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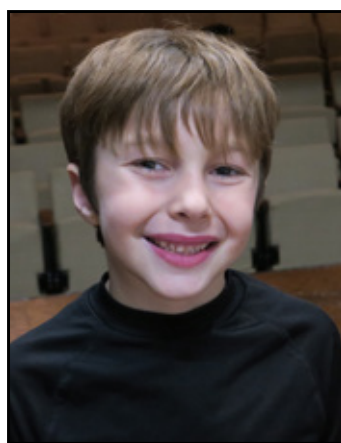


thetimes24-7.com

*Wishing you  
a very  
Merry  
Christmas!*

## ➔ TODAY'S VERSE

Isaiah 30:21 And thine ears  
shall hear a word behind  
thee, saying, This is the way,  
walk ye in it, when ye turn to  
the right hand, and when ye  
turn to the left.



## ➔ FACES of HAMILTON COUNTY

People who call our community their own.

What makes Alex Gray smile?  
"Minecraft," said the then 8-year-  
old Noblesville resident, a then  
third-grader at Hinkle Creek El-  
ementary School. He was found  
two years ago, at age 7, making  
his acting debut alongside his  
mom, Courtney Gray, in the role of  
Little Caroler in The Belfry Theatre's  
play, "A Christmas Carol," during  
10 sold-out performances at the  
Noblesville community theater.  
What's the most fun? "I get to carol,  
and I get to do a lot of running,"  
said Alex, who sang "God Rest Ye  
Merry Gentlemen" again and again  
on stage. Did he know the song  
or have to learn it? "I had, like,  
no idea." Today's feature is a look  
back at one of The Times' previous  
Faces of Hamilton County. He also  
loves to play soccer, rock climb,  
play Minecraft and video games  
and baseball. He's also a great  
dancer. Alex is an only child and  
is also the son of Matthew Gray.  
Favorite school lunch item? "It's not  
the pizza ... it's the PB&J (peanut  
butter and jelly)." Favorite school  
subject? "Math." What else? "I do  
have hidden talents. I have flexibil-  
ity," said Alex as he demonstrated  
the splits and bent back his thumb  
to touch his wrist. Anything else to  
say? "Merry Christmas." He attend-  
ed Ninja Zone classes at Wright's  
Gymnastics in Noblesville. Over fall  
break 2020, he put on his own mu-  
sical in the back yard with three of  
his best friends, performing songs  
from "Hamilton" and "The Greatest  
Showman." His teacher, Mr. Truitt,  
and The Belfry's "A Christmas Carol"  
director Nancy Lafferty were in  
attendance. He will celebrate his  
10th birthday in January.

### And Another Thing...

- Cicero Town Council will hold a special  
meeting on Dec. 29, 2021 at 9 a.m.  
at the Red Bridge Community Building  
located at 697 W Jackson Street to  
review and approve claims and transfers.  
- Cicero Stormwater Utility will hold a  
special meeting on Dec. 29, 2021 at  
10 a.m. at the Red Bridge Community  
Building located at 697 W Jackson Street  
to review and approve claims.

# The TIMES

Hamilton County's Only Daily Newspaper

NOBLESVILLE, INDIANA

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The Times photo by Betsy Reason

Austynn Loggins, 6, and her brother, Patrick Loggins, 4, the children of Nikki and Brian Loggins, of Noblesville, visit with Santa and give their Christmas lists.

## One more chance to give Santa a wish list

Santa Claus -- in his wire-rim  
eyeglasses, big red suit and beard  
as white as the snow -- takes his  
seat in the Hamilton County His-  
torical Society's Santa  
House on the Courthouse  
Square.



BETSY REASON  
The Times Editor

He invites  
children to  
sit on his lap  
or sit next  
to him. He  
asks for their  
wish lists for Christmas. And he  
responds to their curiosity about  
his reindeers, favorite cookies  
and his elves' workshop.

Children of all ages who still  
want to visit Santa and to share  
their wish lists only have one  
more chance, as it's almost  
Christmas Eve.

Santa will greet visitors for the  
last time of the season in the San-  
ta House from noon to 5 p.m. on  
Friday before he heads back to  
the North Pole.

I had the opportunity to visit

## Noblesville is looking for new superintendent

Noblesville school system is  
in the market for a new superin-  
tendent.

Dr. Beth Niedermeyer, who  
joined the school in 2014, an-  
nounced that she plans to retire  
at the end of  
the 2021-22  
school year.  
Her last day  
is scheduled  
for June 30.



Beth Niedermeyer

Nieder-  
meyer served  
in previous  
leadership  
roles with  
Hamilton Southeastern Schools,  
the Metropolitan School District  
of Pike Township and Fort  
Wayne Community Schools.

"This was a tough decision

➔ See NEW Page A4



The Times photo by Betsy Reason

Santa poses for a photo with Harper Howard, 5, and Aubrey Howard, 2, and their parents, Emily and C.J. Howard of Noblesville.

with Saint Nick last Sunday on  
the downtown Square in between  
his many visitors.

"All of the kids are wonder-  
ful," he said.

Even the crying babies? Yes,  
even the crying babies.

Santa has seen visitors from as

young as 1 month up to 90-year-  
olds. "Grandmas are the best,"  
he said.

He's seen babies in elf cos-  
tumes, all ages in ugly sweaters  
and all kinds of Santa hats.

➔ See BETSY Page A5

## Twas a few days before Christmas . . .

Years ago . . . OK, decades . . . I penned a parody of Clement  
Clarke Moore's outstanding work, The Night Before Christmas.

I was a young sports writer and had some fun  
doing it, so every few years since then I try  
again. The coaches, who were gracious enough  
not to run me out of town after that first one, are  
no longer the topic. And after the last two years  
of pandemics and petty politics . . . this seems  
the right time to do another one. Or, in Otter's  
famous words from the literary classic film Animal  
House -- "I think that this situation absolute-  
ly requires a really futile and stupid gesture be  
done on somebody's part." And to paraphrase  
future Sen. Bluto -- I'm just the guy to do it. So, with apologies to  
Mr. Moore . . .

'Twas mid-week before Christmas, the country's a dump  
Another variant's coming and oops, there goes Trump.

The House and the Senate were divided in two  
Causing the voters to give them a boo!  
Old Noblesville was sad and even a little blue  
Because the annual parade was given the shoo!  
But politics and strife made my head dizzy,  
So I turned to nicer things and avoided the tizzy!  
If you are hurting and can't hear over the phone  
Call the good folks, our friends, at Beltone!  
Looking for a place to age and have fun?



TIM TIMMONS  
Two Cents

➔ See TIM Page A4

## ➔ INSIDE TODAY

Obituaries.....A2  
Classifieds.....A4  
Comics.....A4

## ➔ TODAY'S HEALTH TIP

Eating quickly can triple your  
chance of becoming overweight -- put  
the fork down between bites and allow  
your stomach to realize it's full.

Today's health tip was brought to  
you by Dr. John Roberts. Be sure to  
catch his column each week in The  
Times and online at [www.thetimes24-7.com](http://www.thetimes24-7.com).



## ➔ HONEST HOOSIER

Christmas is two days away.  
One of my favorite memories  
is trying to sneak to a spot where  
I could catch a glimpse of Santa  
Claus. Never did though.



## ➔ TODAY'S QUOTE

"Every time a bell rings an angel gets his wings."  
It's a Wonderful Life

## ➔ TODAY'S JOKE

What does Santa do when his elves misbehave?  
He gives them the sack!

## ➔ THREE-DEGREE GUARANTEE

Weatherby says the high today will be **64°**

If Weatherby is off by more than 3 degrees, e-mail us at  
[weatherby@thetimes24-7.com](mailto:weatherby@thetimes24-7.com) and let us know. Include  
your name and phone number. Each month those who  
called in and caught Weatherby will be entered into a  
drawing for a prize.



The Times appreciates all our customers.  
Today, we'd like to personally thank  
RON MCGILL  
of Noblesville for subscribing!



## ➔ OBITUARIES

Elaine R. Skopelja  
Norman Jay Bailey  
Edna Mae Hecht





## OBITUARIES

### Elaine R. Skopelja

Feb. 11, 1953 - Dec. 19, 2021

Elaine R. Skopelja, nee Noonan, 68, Westfield, passed away Dec. 19, 2021, in her home surrounded by loving family.

She was born Feb. 11, 1953, in Hammond, Ind., to the late William Noonan and Anne Razumich.

Mrs. Skopelja graduated from Highland High School in 1971 with top honors. In 1976, she graduated from Indiana University with a bachelor's degree in history. She continued her education, to obtain her master's degree of Library Science from Rosary College. She was a consummate learner and a wealth of knowledge.

Mrs. Skopelja started her career at the Lake County Public Library as a reference librarian, and her main role was to field questions from patrons on a myriad of topics. Mrs. Skopelja was referred to by her family, as the original "Google". She then went on to hold numerous positions and upon moving to Westfield, became a medical librarian at the Indiana Hand Center and eventually at the Indiana University Medical Center. She also served as President of the Indiana Health Science Librarians Association and received countless accolades and recognition. She conducted research and has been published in numerous medical journals on a variety of topics. Her family is extremely proud of the body of work she produced throughout the years, and the education she provided to so many medical professionals. Library Science was a field of work, which she was extremely passionate about and her passion for educating others—continued throughout her career.

To say that Elaine loved reading was an understatement. She was a voracious reader and her family is convinced that the Westfield Public Library should name a wing in her honor. The collected overdue fees throughout her 30-year residence in Westfield, should be more than enough to cover the costs. Rita at the Westfield Public library had Mrs. Skopelja on speed dial. Her family heard Rita's voice on their answering machine for years, as she reported the overdue books needing to be returned. Mrs. Skopelja instilled that same love of reading and visits to the library in her children and grandchildren. There was not one birthday or Christmas that went by, without a book included in her gift.

Naturally, her love of reading equated to her being extremely intelligent. She loved history and all things trivia. No one ever wanted to play Trivial Pursuit with her. She annihilated anyone in her path each time she played; her family were no competition for her. Little did she know, all that information she had retained throughout the years would help lead her to an appearance on Jeopardy. After years of watching her beat everyone from our living room couch, her family couldn't wait to watch her do it on national television. Despite missing an Indy 500 question, which really irked her, she did a great job and made them so proud.

Mrs. Skopelja also had a love of horses since childhood. She never considered herself an artist, but you could always find a doodle on a newspaper, napkin, or whatever was around with her sketches of a horse or two. She always joked that it was the only thing she knew how to draw. She loved going to the racetrack and never missed a Kentucky Derby or a Preakness. It was her "Super Bowl". Her love of cats was just as strong, and they were the perfect companion for her as she snuggled up with a good book.

She was also an avid Indiana Hoosiers and Chicago Cubs fan, often joining family and friends at the "bucket" game tailgate and yearly trips with family to Wrigley Field to catch a Cubbies game. She loved Chicago in general: the museums, the history, the shopping—just all of it.

Movies and music also played a major role in Mrs. Skopelja's life. You can almost guarantee that turning on the TV at her house would bring you right to Turner Classic Movies. She loved old movies and comedies. She couldn't wait to be with her family and gather on the couch to turn on SCTV during the holidays. You could also jump in her car and upon starting have classical music, Dave Brubeck or the Beatles blaring for all to hear.

Her love of everything mentioned above never superseded her love for her friends and family. Mrs. Skopelja was kind and loving to anyone she met and was an amazing wife, mother, sister, aunt, grandmother and friend. Her family has many fond memories of vacations with both family and friends and countless family get-togethers, throughout the years. She hosted Thanksgiving for up to 40 people every year and she was most happy when she was with her entire family. She adored her grandchildren and they lovingly referred to her as "Mimi". They looked forward to spending time with her and enjoying what they termed as, "Mimi Days" where she would take them to the library, McDonald's and the park. She will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her dearly.

Her family states that they owe everything to the outstanding medical team at the Community North Cancer Center, led by Dr. Bhatia and Megan Weaver, NP, who after learning of her cancer diagnosis, blessed them with three more years of time to continue making memories with her. The amount of support, dedication, and grace this journey cannot be measured. Her family is eternally grateful and indebted to them for everything they did, as she courageously fought this terrible disease.

Survivors include her loving husband, Chuck Skopelja; children, Brooke (Patrick) Cassidy, Erin (Ozzy) Yesinnar and Mike (Christina) Skopelja; and beloved grandchildren, Rylee, Jackson and Calvin Cassidy, Eva and Luca Yesinnar and Charlie and Alexandra Skopelja; her brothers and sisters, Lorraine (Terry) Stage, Paula Bissek, William Noonan, Mike Noonan, Jim (Gloria) Noonan, Tom Noonan and Chris Noonan; her in-laws, Lisa (Tim) Armstrong, Ron (Cindy) Skopelja, Tommy (Paula) Skopelja and Nick (Margery) Skopelja; her beloved nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews, Ryan (Cate) Stage, Colin (Stephanie) Stage, Alison (Andrew) Giorgi, Sean Noonan, Kyle Noonan, Ariel Noonan, Adlai Noonan, Sheminith Noonan, Harper Stage, Brayden Noonan, Jayden Noonan, Melissa DeSutter, Vera DeSutter, Megan (Tim) O'Shea, Cortney (Jarred) Mushill, Avery Mushill, Chad (Emily) Armstrong, Nicole Skopelja, Violet Diaz and Stephen Skopelja.

Noan was preceded in death by her nephew, Gebrah Noonan; and sister-in-law, Lynda Skopelja.

Visitation is scheduled to take place on Monday, Dec. 27, 2021 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Randall and Roberts Funeral Center, 1685 Westfield Road in Noblesville. The funeral service is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 28, 2021 at 11 a.m. at St. Maria Goretti Catholic Church, 17102 Spring Mill Rd. in Westfield. Burial will be at Hamilton Memorial Park Cemetery, 4180 Westfield Rd. in Westfield.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Westfield Public Library or the Community North Cancer Center at (317) 355-GIVE (4483) or give@ecommunity.com (please designate that the donation goes to the Cancer Center) in Mrs. Skopelja's name, preferred.

Condolences online at: www.randallroberts.com



### Edna Mae Hecht

March 14, 1923 - Dec. 15, 2021

Edna Mae Hecht, 98, Noblesville, passed away on Wednesday, Dec. 15, 2021 at Harbour Manor Care Center in Noblesville.

She was born on March 14, 1923 to Henry and Carrie (Ackley) Stithem in Palco, Kan.

Mrs. Hecht was an office worker, and later a computer operator for the Rock Island Arsenal in Rock Island, Ill. She was a member of Bethel Lutheran Church and the Red Hat Society. Mrs. Hecht loved music, dancing and enjoyed playing the organ.

Survivors include her grandsons, Thomas D. (Lucile) Boenitz and Paul J. (Catherine) Boenitz; and her great-grandchildren, Claire, Justin, Joel and Nico.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Raymond Hecht; daughter, Velda R. Boenitz; as well as several brothers and sisters.

The family would like to sincerely thank the caregivers at Harbour Manor Care Center for treating her like part of the family during her time at the facility.

Services are scheduled on Tuesday, Dec. 28, 2021 at Bethel Lutheran Church, 20650 Cumberland Rd. in Noblesville. Visitation will be from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.; a non-communion service will be from 1 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. Burial will be at Cicero Cemetery in Cicero.

Memorial contributions may be made to Bethel Lutheran Church (Bethellutheranchurch.com)

Condolences online at: www.randallroberts.com



### Norman Jay Bailey

June 23, 1942 - Dec. 21, 2021

Norman Jay Bailey, 79, Fishers, passed away on Tuesday, Dec. 21, 2021 at his home.

He was born on June 23, 1942 to Abram and Dorothy (Rough) Bailey in Columbus, Ind.

Mr. Bailey was a Right of Way Specialist for 46 years at various civil engineering firms before retiring from American Structure Point. He is a member of Noblesville First United Methodist Church where he was very involved and served as an usher, as well as other United Methodist Churches for 50 years. Norman enjoyed IU Basketball and baseball, especially going to spring training for the Cubs and Dodgers. He liked to be outdoors and working in his garden. Mr. Bailey especially enjoyed traveling with his wife, Jane over the past 25 years.

Survivors include his wife of 58 years, Lovina "Jane" Bailey; son, Randy (Shawn) Bailey and Rod Bailey; special granddaughter, Karinne Ashley Bailey; grandsons, Randall Caleb Bailey and Ryan Bailey; niece, Robin (Matt) Arthur; and nephews, Scot (Teri) Bailey and Cris Bailey.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brother, Wayne Paul Bailey.

Services will be held at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 28, 2021 at Noblesville First United Methodist Church, 2051 Monument Street in Noblesville, with Pastor Jerry Rairdon officiating. Visitation will be from 11 a.m. to the time of service at the church. Burial will be at Oaklawn Memorial Gardens in Indianapolis.

Memorial contributions may be made to Noblesville First United Methodist, 2051 Monument Street, Noblesville, IN 46060.

Condolences online at: www.randallroberts.com



## Purdue Extension Master Gardener program to offer virtual basic training in spring

The spring 2022 Purdue Extension Master Gardener (EMG) basic training program will begin Feb. 1 as a series of live virtual webinars.

Visit bit.ly/2022PurdueEMGTraining and contact a hosting Purdue Extension educator to obtain an application. The application deadline is Jan. 11. The training wraps up May 3. An individual registration costs \$180 and includes a print version of the Purdue EMG manual. The fee for two people sharing a print version of the manual is \$280.

Purdue Extension specialists and educators from across Indiana teach the course. Topics include soils, fertility, pest control, invasive species, pesticide safety and alternatives, trees, vegetables, flowers, lawns and fruit.

"The Purdue Extension Master Gardener program's main purpose is to train volunteers to assist Purdue Extension with consumer horticulture education in Indiana communities," says John Orick, Purdue EMG state coordinator (www.hort.purdue.edu/mg).

Extension Master Gardener volunteers are required to give a minimum of 40 hours back to the community after completing initial training and passing an exam. Volunteers completed

117,000 hours in 2021, Orick says.

To strengthen connections to county Purdue EMG programs, each hosting Extension educator will hold a required one-hour weekly meeting with participants to dig deeper on how the topic of the week applies to local gardeners.

"Indiana is a long, north-south state," says Jeff Burbrink, a Purdue Extension educator in Elkhart County who is on the team that planned the spring program. "Our climate and soils vary a great deal from Lake Michigan to the Ohio River. We want to be sure that our Extension Master Gardeners can see how these concepts work in their backyard."

Most Master Gardeners stay involved in the program for years.

"Our local Master Gardeners created the Michiana Master Gardener Association in 1996," Burbrink says, "in part because they enjoy learning, and in part because they can work on big projects together, like our annual Garden Tour and Garden Expo. They are an amazingly talented group of creative people."

## ATTENTION

Looking for persons who were employed at Warner Commercial Auto Body in Noblesville in the time frame of 1954-69. Please contact Jim Lyons at (330) 670-7319 or by e-mail at jlyons@hcplaw.net.

Thanks for reading  
**The Times!**



## Chuck Goodrich ranked nationally in the Top 100 highest-rated CEOs of 2021

Gaylor Electric's President & CEO, Chuck Goodrich, was announced as a winner of Comparably's "Best CEO 2021" award! Ranked among world-renowned companies, this national honor highlights the Top 100 highest-rated CEOs in the country.

The mission of Comparably is to make workplaces transparent and rewarding for both employees and employers. Goodrich was selected based on anonymous employee feedback collected by Comparably over the last 12 months. This data has allowed them to narrow down the top CEOs from large companies around the country. The average approval ratings for these top-rated CEOs are 89%, compared to a 68% across all of Comparably's data site wide.

"It is an honor to be recognized for a job I love doing every day at Gaylor Electric," said Chuck Goodrich, President and CEO. "This award says more about our employees, families, and extended network than me personally. I am humbled and blessed to have received this award."

Comparably is a leading workplace culture and corporate brand reputation platform, with over 15 million anonymous employee ratings on 70,000 companies. With the most comprehensive data on large and SMB organiza-



Chuck Goodrich

tions in nearly 20 different workplace categories, it is one of the most used platforms for employer branding and a trusted site for workplace culture and compensation data.

Gaylor Electric is a national contractor of excellence. Founded in 1984 on the merit shop philosophy, Gaylor Electric offers complete design-build electrical construction, utility services, and 24/7 on-demand electrical support. Serving some of the world's most renowned companies, we deliver on our Cornerstone of Reliable Resources,

Outcomes, Insights and Genuine Care for People; dedicated to Innovation and Quality, being measurement-centric accountable. Our teams of inspired employees drive an unparalleled commitment to developing strong business relationships, resulting in continued client loyalty. Visit us at www.gaylor.com.

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**NOBLESVILLE BABE RUTH BASEBALL**

*Providing an affordable and positive baseball experience for all young men ages 13-18*

**REGISTRATION OPENS DECEMBER 1ST**

Though we are "Noblesville Babe Ruth Baseball," we welcome and encourage players from other communities to participate with us!

**Registration:** December 1, 2021 thru March 2022

**Evaluations:** March 12, 2022, NHS Aux Gym (New players ages 13-15 only)

**Opening Day:** April 18, 2022 (13-15)  
April 30, 2022 (16-18)

**www.noblesvillebaberuthbaseball.com**



# DNR properties offer first day hikes at Indiana’s state parks

Usher in 2022 with other outdoor lovers at one of the many First Day Hikes offered Jan. 1 at Indiana’s state parks, forests, and lakes. First Day Hikes are a healthy way to start 2022 and a chance to get outside, exercise, enjoy nature and connect with friends. Nearly all state parks and lakes, as well as some state forests, will offer hikes. Find a hike near you at [in.IN.gov/INstateparkevents](http://in.IN.gov/INstateparkevents).

The guided hikes are organized by Indiana State Parks in cooperation with America’s State Parks. First Day Hikes will take place in all 50 states. First Day Hikes originated more than 20 years ago at the Blue Hills Reservation, a state park in Milton, Massachusetts. The program was launched to foster healthy lifestyles and promote year-round recreation at state parks. For more information, visit America’s State Parks’ website ([stateparks.org](http://stateparks.org)) or facebook.com/Americas-State-Parks-205324976548604.

First Day events are listed below. More may be added so check the website if your favorite place isn’t listed below:

**Brookville Lake.** Meet at 4 p.m. at the Campground Shelter at Miami State Recreation Area, which is across from the Wildlife Wander Trail. Hike is 0.7 miles, rated easy, and should last about 45 minutes. There will be a campfire after the hike.

**Brown County State Park.** This hike will be open from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and will be self-guided with interpretive stops along the way, including a hot chocolate stop. Participants should start at the Nature Center. The hike is 2 miles and

should take about 90 minutes.

**Cataract Falls.** A brochure for this self-guided hike is available at the gatehouse.

**Chain O’Lakes State Park.** Meet at 2 p.m. at the Sand Lake Beach parking lot for this 1.5-mile hike over easy terrain, which should last about 90 minutes. The hike will be followed by cocoa and cookies as supplies last.

**Charlestown State Park.** Meet at the Trail 3 and 4 parking lot at 10 a.m. for a 2.5-mile, two-hour hike to Rose Island. The hike is considered moderately rugged.

**Clifty Falls State Park.** Meet at the Clifty Shelter at 2 p.m. for a two-hour moderately rugged hike along Trail 8. This trail meanders along the west side of Clifty Creek and offers scenic views of the canyon below. Water and cookies will be provided before the hike. The restroom at Clifty Shelter will be closed for the winter, so plan ahead.

**Falls of the Ohio State Park.** Meet at the Interpretive Center at 2 p.m. to hike the fossil beds and learn about Devonian sea life. Bring binoculars to look for winter birds. The Interpretive Center will be closed on Jan. 1 except for restrooms.

**Ferdinand State Forest.** Meet at the Sycamore Shelter at 9 a.m. to hike about 1.7 miles along a section of the Twin Lake trail with a brief stop to warm by a fire and have hot chocolate.

**Fort Harrison State Park.** Meet at the Delaware Lake Shelter at 1 p.m. for a 2-mile, one-hour hike. Friends of Fort Harrison will be providing hot cocoa while supplies last.

**Hardy Lake.** Meet at

the Main Trailhead across from the beach access road at 9 a.m. for a 2.75-mile, one-hour hike.

**Harmonie State Park.** Meet at the pool parking lot at 10 a.m. CT for a moderate 2-mile, 90-minute hike. Cookies and cocoa will be provided by the Friends of Harmonie after the hike.

**Indiana Dunes State Park.** Meet at the Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center at 10 a.m. for a 1 ½-mile, 90-minute hike on the 3-Dunes Challenge. Drinks, snacks, a campfire, and a 3-Dunes Challenge sticker will be provided by the Friends of the Indiana Dunes.

**Interlake State Recreation Area.** Stop by the main office to pick up a map for a scavenger hunt from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. CT and complete the hike for a prize while supplies last.

**Jackson-Washington State Forest.** Meet at the parking lot below the CCC playground at noon at start of Trail 1, just before the Pinnacle Shelter, for a 2-mile, one-hour hike to Pinnacle Peak.

**Lieber State Recreation Area.** Join the naturalist for Lieber’s Sunset First Day Hike at 4:30 p.m. at Hilltop Shelter. Hike is a moderate 1.5-miles. Snacks and hot chocolate, and a campfire will be provided.

**Lincoln State Park.** Meet at the Nature Center at noon CT for a 1 ½-mile, one-hour hike to the Sarah Lincoln Nature Preserve. Snacks and hot chocolate provided at the Nature Center. A second 2-mile hike will be offered around Lake Lincoln.

**McCormick’s Creek State Park.** Meet at Canyon Inn at 1 p.m. for registration for Winter Magic Photo Contest Hikes, which will begin at

2 p.m. Pick one of three different guided hikes. After the hikes, enter your photos and enjoy refreshments courtesy of Canyon Inn.

**Mississinewa Lake.** Meet at the Blue Heron Trail within Miami State Recreation Area at 4:30 p.m. for this hour-long hike. S’mores will be served. Advance registration is requested by calling 260-468-2127.

**Monroe Lake.** The ninth annual First Day Trail Run/Walk will take place at Fairfax State Recreation Area. Registration is from 2:15 to 3:15 p.m. at Bay View Shelter and the untimed event starts at 3:30 p.m. Participants can choose from a 1.3-, 2.9-, or 3.7-mile course. Cost is \$15 and includes a grab-n-go box meal, event patch, gift certificate, and an entry for prize drawing. Advance registration is required by Dec. 30.

**Morgan-Monroe State Forest.** Meet at the forest office parking lot at 9 a.m. for this walk on an accessible trail.

**Mounds State Park.** Meet at the Nature Center Front Porch before 5:30 p.m. for warm beverages. At 5:30 p.m. will be a .25-mile easy hike lasting about 45 minutes along an illuminated trail.

**O’Bannon Woods State Park.** Meet at the nature center at 10 a.m. for a Walk with an Ox and the park’s donkeys, Garth and Gracie. The walk will be on a roadway for about 1 mile, with photo opportunities with the animals. Refreshments will be served at the Nature Center.

**Ouabache State Park.** The hike will start at 1 p.m. at the bison enclosure parking lot on Trail 1, an easy trail with a gravel surface, and will go around the American

bison enclosure. The hike will include a stop at the feeding station where guests will be able to observe the bison up close.

**Owen-Putnam State Forest.** Meet at the Owen Putnam State Forest office at 9 a.m. for a guided hike on Poplar Top Trail.

**Patoka Lake.** Meet at the Nature Center at noon and grab a challenge sheet about Patoka history that participants can fill in during the hike. The winner will receive a 2022 Annual Entrance Pass. Cookies and hot chocolate will be served.

**Pokagon State Park.** Meet at the CCC Shelter for a 3-mile hike from 2 to 3:30 p.m. There will be a bonfire, cocoa, and treats after the hike. Park in the South Beach parking lot or near the basketball courts.

**Potato Creek State Park.** Meet at the Quaking Aspen parking lot at 2 p.m. for a 1-mile hike around Worster Lake. Bring binoculars. At 3:30 p.m., warm up at the Nature Center with a bowl of chili provided by the Friends of Potato Creek.

**Prophetstown State Park.** Meet at the Prairie View Picnic Area at 1 p.m. Jan. 1 or 2 for a 2-mile easy hike. Enjoy hot chocolate and apple cider by the campfire.

**Raccoon State Recreation Area.** Meet at the Bluebird Shelter at noon for this one-hour moderately rugged hike.

**Salamonie Lake.** Meet at the Interpretive Center at 10:30 a.m. for this one-hour hike through the woods along the Wildlife Management Trail. Advance registration is requested by calling 260-468-2127.

**Shades State Park.** Meet at the Hickory Shelter at 10:30 a.m. for this 1-mile moderate to rugged

hike on Trail 1. Expert birder and park volunteer Alan Bruner will lead this hike, which includes Prospect Point, Silver Cascade Falls, and Devil’s Punchbowl.

**Spring Mill State Park.** Two hikes will be offered. Meet at the Spring Mill Inn at 9 a.m. for a 90-minute moderate to difficult Nature Preserves Hike along Trail 3. For an easier hike, meet at the Gus Grissom Memorial parking lot at 10 a.m. for a 30-minute hike along Trail 6, which is paved and .25 miles long. Hot chocolate and cookies will be served in the Lakeview Room at the Inn after the hikes.

**Summit Lake State Park.** Meet Smokey Bear at the Park Office from noon to 2 p.m. for photos and a scavenger hunt on Trail 4.

**Tippecanoe River State Park.** Meet at the Fire Tower parking lot at noon for this .5-mile hike to the tower.

**Turkey Run State Park.** Meet at 2 p.m. at the Turkey Run Inn for a guided hike through Turkey Hollow on Trail 6 and the Trail 7 loop.

**Versailles State Park.** Meet at the Oak Grove parking lot at 1 p.m. for a 2.5-mile moderately difficult hike on Trail 1. Refreshments will be provided.

**Whitewater Memorial State Park.** Meet at the Poplar Grove Shelter at 2 p.m. for a 2.5-mile hike of the Memorial Loop Trail, which should last about 90 minutes.

**Yellowwood State Forest.** Meet at the forest office parking lot at 9 a.m. for a first day hike along the 1-mile Resource Management Trail.

To view more DNR news releases see [dnr.IN.gov](http://dnr.IN.gov).

## Red Cross: Donate blood (or platelets) now to help patients avoid delays in care

As holiday celebrations continue, concern is rising for the nation’s blood supply, which has now dipped to concerning levels and could force hospitals to hold off on essential blood and platelet transfusions for patients.

Historically low blood supply levels not seen in more than a decade persist for the American Red Cross, which supplies about 40% of the nation’s blood. The ongoing decline comes at a time of year when donations typically fall. Holiday get-togethers, school breaks and winter weather often lead to lower donor turnout, potentially further compounding the situation.

Potential donors are urged to schedule an appointment now by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). If there is not an immediate opportunity available to donate, donors are asked to make an appointment in the days and weeks ahead to ensure the Red Cross can replenish and then maintain a sufficient blood supply.

In thanks, all who come to give through Jan. 2 will receive an exclusive Red Cross long-sleeved T-shirt, while supplies last.

Those who come to give blood, platelets or plasma in January will automatically be entered for a chance to win a getaway to Super Bowl LVI in Los Angeles. As an extra thank-you from the Red Cross, those who come to donate in January will also be automatically entered to win a home theater package and a \$500 e-gift card. Terms apply; visit [RedCrossBlood.org/SuperBowl](http://RedCrossBlood.org/SuperBowl) for more information.

Blood drive safety  
Each Red Cross blood



drive and donation center follows the highest standards of safety and infection control, and additional precautions – including face masks for donors and staff, regardless of vaccination status – have been implemented to help protect the health of all those in attendance. Donors are asked to schedule an appointment prior to arriving at the drive.

Save time during donation

Donors can also save up to 15 minutes at the blood drive by completing a RapidPass®. With RapidPass®, donors complete the pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of donation, from a mobile device or computer. To complete a RapidPass®, follow the instructions at [RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass](http://RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass) or use the Red Cross Blood Donor App.

To donate blood, individuals need to bring a blood donor card or driver’s license or two other forms of identification that are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also must meet certain height and weight requirements.

Health insights for donors

At a time when health information has never been more important, the Red Cross is screening all

blood, platelet and plasma donations from self-identified African American donors for the sickle cell trait. This additional screening will provide Black donors with an additional health insight and help the Red Cross identify compatible blood types more quickly to help patients with sickle cell disease who require trait-negative blood. Blood transfusion is an essential treatment for those with sickle cell disease, and blood donations from individuals of the same race, ethnicity and blood type have a unique ability to help patients fighting sickle cell disease.

Donors can expect to receive sickle cell trait screening results, if applicable, within one to two weeks through the Red Cross Blood Donor App and the online donor portal at [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org).

About the American Red Cross

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides comfort to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation’s blood; teaches skills that save lives; distributes international humanitarian aid; and supports veterans, military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to deliver its mission. For more information, please visit [redcross.org](http://redcross.org) or [cruzrojaamericana.org](http://cruzrojaamericana.org), or visit us on Twitter at @RedCross.

## Todd Rokita: Avoid scams by doing careful research before donating to charities

Attorney General Todd Rokita is advising Hoosiers to do careful research before donating to charities in order to avoid being scammed or having their contributions used in ways they might disapprove.

As the calendar changes from 2021 to 2022, many charities are soliciting donations in efforts to finish the year on strong financial footing and build a solid foundation for the months ahead. Scam artists are aware of this, and they often pose as charities in order to trick prospective donors into misdirecting their gifts.

“There is something distinctly repulsive about fraudsters who scheme to take advantage of Hoosiers’ good-hearted generosity,” Attorney General Rokita said. “Everyone should endeavor to help less fortunate neighbors and give to worthy causes. As we do that, though, we should take steps to ensure we’re not padding swindlers’ pockets rather than truly helping the needy.”

The Indiana Attorney General works to track down, investigate and bring to justice the criminals who perpetrate illegal scams. He works just as hard to help Hoosiers avoid becoming victims in the first place.

To that end, Attorney General Rokita offers the following tips:

- Research any charity to which you are considering donating.
- The FTC suggests searching online using the charity name plus words like “complaint,” “review,” or “scam.” Don’t be fooled by names that sound like well-known charities.



Todd Rokita

- Be sure to ask how much of your donation will go directly to the program you want to help — and do your own research to confirm.

- Beware of charities that pop up after recent disasters.

- Make sure you are dealing with the real charitable organization. Be leery of year-end appeals from unknown or unfamiliar organizations you receive by phone, mail, email, and/or social media.

- If reached by phone, do not agree to donate money without further research into the organization.

- Don’t assume solicitations on social media or crowdfunding sites are legitimate — or that hyperlinks are accurate — even in posts shared or liked by your friends. Contact your friends offline and request information about links they share.

- It is generally safer to donate as part of a longstanding familiar relationship with a charitable cause than to respond to out-of-the-blue solicitations.

- When donating online, use a browser to navigate

to a reputable charity’s verified website — and donate there rather than through a third party or “middleman” collectors, who often skim off a sizeable portion of donations even if they are legitimate.

- Legitimate, secure donation websites should begin with “https” (or feature a lock icon) rather than just “http.”

- Take your time and don’t overshare. Do not share personal information or financial information in response to unsolicited emails, texts or phone calls.

- Never feel rushed to donate.

- Be skeptical of solicitors who try to play on your emotions through heart-rending stories or images. Remember that legitimate charities do not use pressure tactics.

- Always donate by credit card rather than cash or other methods, to ensure you can access the protections available through your credit card company.

- Make sure you haven’t signed up for a recurring donation if you didn’t want one.

- Look up a charity’s report and ratings on these websites:

- CharityNavigator.org
- CharityWatch.org
- Give.org
- Guidestar.org
- Go online to [indiana-consumer.com](http://indiana-consumer.com) to report charity scams to the Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Indiana Attorney General. If you need additional information regarding the Office’s Consumer Protection Division, please call 1-800-382-5516.



TIM

From Page A1

Heritage Woods of Noblesville! Get on the run!  
If it's flooring you need to set things right  
Give Kinsey's a call, they're sure to delight!  
Looking for a house or even a dome?  
Speak to Deak and Peggy will find you a home!  
Carbon Fiber is where you're keeping your eye  
Then you know the best, they're at IDI!  
We love Christmas Carols, afar and so near  
We hear them so well thanks to Miracle Ear!  
A scratch or a dent on our car caused by some jerks  
Take it right now to Renner Nixon Body Works.  
A growl or a grumble, we wonder what's the matter.  
It's easily fixed with a Jim Dandy Platter!  
Bussell and Randall and Roberts and Indiana Funeral Care  
Helped us get by with a song and some prayer.  
The seniors were resting, secure at Sanders Glen  
On carpet from Kinsey's, as soft as a wren.  
Looking to watch a movie for fun?  
Head north on 19 and get to Tipton!  
The day had been long, I was tired and wore out.  
But a noise from outside resembled a shout.  
I sprang (well, OK, I slowly got up) from my chair to see what was the clamour  
And out on my lawn stood giant John Hammer!  
Bigger than any man, the patriot stood  
If we had more like him the USA would be good.  
His neck is all red, his heart red white and blue  
His hands are like hams and strong they are too.  
I don't care about Brandon or Biden or Trump  
You can keep McConnell, Pelosi and Stump.  
They all act the same, they're in it for themselves.  
They're beyond being saved by Santa and Elves.  
In a flash he was gone as I looked all around.  
And suddenly he was beside me with nairy a sound.  
I fear for our country, I dread it the worst.  
Unless we can change, you heard it here first.  
John Kennedy said to give more than you take  
Treasure the flag or get out for Pete's sake.  
It's Christmas which means remember the manger.  
But we seem to forget and that's the real danger.  
The issue is not black, white and / or brown.  
It's not where you live or what part of town.  
It's not what you believe whatever your creed.  
The issue is our country, that's really in need.  
He turned and he stared, my heart skipped a beat.  
And slowly he turned, this next part is neat.  
As big as he was then suddenly he was gone.  
I looked in the yard he was out on the lawn.  
I heard him yell out, calling adieu . . .  
I'll tell you what we all need to do,  
Remember that flag, the red, white and blue.  
Stand for what's right and don't put up with no wrong.  
Then proud we'll all be, maybe even in song.  
This country is ours, on that there's no fuss.  
So long as we care, it's all up to us.

Timmons is the chief executive officer of Sagamore News Media, the company that owns The Noblesville Times. He is a proud Noblesville High School graduate and can be contacted at [timmons@thetimes24-7.com](mailto:timmons@thetimes24-7.com).



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NEW

From Page A1

for me, as the years I have spent with Noblesville Schools have been the proudest of my career,” Niedermeyer said in a press release. “I have such tremendous respect for this community and for our educators, support staff and leaders. It’s been my true honor to walk alongside you all, celebrating our achievements and supporting one another through challenges. I will continue to be committed to students, educators, public education, Noblesville Schools, and this community, and am rooting for your success.”

She will be a tough act to follow, at least as far as Noblesville Mayor Chris Jensen is concerned.

“Noblesville Schools is better because of Beth Niedermeyer’s leadership,” Jensen said. “She has led and served with a compassionate and focused heart and an unwavering commitment to ensuring our students’ academic well-being and personal safety. The collaboration between Noblesville Schools and the City of Noblesville has never been stronger than it is today. I will miss her in her current role but am excited for her next chapter.”

During Niedermeyer’s tenure she led several significant achievements including:

- Academic data above state and national averages, including “A” ratings from the Indiana Department of Education, and state and national recognition for STEM programming, work-force development initiatives, Advanced Placement, college and career readiness, special education, educational technology, and music education.
- Steady community leadership following the district’s school shooting in May 2018, including the hiring of a full-time safety director, the placement of school resource officers in all 10 schools, and over 50 safety enhancements across the district.
- Strong fiscal management, including the passage of two successful referendum campaigns, balanced budget maintenance, high credit ratings, low interest rates, and a reduction of the total property tax rate for three years in a row.
- Growth management, including expansions and



File photo

Niedermeyer came to the job in 2014 and said her time in this job have been the proudest of her career.

renovations at all 10 schools and several athletic facilities, the opening of a new community center and transportation center, and the launch of a district solar power initiative expected to generate hundreds of thousands of dollars in savings.

- An expanded focus on creating a school environment where all students can best learn, including over 30 new mental health enhancements, additional resources for low income and English language learner students, diversity training for staff, and the founding (with other community leaders) of the Noblesville Diversity Coalition.

- The creation/expansion of community outreach and engagement initiatives, including the Miller Ambassadors leadership program, the Noblesville High School internship program, work-force development partnerships, the district’s 150th anniversary celebration, Superintendent Table Talk, and the Noblesville Schools Back to School BASH.

- Management of the COVID pandemic, with Noblesville Schools able to keep schools open and students learning every day of the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school year.

- High-quality staffing during intense teacher, employee, and substitute labor shortages, including creative recruiting and retention initiatives, the largest pay increase to Noblesville teachers in approximately 40 years, and the introduction of interest-based bargaining.

- An adjusted school day schedule to provide enhanced health, well-being and learning for students.

- Launch of district preschool and before/after school care programming. “I want to thank Dr. Niedermeyer not only for her outstanding leadership

and service to Noblesville Schools these past eight years, but also for her commitment to public education for the last 38 years,” Joe Forgey, president of the Noblesville Schools Board of Trustees, said. “Her passion for learning, thoughtful guidance, and ability to build strong relationships has had an untold positive impact on tens of thousands of students, employees, families and community members over the years. Noblesville Schools is one of the best districts in the state and we’re confident that we’ll be able to find another strong leader to continue our tradition of excellence,” Forgey said.

In addition to her leadership responsibilities with the district, Niedermeyer also serves on the board of directors for the Boys and Girls Club of Noblesville, Noblesville Chamber of Commerce, Noblesville Youth Assistance, Noblesville Diversity Coalition and Noblesville Midday Rotary.

Niedermeyer has received numerous honors and awards over the course of her career including: Central Indiana Superintendent of the Year, Indiana Principal of the Year, Fort Wayne Community Schools Teacher of the Year, Aerospace Science Teacher of the Year, Excellence in Education awards, and a Distinguished Education Alumna Award from Indiana Purdue University Fort Wayne.

The school board will be working with a professional superintendent search firm to assist in finding Niedermeyer’s replacement and hope to name the new superintendent this spring. Members of the school community will be asked to share input to help determine the qualities prioritized in selecting the new superintendent.

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The Times photo by Betsy Reason  
**Rylan Dinkins, 5, poses for a photo with Santa and Mom, Shelby Sailor; and Grandma, Trisha Sailor.**



The Times photo by Betsy Reason  
**Families stand in line outside of the Santa House on the Hamilton County Courthouse Square in downtown Noblesville.**



The Times photo by Betsy Reason  
**Ramsey Jones, 18 months, Noblesville, the grandson of Bryan Ayer and Toni Ramsey Ayer, is a little squirmy sitting on Santa's knee and wants back in the arms of Grandma Toni Ayer.**



The Times photo by Betsy Reason  
**Miles Russell, 14 months, the son of Tony and Megan Russell, makes his first visit to Santa, and he isn't very happy, as was told by his face**



The Times photo by Betsy Reason  
**One of the adult visitors was Kimberly Davis of Noblesville and who said she stopped in, "Because I love Santa Claus; he's the best." Her cats are her kids, and she talked about her cats with Santa.**



The Times photo by Betsy Reason  
**Abigail Phillips, 6, a first-grader at North Elementary in Noblesville, asks Santa for a Pixie fairy and a unicorn with wings. Then she goes on to ask Santa a few questions about his reindeer and elves.**

So what do kids want for Christmas this year? "A lot of retro toys," Santa said. "A lot of girls are asking for Barbie," he said. L.O.L. dolls are popular. "Legos is probably the biggest item on most of their lists this year for both boys and girls," Santa said. The boys, ages 5-7, are asking for Tonka trucks and Hot Wheels, and the teenagers want cell phones and games. "Get to be 40 years old, they want 'happiness and peace.'"



Santa Claus

Santa said visitors who came to see him seem to be "much happier this year," compared to last year, during the continuing pandemic. Some visitors wear masks, although masks aren't required. Santa isn't required to wear a mask. "I have all of my shots," said the jolly ol' elf.

What's the most asked question from kids? "What kind of cookies do I like," Santa said. "Who's my favorite reindeer?" "Where's Mrs. Claus?" "Where are the reindeer right now?" Santa usually asks the kids' favorite cookies, which are often his favorite. "Chocolate chip seems to be the top one."

Some kids say that they leave a glass of milk for Santa and carrots for Santa's reindeer.

And some ask how many elves work in Santa's workshop.

He encourages children to love their moms and dads.

"We have introduced Santa this year for the first time," said Amelia Roberts of Noblesville, who with her husband, Travis, brought their 2-1/2-year-old daughter, Anna, to see Santa. "She did well," the mom said.

While Anna said she wanted "chocolate" and "lollipops," and enjoyed her free candy cane, her list actually included "baby dolls" and "stuffed animals," her mom said.

Abigail Phillips, 6, a first-grader at North Elementary, asked Santa for a Pixie fairy and a unicorn with wings. Then she asked Santa a few questions. "How many reindeer do you have?" she asked.

Santa replied, "I have eight plus Rudolph."

"How many elves do you have?" "Oh boy, last count there were 2,313, but we just had a new one born,"

Santa said. Miles Russell, 14 months, the son of Tony and Megan Russell, made his first visit to Santa, and was a little squirmy, and he wasn't very happy, as was told by his face.

One of the adult visitors was Kimberly Davis, 40, Noblesville, who said she stopped in, "Because I love Santa Claus; he's the best." Her cats are her kids, and she talked about her cats with Santa.

What are more questions that Santa answered?

What does Santa eat? "Whatever Mrs. Claus fixes."

Does Santa watch his weight? "Santa never watches his weight."

Santa's favorite movie? "Miracle on 34th Street."

What else?

The Historical Society does a great job of sponsoring the Santa House, which was built many years ago by the late Don Roberts, a former aviation teacher at Noblesville High

School. Hamilton County buildings and grounds superintendent Steve Wood and his staff in 2018 did repairs on the house and provided an ADA-compliant ramp, made by Noblesville's Carl Abbott, for the community. Remember, last time to see Santa will be in the afternoon on Christmas Eve.

-Contact Betsy Reason at [betsy@thetimes24-7.com](mailto:betsy@thetimes24-7.com).

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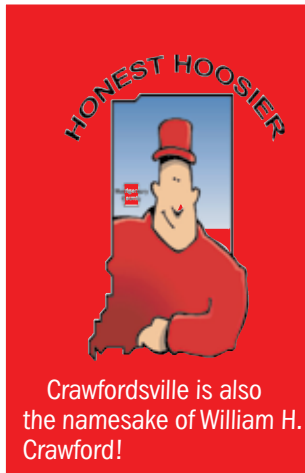
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# Indiana Facts & Fun



13  
Crawford

## Did You Know?

- Crawford County has a total population of 10,713 individuals.
- The county was founded by William H. Crawford in 1818.
- English, the county seat, was destroyed by six floods from 1959 to 1990, so the town was relocated.
- The total amount of land in the county is 308.72 square miles with 3.08 square miles being water.
- English has an estimated population of 632 people.

## Got Words?

The Camp Fork, a stream in Crawford County, has destroyed much of the land for several years. Along with this, the county seat had to be relocated because of six destructive floods. What do you think are benefits and drawbacks of having small and large bodies of water in small towns?

## Number Stumpers

1. What percentage of the county is made up of water?  
≥
2. How many years of floods did English experience before relocating?  
≤
3. What percentage of individuals in the county reside in English?  
≥
4. How old is Crawford County?  
≤

Answers: 1. About 1% 2. 31 Years 3. About 5.9% 4. 200 Years

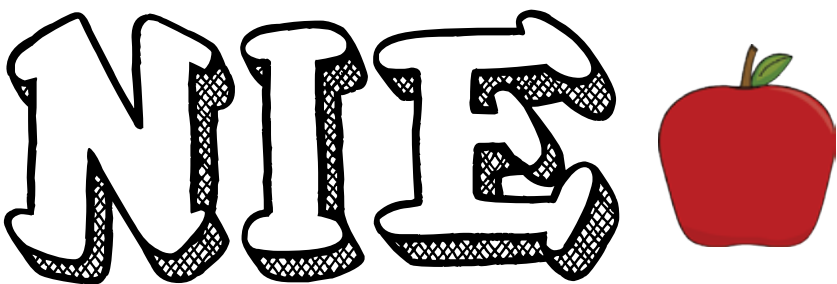
## Word Scrambler

Unscramble the words below!

1. HSNIEGL
2. GNLFD00I
3. CRFRWDOA OUCYTN
4. ATRWE
5. MACP KORF

Answers: 1. English 2. Flooding 3. Crawford County 4. Water 5. Camp Fork

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# THURSDAY

## Indiana the Strong

Thursday, Dec. 23, 2021

A7

### Purdue Extension to address housing concerns in Parke County



In Parke County, Indiana, limited available housing options are constraining people's ability to live and work in the coun-

ty. The Purdue Extension Community Development Program is collaborating to provide county-level, housing-related information that will guide county and local leaders as they work to improve housing needed for current and future community success. "Housing represents a key aspect of economic and community development in Parke County. Our in-depth analysis will guide

county and local leaders as they seek to improve the mix of housing needed to meet current and future housing demands," said Michael Wilcox, assistant director and program leader for Purdue Extension's Community Development Program. In partnership with Parke County leaders, businesses and residents, the Purdue team will provide a comprehensive assessment

of housing in Parke County through data analysis, co-host focus-group meetings with local partners and produce a survey to determine the housing demand and needs of employees working in the county. "We have worked with Purdue Extension on multiple projects, including the development of our Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) program. Lack of quality, obtain-

able housing was a need identified by our employers during the BR&E interviews. This assessment is necessary to address that need," said Cyndi Todd, executive director of Partnership Parke County, Economic Development Office. The Purdue team will synthesize the information collected and prepare a summary of major findings and possible strategies for

leaders to consider as they address current housing issues. "At Purdue Extension, we are our community's educational partner for life, and an integral part of that is collecting the data that helps our stakeholders make sound data-based decisions," said Kurt Lanzone, agriculture and natural resources educator, Purdue Extension - Parke County.

### Tips for avoiding Christmastime scams



Attorney General Todd Rokita is warning Hoosiers to watch for scams while finishing their holiday shopping this year. "Christmas should be about celebrating faith and family and friends," Attorney General Rokita said. "Amid each year's festivities, though, it seems we must always contend with shameless con artists determined to defraud generous Hoosiers and separate them from their hard-earned money." Scammers are known to look for rushed, unsuspecting victims. "This time of year," Attorney General Rokita said, "individuals most absorbed in the season's traditions could become easy prey to fraudsters. That includes shoppers

hurrying to finish buying all the gifts on their lists. I encourage everyone to exercise vigilance to protect themselves." Attorney General Rokita offered the following tips for avoiding falling victim to scams: - When shopping online, stick to secure websites that have "https" in the address (or a lock icon) rather than just an unsecured "http" site. - Pay by credit card when online shopping. Always review your monthly statements for charges you don't recognize. You can reverse charges or dispute a charge with your credit card company if necessary. It is more difficult to dispute charges on your debit card or obtain cash back. - If you are purchasing gift cards, make sure you know the expiration date, as well as the terms that apply to the card. Keep receipts associated with gift cards in case they do not get properly activated to the amount you paid. - Also on the subject of gift cards: Remember that any solicitor who contacts you by phone or email and asks you to pay with a gift card is no doubt a scammer. Do not cooperate

with anyone making such a pitch. - When shopping at physical store locations, conceal your purchases in the trunk of your vehicle or under the seat rather than leaving them in plain sight through windows. Also keep a close watch on purses and wallets when walking through shopping areas. - Stave off "porch pirates" by making sure home exteriors stay well-lit. Follow a plan for the arrival of home deliveries, such as arranging for trusted neighbors to receive deliveries when you're gone. Homeowners also may consider such options as purchasing lockable drop-off boxes or security systems with cameras. - If a deal seems too good to be true, then it probably is. Take your time to investigate and be skeptical of such deals. Ask questions. Be sure to read the fine print to make sure you are purchasing exactly what you want on the terms you expect. - Closely read emails advertising holiday deals to make sure they come from the companies they claim to represent rather than imposters and fraudsters. Consider navigating to a

company's official website through a trusted search engine rather than clicking on a link in an email. - To protect your personal information, refrain from making online purchases while using public Wi-Fi. - Never make hurried decisions. Scam artists want to pressure you into making a quick commitment to buy from them. Slow down and check out details for yourself. - Research charities before donating — and follow the same online payment and security rules you would follow with online shopping. You can look up charities' reports and ratings on these websites: Give.org; GuideStar.org; CharityWatch.org; and CharityNavigator.org. As always, if you believe you have been subjected to a scam, file a complaint with the Indiana Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division. Our office relies on Hoosiers filing complaints to know which companies or individuals to investigate. A consumer complaint can be filed at indianaconsumer.com — or you can contact the Office of the Attorney General at 1-800-382-5516.



Purdue University photo  
**Karen Plaut, the Glenn W. Sample Dean of Purdue College of Agriculture, left, presents Extension educator Karen Richey with the 2021 Frederick L. Hovde Award of Excellence in Educational Service.**

### Hovde Award presented to Purdue Extension educator

The Indiana Farm Bureau's (INFB) 2021 Frederick L. Hovde Award of Excellence in Educational Service to the people of Indiana by a Purdue staff member has been awarded to Extension educator Karen Richey. Karen Plaut, the Glenn W. Sample Dean of the Purdue College of Agriculture, paid tribute to Richey's numerous contributions: "For 31 years, Karen has made an impact at local, state and national levels while also mentoring numerous educators throughout Indiana. She is renowned for her expertise on food, nutrition and food safety, has provided statewide leadership on numerous boards and task forces, and was instrumental in creating the Purdue Extension food safety team. She is deeply deserving of this honor." The award was presented at the annual INFB convention, held in French Lick on Dec. 9. "Rural communities are the cornerstone of our membership. Since 1972, it's been an honor to support Purdue University educators, like Karen Richey, who showcase outstanding service to our members across rural Indiana," said Randy Kron,

INFB president. Nominated by three fellow health and human sciences educators, Richey's nomination also was supported by colleagues such as Amanda Deering, clinical associate professor in Purdue's food sciences department. "Karen has a natural ability to connect with people and explain difficult concepts in a way that people can easily understand," Deering said. "Not everyone can do that well, and I think it's wonderful that she uses these abilities to serve our Indiana stakeholders through Purdue Extension. Her devotion to providing food safety education is inspiring, and she should be viewed as an example of what all Extension educators strive to be." In accepting the award, Richey praised the colleagues with whom she has worked during her three-decade Purdue Extension career. "I am truly honored to receive the Hovde Award. I am the one accepting this honor, but the award belongs to at least equally to the great individuals and teams that I have had the good fortune to work with at various stages of my career."

### Methodist Sports Medicine changes name to Forté Sports Medicine and Orthopedics

The physicians and team members of Methodist Sports Medicine announced today they have changed the name of the physician group to Forté Sports Medicine and Orthopedics. The practice underwent a rebranding process to find a name that would highlight its brand promise and position the practice for future growth. Forté, which is a French and Italian word for strength, refers to a person's strong suit or something that shows one's special ability. The practice, which is trusted by top athletes and sports teams such as the Indianapolis Colts, is recognized as one of the region's most respected orthopedic groups. "This rebranding is about more than just a new logo or colors," stated Dr. Mark Ritter, Forté Sports Medicine and Orthopedics president and a fellowship-trained orthopedic knee and shoulder surgeon. "The name Forté was chosen because it not only allows us to highlight our forté, which is providing great clinical

outcomes and an elevated patient experience, but also allows us to highlight how we help our patients get back to what they do best and live their lives fully." Founded in 1983 as one of the country's original sports medicine practices, Forté has grown to include 29 physicians and 237 team members who provide comprehensive, specialized sports medicine and orthopedic care to patients of all ages. The rebranding comes in advance of the opening of a new state-of-the-art orthopedic specialty hospital in March 2022. Located near 111th and US-31 in Carmel, the hospital is a result of a collaboration with Franciscan Health and greatly expands orthopedic services to patients throughout Indiana and much of the Midwest. "I'm very proud of the group of physicians and staff we've assembled who comprise one of the most skilled and integrated practice groups in the area," said Dr. Ritter. "While our name is changing, our

tradition of focusing on our patients does not. We will continue to strive each day to be the best place to give care and the best place to receive care." About Forté Sports Medicine and Orthopedics Forté Sports Medicine and Orthopedics, previously known as Methodist Sports Medicine, is an independent, physician-owned orthopedic practice recognized as one of the region's most respected orthopedic groups. Clinical evaluations performed by highly skilled fellowship-trained orthopedic surgeons, combined with advanced surgical techniques and comprehensive non-surgical treatment options, provide patients with exceptional treatment outcomes and a return to active living. Forté Sports Medicine and Orthopedics provides patients comprehensive orthopedic care in several sub-specialties, including hand, wrist, elbow and shoulder; foot and ankle; hip and knee; joint replacement and revision; spine



care and sports medicine. Physicians with Forté Sports Medicine and Orthopedics have been trusted by the Indianapolis Colts as their official team physicians since 1983 and serve as the orthopedic provider for Purdue University, Butler University, Indiana State University and numerous high schools and public safety departments throughout central Indiana. Forté Sports Medicine and Orthopedics also innovates daily through a separate 501(c)(3) that is dedicated to improving the lives of patients everywhere through advanced clinical research and education.

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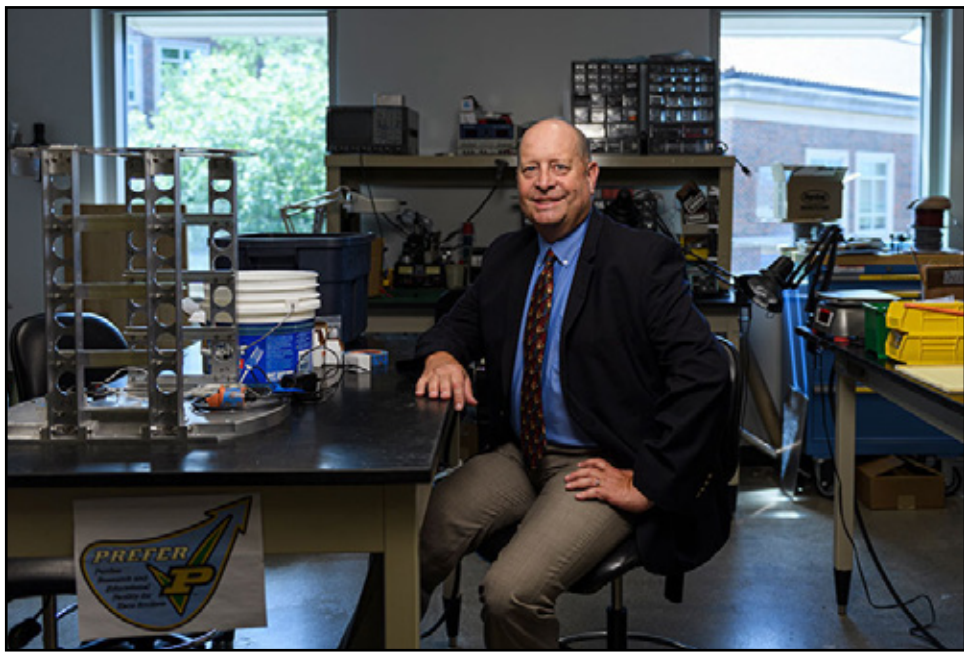
# THURSDAY

## Indiana the Strong

Thursday, Dec. 23, 2021

A8

## Reaching space to become a reality for Purdue aerospace engineer



Purdue University photo/Rebecca McElhoo

**Steven Collicott, an aerospace engineer in the School of Aeronautics and Astronautics, was selected by NASA for a suborbital flight to conduct a research experiment aboard a Virgin Galactic aircraft.**

Purdue University's Steven Collicott was 8 years old when he saw Neil Armstrong step onto the moon and dreamed of reaching the stars. Now, both he and his research are going to make a giant leap into space aboard a Virgin Galactic craft.

Collicott, a professor of aerospace engineering in the School of Aeronautics and Astronautics, was selected Wednesday to

receive an award by NASA's Flight Opportunities program giving him the chance to fly into suborbital space and back on a Virgin Galactic craft while conducting a zero-gravity experiment.

Collicott was the only applicant in this round of selections to receive the chance to take a suborbital flight sponsored by NASA. His research was selected as part of a

competitive nationwide process.

The selection will make Collicott the first Purdue faculty member to take a trip to space.

"The sudden news that I now get to fly into suborbital space to work in an amazing new zero-gravity laboratory aboard Virgin Galactic is a thrill beyond words," he said. "That I'll be one of the first researchers to fly with

their own experiments is an exciting notion that I never bothered to consider before."

Collicott already is known for his high-flying experiment endeavors, having taught a zero-gravity flight experiment course for many years. As part of the course, Collicott and some of his students experience weightlessness while conducting experiments aboard a parabolic aircraft flight, dubbed the "Vomit Comet."

Those flights reach an altitude only in the range of 30,000 feet, significantly less than suborbital rocket altitudes that begin as high as 50 miles.

Known as the Cradle of Astronauts, Purdue has 27 alumni who have flown in space or have been selected for space flight.

The final decision for Collicott's inclusion in the Cradle follows guidelines developed over three years ago when commercial space activities increased. William Crossley, the J. William Uhrig and Anastasia Vournas Head of Aeronautics and Astronautics, will apply those guidelines after Collicott's flight.

Inclusion is possible for alumni, faculty, staff and students who work in space.

Collicott, who recently returned from a zero-gravity aircraft flight, plans to start building the experiment soon.

For the flight, Collicott will conduct an experiment that explores a difficult-to-model phenomenon in how a liquid that wets a solid surface less than perfectly moves in an awkward stick-slip process across that solid surface in weightlessness.

The phenomenon can be found with green rocket propellants and water in life-support systems. In spaceflight, this stick-slip spreading process is important even in meters-long fuel tanks.

The experiment serves to help engineers exploit numerous liquid-solid combinations, such as new green propellants, in future spacecraft. The experiment also will highlight possible ways to automate such measurements in the future, and this automation enables cheaper launches of automated follow-up experiments.

Green propellants are new variations of rocket

fuels being researched as non-toxic replacements for long-used traditional fuels, which are dangerously toxic and very difficult to handle.

In recent years, Collicott has flown seven automated experiments on five Blue Origin missions and an automated experiment on a UP Aerospace launch with a second scheduled to happen in 2022. He also has flown automated experiments on numerous Exos Aerospace test flights.

The selection makes Collicott the latest person with Purdue connections to set their sights on suborbital flight. Two School of Aeronautics and Astronautics alumna – Sirisha Bandla and Audrey Powers – flew suborbital this year with fellow graduate Beth Moses, who became the first female commercial astronaut on Virgin Galactic's flight test in February 2019.

Powers flew in October via Blue Origin as the company's vice president of mission and flight operations. Moses and Bandla, Virgin Galactic's vice president of government affairs and research operations, flew in July.

## Gov. Holcomb tabs Jake Oakman for top job

Gov. Eric J. Holcomb has announced that Jake Oakman is the new executive director for the White River State Park Development Commission.

"Jake has long been devoted to making Indiana a better place to work, live, play, study and stay," said Gov. Holcomb. "He will take his passion and commitment to making Indiana a global destination and build upon the current successes of one of our states Crown Jewels, the White River State Park."

Jake Oakman most recently has served as the director of strategic communications for the Indiana Republican State Committee. Before his role with the committee, Oakman worked for the Office of Governor Holcomb as his special



assistant, serving as the governor's primary speech writer and advisor on communication strategies. Before that, Oakman worked at the Indiana Office of Tourism Development as the director of communications and media relations. While in that role, Oakman helped develop and launch the state's first multi-state tourism branding campaign in nearly a decade, leading

to record numbers of visitors and tourism spending. Oakman's first job in Indianapolis was at White River State Park working as a ticket sales executive for the Indianapolis Indians at Victory Field.

"White River State Park is one of Central Indiana's premier destinations," Oakman said. "I'm excited to work with Governor Holcomb, the commission, the team at WRSP, Live Nation and other stakeholders to attract more visitors to the events and world class attractions within the park. With the new TCU Amphitheater and park expansion plans, this is the perfect time to develop creative ways to enhance the White River State Park visitor experience. I'm looking forward to leading those

efforts."

Oakman earned an undergraduate degree from Indiana University and serves as a member of the Indiana Arts Commission.

In 1979, the Indiana General Assembly created the White River State Park Development Commission as a quasi-governmental agency. The commission oversees the White River State Park's world-class attractions and destinations located in downtown Indianapolis. The 250-acre park is home to the TCU Amphitheater, the Indiana State Museum, the IMAX Theater at the Indiana State Museum, the Indianapolis Zoo, the Eiteljorg Museum, Victory Field and the NCAA Hall of Champions.

Oakman begins his tenure on Jan. 3.

## Monroe Lake to sets 9th First Day run / walk on Jan. 1, 2022

Monroe Lake has scheduled its 9th annual First Day Trail Run and Walk at Fairfax State Recreation Area on Saturday, Jan. 1 at 3:30 p.m.

The event is non-competitive and offers distance options of 1.3, 2.9, and 3.7 miles. Registration is \$15 per person and includes a post-event grab-and-go meal and a ticket for the prize drawing.

Advance registration is available until Dec. 30 at [bit.ly/firstdayrun2022](http://bit.ly/firstdayrun2022). That web location also includes course maps and additional info. The first 300 people to register will receive a \$15 gift certi-



cate for the restaurants at the Fourwinds Lakeside Inn and an embroidered iron-on commemorative patch. Participants can also register on the day of the run from 2:15 to 3:15 p.m., cash or check only.

The First Day Trail Run and Walk is co-sponsored by Monroe Lake, the Fourwinds Lakeside Inn, and the Indiana Trail Running Association. Proceeds support public events, programs, and interpretation at Monroe Lake.

## MatchBOX secures United Way funding, opens 2022 applications

Tesha Hardy had been in the nursing field for a decade before she established Lightstone Education Center in 2017. A nurse practitioner by day, Hardy saw an opportunity in the market for local education programs that allow professionals to enter or expand their skills in the medical field.

Hardy was one of ten founders included in MatchBOX Coworking Studio's first cohort of their Spark program. Juliana Casavan, operations manager for MatchBOX and Spark project lead, explained, "Business acceleration is a model for growing companies by giving founders access to mentors, curriculum, resources, networking, and workspace. We offer accelerator programs that are open to all appli-

cants, but built the Spark program specifically to serve Black, Indigenous, and POC founders. The entrepreneurs in our inaugural cohort have specific barriers and needs and our intention was to connect them with BIPOC mentors, allied service providers, and the resources they need to grow businesses in a variety of industries."

The year-long program, created, designed and delivered by MatchBOX with initial funding from the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, kicked off in January with ten local business owners, selected from a total of 34 applicants. Throughout the year, the entrepreneurs were matched with mentors and worked with business professionals to develop business plans, marketing strategies, brand and

packaging design, financial models, and operating documents.

And they saw impressive results. Neurava, a Spark company cofounded by Jay Shah and Vivek Ganesh, recently raised \$650,000 in seed funding led with support from Elevate Ventures to further develop a wearable device that monitors for seizures. Samiaiyah Ncube, founder of Nom Nums Cakes & Treats, and Tesha Hardy, founder of Lightstone Education received a combined \$10,000 in services via the MatchBOX Acceleration Microgrants program to fund growth-focused projects. Other participants grew their client base, pivoted their business models, and moved closer to a launch date.

In November, United Way of Greater Lafayette

announced that they would award \$10,000 from the first equity fund named for Sarah Rounds Price. The SRP Equity Fund grant to MatchBOX is to help support the 2022 Spark cohort. Jennifer Million, senior director of finance and operations for UWGL, said, "The fund was established to incentivize nonprofits to develop or expand programs that will foster inclusivity and celebrate various cultural perspectives or opportunities to bridge gaps in services and outcomes. Supporting BIPOC business owners is an important aspect of working toward a more equitable community."

As the 2021 cohort nears graduation, Hardy shares, "During the Spark program, I've been able to make the leap to operating Lightstone Education full

time. I accessed a grant to rebuild my website and automate registrations and course assessments. The business is more efficient, more profitable, and I'm really excited about continued growth."

Applications are currently open for MatchBOX's 2022 Spark cohort, and an Informational session is scheduled for December 16 at 5 pm. Registration for the info session and applications for next year's program can be found at [www.mbx.fyi/spark](http://www.mbx.fyi/spark)

About MatchBOX MatchBOX Coworking Studio is a nonprofit venture that draws together innovative and creative individuals pursuing new ideas. The 11,000 square foot studio is full of desks with all the amenities you need to get work done: 24-hour secure access,

conference rooms, superfast WiFi, the MBX Makerspace, and an unlimited supply of coffee and snacks.

It's a great place to start a new business, or to grow an existing small business. It's for the hobbyist with a new idea, the moonlighting entrepreneur, or the professional office nomad. It's for developers, designers, strategists, artists, writers, makers, and change-makers of all types. It's a home for the creative class in Lafayette, West Lafayette, and throughout the midwest.

The studio is an office and meeting space to nearly 300 members and partners in a variety of sectors. MatchBOX hosts meetups and events that focus on business acceleration, mentorship, technology, innovation, and more.

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