TRENTON TELEGRAPH

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SUBMITTED

NCMC students Peyton Roberts, Krista Cokerham, Brody McGinness, Amy Pickering, Titus Kottwitz, Crista Perry, Myles Johnson, Collin Kinsella, Blake Livengood and Kendrick Hulett, Tayla Turner, Traylen Brundage, Spenser Coram, Harlee Beck and Casey Wray participated in the Missouri Professional Agriculture Student Organization State Conference.

College Ag Students Take On State

Fifteen agriculture students from North Central Missouri College participated in the Missouri Professional Agriculture Student Organization State Conference No. 8 – 10, hosted by State Technical College in Linn.

Students competed in career development contests, attended agriculture industry workshops and toured the historic Missouri State Penitentiary in Jefferson City. Participants also had the opportunity to hear from corporate sponsors and network with industry professionals.

Students attending the conference were: Crista Perry, Harlee Beck, Collin Kinsella, Myles Johnson, Blake Livengood, Amy Pickering, Spenser Coram, Krista Cokerham,

STATE
CONTINUED TO PG 4

Free Gifts Available As Church Helps Youth Give Back To Parents

Special report

Trenton children can pick out Christmas presents for mom and dad next month without spending a dime.

Hodge Presbyterian Church's middle school youth group will offer free gift baskets for children to choose for their parents from 4 to 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 4, during Five Points Alive's Storybook Christmas celebration downtown. The shop will be set up in the former Uprooted Kitchen building, 1000 Tinsman Ave.

"Any child that wants to come and shop that night to get a gift for their mom or their dad is invited to come," church volunteer Terri Critten told the Trenton Telegraph. "There's no charge."

Each child can pick one basket for their mother and one for their father.

The idea, Critten said, is to turn the holiday focus away from wish lists.

"We just feel like it gives children an opportunity to give during the Christmas season rather than just being focused on what they're

GIFTS
CONTINUED TO PG 4

Trenton Chamber Introduces Cocoa Crawl

The Trenton Area Chamber of Commerce is introducing a new holiday tradition, the Cocoa Crawl. It will take place Friday, Dec. 11.

"This year, instead of hosting the traditional home tours, we are shifting our focus to celebrating our local chamber members and giving the community an opportunity to visit, experience and support the businesses that make Trenton special," reads a release about the event.

The Cocoa Crawl will take place throughout the day on Dec. 11, with participating businesses welcoming visitors during their business hours. The event will conclude at 7 p.m., giving the community the opportunity to visit participating locations throughout the day.

Each participating stop will be asked to provide a cocoa-themed treat for visitors to enjoy.

"This could be anything from a sweet treat or cocoa-inspired goodie to a fun holiday-themed snack," reads the release.

The chamber will also be selling special Cocoa Crawl mugs for participants to purchase and use as they make their way through the participating businesses.

Participating businesses are also being encouraged to offer something extra for Cocoa Crawl visitors such as giveaways, discounts or promotions.

"Our goal is to create a fun new holiday tradition that encourages people to shop local, visit our chamber members and experience all that Trenton has to offer," said Kayla Graham, chamber executive director.

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Beyond Reason: The Prankster

by Rob Perez
Columnist

Heading down, I got in the elevator near the top of the building. It was empty. Only when the doors shut and I went to push L did I notice that someone had pushed all the buttons. I guess I would be stopping on every single floor on the way down. I should say—I respect the move.

I didn't resent the experience at all. Ding. Eleven. I thoroughly enjoyed myself. Ding. Ten. I marveled at the simplicity. Ding. Nine. I think it actually lowered my blood pressure. Ding. Eight.

Ironic, perhaps, that this Kid was trying to annoy. Ding. Seven. Instead, he got the opposite reaction. Ding. Six. Still a solid at bat. Ding. Five.

We sailed past four when I realized the Kid had missed one. He didn't push 4.

What's that all about? Come on, Kid. You're leaving money on the table. Where's your follow-through?



The thing about comedy is—there's a legacy, Kid. How would Chaplin approach this? He would add motivation: a blind girl. With an emotional foundation, you can lean on the Marx Brothers. They might add zany. Like a clown horn and a few double entendres. Jacques Tati would bring dignity to the quiet moment of indignity.

I mean, I don't want to tell you how to do your job, Kid, but comedy isn't something you can phone in. Unless you're a natural. And let me tell you something, Kid: you're no natural.

Comedy requires commitment. Creativity. Iterations. Addition. Subtraction. Long division. Don't ask me why, but comedy is a lot of math.

Kid, if you're going to do this right, you got to give it your life. Your whole life. Comedy will be your everything. Are you willing to dedicate THAT? Because your slipshod work gives me great pause.

And if for some reason you got the idea that comedy is going to be wine and roses, let me set you straight. Put that speech thanking the Academy back into the drawer. When the muse isn't there, you take off that white collar, put on your blue collar, and get to work.

Also, for the record, even if things go well for you, this life will not satisfy. You will always want more. And that's during the good times.

Forget your partner or kids or friends or even a mistress. Comedy is the only love you will ever know. And here's the god-awful truth: Comedy will never love you back.

One day Little Jimmy will ask—Where is Papa? Why doesn't Papa ever come to see me? The question will haunt you, will keep you up at night. You won't be able to sleep because you know in your heart of hearts that somewhere there's a punchline.

Finally, it will come to you. And in your mind, Mommy will answer Little Jimmy: Papa can't come to see you tonight because Papa is with Comedy.

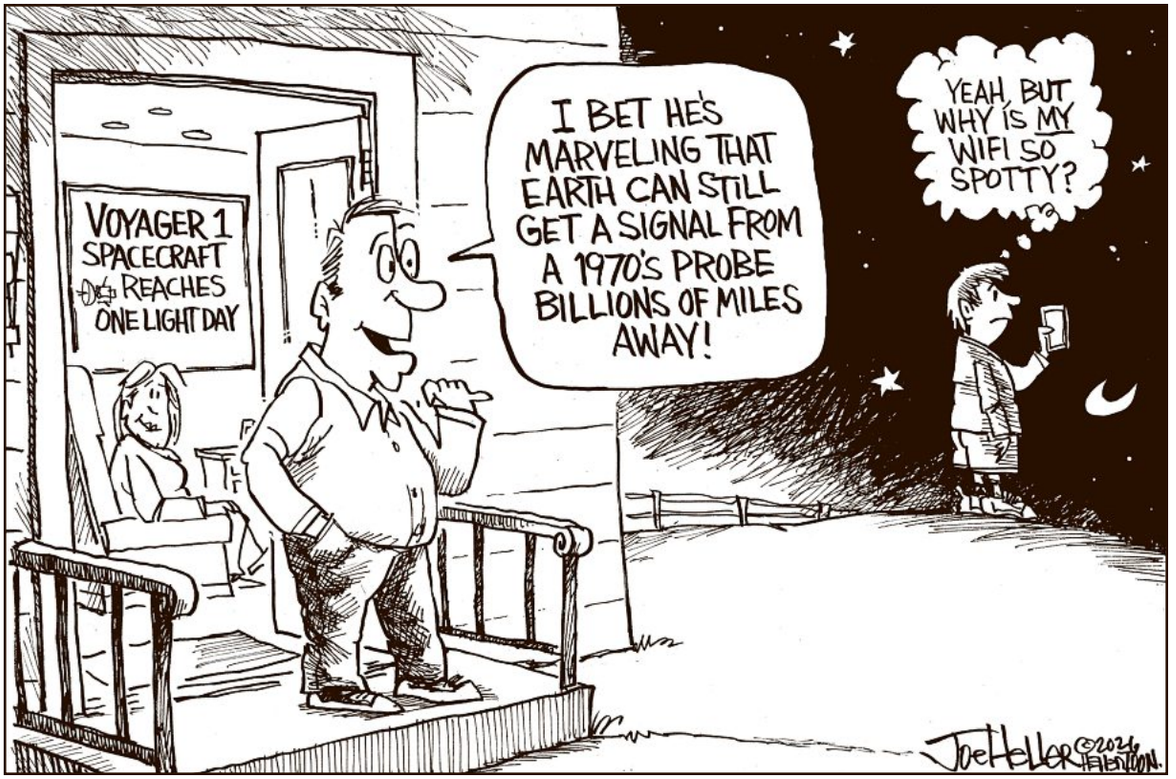
Truth is, most never get close to making it in this game, Kid. But if for some reason the stars align and you're the one in a million—I dunno, the world's bigger now, might be 1.5 million—but if somehow you manage with hard work and dumb luck and talent and looks, you know what you get for all that?

A dog's life.

Comedy will take everything you have and ask for more. You will be stranded on a deserted island, starving, sunburnt with painful blisters, and you will know that this is the end and with your last breath, you whisper—to no one: Finally, no more pickleball.

Good comedy comes from pain, but great comedy comes from suffering. Sorry, Kid. It seems to me that there is nothing in your work that leads me to believe that you're ready to suffer.

So I hate to break it to you, Kid, but someone has to. You don't have what it takes. You're not even in the ballpark. I'm now in the lobby. Let me give you a little friendly advice: Knock it off with the childish pranks. Get out of the way and leave the comedy to the professionals.



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District Governor Visits Trenton Rotary

Trenton Rotary Club had its official visit from District 6040 Governor Amy Chinnery-Valmassei during its meeting last week.

Chinnery-Valmassei talked to Rotarians about "doing better than their best," encouraging them to take successful efforts such as club membership and projects to make them better. She noted Rotary Club International is all about connecting and having an impact in the community. She also reviewed Rotary's seven areas of focus and talked about different projects that can be done to have an impact in those areas - environment, clean water and sanitation, disease prevention and eradication, maternal and child health, basic education and literacy, community and economic development and peace and conflict resolution.

In discussing the global grant program, she talked about additional money that has been added to address peace and conflict resolution needs - one of which is focusing on bullying in schools - and a second that focuses on gun safety by working with grandparents to provide gun locks to keep children safe.

The international conference will be held in June in Barcelona, Spain. During the international meeting, Larry Lunsford of the Kansas City Plaza Club will be inducted as the 2027-28 international president. Lunsford, who has been a guest of the Trenton club several times, has served as District 6040 governor and organized the Shoes for Orphan Souls project, which provides shoes to children in need in foreign countries.

This year, the district will be sending a group to Guatemala to take shoes to orphans in that country.

During the local business meeting, Chinnery-Valmassei installed Hilbert Holeman and Jamie Hooyman as new members. Michael Witten is also a new member and will be inducted at a later time.



SUBMITTED

Hilbert Holeman and Jamie Hooyman are installed as new members of the Trenton Rotary Club during its meeting on Nov. 12. Pictured are, from left, District Governor Amy Chinnery-Valmassei, Holman, Hooyman and Club President Kristi Harris.

Fraudsters Thrive On Opportunity, Anonymity

By Quentin McConkey,
CFE Security Officer, BTC Bank

According to the Federal Reserve, Americans' use of checks has decreased by 75% since the year 2000. Based on your own spending habits, that decline over the past 25 years may seem right on track.

But when you compare it to the reports of check fraud nearly doubling since 2021, you might wonder how those statistics can both be true.

With so few people writing checks nowadays, how is fraudulent activity more prevalent than ever? Check fraudsters thrive on two vulnerabilities that come with check-writing: opportunity and anonymity.

When you send a check in the mail, scammers have an opportunity to access that document while it's out of your sight—from the moment it goes into the mailbox to the time it gets deposited by the recipient. Along the way, it can pass through many hands, mailboxes, sorting facilities, mailrooms and processing centers. Each additional stop creates another opportunity for a check to be lost or stolen before it reaches its intended destination.

After a scammer has taken advantage of that opportunity, anonymity comes into play. They might not be your original payee, but nobody knows that. Traditionally, check fraudsters have honed check "washing" routines—taking your physical check and using cleaning solvents, chemicals and good old-fashioned elbow grease to fade or remove your writing.

They can then replace the real information with new information, like a different name or a larger dollar amount, and ultimately cash or deposit it themselves.

Even trickier, they can also imitate you as the check writer. Thanks to technology, fraudsters can "cook" checks—copying and modifying them digitally—with some even selling stolen and edited blank checks online. Regardless of how they do it, it only takes one stolen check for a scammer to have your name, contact information, routing number and account number.

So, what can you do?

One way to avoid this is to take advantage of your payee's paperless billing and electronic payment options when available.

Use your bank's online banking features. Digital bill pay, automatic payment options, and account-to-account transfers can reduce the number of physical checks you have to write and mail. This keeps your payment from passing through extra hands.

Stopping scammers works best when you and your bank work together. Online account access makes it easier to monitor your balance and transactions regularly. Coupled with your bank's fraud detection systems, keeping an eye on your account through your bank's app can help you notice suspicious activity quickly. Alerting your bank as soon as something looks wrong can help protect your money and stop the scam from going any further.

Another line of defense between your money and scammers is happening at your community bank in real time.

Fraudsters may thrive on anonymity, but banking locally gives you the opportunity to be known. The people at your local branch may recognize when a transaction or request doesn't fit your normal habits, and when something doesn't seem right, they can ask questions.

State

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Brody McGinnes, Kendrick Hulett, Tayla Turner, Peyton Roberts, Traylen Brundage, Titus Kottwitz and Casey Wray, along with NCMC Agriculture Instructors/ PAS Advisors Jack Green and Kurt Meighen.

NCMC students who qualified for national competition have the opportunity to compete at the National PAS Conference in Green Bay, Wisconsin in the spring. Contest results are as follows:

Career Planning

Agriculture Education – Tayla Turner – 2nd in State

Agriculture Education – Krista Cokerham – 3rd in State

Agribusiness Systems – Traylen Brundage – State Winner

Agribusiness Systems – Kendrick Hulett – 2nd in State

Agribusiness Systems – Titus Kottwitz – 3rd in State

Agribusiness Systems – Spenser Coram – State Participant

Animal Systems – Brody McGinness – State Participant

Plant Systems – Casey Wray – State Winner

Plant Systems – Peyton Roberts – 2nd Place

Career Progress

Agribusiness Systems – Crista Perry – State Winner

Animal Systems – Harlee Beck – State Winner

Animal Systems – Amy Pickering – 3rd in State

Animal Systems – Myles Johnson – State Participant

Plant Systems – Collin Kinsella - 3rd in State

Employment Interview

Agriculture Education – Tayla Turner – State Winner

Agriculture Education – Krista Cokerham – 3rd in State

Agriculture Sales – Titus Kottwitz – 2nd in State

Agriculture Sales – Kendrick Hulett – State Participant

Agriculture Sales – Traylen Brundage – State Participant

Agronomic Production – Blake Livengood - State Winner

Agronomic Services – Casey Wray – 2nd in State

Agronomic Services – Peyton Roberts – 3rd in State

Agronomic Services – Collin Kinsella – State Participant

Livestock & Dairy Production – Crista Perry – State Winner

Livestock & Dairy Production – Spenser Coram – 2nd in State

Livestock & Dairy Production – Brody McGinness – State Participant

Livestock & Dairy Production – Myles Johnson – State Participant

Livestock & Dairy Services – Amy Pickering – State Winner

College Bowl

Tayla Turner, Peyton Roberts, Collin Kinsella, Traylen Brundage & Amy Pickering – State Runner-up

Krista Cokerham, Titus Kottwitz, Kendrick Hulett, Casey Wray & Harlee Beck – State Semi Finalist

Career Specialist

Crop Specialist – Krista Cokerham – 1st; Casey Wray – 3rd Place; Collin Kinsella – 4th Place

Dairy Specialist – Casey Wray – 1st

Equine Specialist –Tayla Winner – 1st; Amy Pickering – 4th

Floriculture Specialist – Krista Cokerham – 2nd

Soils Specialist – Collin Kinsella – 1st

Vet Tech Specialist – Traylen Brundage – 4th

Gifts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

going to get for Christmas, but to be able to share the joy of Christmas by giving to their parents," she said.

The baskets, separate sets for men and women, are being assembled by the church's SOG youth group, short for Students of God, as a community service project.

Critten said the middle-schoolers benefit as much as the children they're serving.

"It's also great for our students who are in the youth group to be able to provide a service to the children in our community," she said.



FACEBOOK/HODGE STUDENTS OF GOD

Hodge Presbyterian Church's Students of God youth group is helping spread holiday cheer by preparing free Christmas gift baskets for children to give their parents during Trenton's Storybook Christmas celebration on Dec. 4.

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Trenton High School juniors Violet Breitenbucher and Peyton Curd were part of the group of FCCLA students who stopped vehicles entering the high school parking lot this week to check if seat belts were being used.

Trenton FCCLA Hosts Annual Traffic Safety Event

From 7 to 8 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 17, Trenton High School's Family, Career and Community Leaders of America group hosted their annual traffic safety seat belt event. Students, in conjunction with Trenton police officers, stopped cars as they entered the school parking lot, recording if drivers and passengers were wearing seat belts.

This year, 209, or 79%, were buckled up and 55, or 21%, were not . This is an increase in those buckled up from last year when 183, or 72%, were buckled and 72, or 28% were not.

Trenton High School FCCLA received a grant from Missouri/National FCCLA to fund this initiative.

Antique Study Club Learns About County Courthouse Remodel

The Antique Study Club met in October at the Grundy County Courthouse, welcoming new member Sarah Siebenborn.

Cathy McKay introduced Grundy County Presiding Commissioner Phil Ray, who reported the historic Grundy County Courthouse has recently unveiled its newly renovated courtroom, capping off a $70,000 project that blends contemporary security needs with a return to the building's original architectural layout.

Highlighting the historical features of the six-floor landmark, Ray emphasized the enduring civic purpose of the site, noting that it remains, first and foremost, "the people's building."

Ray also shared a historical nod to the evolution of local governance, reminding attendees that county commissioners originally served as the area's county judges.

According to Ray, discussions surrounding the courtroom update began several years ago under the tenure of judge Jack Peace. The primary objectives of the initiative were dual-fold: addressing modern security vulnerabilities and reverting the courtroom floor plan to its authentic, historical footprint.

During the remodeling, there were no "surprise" historic objects found, as it was actually the second remodel of the courtroom. There were, however, plenty of square nails that turned up during this last remodel.

Ray reported 100% of the project's materials were purchased locally. The physical transformation was executed entirely by local hands. Area contractor Eric McLain completed the project on schedule, with woodworking assistance provided by Steve McKay.

Ray also reported that the courthouse will annually host area high school students to tour and familiarize themselves with the jobs of the county elected officials.

The next meeting of the club will be Friday, Nov. 20, 2026, at 1015 Main St.

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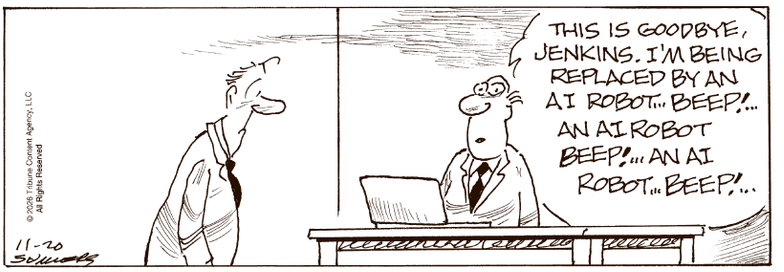
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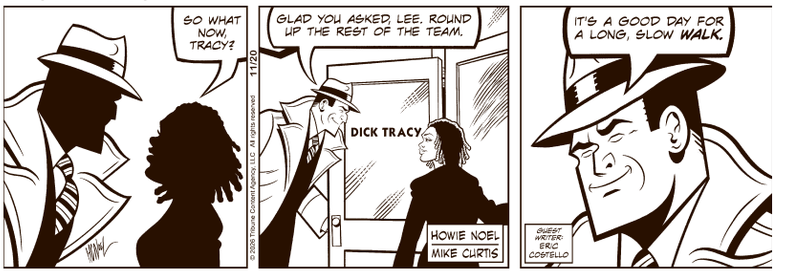
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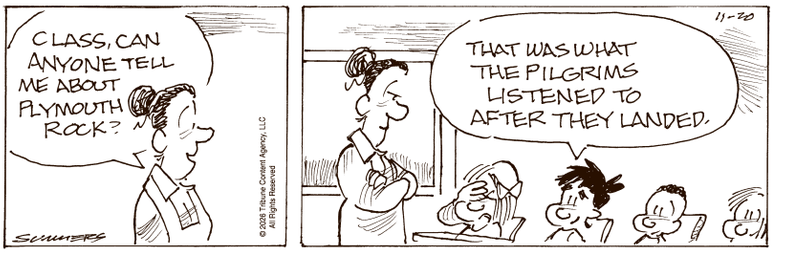
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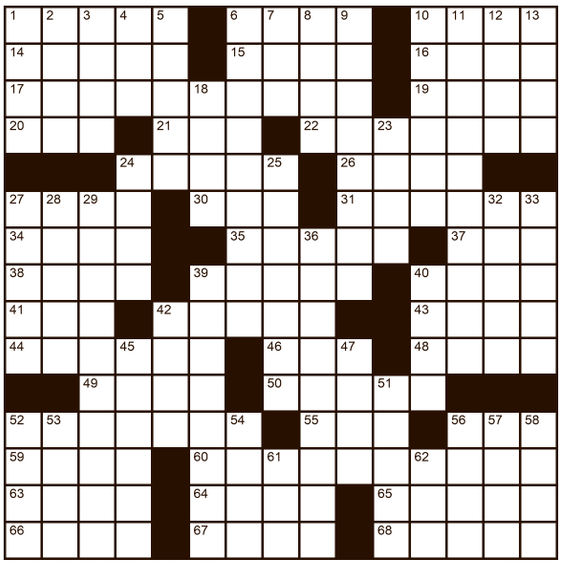
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THE MIDDLETONS



THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski



Created by Stella Zawistowski 11/20/26

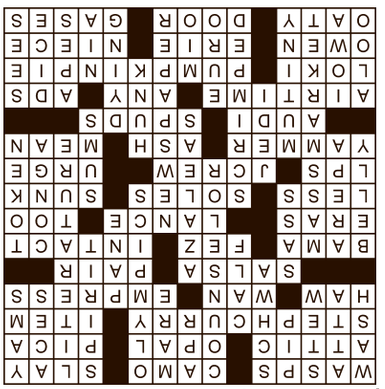
ACROSS

1 Slender-waisted insects
6 Combat clothes, for short
10 Kill, as a dragon
14 House's top story
15 Iridescent gem
16 Small font size
17 NBA record-holder in 3-pointers: 2 wds.
19 Agenda listing
20 "Yee-__!"
21 Pale with fear
22 Female ruler
24 Pico de gallo, e.g.
26 Twosome
27 The Crimson Tide, for short
30 Tasseled hat
31 Whole and undamaged
34 Meaningful time periods
35 Knight's weapon
37 Overly
38 Not as much
39 Shoe bottoms
40 Shipwrecked
41 Vinyl records: Abbr.
42 Banana Republic rival: 2 wds.
43 Strong desire
44 Talk on and on
46 Kind of hardwood
48 Intend
49 German automaker
50 Taters
52 When a broadcast begins
55 One or more
56 TV spots
59 Norse trickster god
60 Fall dessert: 2 wds.
63 Actor Wilson
64 The "E" in HOMES
65 Nephew's sister
66 Like Cheerios
67 Entryway
68 Neon and argon, e.g.

DOWN

1 Clean in a sink
2 Whole-wheat flour
3 Ragout, e.g.
4 Domino marking
5 Unstressed vowel
6 Therapist
7 Fourth month: Abbr.
8 Female horse
9 Milan event in 2026
10 Team morale
11 Written art form
12 Star pitchers
13 Orange tubers
18 Baby cow
23 Window section
24 Impudence
25 Flowering shrubs
27 Tummy
28 Griddled corncake
29 General audience: 2 wds.
32 Cuban line dance
33 Old subway coin
36 Daily publication
39 __ and saved
40 Totals
42 "Star Wars" knight
45 Sailors' rebellion
47 Muscular guy
51 Perishing
52 Potato, in Indian cuisine
53 The Hawkeye State
54 Money in Spain
56 Gorillas, e.g.
57 Cut into cubes
58 Notices
61 "O Sole __"
62 Actress Long

Friday's Puzzle Solved



SUDOKU

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

11/20/26

Level 1 2 3 4

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9.

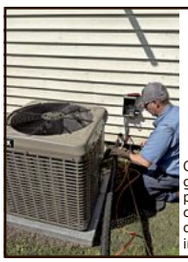
Solution to Friday's puzzle

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

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FACEBOOK / TRENTON HIGH SCHOOL

Seen here is last season's Trenton High School boys basketball team.

Freshman Play-maker Headlines Trenton's Hoops

Special report

Trenton's leading scorer last season was a freshman. This winter, the basketball standout could be sharing the back court with another one.

Sophomore Caleb Dixon returns as an all-conference and all-district standout, and freshman guard Guy Gottman has already earned a starting role with the varsity team. Together, they give coach Jon Guthrie a young core to build around as the Bulldogs prepare for their Nov. 24 home opener against East Buchanan.

"Our THS boys basketball team will be young and competitive this season," Guthrie told the Trenton Telegraph.

Dixon started as a freshman and led the team at 13 points per game.

"During the 2025-26 season, he was our all-conference and all-district player," Guthrie said. "He … did a great job on the defensive end. He's a very good leader."

Junior Cayden Farmer is the other returning starter, and he made his mark at the other end of the floor. Farmer was named the team's defensive player of the year and the KMZU Dream Team player of the year, and he averaged nine points a game.

"He is a great hustler and a hard worker on the court," Guthrie said.

Young guards step in

Gottman could be the most exciting newcomer. He started at guard for varsity this summer, and Guthrie sees a rare talent at the position.

"Guy is one of the most dynamic passers we've had in our program for several years, and has the ability to score at all three levels," the coach said. "He is a great hustler and a really good leader as a freshman. He will help us set the tone offensively."

Fellow freshman Zeb Johnson also played varsity this summer. He brings a scoring threat from long range and close in.

"He is a great three-point shooter, and finishes really well around the basket," Guthrie said. "He is also one of our hardest workers."

Sophomore guard Ryker Olmstead adds energy on defense, and he spent the off-season improving his outside shot.

"Ryker is a high-energy guard that plays great defense," Guthrie said.

Senior leadership

The young guards will have plenty of veterans around them. Senior Camden Skipper anchors the post and sets the tone for the program.

"He is one of the best leaders in our program," Guthrie said.

Skipper shared last season's Hustle Award with fellow senior Kaidyn Schweizer, one of the Bulldogs' top defenders. Senior Graeme Sager, the Sixth Man Award winner as a sophomore, gives Trenton another option on offense.

"Graeme is a very athletic player," Guthrie said. "He has the ability to score at all three levels, and is a very competitive player."

Seniors Matthew Kralicek and Gage Pierce bring a different kind of value.

"They are positive athletes that are awesome to have in the locker room," the coach said.

The juniors provide toughness. Jackson Lewis is a vocal leader who will dive on the floor for loose balls. Braden May and Rylan Campbell round out the group.

"Braden May and Rylan Campbell are also solid junior players for us, who work hard and are high character athletes," Guthrie said.

Guthrie leads the boys program in the Grand River Conference. He also teaches middle school special education, works as an assistant football and baseball coach, and coordinates the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at Trenton Middle School and Trenton High School.

The Bulldogs open at home against East Buchanan on Tuesday, Nov. 24. They'll play in the Gallatin Holiday Tournament during the first week of December.

Pirates Defeat Parkland College, Sweep Classic

North Central Missouri College men's basketball kept rolling last weekend as they defeated the defending NJCAA D-II national champion Parkland College and Black Hawk College in the KCKCC Classic. The Pirates were 6-1 overall before coming at home on Tuesday, when they took on Highland CC out of Kansas.

As of press time, scores were not yet available.

North Central Missouri College earned an 85-81 victory over Parkland College behind a balanced offensive effort and a strong shooting performance. The Pirates shot 54.4% from the field (31-of-57) and connected on 8-of-12 attempts from three-point range.

Isiah Thomas led NCMC with 24 points, shooting 10-of-21 from the field while adding two steals. Grant Redd contributed 17 points, seven assists and six rebounds, while Mekhi McNeil finished with 13 points, nine assists and four steals. Deng Giet added 12 points, knocking down three three-pointers, and Jaishon White chipped in eight points and six rebounds.

The Pirates also received a spark from their bench as Jordan Shockley scored six points, including two three-pointers, in six minutes. NCMC finished with 18 assists and nine steals in the four-point victory.

North Central Missouri College earned an 82-75 victory over Black Hawk College behind a balanced offensive effort and a strong defensive performance. Redd led the Pirates with 22 points, shooting 8-of-13 from the field and 4-of-5 from three-point range. Giet added 15 points and seven rebounds, while McNeil contributed 14 points and three assists. Thomas and White each finished with 12 points, with White also grabbing seven rebounds.

The Pirates shot 47.3% from the field and 36.4 percent from beyond the arc while forcing 10 steals. NCMC also held a 37-32 advantage on the boards to secure the seven-point win.

Trenton Winter Sports About To Kick Off Season

Special report

Trenton's winter sports season is about to tip off. Basketball opens at home next week, and two-time state wrestling champion Jacob White and the Bulldogs hit the mats right after Thanksgiving.

"Once we get back from Thanksgiving break, our high school winter sports schedule gets going," Activities Director Chris Wever told the Trenton Telegraph.

The varsity basketball teams open at home against East Buchanan on Tuesday, Nov. 24, with the girls at 6 p.m. and the boys at 7:30 p.m. The night before, Monday, Nov. 23, Trenton hosts Cameron in junior varsity games at the same times.

Both varsity squads warmed up Tuesday, Nov. 17, at a jamboree in Chillicothe.

After Thanksgiving, both varsity teams head to the Gallatin Tournament, which runs Nov. 30 through Dec. 5. The Bulldogs boys won the consolation title there last season.

Wrestling

Wrestling starts the same week as the Gallatin Tournament. The boys and girls teams open at home against Kirksville and Palmyra at 5 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 1.

White, who won his second state title at 120 pounds last winter, leads a boys lineup with five returning state qualifiers.

The girls travel to Marceline for the Tiger Mat Classic on Friday, Dec. 4, and the boys follow Saturday, Dec. 5. Both teams return home Thursday, Dec. 10, for a 5 p.m. quadrangular with Penney, South Harrison and Albany.

PET of the Week



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