

➔ **TODAY'S VERSE**

1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.



➔ **FACES OF HAMILTON COUNTY**
People who call our community their own.

What makes Sara Ballew smile? "My kids, my family, my dogs, customers," said the 42-year-old Noblesville resident. The 1997 Hamilton Heights graduate and former Cicero resident has been working at Discount Copies, her family's business, since 1998, two years after the copy business opened. "Mom and I have worked together since I was 14. We work together pretty well." She likes working with all of the customers. "I kind of feel like we're the 'Cheers' of copy shops." Sara likes working with her whole family; even her kids work there. During the COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease) pandemic, the shop is open for contactless curbside service with a service window with a Ring doorbell. She is married to Christopher Ballew and has three sons, Justin, Kyle and Nick; and three stepchildren, Natalie, Raygan, and Cooper. Best thing she's done in her life? "Being a mom. That was what I wanted to do since I could remember. I always wanted kids. It's been great that they get to come to work with me." She and her mom, Teresa Peil, who are both Tri Kappa sorority members, live across the street from each other in Old Town Noblesville. When Sara's not at work? "I like to watch movies, play games, do puzzles and read." Noblesville artist Lesley Haflich in 2018 painted Sara and her mom together in one portrait as part of the "30 Women of Noblesville" portrait painting exhibit at Nickel Plate Arts Campus in Noblesville. "It was a privilege. I really liked that," she said of the painting that's on display when customers walk in the front door of Discount Copies. "It made me feel special."

➔ **And Another Thing...**

Get dressed up with your little one, and dance the night away with Fishers Parks! Our annual Pre-K Prom returns from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Saturday, February 12, for a fun Valentine's Day event "among the stars" at the Fishers Parks HQ. Filled with dancing, craft activities, a photo booth, and refreshments, cost is \$25 per person.

The TIMES

Hamilton County's Only Daily Newspaper



NOBLESVILLE, INDIANA

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Photo courtesy of Noblesville Choral Department

New Dimension, Noblesville High School's top all-female show choir, won Champion Women's Show Choir, Best Vocal Sound in their division and Best Crew at their first competition of the season on Saturday afternoon at the Jay County Show Choir Spectacular in Portland, Ind.

Let the show choir competition season begin!

What a great start to Noblesville High School's show choir competition season.

NHS Singers, the high school's top mixed show choir, on Saturday night took home Grand Champion of the Jay County Show Choir Spectacular, along with Best Choreography and Best Vocals awards.



BETSY REASON
The Times Editor

Their traveling companion choir, New Dimension, NHS's

top all-female show choir, won Champion Women's Show Choir, Best Vocal Sound in their division and Best Crew.

What an amazing day that began with students rising in the wee hours of the morning to board four Noblesville school buses by 4:45 a.m. to travel to Jay County High School in Portland, nearly 90 minutes northeast of Noblesville.

And just as soon as the choirs arrived at Jay County, they began preparing for their first competition, with New Dimension warming up at 8 a.m., just before competing at 8:30 a.m. on the auditorium stage.

New Dimension performed music by Alan Menken, Burt Bacharach, Madonna, and Ike and Tina Turner. (My daughter sang the opening solo of Menken's "Fabulous, Baby!" And all of the solos were definitely fabulous.

NHS Singers wouldn't compete until after lunch, at 1:45 p.m. on the auditorium stage, with an amazing set featuring songs by Stevie Wonder, Neil Sedaka, Justin Hurwitz, George Michael and Steve Perry.

Then there would be awards at 4:30 p.m., with New Dimen-

➔ See Betsy Page A5

BBB Scam Alert: Want a COVID test? There's a scam for that

The US Food and Drug Administration is warning people of fraudulent coronavirus tests, vaccines, and treatments as the pandemic continues. According to Centers for Disease Control, since the arrival of the Omicron variant, the increase of testing for COVID-19 has become a concern. Scarcity often leads to potential scams for a product that doesn't exist, the compromise of personal identifiable information, or the increase of deceptive advertising.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) issued a warning earlier this year about potential fraud related to the antibody tests. Scammers are selling unapproved COVID-19 antibody tests, which can give inaccurate results. In doing so, they are also collecting personal information, such as Social Security numbers and dates of birth. They may also be stealing health insurance or Medicare information that can be used in future schemes.

➔ **How the Scam Works**

Robocalls are sent out to consumers directing them to a website that looks like a clinic or medical supply company offering COVID-19 tests. These tests allegedly identify if a person has been infected with coronavirus - even if they've recovered.

Some even promise results in 10 minutes. However, to receive a test, a credit card or a form needs to be completed with personal information.

In some cases, the test involves an easy at-home testing kit. Other times, the tests are allegedly offered through a clinic. But in all versions, the person or website selling the test is short on details. They aren't willing or able to provide any information about how the test works, where it is sourced, and what laboratory processes it.

Don't fall for it! These tests are not US Food and Drug Administration approved and will not give accurate results. In fact, requestors may never even receive an actual test kit. Either way, scammers will have made off with the money and personal information.

➔ **How to Avoid Fake Coronavirus Tests**

- Want a test? Talk to your doctor. Reach out to your healthcare provider. They can help figure out if the test will be covered by insurance and where to find a legitimate clinic. If you don't have a primary care physician, check out the official website of your local health department for more information on testing

➔ See BBB Page A5

Life and other deep subjects

Scattershooting about the meaning of life . . . and other deep subjects (like, why do hot dogs taste better with coney sauce . . . and why are some coney sauces sweet while others are not) . . .

WHETHER WE are talking about The Times in Noblesville or our paper in Crawfordsville, your outpouring of kind words and support to a guy who had a minor heart attack is simply overwhelming. I've heard from folks I haven't talked to in eons and my wife and I can't begin to tell you how much we appreciate all of you.

The official update is I'm scheduled for open heart surgery at the end of this month. The pros at St. Vincent's tell me that I will be up and walking soon after the surgery and can get back to a regular walking (and even running) regimen soon. My oldest said that we are going to run the



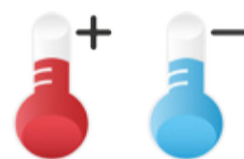
TIM TIMMONS
Two Cents

➔ See TIM Page A5

The Daily Almanac



Sunrise/Sunset
RISE: 8:05 a.m.
SET: 5:53 p.m.



High/Low Temperatures
High: 25 °F
Low: 15 °F



Wacky Holiday Today

- National Cheese Lovers Day
- Penguin Awareness Day



What Happened On This Day

- 1942 Nazi officials meet to organize the extermination of Jews
- 2009 Barack Obama is sworn in as U.S. president



Births On This Day

- 1930 Buzz Aldrin American pilot, astronaut
- 1956 Bill Maher American comedian, actor, television host



Deaths On This Day

- 1993 Audrey Hepburn Belgian/English actress, singer
- 2012 Etta James American singer-songwriter
- 1936 George V of the United Kingdom

➔ **INSIDE TODAY**

Obituaries.....A2
Classifieds.....A4
Service Directory.....A5

➔ **TODAY'S HEALTH TIP**

Try to eat together as a family often - home-cooked meals are generally healthier.
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.



➔ **TODAY'S QUOTE**

"In the end, you will understand that it was simpler than you envisioned when you were beginning."
Will Turman

➔ **TODAY'S JOKE**

Where do fruits go on vacation?
Paris (pear-is, get it?)

➔ **HONEST HOOSIER**

On this date almost 200 years ago (1825), the state capital moved from Corydon in southern Indiana to the new city of Indianapolis.



➔ **OBITUARIES**

Sonya Denise Pearson



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



7 DAY FORECAST

WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE
37/39 CLOUDY, TEMPS FALL, WINDY SOUTH	15/25 SUNNY AND COLD	14/27 SUNNY AND COLD	13/32 SUN AND CLOUDS	18/29 MAINLY CLOUDY	21/32 FEW SNOW SHOWERS	18/25 BREEZY AND COLDER

OBITUARIES

Sonya Denise Pearson Dec. 26, 1954 - Jan. 15, 2022

Sonya Denise Pearson, 57, Atlanta, Ind., passed away on Saturday evening, Jan. 15, 2022, at University Hospital in Indianapolis.

She was born on Dec. 25, 1964, in Cherry Valley, AR.

Mrs. Pearson attended Hamilton Heights High School. She was married to Randy Allen Pearson on Feb. 17, 2009. She worked for the Hamilton Southeastern School District for many years as both a custodian and a cafeteria manager. After 20 years of dedicated service, she decided it was time for retirement.

Mrs. Pearson loved watching reruns of the Andy Griffith Show. She was also a fan of the old Sylvester and Tweety cartoons – her favorite being Tweety of course. These shows took care of her during the week, but her Sunday TV time was devoted to NASCAR. Mrs. Pearson also loved to play cards, and would usually take a very NASCAR-ish, “rubbin’ is racin’” approach to the game. Losing was not an option. She liked country music. Whether it was classic country or one of the newer artists, she enjoyed it just the same. She also had a great appreciation for Native American culture.

Survivors include her loving husband, Randy Allen Pearson; step-father, Doug Stoops; sons, Nicholas Pearson (Tiffany), Randy Joseph Pearson and Bradley Pearson, all of Elwood; daughters, Tanaya Hitt (Nicholas) of Lafayette, Amy Townsend (James) of Kokomo and Sierra Townsend of Atlanta; grandchildren, Chazz, Nicholas, Jr., Joshua, Dakota, Cameron, Dustin, Alyssa, Silas, Lexi, Brinley, Gracie and Maria; brothers, James DeWitt (Vicki) of Arkansas, Randall DeWitt, Sr. (Glen-da) of Arkansas, Ricky DeWitt (Diane) of Arkansas, Dougie Stoops (Melissa) of Atlanta and David Stoops (partner, Charles) of Noblesville; sisters, Debbie Anderson of Arkansas and Sheila Abbott (Carl) of Noblesville; half-sisters, Tammy Watson and Angel Harris; many nieces, cousins and nephews; and by her canine BFF, Ruger.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Ellen Mae (Forkner) Dewitt-Stoops; and by her brother-in-law, Donald Anderson.

A Celebration of Life is scheduled for 10 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 22, 2022, at Kercheval Funeral Home, 306 E. 10th Street, Sheridan, with visitation from 9 a.m. until the time of service.

Memorial contributions may be presented to the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Carolyn S. Sisson

Dec. 10, 1953 - Jan. 10, 2022

Carolyn S. Sisson, 68, Cape Coral, Fla. passed away Monday at Select Specialty Hospital in Ft. Meyers, Fla. following an extended illness.

She was born Dec. 10, 1953, in Elwood, Ind. to John “Jack” Ackerman and Betty (Troutman) Ackerman.

She graduated from Lapel High School in 1971. She worked for Hamilton Southeastern School System for several years.

Mrs. Sisson was a member of the Jehovah’s Witness Kingdom Hall in Cape Coral. She enjoyed her time in Florida and sewing.

Survivors include her husband, Phillip Sisson of Cape Coral; daughter, Amanda (Josh) Wheeler of Lapel; mother, Betty Ackerman of Lapel; sister, Amelia (John) Milner of Pendleton; granddaughter, Cicely Wheeler. She is also survived by her nephew, Chris Milner.

Mrs. Sisson was preceded in death by her father.

A graveside service is scheduled for 11:30 AM on Sat., Jan. 22, 2022, at Brookside Cemetery, 2900 Brookside Road, Lapel, with Rev. Gary Klinger officiating. Burial will follow in Brookside Cemetery.

Visitation is scheduled from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on Sat., at Hersberger-Bozell Funeral Home 1010 N. Main St. Lapel.

Social distancing and wearing of masks are suggested. Online condolences: www.hersbergerbozell.com



Westfield Republican Scott Willis raises over \$126,000

Scott Willis, who officially filed an Exploratory Committee for Westfield Mayor in October of 2021, has reported \$126,677 in contributions in 2021 and \$125,814 cash on hand.

Willis’ total raised is a record for amount raised in a non-election year for Westfield Mayor and sets him up as a front-runner in the 2023 Republican primary. Willis set a record in Westfield for most money raised in a non-election year.

“As I continue to explore running for Westfield Mayor, I’m having meaningful discussions with residents, community groups, and business owners in Westfield about our city’s future. I’ve been honored to receive a tremendous amount of encouragement and support. Not only is that reflected in the financial contributions received, but also in the growing team



Scott Willis

of grassroots supporters volunteering for my campaign,” said Willis.

During Willis’ first term as a Westfield City Councilor, he has brought a unique voice and perspective to the council as a 17-year Westfield resident, decorated U.S. Marine, and successful businessman.

Willis, and his wife Stacey, have three children -- Sophia, a freshman at Xavier University, and Brenna and Graden, both Westfield Schools students.

Belmont University announces Fall 2021 Dean’s List

The following students achieved the Dean’s List at Belmont University for the Fall 2021 semester. Eligibility is based on a minimum course load of 12 hours (exclusive of audit and pass/fail courses this semester) and a quality grade point average of 3.5 with no grade below a C (inclusive of audit, pass/fail courses and zero-credit courses).

Grace Fairweather of Carmel
Caroline Temple of Carmel
Reagan Claymon of Carmel
Amber Poziviak of Carmel
Logyn Molloy of Carmel
Gavin Morrow of Carmel
Addison Stein of Carmel
Leah Palermo of Brownsburg
Audra Marchese of Carmel
Chloe Clevenger of Fishers
Ruth Helfer of Fishers
Sydney Moore of Fishers
Emilee Ernster of Fishers
Madison Keller of Fishers
Carson Ulmer of Fishers
Zachary Lilly of Fishers
Zachary Clar of Fishers
Thomas Woodring of Fishers
Emily Anderson of Fishers
Ella Williams of Noblesville
Grace Wiles of Noblesville
Ella Bodinus of Noblesville
Delaney Martin of Westfield
Leah Spurlock of No-

blesville
Bonnie Nickander of Noblesville
Tate Bailey of Noblesville
Brooke Waldal of Carmel
Aaron Moore of Carmel
Aubrie Bradbury of Carmel
Anthony Vaiana of Westfield
Emily Rhodes of Westfield
David Hirschfeld of Westfield
Samuel Skelton of Indianapolis
Kensington LaMotte of Indianapolis
Jessica Quadrini of Indianapolis
About Belmont University

Located two miles from downtown Nashville, Tennessee, Belmont University consists of nearly 8,800 students who come from every state and 33 countries. Consistently recognized by U.S. News & World Report for innovation and commitment to undergraduate teaching, Belmont brings together the best of liberal arts and professional education in a Christ-centered and student-focused community of learning and service. As a campus that aims to Let Hope Abound, the University is committed to producing graduates who are Hope Inspiring, Character Forming, Future Shaping, Community Engaging and Bridge Building people. With more than 115 areas of undergraduate study, 41 master’s programs and five doctoral degrees, there is no limit to the ways Belmont University can expand an individual’s horizon.

Dean’s, President’s lists students named for UA fall ‘21 term

A total of 11,979 students enrolled during the fall 2021 term at The University of Alabama were named to the dean’s list with an academic record of 3.5 (or above) or the president’s list with an academic record of 4.0 (all A’s).

Tristan Barr of Carmel (46032) was named to the President’s List.
Emma Brune of Carmel (46033) was named to the Dean’s List.
Connor Farrell of Carmel (46074) was named to the Dean’s List.
Abigail Grogan of Carmel (46033) was named to the President’s List.
Samuel Kight of Carmel (46032) was named to the President’s List.
Jaehee Kim of Carmel

(46032) was named to the Dean’s List.
Austin Lynch of Carmel (46033) was named to the Dean’s List.
Katherine Munson of Carmel (46033) was named to the President’s List.
William Payne of Carmel (46033) was named to the Dean’s List.
Maxwell Street of Carmel (46032) was named to the President’s List.
Michael Ward of Carmel (46074) was named to the Dean’s List.
Estelle Duell of Cicero (46034) was named to the Dean’s List.
Jessica Steele of Cicero (46034) was named to the President’s List.
Mae Farmer of Fishers (46037) was named to the

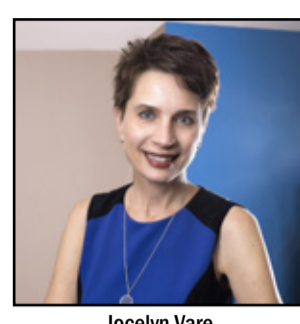
Vare’s fight for transparency produces a win for residents

Seventy-five percent of the voters in the newly drawn Indiana State Senate District 31 are familiar with At-Large Fishers City Councilor Jocelyn Vare’s dedication to transparency in government. On behalf of Fishers residents, Vare has fought for a more open and accountable city government.

Pushed in large part by Vare’s tenacious advocacy, last night the Fishers City Council passed an ordinance to guarantee minority caucus council members a seat on the Council’s standing committees and implement a formal procedure for citizen appointments to city boards and commissions for the first time. The change aligns with Vare’s promise to build trust between citizens and government. Standing committees on city council develop and prioritize city decisions on expenditures, disclosures, community input, and compliance.

“Voters elected me to open the door for them,” says Vare. “It took two, hard-fought years for our city government to welcome diverse points of view to sit at the decision-making table. This is a meaningful acknowledgement from the majority caucus after the first Democrats were elected to City Council in 2019. Most importantly, this new openness is a service for the residents in our community.”

Vare will take her seat on the Budget and Finance Committee and Non-Profit Committee effective immediately and fellow Democrat, Dr. Crystal Neumann



Jocelyn Vare

has been appointed to serve on the Rules Committee.

“Fishers residents consistently share their concern with me that city decisions behind closed doors can’t be best for our growing community,” Vare explains. “For the first time, our city is finally considering a bipartisan approach to vital financial and procedural decisions. The new approach will allow for a more balanced and open process that better serves our residents.”

While the amendment is a new approach for the city, it is consistent with Vare’s core values as a public servant. Much like her council campaign, Vare’s Indiana State Senate campaign is centered on ensuring every voice is heard. Vare will bring her values, experience, and successes to work for residents in Indiana’s Senate District 31.

Jocelyn Vare is an at-large member of the Fishers City Council and a candidate for Indiana Senate District 31 in 2022. State Senate District 31 was redrawn in 2021 to include all of Fishers, Geist, and parts of Noblesville and the Northeast Side of Indianapolis.

Rokita defends Roncalli on same-sex marriage

Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita is leading a 16-state coalition defending the right of Roncalli High School, a Catholic institution in Indianapolis, to uphold church teachings on same-sex marriage in its hiring and firing decisions.

“The First Amendment protects religious institutions from undue governmental intrusion into matters of faith and doctrine,” Attorney General Rokita said. “We will stand firm in protecting Hoosiers’ constitutional liberties, including religious freedom.”

A former guidance counselor in a same-sex marriage filed a lawsuit against Roncalli High School and the Archdiocese of Indianapolis after Roncalli opted not to renew her contract. In August, a federal district court ruled in Roncalli’s favor. The former staff member filed an appeal in the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

On Tuesday, Attorney General Rokita filed an



Todd Rokita

amicus brief supporting Roncalli High School and the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

“Regardless of one’s personal views on same-sex marriage,” Attorney General Rokita said, “the First Amendment clearly permits churches and faith-based organizations to require ministerial staff to support their institutional beliefs.”

Attorney General Rokita’s amicus brief directs the court to a clear pattern of judicial precedent affirming the autonomy of religious institutions in making employment decisions regarding their ministers, including staff members at religious schools.

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find it here!
the times

Health experts advise managing screen time

Excessive screen time can cause a host of negative side effects in kids, but as some Indiana schools go virtual because of the omicron variant, prolonged interaction with technology can be unavoidable.

Dr. Derek Sprunger, a professor of clinical ophthalmology in the Indiana University School of Medicine's Ophthalmology Department, said parents still can still use several methods to moderate their kids' screen time. He advised limiting kids' exposure to non-education-related technology. "I don't say eliminate, but cut back," he said, "and there's no exact amount of time that you should or shouldn't be doing this, but if you're doing a lot through school, more than typical, cut back on your outside-of-school time, like gaming and things like that."

Sprunger said excessive screen time can cause several short-term health effects, including eye fatigue, blurred vision and headaches. According to the Mayo Clinic, it also can lead to irregular sleep and impaired academic performance.

In addition to those side

effects, Sprunger added that overusing technology also can advance long-term nearsightedness.

"This is a more permanent thing," he said. "The things we talked about earlier, if you cut usage of your screen time, that will reverse. Once you induce nearsightedness, that can be a more permanent problem."

Dr. Scott Edmonds, chief eye-care officer at United Healthcare, recommended the "20-20-20" rule, breaking up screen time to limit eye strain: For every 20 minutes folks spend staring at a computer, he said, they should take 20 minutes to observe something at least 20 feet away.

"That break takes you away from the blue light, lets your pupil go to its normal size, lets your muscles in your eye relax, lets your focusing muscle relax," he said. "All that, every 20 minutes, will really help you be more comfortable with screen time."

In a September report from the Pew Research Center, about 70% of parents said their children are spending more time in front of screens than they did pre-pandemic.

Rokita earns \$316,241 recovery for Hoosiers

Attorney General Todd Rokita announced that his office's Indiana Medicaid Fraud Control Unit has received \$316,241 on behalf of the Indiana Medicaid program as part of a \$4.9 million resolution of allegations against PharMerica Inc. The company is one of the nation's largest long-term care pharmacies, providing supplies and services to nursing homes and other facilities.

This recovery is the culmination of 14 years of litigation under the federal False Claims Act and similar state laws in Indiana and 10 other states. In September 2007, whistleblowers James Banigan and Richard Templin filed a lawsuit in a U.S. District Court against defendants Organon Inc., Omnicare Inc., and PharMerica Inc.

"This case demonstrates the vital role of persistence in the American legal system," Attorney General Rokita said. "When companies betray the trust placed in them by Medicaid patients and their doctors, justice demands that the companies be held accountable, no matter how long it takes."

Banigan and Templin alleged that the pharmaceutical company Organon entered into an illegal scheme with PharMerica and Omnicare, another long-term care pharmacy. Under the alleged scheme, Organon would pay kickbacks to PharMerica and Omnicare to incentivize the pharmacies to switch the medications prescribed by patients' physicians to those sold by Organon, including antidepressants Remeron



Todd Rokita

Tablet and Remeron SolTab.

In August 2014, Organon settled with the federal government and the states, with Indiana Medicaid recovering \$219,000. Omnicare settled in May 2017, with Indiana Medicaid recovering \$1,330,572.

Litigation against PharMerica continued and included an appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit of an April 2018 dismissal of the case obtained by PharMerica. In February 2020, the appeals court partially reversed the dismissal of the action.

This resolution announced today brings the case to an end, with Indiana Medicaid having recovered a total of \$1,865,813 in this case.

The Medicaid Fraud Control Unit recovered more than \$8 million for the Indiana Medicaid program in 2021. Across all divisions, Attorney General Rokita and his team recovered more than \$210 million in 2021 on behalf of Hoosiers.

The Indiana Medicaid Fraud Control Unit receives 75 percent of its funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under a federal grant. The remaining 25 percent is funded by the State of Indiana.

Young, Wicker Applaud FMCSA Advancement of 18 to 21-Year-Old Truck Driver Pilot Program

U.S. Senators Todd Young (R-Ind.) and Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) applauded the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) for advancing the 18 to 21-year-old truck driver pilot program.

This program will allow 18 to 21-year-old truck drivers to operate in interstate commerce, as they currently do in intrastate commerce. The pilot program includes a number of safety requirements, such as advanced technology in trucks, an accompanying experienced driver, and the participation of motor carriers with a safe record.

"Today, 18-year-olds can drive more than 200 miles from New Albany to Gary and back, but they aren't allowed to



drive two miles from New Albany to Louisville," said Senator Young.

"My DRIVE-Safe pilot program will address the driver shortage, provide new career opportunities for young Hoosiers and Americans, and make the roads safer. We have faced a truck driver shortage for years, but it has now reached a crisis level as we witness major supply chain bottlenecks across all sectors. I commend the Federal

Motor Carrier Safety Administration for acting swiftly to establish this program."

"If a 19-year-old can safely drive a truck from one end of our state to the other, federal law should allow the same young American to drive across state lines," said Senator Wicker. "Implementation of this important provision will help address driver workforce challenges, which are particularly important given the

ongoing supply chain transportation disruptions. Though I have concerns about the Registered Apprenticeship program requirement, I appreciate FMCSA's work to advance this important program."

"My DRIVE-Safe pilot program will address the driver shortage, provide new career opportunities for young Hoosiers and Americans, and make the roads safer."

The 18 to 21-year-old truck driver pilot program was based on Senator Young's DRIVE-Safe Act, which was introduced in February 2019. The pilot program was included in the Senate Commerce Committee's Surface Transportation Investment Act that was part of the bipartisan infrastructure law.

Indiana produces 7th most CO2 emissions per capita in U.S.

As the effects of climate change become more severe, policymakers worldwide are increasingly focused on how to limit greenhouse gas emissions, slow the pace of climate change, and mitigate climate risks.

World leaders met in Glasgow in November of last year for the latest United Nations climate conference, with the aim of setting new, more aggressive targets to reduce emissions and combat warming. The conference produced a number of pledges to accomplish this goal, including agreements to phase down the use of coal and fossil fuels for energy.

In the U.S., limiting carbon emissions has been a major goal in the first year of President Joe Biden's administration. A \$1 trillion infrastructure bill passed by Congress and signed into law in November included major new investments in the electric grid and clean energy, electric vehicle charging stations, and enhanced rail and public transportation systems to reduce emissions. The Biden Administration has also used other means

to establish emissions reductions as a priority, including a broad pledge to cut the nation's emissions by 2030 and an executive order outlining specific steps the federal government will take to reduce its carbon footprint from operations and procurement.

Strong U.S. action to reduce carbon emissions is critical to reducing emissions worldwide. As the world's largest economy, the U.S. is one of the top producers of carbon emissions. The U.S. generates 5.1 billion tons of CO2 in total each year, behind only China at 11.1 billion. The U.S. also ranks second in carbon emissions on a per capita basis, with emissions of 15.6 tons of CO2, trailing Canada's 17.8 tons of CO2 per capita.

While the U.S. remains among the top emitters worldwide, CO2 emissions have been trending downward over time. Total CO2 emissions reached a peak of around 6 billion tons in 2007, but since then, annual emissions have declined by almost 1 billion tons per year. Per capita emissions have

shown a similar decline over the same period, even despite continued U.S. population and GDP growth over that period.

States in the U.S. contribute different amounts to these totals depending on factors like population, economic makeup, and government policy. Larger states like Texas and California tend to have the highest emissions on an absolute basis, but in some states this is mitigated at the per capita level by greater reliance on clean energy or policies like emissions targets. In contrast, many of the top states for carbon emissions on a per capita basis have both low populations and economies that rely heavily on fossil fuels for energy or industrial purposes, including Wyoming, North Dakota, and West Virginia.

The data used in this analysis is from the U.S. Energy Information Administration and the U.S. Census Bureau. To determine the states with the largest carbon footprint, researchers at Commodity.com calculated per capita annual CO2 emissions. In the event of a tie, the

state with the higher total annual CO2 emissions was ranked higher.

The analysis found that at an annual 28.2 tons per person, Indiana produces the 7th most carbon emissions per capita in the U.S. each year. Here is a summary of the data for Indiana:

- Per capita annual CO2 emissions (tons): 28.2
 - Total annual CO2 emissions (tons): 188,800,000
 - Sector that emits the most CO2: Electric Power
 - Fuel that emits the most CO2: Coal
- For reference, here are the statistics for the entire United States:
- Per capita annual CO2 emissions (tons): 15.6
 - Total annual CO2 emissions (tons): 5,144,360,777
 - Sector that emits the most CO2: Transportation
 - Fuel that emits the most CO2: Petroleum
- For more information, a detailed methodology, and complete results, you can find the original report on Commodity.com's website: <https://commodity.com/blog/carbon-dioxide-emissions/>

NFD Lieutenant Scott Hunter completes the international professional designation process

Noblesville Fire Department Lieutenant Scott Hunter has successfully completed the process that awards the professional designation of "Fire Officer" (FO). The Commission on Professional Credentialing (CPC) met on Dec. 7, 2021 to confer the designation.

Lt. Hunter becomes one of only 602 FOs worldwide, and the first with that designation in the NFD.

The designation program is a voluntary program designed to recognize individuals who demonstrate their excellence in seven measured components including experience, education, professional development, professional contributions, association membership, community involvement and technical competence. In addition, all applicants are required to identify a future professional development plan.

The FO designation program uses a comprehensive peer



review model to evaluate candidates seeking the credential. The CPC awards the designation only after an individual successfully meets all of the organization's stringent criteria.

"Achieving this designation signifies Scott's commitment to his career in fire and emergency services and his emphasis on professional growth," said NFD Chief Matt Mitchell, who has the Fire Marshal CPC designation. "I'm proud of Lt. Hunter for earning

this distinction, but also the example it sets for his fellow firefighters with life-long learning, skill development and community service."

This professional designation is valid for three years. Maintaining the designation requires recipients to show continued growth in the areas of professional development, professional contributions, active association membership and community involvement as well as adhere to a strict code of professional conduct.

The CPC, an entity of the Center for Public Safety Excellence, Inc., administers the designation program. It consists of individuals from academia, federal and local government, and the fire and emergency medical services profession. To learn more about CPC, visit www.cpsc.org.

About the Noblesville Fire Department: The Noblesville Fire Department has 140 career firefighters, including 10 full time staff positions, operating out of seven fire stations. NFD covers a rapidly growing area of 58 square miles within its jurisdiction. In addition to fire suppression, NFD provides emergency medical services (EMS), consisting of Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS/Paramedics), and maintains a Hazardous Materials Team, Dive Team, and Tactical Rescue Team. For more information, visit www.cityofnoblesville.org/fire.

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3.0% Of Indiana workers quit their jobs in 2021, 14th most in U.S.

As workers continue to leave their jobs en masse, the phenomenon known as the “Great Resignation” seems to be far from over. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, quits totalled 4.5 million in November, a record high, and have been trending upward since April 2020. The quit rate—defined as the number of quits as a percentage of total employment—rose to 3.0% in November, tying September’s record.

Historically, job openings, hires, and separations have tracked each other. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted this pattern. At the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, total separations rose to a record 16.3 million as businesses across the country laid off workers and shut down. Separations were also high in April 2020 but then returned to more typical levels and have been trending upwards ever since. At the same time, job openings have been climbing rapidly, reaching near record levels in October 2021 amidst widespread labor shortages.

As businesses across the country struggle to hire, workers continue to quit in droves. Both total quits and quit rates have been rising since the spring of 2020, causing quits to account for an increasingly large share of total

separations. The pandemic has caused many workers to reassess their priorities and look for jobs that offer more flexibility as well as better pay and benefits. Fortunately for them, the current labor market puts workers in a good position to make headway on these goals. Job openings currently total 10.6 million, and with 6.9 million unemployed workers, there are about 1.5 jobs per every unemployed worker.

While quits tend to be higher in lower-paying sectors, quits have been rising across nearly every industry. The accommodation and food service industry, which includes restaurants, bars, and hotels, had the highest quit rate for 2021 at 5.7%. Additionally, the industry had the greatest increase in its quit rate from 2020 to 2021, at 1.5 percentage points. Government had the lowest quit rate in 2021, and is the only sector that saw a decline in its quit rate year over year.

Quit rates vary across the country due to factors such as local job market conditions, cost of living, and local industry makeup. To determine the states with the highest quit rates, researchers at ChamberOfCommerce.org analyzed the latest data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The researchers ranked states according to the overall quit rate in

2021. Researchers also calculated the total quits in 2021, the percentage point change in the quit rate from 2020 to 2021, and quits as a percentage of total separations in 2021.

- Overall quit rate (2021): 3.0%
- Total quits (2021): 928,000
- Percentage point change in quit rate (2020-2021): +0.7
- Quits as a percentage of total separations (2021): 70.8%

For reference, here are the statistics for the entire United States:

- Overall quit rate (2021): 3.0%
- Total quits (2021): 43,093,000
- Percentage point change in quit rate (2020-2021): -0.6
- Quits as a percentage of total separations (2021): 68.3%

For more information, a detailed methodology, and complete results, you can find the original report on ChamberOfCommerce.org’s website: <https://www.chamberofcommerce.org/states-with-the-highest-quit-rates/>

USDA launches pilot program to deploy rural renewable energy infrastructure

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that the Department is making up to \$10 million available to help people living in rural towns develop community renewable energy projects that will help them cut their energy costs and contribute to the nationwide effort to reduce pollution that contributes to climate change. These funds will be targeted to help people who live in communities that have been historically underinvested and disadvantaged.

USDA is making the funds available through the new Rural Energy Pilot Program to help the people of rural America build back better, stronger and more equitably than ever before. Through this program, USDA is supporting the Biden-Harris Administration’s commitment to making environmental justice a part of every agency’s mission to address the disproportionate health, environmental, economic and climate impacts on disadvantaged communities.

“Under the leadership of President Biden and Vice President Harris, USDA is providing grant assistance for people who live in particularly underserved rural towns to help them cut their household energy costs and address climate change at the local level,” Vilsack said. “As we continue to rebuild the nation’s infrastructure, USDA is targeting resources and investments to help meet our nation’s energy needs and combat climate change. The new program we’re announcing today will pilot the viability of community-scale renewable energy investments to mitigate the energy-burdened circumstances

of particularly disadvantaged rural communities. This assistance will help to keep people in their hometowns by supporting good-paying jobs, business opportunities, and a more affordable cost of living.”

Background: USDA will make up to \$10 million in grants available to particularly underserved rural communities. The funds can be used to deploy community-scale renewable energy technologies and innovations to reduce climate pollution and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change. These technologies include solar, wind, geothermal, micro-hydroelectric and biomass/bioenergy. Up to 20% of awarded funds may also be used for community energy planning, capacity building, technical assistance, energy efficiency and weatherization.

USDA is offering priority points to projects that advance key priorities under the Biden-Harris Administration to help communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, advance equity and combat climate change. These extra points will increase the likelihood of funding for projects seeking to address these critical challenges in rural America.

Details on an upcoming informational webinar is forthcoming and will be posted to the Rural Energy Pilot Program webpage.

Prospective applicants must inform the Agency by submitting a required Letter of Intent prior to submission of a complete application. The letters must be submitted via electronic upload into a secure cloud vault, by 11:59 p.m. EST on April 19, 2022.

Application guides and submission information are available on the program

website, under the To Apply tab, www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/energy-programs/rural-energy-pilot-program.

For additional information, see page 2747 of the Jan. 19 Federal Register (PDF, 278 KB).

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural, tribal and high-poverty areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov. If you’d like to subscribe to USDA Rural Development updates, visit our GovDelivery subscriber page.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America’s food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate-smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.



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BBB From Page A1

availability.

- Research before buying. Scammers put pressure on people to buy or commit without giving them time to do further research. Before agreeing to anything, investigate first. Research any claims the company makes. Start with searching BBB.org to see they are BBB Accredited, have good reviews, and if there are complaints or scam reports associated with their business name. In addition, review the warnings on FBI, Federal Trade Commission, Attorney General's office, and BBB ScamTracker.
- Understand all options: The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has a detailed guide to testing for COVID-19. Understand the different tests available.
- Never share your personal information with strangers. Only make purchases and share your personal information with people and companies you



know and trust.

- Check claims of FDA approval. Per the FBI, "Not all COVID-19 antibody tests have been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and their efficacy has not been determined." Check the FDA website for a list of approved tests and testing companies.

BBB recommends if you have been to a pop up COVID testing site and are feeling unsettled about providing personal or financial

information, consider the following options:

- Place a credit freeze on your accounts by contacting the three major credit bureaus.
- If possible, file your taxes early to avoid a tax refund theft and alert the IRS.
- If this does happen alert the insurance company what happened and watch for any unauthorized claims.
- Monitor all financial accounts for any suspicious charges that do not belong to you and dispute them.
- Report any suspicious activity to BBB.org/scam-tracker.

For More Information BBB has additional tips for avoiding scams on BBB.org/spotscam and the BBB news feed.

If you've been the victim of a scam, please report it on the BBB.org/Scam-Tracker. Your report can help others to stay alert and avoid similar scams.

TIM From Page A1

Ft. Ben Half Marathon again together (to that, my youngest said . . . y'all have a good time).

In all seriousness though, thank you so very, very much for caring. It's a lot more than an old newspaper vagabond expected.

IT'S THAT time of year for political filings. There are some interesting ones so far, but one of the areas we'll be watching closely is the Noblesville School Board. Embattled Superintendent Dr. Beth Neidermeyer announced her pending retirement already, so perhaps some folks who were looking to make a change at the top might not be so inclined now. Actually, schools all over Hamilton County are going to be interesting to watch.

SPEAKING OF

politics. Please let me repeat that I urge you to keep your eyes on our hired help in Indianapolis. Yes, they are zeroing in on newspapers again, but they are also going to be looking at issues involving personal rights and such. The more you pay attention, the better. When those good folks are left unchecked and don't hear your opinions, they can do some awfully strange things.

MEET JOE LaRue. For those keeping score at home, Joe used to work for us when he was doing his undergrad work at Wabash College. Now as a distinguished alum of the prestigious school, he's back as our managing editor. He'll be working out of our Noblesville office but his talents will be on display in both places. Please help us give Joe a warm

Sagamore News Media welcome. You can e-mail him at joe@thetimes24-7.com.

FOR THE purposes of my earlier question - I'm dividing coney sauces into two categories - sweet and not-so-sweet. Coneys, like at Dog'n'Suds, are sweet. The ones from Skyline out of Cincinnati are not. For the record, I prefer sweet. Then again, for the record, pretty sure coneys are officially off the heart-healthy list I'm abiding by these days. What about you? Sweet or not-so-much?

Two cents, which is about how much Timmons said his columns are worth, appears periodically on Wednesdays in The Paper. Timmons is the publisher of The Paper and can be contacted at timmons@thepaper24-7.com.

BETSY From Page A1

sion announced as winner of their division.

Then there was a dinner break, a performance by the Ball State Singers, then finals for the top mixed show choirs beginning at 6:45 p.m. with NHS Singers competing again at 7:20 p.m., and awards late in the evening, at 10:45 p.m. While it made for a long day with students arriving back home at nearly 1 a.m., it was also an exhilarating and rewarding day for the choirs. During the time that our Noblesville choirs were on stage, there was so much energy in the room.

"All the students were challenged to rise to the occasion very quickly. We more or less stopped rehearsing in mid-December, came back on Jan. 11 and had to be ready to make it happen four days later," NHS choral director John Neubauer said on Tuesday after the contest.

"The students really stepped it up in all areas. The band, the crew, the Singers, the soloists and the parents who assist on costuming and with the set," he said.

"With the Covid situation, it is even more complicated. Encouraging students to keep distance, masked (on the bus and in practices) and as safe as possible is complicated," Neubauer said.

(The choirs were not required to wear masks while competing on stage Saturday.)

"Overall, the students, obviously, did their job. Mrs. (Shannan O'Dowd) Masten (assistant choral



The Times photo

NHS Singers' Maddux Morrison (right) and Maddie Durst (left) perform to "Someone in the Crowd," a song from the 2016 film, "La, La Land," Saturday at the Jay County Show Choir Spectacular.

director) and I are very proud of them," Neubauer said.

How are these first wins a great start to the competition season?

"It takes a lot of work and tunnel vision to be ready for a show choir competition," Neubauer said. "We have been working towards this since almost Day 1 of school. (Freelance choreographer Jarad Voss has been teaching the choirs their dances since August.) All the pieces for success are in place. The students know the material. So now we get to focus on growing the product to be bigger, more effective, more exciting. It is a matter of the students having the drive to continue to grow these productions."

How are these competitions good for NHS choirs? "I think competition is great for the students," Neubauer said. "They definitely

want to be recognized for excellence. And, especially, the older students understand what it takes to get to excellence. The younger students largely follow by example, and hopefully excellence is self propelling. The choir also bonds with each other on these trips. Friendships are built. They also meet students from other schools and get to share ideas and see productions from other schools. It is a great time, and I think the students love these days very much."

Learn anything from this first competition of the season?

"We learned a lot about the determination of our students to work for a high goal and to deal with adjustments, changes, challenges and their ability to deal with some adversity."

This is just the start of show choirs' competition season. Next weekend,



The Times photo by Betsy Reason

NHS Singers, Noblesville High School's top mixed show choir, celebrate their overall Grand Champion win with the biggest trophy at their first competition of the show-choir contest season Saturday night at the Jay County Show Choir Spectacular in Portland, Ind.

the two choirs are off to Franklin Community High School, then Feb. 5 to Fishers High School (with Sensation and MaleTonez joining NHS Singers and New Dimension in the competitions), then on Feb. 12 MaleTonez and Sensation will head to Plainfield, then NHS Singers and New Dimension will travel to Davenport, Iowa, then the four choirs will compete at Warren Central.

"The students are excited to represent NHS at all our competitions," Neubauer said. "Each of the competitions will be a little different. Our competition in Iowa will be quite different as it is held in a Broadway-style theater in downtown Davenport, Iowa, and will feature choirs that we have not seen recently or maybe even ever. Of course, we are also

attempting to qualify for the (mid-March) ISSMA State Finals in Show Choir which will feature nine mixed choirs and nine single-gender choirs with only the top-scoring choirs in Indiana being invited."

For anyone who wants to view the show choirs' competition sets, there is a free public performance at 7 p.m. Jan. 27 in the NHS Auditorium, just before the Franklin competition that weekend. Performers will be masked. "We ask the audience to also be masked," Neubauer said. "MaleTonez, Sensation, New Dimension and Singers will all perform. Can't wait."

He is proud to be a part of Noblesville High School's history and "long tradition of having great show choirs."

Neubauer said, "I remember seeing Singers back in my youth. It's ex-

citing to lead the program that has a rich history."

New Dimension and Sensation all-female show choirs have done very well, too, in the competitive arena, he said. "MaleTonez is definitely a unique group of guys that have a ton of fun making music together."

The entire choral department, including the Main Event Band (for New Dimension and Singers) and the Keytonez (band that backs up MaleTonez and Sensation) "are some of the best students and people at NHS. The community should be proud of them. I know we (Mrs. Masten and myself) are very proud of them."

And one more thought.

Some of the other choir programs brought in thousands of dollars in lights and sets... and Noblesville choirs still beat all of their competitors.

How does that happen? "I'm 'old school,'" Neubauer said. "By that, I mean I live by this philosophy: Singing and dancing is what show choir is. I love great costumes and special effects as needed to make the production great. But without great singing and great dancing, there is no real show choir. Not meaning to 'diss' groups who spend more on icing but educationally, I'd rather focus on the cake."

-Contact Betsy Reason at betsy@thetimes24-7.com. A District Show Choir Concert for the public featuring all of the district's show choirs will be March 17 at NHS.

The Times

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Fayette

Did You Know?

- Fayette County was founded in 1819 and named for Marquis de la Fayette.
- Connersville, the county seat, is the only incorporated city in the county and is home to the county's only high school.
- The county is 215.16 square miles and has a population of 24,277 residents.
- Fayette County's automotive era began in 1909 with the McFarlan went into production.
- Connersville has a population of 13, 481 and is only 7.76 square miles.

Number

%



Stumpers

1. What percentage of the county does Connersville make up?
≥
2. How long ago was the automotive era for Fayette?
≤
3. What is the population density of the county?
≥
4. How old is Fayette County?
≤

%

Answers: 1. About 3.6% 2. 111 Years 3. About 112.6 per square mile 4. 201 Years

Got Words?

Although Fayette County was economically significant in the early 19th and 20th centuries, it is now among the poorest counties in the state. How do you think Fayette and other struggling counties can transform their economic hardships for the better?

Word

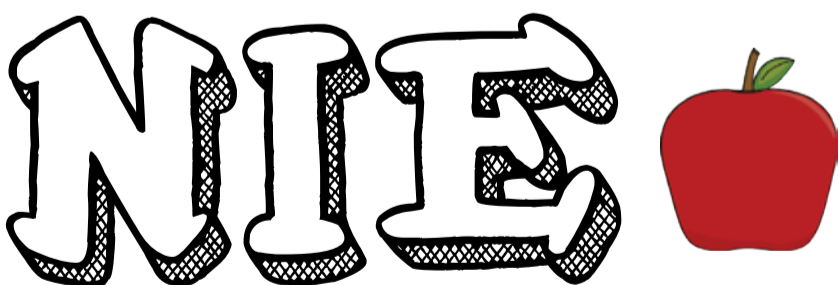
Scrambler

Unscramble the words below!

1. COOYENM
2. TEFYAET UYTCNO
3. ECINEDL
4. TUTEOAMVI EAR
5. NEVSLENIOLCR

Answers: 1. Economy 2. Fayette County 3. Decline 4. Automotive Era 5. Connersville

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