

# OPINION

DAILY JOURNAL

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"The Daily Journal is dedicated to community service, to defense of individual rights and to providing those checks upon government which no constitution can ensure."

SCOTT ALEXANDER  
founding editor, 1963

## AT ISSUE

Whiteland wrestler Matthew Fields won the IHSAA championship Saturday.

## OUR POINT

Fields demonstrated skill, perseverance, dedication and heart in his victory.

## Wrestler earned title through dedication, skill

The Daily Journal

The road to a state championship might have begun almost exactly a year ago for Matthew Fields of Whiteland Community High School.

Last year, Fields was bested by Taylor March of East Noble in the quarterfinals.

This year, Fields faced March again, this time in the finals in the 119-pound weight class of the tournament Saturday at Conesco Fieldhouse in Indianapolis.

The 3-0 win wasn't revenge. It was the result of years of hard work.

It was a title Fields earned by polishing natural skill through hours and hours of training and a strong dose of heart.

His coach put it best. Dave Thompson said, "His whole season has been focused toward this night. He worked and worked and worked until he achieved that goal."

The Warrior wrestler didn't just attend practices and training sessions during the season. He extended workouts as long as he needed to perfect his skills. He routinely continued wrestling with practice partner Austin Dickey a half-hour after the end of practice.

Thompson said, "Whether it's wrestling, working out, doing some extra jump rope or extra running, anything it took to get them prepared for what was coming."

Fields finished his season 41-1. His 154 career wins are the most in school history, tying the record set by Michael Horton in 2000-03.

As talented as he is, Fields showed his emotional side after the victory.

After the referee raised Fields' right arm when the match was over, the young man raced toward the team's coaches and exchanged hugs. Then he lifted his coach a few inches off the ground.

Thompson said, "He can squat (weight-lift) more than I weigh, so I knew he could do it. But it makes me a little nervous when I'm up in the air like that. If he dropped me, I might break a hip or something."

An ebullient Fields responded, "Coach isn't that heavy. Today he was light as a butterfly."

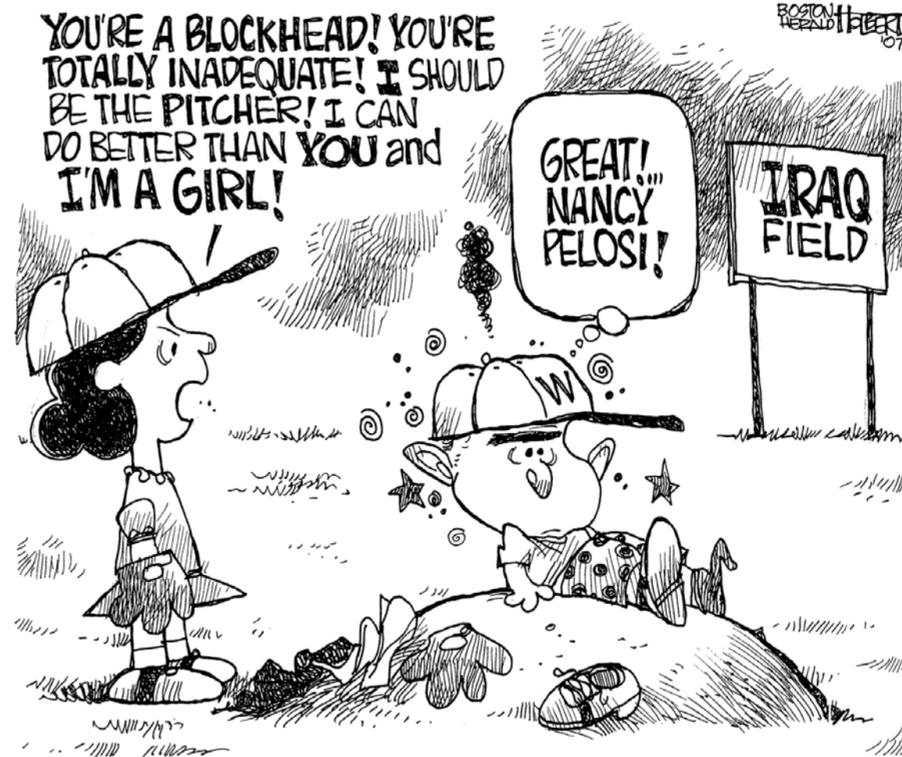
As with any sport, natural ability will take an athlete only a short way toward a championship. The rest of the trip requires perseverance, training, practice and heart.

Fields showed all these qualities and then some not just in his performance Saturday but throughout the year and, indeed, his entire career.

He'll wear the mantle of champion with pride because he showed what it truly takes to become a champion.



FIELDS



## To get most out of what life has to offer, slow down, focus

Now days used to be a lot more fun than they are now.

As a kid, a snow day was a glorious gift, better than a birthday present because it was totally unexpected. Remember?

Now, as an adult, it is a double-edged sword: I weigh the work I will have to make up against the chance to sleep in.

That's not to say that Becky and I didn't make use of last week's days off.

I decided to use the time, after I got out of bed, for extra exercise on the elliptical. By the time I crawled out of the sack, she was already up and busy with her drawing pad and the book "Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain" that I gave her for her birthday.

Since it was too slick to run on the roads, I put on my sweats and running shoes and headed to the basement. The elliptical trainer is a pretty good substitute for road running, but its drawback is I get very bored staring at a basement wall. That's why I am so thankful for my trusty iPod.

I have nearly 5,000 tunes on my iPod, but during these winter months in the basement I have been concentrating on music by the Beatles.

I find running toward a brick wall isn't as tedious if I revisit the music of the Fab Four.

I think my iPod has also helped me remember something important.

I know Beatles music. I learned



Norman Knight

to play guitar by copying Beatles songs. I fell asleep at night with my record player playing Beatles tunes. I could recite all the lyrics to all of the songs in the order in which they appeared on the albums. Their music is part of what makes me me.

What has struck me again and again as I listen to these old familiar songs is how much I missed. What I mean is, there is so much going on in the recordings I never noticed.

Or maybe I have forgotten. That chunky guitar rhythm on "Can't Buy Me Love"? The percussion on "From Me To You"? Did I hear that back then?

As I sweat on the machine, I wonder if back then I was hearing those songs in a sort of teenage, unfocused way.

Now, with just a bare wall to look at and no other distractions, I concentrate only on the music pumping directly into my ears. And I hear so much more. It is almost like discovering new Beatles songs.

After my workout, I went

upstairs. Becky was deep in concentration as she tried to draw her left hand. She was looking at it through a piece of glass.

"This helps me see in two dimensions instead of three. I am supposed to look at the lines of my hands as they really are, not as I think they are," she explained.

On the table were very detailed, very accurate drawings of horses. She had looked at pictures of horses upside down as she copied them. The book's instructions, she explained, are all about learning to really look at a thing. Not just glancing, not just seeing in a distracted, inattentive way, but really looking and seeing the amazing detail in everything.

It's a lesson we keep forgetting: The world is full of wonder, and we get so preoccupied we don't see it. We forget to pay attention. Sometimes we need to be reminded.

On my desk I have a quote I saved from my Daily Zen Calendar by a Buddhist monk, Chogyam Trungpa. I keep it to remind me.

"Look! This is your world. It is your feast. Look at the greatness of the whole thing! Don't hesitate. Open your eyes! Don't blink. Look — look further!"

Norman Knight, a teacher at Clark Pleasant Middle School, writes this weekly column for the Daily Journal. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

## New faces in Indiana's Statehouse participating in same old blame game

By MIKE SMITH  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

So much for all the early session talk of bipartisanship in the Indiana House of Representatives.

Members of both parties took to the microphone on the first day last month and pledged to work together on major issues facing the state. Peace, love and harmony.

It looks like the honeymoon between the chamber's 51 Democrats and 49 Republicans is over.

They might patch things up, but the first major blame game broke out last week when the parties accused each other of playing pure, partisan politics. If things go as usual, there is sure to be more finger-pointing.

The mood turned sour over a bill Democratic leaders hailed as one that would deliver significant property tax relief to homeowners while giving local governments more flexibility to raise money.

Its key feature would allow local governments to raise local income taxes as long as at least 60 percent of the revenue went toward property tax relief.

Republicans offered a dozen amendments to the plan in committee, but majority Democrats rejected them all. Republicans presented some of the same amendments, and some new ones, on the floor last week, only to watch each fail on a party-line vote.

When the overall bill was brought down for a vote, Republicans rallied at Democrats for rejecting every change they had offered.

"It's funny, but every last one of those was defeated along party-line votes," Rep. Jeff Espich, R-Uniondale, said before the vote.

"I think what you were shunning was any effort by the minority to have any input on this bill."

Democrats knew they would not get a single Republican vote. Before the tally, they accused Republicans of taking a partisan stand and keeping sound legislation from advancing to the Senate.

They also noted that Republican Gov. Mitch Daniels, who has not had warm relations with House Democrats, had commended them for putting a plan with merit on the table.

"There is a time, and this is the time, to take politics off the table," Rep. Chet Dobis, D-Merrillville, told Republicans.

When the votes were tallied, 49 members — all Democrats — voted for the bill and 48 members — all Republicans present and two Democrats — declined to support it.

The bill still has a shot. It takes 51 votes to pass or defeat a bill outright. Since the vote fell short of that, the bill can be voted on again until Feb. 26, the deadline for advancing House bills to the Senate.

It can still be amended, too, if two-thirds of House members agree to allow that. So a deal can still be struck.

But after the vote, there was little talk of that. The blame game was on.

House Speaker Patrick Bauer, D-South Bend, said Republicans "locked up" and noted that one Republican had supported the bill in committee but did not on the floor.

"Every single one of them voted against property tax relief and the ability of local governments to fund police and fire," he said.

He chafed when reminded that two of his own members also voted against the bill.

"I don't think one party should

have had to pass this," Bauer said. "A bipartisan vote was needed, and that's what I wanted."

House Minority Leader Brian Bosma, R-Indianapolis, told a reporter before the vote that Democrats had made the past several days some of the most partisan he has seen at this point in a session.

He noted that when Republicans were in the majority in 2005 and 2006, they accepted Democratic amendments to some major bills. But now, he said, Democrats were showing that their early session pledges of bipartisanship were hollow promises.

After the vote on the property tax bill, he said Democrats "wanted to do this with muscle rather than compromise, and apparently they didn't have the muscle to do it."

Truth be told, both parties have used pure, partisan muscle to pass some bills when they were in the majority.

When Republicans had a 52-48 advantage last year, they rejected 12 Democratic amendments to legislation that would give the governor authority to lease the Indiana Toll Road to a private, Australian-Spanish consortium.

Yes, they did accept one. It required that American flags be flown at toll collection booths.

At the end of the session, the bill passed on a straight, party-line vote.

So just like early session pledges of compromise and cooperation, this latest blame game of partisanship is nothing new in the Indiana House. It's just the latest one.

Mike Smith has covered Indiana's Statehouse and political scene for the Associated Press since 1993. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

## YOUR VIEWS

### Use new technology to decrease train accidents

To the editor:

A recent train/SUV accident resulting in a two-child fatality happened within about a mile of our house and has inspired the following:

The mechanical technology of the diesel engine has improved over the earliest steam locomotives, but it would appear that there has been little or nothing done about the potential threat to automobiles and other road-bound vehicles.

The earlier models had a single white headlight and a steam whistle. The modern diesel locomotive has a single headlight and a horn similar to that of some trucks.

With the technology available today and a bit of common sense, I would think that there would be several things that could be done to lessen the confrontations between train and car. Among these would be:

1. Mount flashing red beacons along with the single white light on the front of the engine.

2. Install radar signal generators on the engine so those with radar detectors are alerted. I know that I always wake up when my radar detector goes off.

3. Install inexpensive red revolving beacons at the non-gated railroad crossings. These beacons could be mounted on the existing railroad crossing signals and could be triggered by radio signal intensity from the oncoming train (dog shock-collar techniques).

4. Do not require cars to stop at railroad crossings but only require that they slow to 10 mph. This would permit the car to coast beyond the crossing if the engine failed when accelerated or when traction is lost due to icy conditions.

There are other things that could be done to prevent train-car accidents, but those mentioned would be of little cost and should be effective.

I, as well as those who have suffered railroad crossing tragedies, appreciate the time that you have taken to read my letter, and I hope that some of these suggestions may contribute to lessening the number of accidents in the future.

Donald G. Cox  
Greenwood

### Slain boy's birthday passes with no answers

To the editor:

Today would have been Blake Michael Dickus' 11th birthday. Instead, he was murdered along with Chynna L. Dickus on July 24 in their home in Franklin.

Normally, Blake's mom, Christina Dickus, would be busy making plans for Blake's birthday party with his family and friends.

However, this year Blake will have no party because of the act of someone so cruel who took him from us all. He is missed beyond words. Our hearts are forever changed. We will stay the course, no matter what, to help find the person responsible for murdering Blake.

We hope that anyone who has any information, thoughts or even the smallest detail will call the Franklin Police Department and tell whatever you know. Someone, other than the killer, knows exactly who killed Blake and Chynna.

Our family begs you to come forward and tell what you know for the sake of Blake. The detectives have been working nonstop on the Dickus murders, and we all believe that they are very close to finding the killer.

Our family cannot thank the police enough for all they have done to help us during the most difficult time of our lives.

Happy birthday, little Blake. Your smile arrives with the bright sunshine. We love you and miss you.

Debbie Brown  
Greenwood

### Loss of grandsons in collision difficult to bear

To the editor:

The loss of my grandsons, Travis and Jake Findley:

How does one cope, survive and forgive when something this tragic happens to a family? As their grandmother, I will never hear, "I love you, Grandma."

There will be no more sleepovers or going to the movies. Everything that I treasured doing with them is gone forever.

My daughter and son-in-law have been given more than any parent should have to bear.

All railroad crossings should have lights, crossing arms, etc., to warn of oncoming trains.

Ultimately, the one responsible is the driver of the vehicle. For whatever reason, he did not stop. It was his responsibility to ensure the safety of every person in the vehicle.

Sue Winters  
Greenwood