



DAILY JOURNAL

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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2007

Johnson County, Indiana

50 cents

WEATHER



Today Skies: Accumulating snow Temps: High 38; low 18

MAP, PAGE A8

YOU SHOULD KNOW

Weather could delay paper

Because of an expected winter storm, delivery of Tuesday's Daily Journal may be delayed.

INSIDE

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Pages B6-B8

WEB EXTRAS

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Tell us what you think

What do you think of the Pacers' performance so far this season? Do you think Indiana University will advance far in next month's NCAA men's basketball tournament?

Send your comments about all things sports to speakout@thejournalnet.com.

DEATHS

Greenwood

- Sue Ann Cravens, 57
Timothy Samuel Neff, 37
Jim Newbrough, 65
Thomas O'Shaughnessy, 77

Indianapolis

- Vitus M. Bell, 82
Harold V. Hickman, 81
Angela Ingram, 37
Robert Lee Royalty, 72
Betty Stoddard, 75

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CG SWIMMER SETS NATIONAL RECORD

Junior wins two individual titles at state finals in Indy

By MATTHEW GLENESK DAILY JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER mglenesk@thejournalnet.com

INDIANAPOLIS

Michelle McKeehan's performance at Saturday's IHSAA swimming state finals wasn't just fast; it was historic.

The Center Grove junior stole the show inside the Indiana University Natatorium at IUPUI, cementing her legacy as one of the best swimmers in state history.

McKeehan swam in four individual races over the two-day meet and broke a record every time she dove into the pool, including setting a new national standard.

She defended her state titles in the 200-yard individual medley and 100 breaststroke in record-breaking fashion and became just the third female swimmer in state history to win the same two individual events in each of her first three years in high school competition.

But it was her performance in Saturday's 200 individual medley final that left competitors in her wake and brought the crowd to its feet.

McKeehan not only bested the state record she set a day earlier in preliminary action but set the new national mark with a time of 1:58.06.

Her time broke the national high school record set by Natalie Coughlin, who later became a U.S. Olympian, in 2000.

Heading into the state meet, McKeehan's goal was to set the new state record, but McKeehan didn't anticipate breaking Coughlin's national high school mark of 1:58.45.

"I was hoping to go a little bit faster than what I did last night, but nowhere in my dreams did I imagine going that fast," McKeehan said. "I know that's what we strived for all year long. It's all just very exciting now."

During the record-breaking 200 individual medley, Center Grove coach Jim Todd stood at the edge of the pool checking his stopwatch, waving his arms and screaming for McKeehan to go faster.



STAFF PHOTOS BY SCOTT ROBERSON/sroberson@thejournalnet.com

Above: Center Grove coach Jim Todd, left, hugs junior Michelle McKeehan after her victory in the 200-yard individual medley Saturday at the IHSAA state swimming and diving finals. Top: McKeehan swims her way to the national record in the event.

After she touched the wall with the new national record, Todd had to bend over and put his hands on his knees to catch his breath.

"She's in better shape than I am," he said. Following the announcement that McKeehan had set the record, she received a standing ovation from the crowd.

"It was very welcoming," she said. "It's good to know that people from all over, even if you're swimming against their swimmers, you're still going to be supported. It was very welcoming to know that everyone out there supports me and what the other girls at this meet put in and the time and dedication we put in."

As a coach, seeing one of his athletes receive such a warm reception from a partisan crowd was special for Todd.

"I'll tell you what, that was awesome, absolutely awesome," he said. "She deserved it, though. She brought life to this meet."

Todd, who was named the state's girls swimming coach of the year, knows what McKeehan is capable of. But even he was a bit surprised at her dominating performance, which included a staggering four-second cushion between McKeehan and her closest competitor.

"This year she set out goals and trained so hard, worked and was so committed," he said. "Last night she was able to get her initial goal to set the state records and get that monkey off of her back, and today she was able to swim very relaxed. That national record is something I'm very blessed and lucky to be able to be a part of."

CHAMPIONSHIP BY THE NUMBERS

6

State titles Center Grove's Michelle McKeehan has won in three years (three 200-yard individual medley titles and three 100-yard breaststroke titles)

1:58.45

Previous 200 individual medley national high school record time set in 2000 by U.S. Olympian Natalie Coughlin of California

1:58.06

McKeehan's time in Saturday's 200 individual medley, setting a new national mark

Men have pushed for upgrades since before crashes

Center Grove area residents say they have worked to get railroad crossing improvements for years

By ANNIE GOELLER DAILY JOURNAL STAFF WRITER agoeller@thejournalnet.com

A Center Grove area man shook his head in disbelief and disappointment when he heard that two children were killed in a vehicle-train accident a few miles away from his home.

"I said, 'This is a crying shame, and maybe now someone will do something about it,'" said Neal Cockrell, who lives near the railroad crossing on Stones Crossing Road where a fatal train-vehicle accident occurred Feb. 3.

Cockrell has been trying for years to convince county officials that the crossing is dangerous.

He isn't alone.

Charles Miller, who also lives



COCKRELL



MILLER

near the tracks, called the county highway department, the Indiana Department of Transportation and agencies responsible for railroads, only to be directed to someone else each time.

Both men said they got the same responses: It's not our responsibility, and we don't have the money.

Now, they say they will contin-

ue to make calls and hold officials accountable for the changes they are promising.

County commissioners have said they will do everything they can to add flashing lights and cross arms to railroad crossings in the Center Grove area, including at Stones Crossing Road. Two boys were killed at the crossing after the vehicle they were riding in was struck by a train.

"Since the accident, I have a renewed sense of wanting to make sure I keep this going," Miller said.

The men had their own reasons for trying to change the crossing, including the high school children whom they see cross the tracks every day.

(SEE UPGRADES, BACK PAGE)



PHOTO BY BRYAN WOLFE, JOHNSON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Jacob Findley, 12, and Travis Findley, 9, suffered fatal injuries when the SUV they were riding in collided with a train in the Center Grove area Feb. 3.

PLUG FOR THE BRAIN DRAIN?

Students split on if \$20,000 would keep them in state

By CANDACE BEATY DAILY JOURNAL STAFF WRITER cbeaty@thejournalnet.com

Gov. Mitch Daniels wants to reward the state's best students with \$20,000 scholarships.

Their school choices are limited to colleges and universities in Indiana. They'd also have to work in the state for three years after graduating from college or pay the \$20,000 back.

Some students said no amount of money will keep them from exploring their options outside the state.

Brittany Hassee is looking at a school in Indiana and one in Illinois. If she stays in Indiana, she doesn't want to make a commitment after graduation.

"I wouldn't want to feel like I have to stay," Hassee said.

Instead, the Greenwood senior will go where she can find a job, she said.

More than one in three Hoosiers who stay in the state for school leave after graduation, according to a 1999 study by the Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute that highlighted the state's difficulty. Indiana ranks 44 among states in the number of people older than 25 with a bachelor's degree, according to a press release from the governor's office.

So, to stop the so-called "brain drain," Daniels has proposed the scholarship.

Students would have to qualify for the scholarship based on SAT scores, their grade point average and class rank. To keep it, they would have to maintain a 3.0 GPA while in college.

The offer is attracting some students.

Whiteland senior Jason Drury said if he could get his hands on the \$20,000 he would definitely stay in state for school, he said. He is still deciding between two Indiana schools and one in Michigan.

Money has played a big part in Drury's decision, so this would help him choose, he said. The Michigan school would be cut from the list with that kind of scholarship, he said. With two older siblings in college in Indiana, his parents would love that, he said.

Greenwood senior Christine Kuo plans to attend DePauw University in Greencastle, but the governor's offer is too restricting, she said.

She would rather see what job opportunities she has after graduating, instead of committing to

(SEE DRAIN, BACK PAGE)



HASSEE