



# THE PACERS' PROBLEMS

Poor performance during first half of recent games troubles Indiana coach and hurts chance of making playoffs.

PAGE B1

# DANIELS WANTS PLAN ON FAST TRACK

PAGE A2

## HURRICANE KATRINA

# STUDY: MILLIONS IN STORM AID WASTED

PAGE A2

# DAILY JOURNAL

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FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 2006

Johnson County, Indiana

50 cents

## WEATHER



Today  
Skies: Partly sunny  
Temps: High 44; low 24

MAP, PAGE A10

## COMING UP

### Learn the ABCs of zzz's

Feeling groggy? Learn some simple ways to improve your sleep.

USA WEEKEND

### Vaulting to the top

When the Center Grove gymnastics team competes for the state championship this weekend, it will mark the high point for proud parents who have nurtured their kids' careers since they were toddlers.

### Three of a kind

Brothers Tony, Joe and Jarrod Epkey are former Center Grove High School standouts who are teammates once again on Ball State's tennis team.

COMING SOON

## FYI

### They won't serve green spaghetti, will they?

Clark Elementary School will host a St. Patrick's Day spaghetti supper from 5 to 8 p.m. today.

The evening will include entertainment by Generation Gap, a band that plays blues, rock and alternative music.

The all-you-can-eat dinner includes spaghetti or pizza, garlic bread, salad and beverages.

Cost is \$5.50 for adults at the door and \$3 for children 12 and younger. Desserts are 50 cents each. Advance orders save 50 cents on each ticket.

The school is at 5764 E. County Road 700N in Clark Township.

Information: 535-6438

## DEATHS

- Franklin
  - Warren Abel, 66
  - Dorothy M. Baker, 94
  - Gale Roy Darland, 84
- Greenwood
  - Margaret Louise Martin, 90
  - Cecil L. Norman, 81
- Mary Almeeta Sutton, 80
- New Whiteland
  - Roland Hill, 80
- Kennel Lee Hodge, 61
- Elsewhere
  - Ashley L. Parr, 19

## INDEX

- Accent.....A6-A7
- Classified.....B5-B9
- Comics.....A8
- Editorials.....A4
- Obituaries.....A5
- Police, fire.....A3
- Sports.....B1-B4, B10
- Southside.....A3
- TV listings.....A7
- Weather.....A10

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# U.S. goes on offensive in Iraq

## Helicopters ferry troops hunting insurgents north of Baghdad

By STEVEN R. HURST  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### BAGHDAD, Iraq

In a well-publicized show of force, U.S. and Iraqi forces swept into the countryside north of the capital in 50 helicopters Thursday looking for insurgents in what the American military

called its largest air assault in nearly three years.

There was no bombing or firing from the air in the offensive northeast of Samarra, a town 60 miles north of Baghdad, the U.S. military said. All 50 aircraft were helicopters — Black Hawks, Apaches and Chinooks — used to

(SEE IRAQ, PAGE A5)



AP PHOTO

Sgt. Dave Fitzgerald performs a security sweep during a reconnaissance patrol by the 66th Armor Battalion as fires from attacks on oil pipelines burn in Taji, Iraq.

## Bush reaffirms pre-emptive strike policy

By TOM RAUM  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### WASHINGTON

The need for a big new military offensive in Iraq illustrates the difficulties still facing the United States after three troubled years of fighting.

It comes as the Bush administration works to show critics at home and abroad it is on the job in Iraq and ready, if necessary, to confront new dangers from Iran.

## ANALYSIS

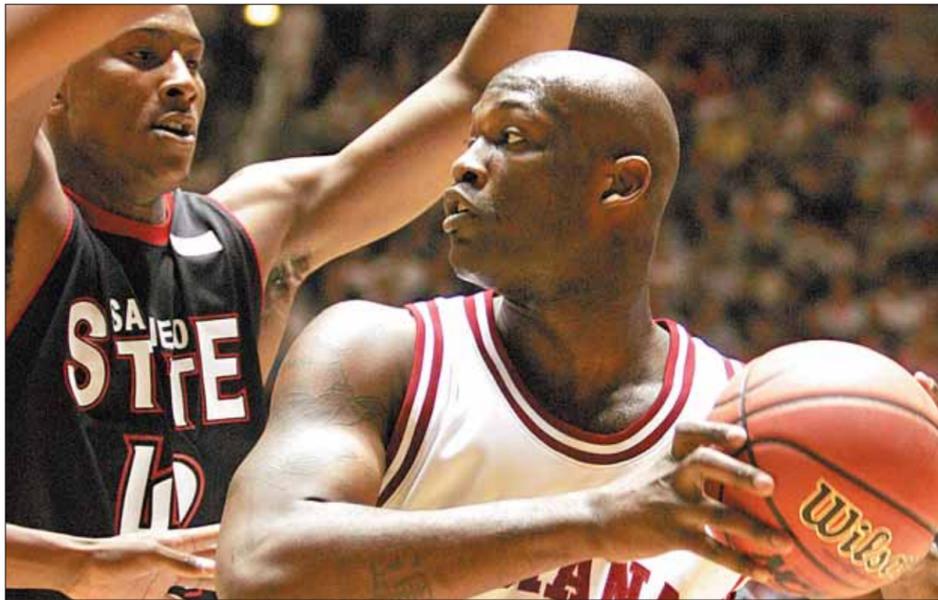
Thursday's assault against insurgent strongholds near Samarra by U.S. and Iraqi troops came as the administration issued a new report reaffirming its policy of pre-emptive strikes and directing attention to the dangers of a nuclear-armed Iran.

(SEE POLICY, PAGE A5)

NCAA TOURNAMENT: IU 87, SAN DIEGO STATE 83

# Comeback kids

## Late 3-pointer gives Hoosiers first-round victory



AP PHOTO

Indiana's Marco Killingsworth, right, looks for a shooting angle against San Diego State's Marcus Slaughter in the first half of their first-round NCAA Tournament game in Salt Lake

City on Thursday. The Hoosiers advanced with an 87-83 victory. They will face Gonzaga on Saturday in the second round after the Bulldogs nipped Xavier 79-75.

## Staff and wire reports

## INSIDE

Thursday's winners and losers: Wisconsin-Milwaukee upends Oklahoma; Tennessee holds on.  
Pages B1 and B3

their sights set on sending coach Mike Davis out with a national championship.

Davis has announced he will step down at the end of the season.

"I think we can win it," guard Marshall Strickland said before the game. "I think we have all the pieces."

No matter how far the Hoosiers go in the tournament, Davis made it clear he won't return to IU next season.

"If we won a national championship, it wouldn't change my decision," Davis said. "Because I don't think anyone needs to be in a situation where their coach is questioned every game, every possession."

"That's the reason I stepped away."

"I think we can win it ... we have all the pieces."

Marshall Strickland  
IU guard

Indiana won despite making only 8 of 27 3-point shots. But the Hoosiers did shoot 50 percent from the field to hang on for the win.

Mohamed Abukar led San Diego State with a game-high 24 points. Brandon Heath added 15.

For Indiana, Roderick Wilmont was the only other player in double figures with 11.

"The fans of Indiana should really appreciate what they have here, and what they have is a great program," Davis said. "And I will always support this program."

# KICKING UP HER HEELS

## Girl celebrates Irish heritage with traditional dance

By PAIGE E. WASSEL  
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A fifth-grader from West Grove Elementary will spend most of St. Patrick's Day on her toes.

Meranda Lile, 11, performs Irish step dancing, a dance made popular by the group Riverdance.

Step dancing has given Lile a way to embrace her Irish heritage and travel around the country, forming new friendships with other step dancers her age.

Lile was at an Irish festival in Indianapolis several years ago when she saw step dancing



STAFF PHOTO BY PAIGE E. WASSEL/pwassel@thejournalnet.com

Fifth-grader Meranda Lile, center, has been participating in Irish step dancing competitions for several years. Her interest was sparked after an Irish festival she attended in downtown Indianapolis.

## INSIDE

Shamrock sham? Irish merchants woo buyers with promise of unique shamrock, but are they for real?  
Page A9



for the first time. As her aunt, Debbie Owens, kept trying to take her to other parts of the festival, Lile kept pleading to watch just one more dance.

Soon after, Lile enrolled in the Richens/Timm Academy of Irish Dance in Indianapolis, where she has been learning

(SEE HEELS, BACK PAGE)

# Board delays penalty decision

## Two Franklin students were expelled in wine incident on school trip

By JO ELLEN WERKING WEEDMAN  
DAILY JOURNAL STAFF WRITER  
jweedman@thejournalnet.com

Two Franklin Community High School students accused of stealing and drinking a bottle of wine on a school trip will have to wait five more days to find out if they will be allowed back in class.

## TURNER

Tara Hight and Andrea Parsley, both 17, were expelled from school March 10 and filed an appeal with the school board.

They have denied the accusations and filed a federal lawsuit against Principal Leighton Turner and the school district, claiming their due-process rights were violated.

The board met in a closed session Thursday to begin hearing the appeals.

(SEE BOARD, BACK PAGE)

# Officials push fire safety

## Smoke detectors, plan called most important

By MICHAEL W. HOSKINS  
DAILY JOURNAL STAFF WRITER  
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After Indiana's deadliest two-week stretch of house fires in at least a decade — an 11-day period that claimed 19 lives — the state's top firefighter urged Hoosiers on Thursday to install smoke detectors and take other common-sense steps to avoid tragedy.

Indiana Fire Marshal Roger Johnson joined dozens of firefighters from the county and state in the Center Grove area to talk about fire prevention and safety.

In Johnson County, four fires in the past five weeks have resulted in the death of a senior citizen in the Center Grove area, another being critically burned and three

(SEE FIRE, BACK PAGE)



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