their groups depend on these ill-gotten gains.

The legislature's attempt to address widespread monopolies are too important to fall victim to the power of the hospital lobby. There are other issues that must also be addressed. We can make insurance markets more competitive and do more to make pharmacy pricing more transparent. We consumers need to be more involved in our healthcare, including choosing physicians and hospitals with an eye on price as well as quality. However, without first addressing hospital monopolies, none of these steps are possible.

There's no perfect solution to the problem of hospital monopolies. It took more than a decade for this problem to clobber us, and the legislature has been working hard for several years to come up with this solution. Other states have wrestled with these monopolies. Some used the courts, others used single-payer systems. Indiana's plan is the best, most market-friendly plan I've seen. It needs to pass this year.

Hicks is the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research and the George and Frances Ball distinguished professor of economics in the Miller College of Business at Ball State University. Email him at mhicks@bsu.edu.

Banks seems to have cleared field

By NIKI KELLY

Indiana Capital Chronicle
indianacapitalchronicle.com

Indiana appears poised for the unfathomable: an unopposed Republican primary for an open U.S. Senate seat.

With current Sen. Mike Braun deciding to run for governor in 2024, a competitive Senate primary was expected to include a host of big-name Hoosier politicians.

Instead, Third District Congressman Jim Banks appears to have cleared the field in only a few weeks — reeling in key endorsements including former President Donald Trump and getting crucial donors on board.

The (possible) last domino fell on Tuesday when former Gov. Mitch Daniels announced he would not run. Moments later, the powerful National Republican Senatorial Committee — and its formidable coffers — backed Banks.

And moderate Republicans around the state — call them Lugar or Daniels Republicans — sighed in frustration.

You can't run to the right of Banks. So, the only hope is a candidate more in the middle of the party. But that doesn't seem to be in the cards.

To put this in perspective, since 1976 — when direct primaries were implemented — there has never been an uncontested GOP primary for an open Senate seat. In 1998, Paul Helmke defeated John Price; in 2010 Dan Coats bested four GOP opponents; and in 2016 Todd Young beat then-Congressman Marlin Stutzman.

Sometimes incumbents are even challenged in the primaries.

Possibilities One keen political observer said lightning could still strike, but no one else is coming to the forefront at this point.

A Bellwether Research poll conducted in December had Banks trailing Attorney General Todd Rokita, 16% to 14%.

But Rokita lately has seemed content with his statewide office, with fewer rumors swirling about a possible run. Congresswoman Victoria Spartz polled at 12% in that survey but is now reevaluating. Former Congressman Trey Hollingsworth was also at 11% in that poll. He left Congress and was considering a run for governor

Niki Kelly



... since 1976 — when direct primaries were implemented — there has never been an uncontested GOP primary for an open Senate seat.

but appears to have missed that moment.

Would he like the Senate better? He is a conservative, but not as loud about it as Banks.

The open governor's seat — Gov. Eric Holcomb is term-limited — is attracting more attention than the Senate. For instance, businessman and Secretary of Commerce Brad Chambers could occupy a lane that Banks doesn't in a Senate race but has shown interest only in a governor's bid.

Holcomb is an interesting possibility. He has been mum on his future. On one hand, we know he had an interest in the Senate because he was originally running for it in 2016 before dropping out and becoming Lt. Governor shortly after. But his COVID-19 measures and veto of the transgender sports bill have cost him Republican support.

Another longtime politico said that for a moderate to enter the GOP Senate primary race, they would have to have a built-in pedigree similar to Daniels. Otherwise, they will get destroyed in this new Republican Party era.

"If you show one ounce of moderation, you are doomed," the insider said.

Indiana Capital Chronicle is an independent, non-profit news organization. Its website is indianacapitalchronicle.com.

The Commercial Review



US PS 125820

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The Commercial Review is published daily except Sundays, Mondays and four holidays (New Year's Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving and Christmas) by The Graphic Printing Co. Inc., 309 W. Main St., Portland, Indiana 47371. Periodical postage paid (USPS 125820) at Portland, Indiana. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Commercial Review, 309 W. Main St., P.O. Box 1049, Portland, Indiana 47371 or call (260) 726-8141.

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VOLUME 149-NUMBER 01
TUESDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 7, 2023

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— Thomas Jefferson

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Toll ...

Continued from page 1
Turkey's Anadolu news agency showed one plane with victims arriving in Istanbul. More than 330,000 quake victims have been moved into hostels and university campuses, Oktay said.

In Kahramanmaraş, one of the areas hardest hit by the second tremor, members of an extended family huddled in a makeshift cabin at a construction site, waiting for rescue workers to come and pull out a 55-year-old female relative from the rubble of a pancaked apartment building.

"I convinced one rescue team to come and check, but they left saying 'we will come back,' and we've been waiting for them since yesterday," Ibrahim Incoglu, 48, said by phone from the town of Elbistan. "We were able to find wood to keep us warm overnight but we've no food and can't leave. Many buildings have collapsed or been badly damaged and the number of rescue teams are inadequate."

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Turkey is facing "the strongest disaster in a century." Speaking on Monday before the second quake struck, he said it was impossible to speculate about the final death toll. Turkey later declared seven days of mourning.

The death count stood at 2,921 in Turkey early Tuesday, according to the country's disaster agency, while the Associated Press said more than 1,000 were killed in Syria. The quakes left almost 16,000 injured in Turkey as a shortage of gasoline in the quake zone hampered the rescue operation, reports said.

At least four Turkish airports were damaged, said authorities, who were tracking calls for help on social media from people who were believed to be trapped under the rubble. More than 6,200 buildings have collapsed in Turkey, authorities said.

Among those affected were many of Turkey's 3.7 million registered Syrian refugees, the biggest such population in the world.

Turkey stopped oil flows to Ceyhan export terminal on the Mediterranean coast as a precaution, although no leaks were detected on the pipelines feeding crude to the facility, according to an official with direct knowledge of the matter. Iraqi Kurdistan suspended oil exports through Turkey to the terminal, the Ministry of Natural Resources in Kurdistan said.

Ceyhan is a vital hub for oil sales



Tribune News Service/ZUMA Press Wire/Ahmet Yukus

Rescue teams try to reach trapped residents inside collapsed buildings at Galleria Apartment in Diyarbakir, southeast Turkey.

from northern Iraq and Azerbaijan. The port exported over 1 million barrels a day in January, or 1% of global oil supplies. The shutdown helped push up prices on Monday.

U.S. President Joe Biden and other world leaders offered condolences. Biden said the US deployed teams to support Turkey's search-and-rescue operations, and "U.S.-

supported humanitarian partners are also responding to the destruction in Syria."

Turkey lies in one of the world's most active seismic zones and is crossed by numerous fault lines. The disaster affected several southern Turkish provinces stretching hundreds of kilometers, where about 13 million people are bracing for colder winter temperatures.

Qualifiers ...

Continued from page 8
Bader was about a half-second behind Delta's Annie Jackson midway through the race Saturday after that backstroke leg. But she had a more than seven-second advantage over Jackson on the breaststroke leg and continued to pull away in the freestyle.

Her winning time of 2 minutes, 18.95 seconds, was an improvement by about 4.5 seconds over Thursday's preliminaries and was more than five seconds faster than runner-up Ella Krug of Norwell. (Jackson finished third.)

"I knew that's the way it was going to go," said Slavik, "just because she's got such a strong second half of her IM. ... She set goals of where she wanted to be and she swam those today."

Bader's dominance in her signature stroke continued later as she won the 100 breaststroke by 6.1 seconds over South Adams' Julia Arnold in a race that was never close.

Joining Bader in advancing to the state finals in multiple individual events was Eleanor Groves of Delta, who won the 50 freestyle and 100 freestyle. (The winner of each swimming event moves on to the state finals while the top four divers qualify for the regional.)

Lauren Fisher, Morgan DeHoff and Bader also teamed with Zion Beiswanger for second behind Delta in the 200 freestyle relay and with Kenzie Huey for third in the 200 medley relay.

Snow worked her way into the No. 3 spot behind Grier Backus and Ava West, both of Delta, with her first five dives during preliminaries Saturday morning and that order held throughout. She was just nine points behind West for second place after the semifinals before slipping a bit in the final three

dives, as the one dive that caused her problems was her last — a back dive with one somersault and one twist.

She finished with 339.6 points to trail Backus (391.45) and West (363.95). A third Delta diver, Kadence Rector, took the last regional qualifying spot for tonight's competition at Hamilton Southeastern with 326.95 points.

Though her last dive faltered, Snow was especially happy with her inward dive in the pike position.

"It was probably the best I could have asked for," she said after improving her sectional score by 32.75 over last season. "It was really high. I got really into the pike and I stayed over the board."

The next best individual swimming finish for JCHS came — literally — behind Bader as DeHoff placed third in the 100 breaststroke. Beiswanger was sixth to give the Patriots half of the top six in the event.

Aubrey Millsbaugh placed fourth in the 500 freestyle and sixth in the 200 freestyle while Fisher finished sixth in the 100 butterfly and eighth in the 50 freestyle. Huey took fifth place in the 100 backstroke and Hannah Laux placed eighth in the 200 IM.

Sophia Hoewel, Millsbaugh, Beiswanger and Laux were fifth in the 400 freestyle relay.

Union City's Elly O'Connor, who trains with Jay County, finished second in the 100 freestyle and third in the 50 freestyle.

Also competing for the Patriots in consolation finals Saturday were DeHoff (ninth - 100 butterfly), Avery Wentz (ninth - 100 backstroke, 14th - 500 freestyle), Hoewel (10th - 100 freestyle, 11th - 200 freestyle), Stacy Fomina (11th - diving), Laux (11th - 100 butterfly) and Beiswanger (11th - 200 IM).

Fort Recovery ...

Continued from page 2

•Learned a funding request for a two-bay electric vehicle charging station through a program with Applied Energy Services was not approved. Diller noted there may be other sources of funding for the project, which officials hoped to install near the visitor center in the village. (If it had been selected, the village would not have paid any costs to have the station installed.)

•OK'd Psi Iota Xi sorority to close the brick portion of Wayne Street from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 29 for the Brick Street Market event.

•Heard another public hearing about exempting the Ohio 49 railroad crossing on the north side of the village near Railroad Street — the first public hearing was not advertised correctly — is slated for 2 p.m. today at St. Henry High School.

State, Comcast sign to partner

By WHITNEY DOWNARD
Indiana Capital Chronicle
indianacapitalchronicle.com

Comcast has signed contracts with Indiana's Office of Community & Rural Affairs (OCRA) to bring gigabit-capable broadband service to unserved parts of Indiana.

The initial finalized agreements will enable Comcast to build to rural, unserved portions of Allen, Bartholomew, Carroll, Cass, Delaware, Fayette, Hendricks, Jennings, Johnson, Hamilton, Huntington, LaPorte, Madison, Marshall, Montgomery, Morgan, Porter, Starke and Wayne counties.

Under Indiana's Next Level Connections Broadband Grant Program, Comcast is partnering with the state and local governments to build and deliver fast, reliable broadband service to more than 10,000 homes and businesses across 19 counties. The projects will deploy 1,200 miles of fiber to unserved rural portions of Indiana. Under this latest phase of Next Level Connections grants, Comcast is investing \$36 million in conjunction with the state's \$13.6 million to expand its network.

This partnership builds upon Comcast's ongoing commitment to bridging Indiana's rural digital divide.

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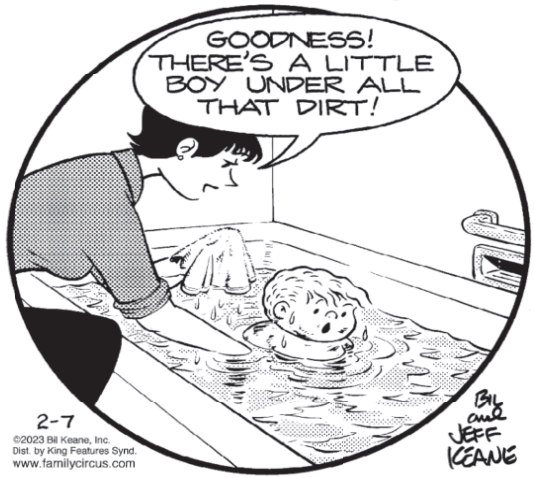
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Dave Coverly



THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



"Where, Mommy, where?"

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

Dangerous waters ahead

South dealer. Both sides vulnerable. NORTH: ♠K Q 6, ♥10 7 3, ♦A J 6 5 3, ♣6 2. WEST: ♠7 4, ♥K J 9 8, ♦8 2, ♣Q J 10 8 3. EAST: ♠9 8 5 2, ♥4, ♦K Q 10 9, ♣9 7 5 4. SOUTH: ♠A J 10 3, ♥A Q 6 5 2, ♦7 4, ♣A K.

The bidding: South West North East 1♥ Pass 2♦ Pass 2♣ Pass 3♥ Pass 4♥ Pass. Opening lead — queen of clubs.

lose one or two trump tricks, but not three. So, to maximize his chances, he cashes the ace of trump at trick two and then leads the deuce toward dummy's 10-7. This guards against either defender having started with K-J-9-x.

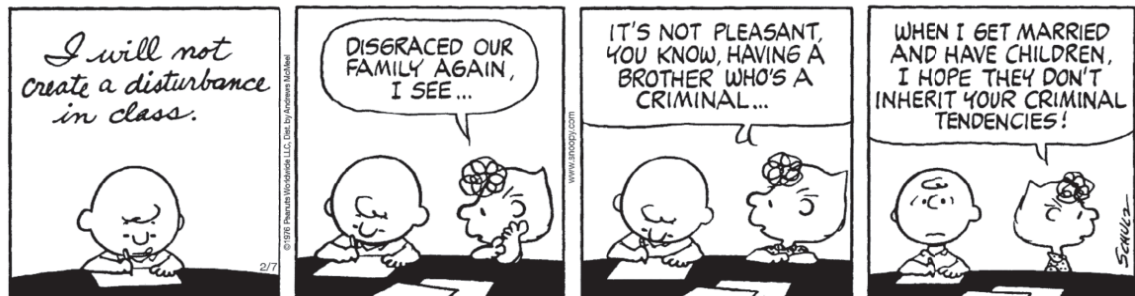
West can do no better than win with the jack — on which East shows out — and return the eight of diamonds. Again, declarer must play carefully. West is unlikely to have a singleton diamond; he is far more likely to have at least two cards in the suit. Accordingly, South ducks the diamond eight at trick four.

East wins with the nine and returns the king of diamonds. South takes dummy's ace and plays the ten of trump, losing to West's king, but the battle is now over. Whatever West returns, declarer wins and draws West's last trump with the queen as soon as possible to make the contract.

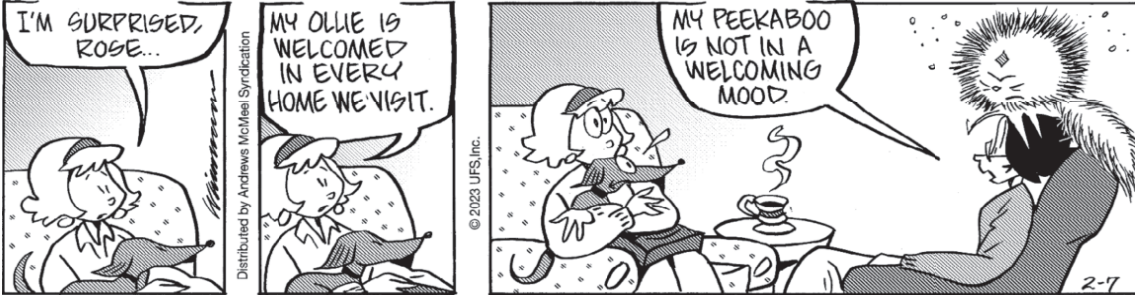
Note that if declarer relies on an early heart finesse by leading a heart from dummy to his queen and then plays the ace of hearts as soon as he regains the lead, he loses three trump tricks and goes down one. Note also that if declarer wins West's diamond shift with the ace at trick four, he also loses three trump tricks and goes down one against best defense. It's a simple hand, really, but declarer must proceed cautiously.

Tomorrow: Big swing on a small deal. ©2023 King Features Syndicate Inc.

Peanuts



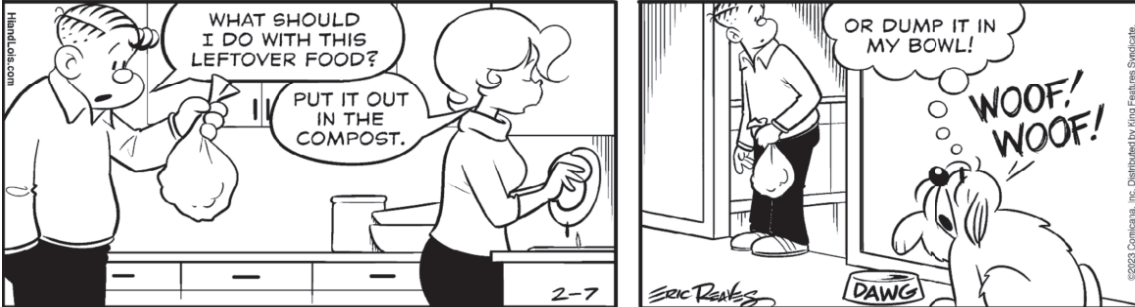
Rose is Rose



Agnes



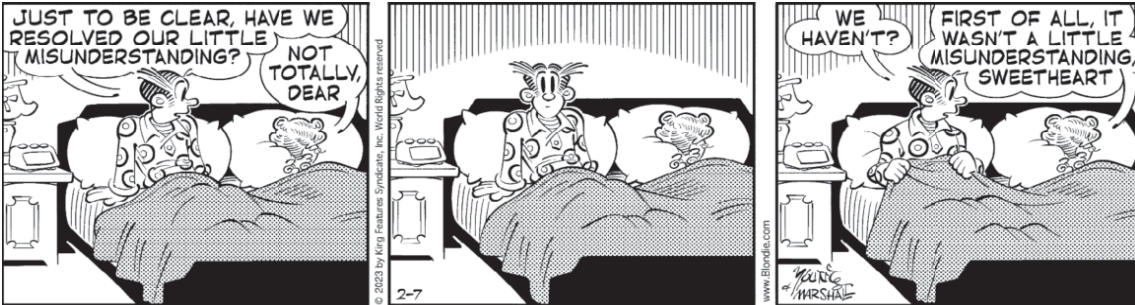
Hi and Lois



Between Friends



Blondie



Snuffy Smith



Beetle Bailey



CRYPTOQUIP

MO JQDK NFZCPTDC V ADFMDA ZO VCA OZF UPUUIK LQMJD LMGD, JQVJ LZPIC UD V TQVSNVRGD TVSNVMRG.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN GOLFERS STUDY STROKES FROM THE LONG GRASS AROUND THE FAIRWAY, THEY MAKE ROUGH ESTIMATES. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals B

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS: 1 Faucet problem, 5 Actress Dawber, 8 Poet Whitman, 12 Journalist Wintour, 13 Gigi's "yes", 14 Roman god of love, 15 Spotted beetles, 17 Seized wheels, 18 Knight's address, 19 Jazz legend Lewis, 21 Charlatan, 24 Tidy, 25 Org. for seniors, 26 Hearty cuddles, 30 Mao -lung, 31 Trombone part, 32 Fan's shout, 33 Thick floor coverings. DOWN: 1 Indian lentil dish, 2 Genetic letters, 3 Neighbor of Ill. comment, 4 Settles the tab, 5 Serve coffee, 6 Calendar abbr., 7 Interprets incorrectly, 8 Cordiality, 9 Iowa city, 10 Easy gait, 11 Helen's home, 16 eBay offer, 20 Swiss river, 21 Waller or Domino, 22 Impetuous, 23 Bailiwick, 24 Equine comment, 26 Very windy, 27 Caspian Sea feeder, 28 Chutzpah, 29 "— Gotta Have It", 31 "No seats", 34 Laundry challenge, 35 Sugar trees, 37 Recipe abbr., 38 Shed, 39 Fine, 40 Let fall, 41 La Scala solo, 44 Lincoln nickname, 45 "Suits" network, 46 Leg, in slang, 47 Take to court.

Solution time: 22 mins.

Crossword grid with letters: FOG, DOMES, BARO, AVE, ANGLE, OOP, BOOBYTRAP, ODE, ETA, NICKEL, DEBTOR, DART, ERA, NIT, SOOTY, ENTS, ORE, CURE, REHAB, INC, REA, TKOS, NASSER, AMOEBA, OLE, ROW, BUBBLETEA, IRE, ECOLE, ARC, DEL, DETER, XES.

Yesterday's answer 2-7

11x11 crossword grid with numbers 1-53.

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Sports

First since '88

With eight semi-state qualifiers, including three champs, Jay County wrestlers win their first regional title in 35 years

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

The team state duals ended in a sigh.

That sigh was not one of relief, but one of acknowledging an opportunity missed.

When that sigh had dissipated, though, coach Eric Myers got right back to reminding his athletes of their capabilities and the goals that remained in front of them.

If there were any sighs Saturday, they were purely of satisfaction.

With regional championships from Ethan Reiley, Tony Wood and Cameron Clark, and five others joining them as semi-state qualifiers, Jay County High School was the dominant force Saturday as it won its first regional wrestling championship in 35 years.

"It's part of history now, part of Jay County wrestling history," said Wood, a junior who is now a three-time regional champion. "I think that's just awesome."

He reveled in the fact that the team will get its picture on the wall alongside other regional champions of decades past.

"It'll be nice coming back here when we're in our 30s or 40s and telling our kids, 'Hey, I was up on that wall,'" added Clark.

The Patriots, who lost the championship of the team state duals to Western after being ranked No. 1 in Class 2A all season, scored 141 points to easily take the regional title over runner-up Delta (116) in a field of 18 teams. Belmont was third with 91.5.

See **First** page 7



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Jay County High School junior Tony Wood takes a shot against Adams Central's Logan Uhlman, during their 138-pound regional championship match Saturday. Wood, who is ranked fourth in the state, won his third regional title to help the Patriots to their first team regional championship since 1988.



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Two qualifiers

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

Mara Bader admits to being nervous about the 200-yard individual medley.

Her mom Missy was nervous, but she always is.

Even coach Matt Slavik, though, said he'd be lying if he said that midway through the race he wasn't feeling nervous as well.

All of those nerves turned out to be unnecessary.

Bader dominated the final two legs of the 200 IM to win the first of her two sectional championships Saturday as she led the host Jay County High School girls swim team to a third-place finish.

The senior also won the 100 breaststroke later in the meet and will compete in the state finals in both events. And sophomore Maddy Snow advanced to the diving regional by virtue of her third-place sectional effort.

The Patriots scored 309 points to finish third behind champion Delta (398) and runner-up Norwell (383). Adams Central was a distant third in the 12-team field with 198 points.

"I think me and the girls were the only ones who thought we could finish third," said Slavik. "A lot of people were surprised with our performance (in preliminaries) on Thursday. We outperformed everybody as far as time drops. ..."

"From seeding, to prelims, to finals, we made up a lot of points. ..."

Bader earns state berths, Snow headed to regional for 3rd-place Patriots

"This team coming together as a team and doing what they did was just a phenomenal experience."

Bader entered Saturday as a three-time state qualifier in the 200 IM, and she was seeded first in the event by 3.53 seconds after Thursday's preliminaries. But her lack of confidence in the second leg of the race caused all of those aforementioned nerves.

"I tell everyone, it doesn't matter who I'm swimming in the IM, that race makes me so nervous all the time," said the senior. "Before it I was really nervous. ... I know that obviously backstroke is not my strong stroke ... I was just glad that it ended the way it did."

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The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Mara Bader, a Jay County High School senior, swims the breaststroke leg of the 200-yard individual medley Saturday en route to winning the sectional championship in the event. She went on to win the 100 breaststroke as she led the Patriots to a third-place team finish.