

TODAY'S VERSE

Isaiah 12:2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.



FACES OF HAMILTON COUNTY

People who call our community their own.

What makes Mollie Menchaca smile? "Today, being with my family at the Veterans Day Ceremony," said the then 71-year-old Noblesville resident. She was found laying the wreath during the Nov. 11, 2019, Veterans Day Ceremony at the Hamilton County War Memorial on the Courthouse Square in Noblesville. Why was it important for her to be there? "To support my husband, to support my son, to support the military," she said. Mollie was born and raised in Kentucky and went into the military right after high school. She was a medic in the Women's Army Corps in 1967-68 in Fort Meade, Va. "It was one of those times when jobs were scarce, and I had an interest in the military because I had brothers that were in the military, and I felt like I wanted to support them." She met her husband, Israel, while serving in the Army. "And my son was a 20-year Air Force veteran." Today's feature is a look back at one of The Times' previous Faces of Hamilton County. Both were in attendance at the 2019 Veterans Day Ceremony. After the military, she got married and raised her kids and had her own daycare for 22 years and then worked for Helmer Scientific in Noblesville for 25 years. She's lived in Noblesville for 53 years and has a daughter and a son and two granddaughters. "And they make me smile and keep me happy ... Plus, I love life and being able to enjoy being with and doing things for people." Kenneth Harris, 87, Noblesville, who served in the U.S. Marines in Korea, had been laying the wreath for past 23 years and was unable to do so in 2019. Mollie, so happened to be at the VFW prior to the event, and was asked if she could lay the wreath on Veterans Day and said, "I'd be honored to." The next veterans event will be the Memorial Day ceremony at 11 a.m. May 30 at the Hamilton County War Memorial on the Courthouse Square in downtown Noblesville.

And Another Thing...

Please be advised, E. 266th Street between Mt. Pleasant Road and Startzman Road will be under daytime road closures while tree clearing work is completed for an upcoming bridge rehabilitation project. Clearing will begin Monday, February 28, 2022 from 9am to 3pm and will continue daily, concluding at the end of Friday, March 4, 2022.

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Photo courtesy of the Noblesville Boys & Girls Club

The Darlington Bed Race will return to Noblesville Main Square after a two-year hiatus for the event because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Those interested in sponsoring or partnering with the event should reach out to BGCN Director of Club Operations, Abigail Stutesman.

10th Annual Darlington Bed Race Returning in June '22

The event that has historically been the 'kick off to summer on the square' returns this year. Due to the pandemic, the event that hosts more than 1,000 on-lookers had been postponed the past two years. Planning is well underway to host a bigger and better than ever Darlington Bed Race to kick off Summer 2022.

The event that supports the Boys & Girls Club of Noblesville and Noblesville Parks & Recreation raises funds to support youth programs that take place during out-of-school times. The Bed Race will also

serve as June's First Friday event for Noblesville Main Street.

"Each year the Bed Race raises money to fund scholarships for our youth programs," stated BGCN Director of Club Operations, Abby Stutesman. "These scholarships provide positive, engaging activities for local children that are needed now more than ever. Youth are needing the freedom and social connections that our organizations offer, and families are needing the financial assistance that events like the Bed Race make possible."

"We always enjoy partnering with Noblesville Main Street and the Boys & Girls Club while supporting the Bed Race! It's such a fun, competitive and entertaining event, whether you participate on a team or enjoy as a spectator," stated Noblesville Parks & Recreation Assistant Director, Amber Mink. "We look forward to helping make the 10th year extra special and provide a unique opportunity to help raise funds for youth

See RACES Page A6

Hearthside Suppers, Carmel Taste, Movie Night Among 25 Things to Do



BETSY REASON
The Times Editor

Movies, plays, live music and more are among 25 things to put on your calendar, from now through the beginning of March.

1. Enjoy Family Movie Night at 6 p.m. today at Emmanuel United Methodist Church in Noblesville.
2. Carmel Community Players presents "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime,"

See BETSY Page A6

Rep. Spartz Stands by Ukraine in Statement on Russian Invasion

In a statement released Thursday morning in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Ukrainian-born Congresswoman Victoria Spartz (R-IN) criticized the Biden administration's handling of the crisis and called on Americans to support Ukraine.

She said, "As a Ukrainian-born American who deeply loves our great United States of America and will always stand with you to protect it from any enemy—foreign or domestic—I would like to express my utmost disappointment with the lack of leadership and strategy on multiple fronts on the part of the current administration that puts our great country and our allies in danger."

"I would also like to ask my fellow Americans to stand with the people of Ukraine in their fight for peace and freedom against evil. They are fighting this war not just for them, but for all of us. Please keep them in your thoughts



Rep. Victoria Spartz and prayers and be vigilant in our fight to preserve our freedoms for our children and for all people who died for them.

"We are a strong country of free people and always will

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OBITUARIES
Eddie Lee May



HONEST HOOSIER

Whatever happened to the Pan Am Games? Remember when they were in Indianapolis? It was on this date in 1951 that the first Games were held in Buenos Aires.



TODAY'S QUOTE

"What lies behind you and what lies in front of you, pales in comparison to what lies inside of you."
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

TODAY'S JOKE

How is it I can remember song lyrics from the 1960s and can't remember where I left my glasses?

TODAY'S HEALTH TIP

If you're trying to lose weight, keep a food diary and calculate what you're actually eating each day - there are apps for that!

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.



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

7 DAY FORECAST

THU 25/34 WINTY MIX AND SNOW	FRI 27/32 WINDY SNOW	SAT 19/35 MOSTLY SUNNY	SUN 23/43 MOSTLY SUNNY	MON 25/45 MOSTLY SUNNY	TUE 24/47 NOT AS COLD	WED 30/56 WINDY AND WARMER
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⇒ OBITUARIES

Eddie Lee May

Aug. 1, 1958 - Feb. 22, 2022

Eddie Lee May, 63, of Noblesville, passed away on Tue., Feb. 22, 2022 at his home.

He was born on Aug. 1, 1958 to Jennings and Dorothy (Brown) May in Noblesville, Ind.

Mr. May proudly served in the United States Army. He was a roofer and a painter, and also worked for Firestone, Kenley's Grocery Store, and as a Dog Catcher for Noblesville throughout his life.

Mr. May was a member of the VFW, Eagles, and American Legion, where he was a member of the honor guard. He enjoyed watching Colts Football, Cubs Baseball, IU Basketball, and NASCAR. He liked to go fishing, play shuffle board, and throw darts.

Survivors include his wife, Sally May; daughter, Jennifer May; sons Jake May and Jason Shadoan; step-daughter, Misty White; siblings Bonnie (Mike) Harris, Terry (Rene) May, Jay (Myra) May and Sandra (Alan) Kuklenski; and grandchildren Samantha, Lydia, Ian and Arya.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his siblings, Bill May, Dave Shadoan and Judy King.

Services are scheduled to be held at 2 p.m. on Mon., Feb. 28, 2022 at Randall & Roberts Funeral Home, 1150 Logan Street in Noblesville. Visitation is scheduled to be held from 12 p.m. to the time of service at the funeral home. Burial will be at Cicero Cemetery in Cicero.

Memorial contributions may be made to Randall & Roberts Funeral Home to help with funeral expenses.

Condolences can be made online at www.randallroberts.com.



High On Humor



DICK WOLFSIE
Funny Bone

Over the years, several of my sports heroes have had their careers tarnished following allegations they were using performance-improvement drugs. During the recent Olympics, several athletes were similarly accused.

As a newspaper columnist, I am proud of what I have written, unassisted by any humor-enhancing drugs or whimsy-producing substances. Many humor columnists have on their shelves at home, Milton Berle's Personal Jokebook, the 12-volume Complete Works of Henny Youngman and the Acapulco Gold of humor: Bob Hope's Greatest One-Liners (unabridged). Yes, I was once a weak person, making it tough to deal with temptation over the years. There was a period in my life when I constantly wondered where my next laugh was coming from. I found myself in a kind of comic abyss. I hung around Barnes and Noble and Borders. I haunted Books-A-Million, where I knew I could buy cracks at a good price.

At one point, I even toyed with Half-Price Books, but you never know what you are buying at a place like that. Is the humor pure, or is it cut with bad stuff? I had a friend who overdosed on The Pocket Rodney Dangerfield back in the '70s. He finally got caught doing Dangerfield jokes in a stand-up routine in a Louisville comedy club. He was kicked off stage. Talk about no respect.

Others may look at my work and wonder: How did he stay on top of his game for so long? He's 75 and has been writing his column for almost 25 years. Maybe he's hooked on something. Tom Brady is hanging up his pads. Maybe Wolfsie should hang up his gags.

Once you are dependent on other people's humor, it's hard to kick the habit. You may think you have conquered your demons, but before long you are hiding Woody Allen quips on index cards in your office desk drawer or sticking Post-It Notes with Jeff Foxworthy wisecracks on your desk lamp. That was me some 20 years ago.

When I first appeared on TV, I also watched old Jerry Lewis movies and I mimicked a few of his routines on camera. Then one day I just stopped. I went cold jerky.

As I write my 1,100th column, I am proud of what I have accomplished. There were times when I almost peeked at an Andy Rooney compilation of essays. I once took a Dave Barry book off my shelf, but I never opened it.

Other humorists have emailed to ask me for advice on how to quit pilfering jokes. I created a short quiz to assess their susceptibility to stealing from others. Here are two sample questions, to assess their chances of a relapse.

I just got back from a pleasure trip.

- I went to Vegas.
- My wife and I cruised to Bermuda.
- I took my mother-in-law to the airport.

My wife ran after the garbage truck. "Am I too late for a pick-up?" she screamed.

- Yes, and we are not permitted to turn around.
- No, just set it by the curb.
- Of course not, jump in.

Anyone who answered C to both questions is on a slippery path. They are apparently too weak to resist cheap zingers and one-liners, often stolen from legendary humorists. As of this week, I will have not yielded to temptation for 6,752 days. But tomorrow I am going to begin reading Mel Brooks' autobiography. Wish me luck.

- Dick Wolfsie spent his career sharing his humor, stories and video essays on television, radio and in newspapers. His columns appear weekly in The Paper of Montgomery County. E-mail Dick at Wolfsie@aol.com.

Local Students Named on Ohio University Fall 2021 Dean's List



More than 5,000 students qualified for the fall semester 2021 Dean's List at Ohio University, including main and regional campuses.

The dean's list includes the following Hamilton County students:

- College of Arts and Sciences student Ashlynn Gauze of Noblesville
- College of Business student Amanda Warren of Fishers
- Gladys W. and David H. Patton College of Education student Morgan Croaning of Carmel
- College of Health Sciences and Professions student Sydney Longstreth of Carmel
- College of Health Sciences and Professions student Nicole Powers of

Carmel

- College of Health Sciences and Professions student Halli Siwik of Fishers
- Honors Tutorial College student Skylar Kellogg of Indianapolis

Over 40 states were represented on the Dean's List, including: Arizona, Connecticut, California, Florida, Illinois, Rhode Island, Texas and Ohio. Students also represented Ireland, India, China, Oman and Switzerland.

Ohio students must earn at least a 3.5 grade point average for the semester with a schedule of classes totaling at least 15 hours, 12 of which were taken for letter grades, to achieve this distinction.

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Reflecting on Sportsmanship with Andy Griffith



KENNY THOMPSON

One of my earliest examples of sportsmanship didn't come from my Bronco League baseball team or my Murdock Elementary football and basketball teams.

I like to watch reruns of the Andy Griffith Show whenever possible, preferably the black and white episodes. One that stands out to me was called "Medal for Opie," which originally aired 60 years ago.

Ron Howard may be best known today as an Oscar-winning director but he was a heck of a child and young adult actor ("Happy Days," "American Graffiti") as well. "Medal for Opie" was one of his finest moments. Opie is determined to enter the 50-yard dash at the Annual Sheriff's Boys Day races and is positive he's going to win a medal.

Not only does Opie have a dream that he wins multiple medals, he even prays to win. But sometimes, the answer to our prayers is no.

When Opie comes in last, he is devastated and walks away from not only his friends but his pa, the sheriff. Later at home, Andy tries to explain to his son about being a good loser. The lesson doesn't immediately sink in with Opie, who believes the medal was rightfully his and that the winner took it away from him.

What does sink in to Opie is Andy expressing his disappointment in

him. While still not understanding the concept of being a good loser, which isn't the same as liking to lose, Opie tells his father he doesn't want to disappoint him and he'll try to understand.

Walking through a handshake line and telling an opponent "good game" or something similar after a tough loss isn't easy. But it is a part of athletic competition, from grade school to the professional level.

That's why it's important that incidents like Michigan coach Juwan Howard's slap of a Wisconsin assistant become a teaching moment and not an excuse to end handshake lines.

We can debate whether a five-game suspension and \$40,000 fine for Howard, a \$10,000 fine for Wisconsin coach Greg Gard and one-game suspensions for three players was enough or too lenient.

Big Ten commissioner Kevin Warren made it clear in his decision, in conjunction with the two schools, that an incident like this must not happen again.

"Big Ten Conference coaches and student-athletes are expected to display the highest level of sportsmanship conduct," Warren said. "Our expectation is that the incident (Sunday) will provide our coaches and student-athletes with the opportunity to reflect, learn and move forward in a manner that demonstrates decorum and leadership on and off of the court."

2-22-22 and Purdue In celebration of Tuesday's "2s" day, let's take a look at the best Purdue basketball and football players to wear the numbers 2 and 22.

First up, men's basketball. Eric Hunter Jr.: The



Eric Hunter, Jr.

current owner of jersey No. 2, the senior has been playing some of his best basketball during the past month to put the Boilermakers in contention for their 25th Big Ten Conference championship. During the past 10 games, Hunter has averaged 9.3 points and shooting 58 percent from the field (34 of 58).

David Teague: Purdue's best to wear No. 2, Teague will be remembered for dropping 32 points on Indiana in 2007. Teague, along with Carl Landry, also will be fondly recalled for giving Matt Painter's coaching career at Purdue the jump start it needed with an NCAA tournament berth.

Joe Barry Carroll: The best to wear No. 22 at Purdue, Carroll was an All-American center who led the Boilermakers to their most recent Final Four in 1980. He also owns the only triple-double in Purdue men's basketball history with 16 points, 16 rebounds and a school record 11 blocked shots during his sophomore year against Arizona.

Cuonzo Martin: The Robin to Glenn Robinson's Batman while wearing No. 22 in the mid 1990s, Martin transformed himself by his junior season into one of the Big Ten's most lethal 3-point shooters.



Jaden Ivey

He set the school record for 3-point shooting percentage (.451) and averaged 18.4 points a game as a senior to earn first-team All-Big Ten honors.

Bob Ford: A team MVP as a junior in 1971, Ford scored 1,244 points and grabbed 648 rebounds in three seasons wearing No. 22.

Jaraan Cornell: The final No. 22 in the basketball countdown was a member of the 2000 Elite Eight team. Cornell left Purdue with a record 242 3-pointers made.

Purdue football has been fortunate to have several talented athletes wear No. 22, led by: Larry Burton: One of the fastest to ever play for the Boilermakers, he was an All-American in 1974 after leading the Big Ten in receptions (38) and receiving yards (702) to go along with four touchdowns.

Dave Rankin: The two-time All-American end (1939-40) was a member of Sports Illustrated's Silver Anniversary All-American team in 1965.

Stan Brown: A taller version of Rondale Moore, Brown led the Big Ten with 108 points in 1969. He set Big Ten records for kickoff returns for touchdowns (3 in 1970) as well as career kickoff returns for TDs (5) and career return

average (28.8).

Jimmy Young: A two-time All-Big Ten defensive back who earned a place in Boilermaker lore with his game-saving interception of Trent Green in the end zone with 16 seconds remaining in the 1992 Old Oaken Bucket game.

End of the line A Super Bowl berth with the Cincinnati Bengals capped the eight-year NFL career of former Purdue star Ricardo Allen, who announced his retirement on Instagram earlier this week.

"I've always wondered how it would feel giving up what most people would consider to be 'most of me' and that's being a professional athlete," Allen wrote. "But the truth is, I'm blessed to be able to say that it's been good. It could have been better with two Super Bowl rings, but who's complaining? Not me."

A defensive back, Allen retires with 11 interceptions and 333 tackles in his career, seven years of which was spent with the Atlanta Falcons.

His retirement leaves Purdue with nine players on active NFL rosters: Markus Bailey (Cincinnati), Derrick Barnes and David Blough (Detroit), Ja'Whaun Bentley (New England), Anthony Brown (Dallas), Dennis Kelly (Green Bay), Ryan Kerrigan (Philadelphia), Rondale Moore (Arizona) and Raheem Mostert (San Francisco).

That number will be boosted in 2022 with likely first-round pick George Karlaftis and possible second-round selection David Bell. Potential late round draft picks/free agents include linebacker Jaylan

Alexander and running back Zander Horvath.

Basketball notes Not since the 1987-88 Big Ten championship team went 26-2 has a Purdue team had a better record after 28 games than the current Boilermakers at 24-4.

Purdue has had 24-4 records or better five times in school history and in three of those seasons (1988, 1994, 1996) the Boilermakers earned a No. 1 seed in the NCAA tournament. Robbie Hummel's torn ACL cost Purdue a shot at a top seed in 2010 and a crushing loss at Michigan in 1987 handed the No. 1 seed and a favorable tourney start in Indianapolis to eventual national champion Indiana. ...

Jaden Ivey's 15 of 18 day at the free throw line against Rutgers were career highs. The 15 made free throws were the most for a Boilermaker since Willie Deane made 17 against Ohio State on Jan. 29, 2003. ...

If you're looking for trends to measure potential Purdue success the rest of the regular season and in the Big Ten/NCAA tournaments, the Boilermakers are 6-0 on Sundays and 23-1 on all days other than Thursday (1-3). ...

Trivia question: Against which Big Ten team does Purdue hold the most series victories? If you answered Northwestern, give yourself a gold star. The Boilermakers own 134 victories over the Wildcats as well as an 11-game winning streak against Northwestern.

- Kenny Thompson is the former sports editor for the Lafayette Journal & Courier and an award-winning journalist. He has covered Purdue athletics for many years.

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Senators Young, Braun Release Individual Statements on Russian Invasion of Ukraine

U.S. Senator Todd Young (R-Ind.), a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, issued the following statement regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine:



Sen. Todd Young

ed and resolute. Sanctions announced earlier this week by President Biden are a positive step, as are ongoing efforts to rally our NATO allies. We should immediately impose the strongest possible economic sanctions to make Putin a global outcast. We must cut off Russia from SWIFT and freeze the life of luxury enjoyed by Putin and his oligarchs.

"Leaders of the free world must awaken to the



Sen. Mike Braun

challenges that come with the return of great power conflict and a multipolar world. With Russia and China content to chart their own paths, despite the costs, we must examine what credible deterrence means – both for Putin in Moscow and Xi in Beijing. The goal should not be preparing for the next response, but to deter attacks in the first place.

"The stakes extend beyond Europe, as China

is watching us and clearly has the same ambitions for Taiwan. It is essential that America sends an unequivocal message: invading sovereign, democratic nations will never be tolerated."

Senator Mike Braun (R-Ind.) released the following statement:

"Though I hoped the administration would proactively shut down Russian energy assets such as Nord Stream 2 to deter further aggression as a majority of Senators voted to do, Putin and his cronies must now be punished with severe economic consequences for their unjustified invasion of Ukraine. The U.S. must unleash independent American energy production to lessen the pain of rising fuel prices on Americans, and the U.S. must be watchful to avoid endangering U.S. troops by involving them further in this volatile situation."

Police to Start Cracking Down on Dangerous, Aggressive Driving

Starting this week, more than 200 state and local law enforcement agencies will be stepping up patrols to help curb dangerous and aggressive driving. The enforcement campaign will run from Friday, Feb. 25, 2022, through Monday, March 21, 2022.

The safety initiative is designed to reduce crashes and traffic fatalities and to promote safe driving around St. Patrick's Day and the NCAA Tournament. It also comes at a time when roadway deaths continue to climb across the state and nation.

In response, officers will be conducting high-visibility patrols over the next several weeks, showing zero tolerance for anyone driving aggressively, over the speed limit or under the influence. The extra enforcement is funded through National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) grants administered by the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI).

"Last year, Indiana saw more traffic fatalities than we've seen in over a decade, and it doesn't appear to be improving," said Devon McDonald, ICJI Executive Director. "So far this year, fatal crashes in Indiana have claimed the lives of 2.5 people every day on average with over 100 lives lost already. It's going to take an all-hands-on-deck approach to turn this around."

Nationwide, traffic fatalities continued to rise at a record pace last year, according to newly released federal data. NHTSA projects that an estimated 31,720 people were killed on U.S. roadways in the first nine months of 2021,

a 12% increase from the same period in 2020.

In Indiana, preliminary data from ICJI shows that 941 people died in fatal crashes last year. While that's up 5% from 2020, it's a 16% increase from pre-pandemic 2019 and represents the highest number of traffic fatalities since 2005.

Alcohol and drug impairment, distracted driving, speeding and not wearing seat belts are some of the leading causes behind the rise in fatalities.

"We cannot and should not tolerate the continuing crisis on our roadways," said Robert Duckworth, ICJI Traffic Safety Director. "Every driver and vehicle occupant has a responsibility when traveling. We need more people to take this seriously and to drive like their life depends on it – because it does."

Throughout the campaign, state and local officials will be encouraging motorists to focus on safe driving and follow the rules of the road. This means wearing a seat belt at all times, driving sober, watching for pedestrians, driving distraction-free and obeying all posted speed limits.

However, some precautions should be taken before getting behind the wheel. For plans that involve alcohol, designate a sober driver ahead of time or plan to use public transportation or a ride service to get home safely.

Motorists are encouraged to call 911 if they encounter an impaired or unsafe driver on the road.

Visit www.cji.in.gov to learn more about the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute.

Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra Presents "Greetings from Japan" Featuring Puccini's Madame Butterfly March 10-12

The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra takes audiences on a delightful musical journey to Japan in a series of concerts March 10-12 at the Hilbert Circle Theatre. Led by Artistic Advisor Jun Märkl, vocalists from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music will perform the heartbreakingly beautiful Act III of Puccini's Madame Butterfly. Soloists include Alejandra Villarreal Martinez (Cio-Cio San), Deepa Johnny (Suzuki), Antoinette Pompe van Meerdervoort (Kate Pinkerton), Michael Deshield (Pinkerton), and Jeremiah Sanders (Sharpless). The collaboration deepens the ISO's strong connection with the IU Jacobs School of Music, which includes a Conducting Fellowship program to support conducting students.

A favorite of opera lovers throughout the

world, Puccini regarded Madame Butterfly as his masterpiece. The tragic story of unrequited love features soaring arias that explore hope, betrayal, and anguish. Act III offers the ideal opportunity to showcase the talents of IU music students.

The program also includes Circulating Ocean by Toshio Hosokawa, one of Japan's most eminent living composers. The work explores the idea of the flow and changing nature of water. Born in Hiroshima, Hosokawa was initially inspired by Western art music from Schubert to Schoenberg. His work increasingly suggests a dialogue between ceremonial music and concert music.

The dates and times for the concerts are:

- 11 a.m. Thursday, March 10
- 8 p.m. Friday, March 11
- 5:30 p.m. Saturday, March 12

Conductor Jun Märkl is recognized as a devoted advocate of both symphonic and operatic Germanic repertoire, and as a rare specialist for his idiomatic explorations of the French impressionist composers. He has been appointed Music Director of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, Principal Guest Conductor for the Oregon Symphony, Artistic Advisor for Taiwan National Symphony Orchestra, and Principal Guest Conductor of the Residentie Orkest, The Hague from 2021 on. He appears as a regular guest with the world's leading orchestras, having conducted the Czech Philharmonic, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Tonhalle Orchester Zurich, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Boston

Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, the NHK Symphony Orchestra Tokyo and many others.

The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, at home and thriving in the heart of Indianapolis, offers an exceptional artistic and musical experience. The orchestra is open to all and dedicated to creating an inclusive and innovative experiential environment that is inspiring, educational, and welcoming. The ISO celebrates historically beloved performances while engaging audiences by introducing new voices through programming including the DeHaan Classical Series, the Printing Partners Pops Series, the holiday traditions of AES Indiana Yuletide Celebration and the popular Bank of America Film Series. For more information, visit www.indianapolisymphony.org.

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USDA Commits \$215 Million to Bolster the American Food Supply Chain

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that USDA is making available up to \$215 million in grants and other support to expand meat and poultry processing options, strengthen the food supply chain, and create jobs and economic opportunities in rural areas. Today's funding opportunity, announced on the one-year anniversary of President Biden's Executive Order 14017 "America's Supply Chains", is one of many actions that USDA is taking to expand processing capacity and increase competition in meat and poultry processing to make agricultural markets more accessible, fair, competitive, and resilient for American farmers and ranchers.

"For too long, ranchers and processors have seen the value and the opportunities they work so hard to create move away from the rural communities where they live and operate," Vilsack said. "Under the leadership of President Biden and Vice President Harris, USDA is committed to making investments to support economic systems where the wealth created in rural areas stays in rural areas. The funding we're announcing today ultimately will help us give farmers and ranchers a fair shake and strengthen supply chains while developing options to deliver food produced closer to home for families."

USDA Rural Development will make \$150 million available in grants to fund startup and expansion activities in the meat and poultry processing sector. USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) will provide another \$40 million for workforce development and training, and the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will provide \$25 million to offer technical assistance to grant applicants and others seeking

resources related to meat and poultry processing. These new opportunities are part of the Biden-Harris Administration's historic commitment to fight monopolization and promote competition across the economy. They are also aligned with USDA's vision of a food system that supports health and ensures producers receive a fair share of the food dollar while advancing equity and combating the climate crisis.

USDA Rural Development is making \$150 million of American Rescue Plan Act funding available through the Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion Program (MPPEP). USDA is offering grants of up to \$25 million each to expand processing capacity through a variety of activities, including but not limited to construction, expansion of existing facilities, and acquisition of equipment.

USDA encourages applications that benefit smaller farms and ranches, new and beginning farmers and ranchers, Tribes and tribal producers, socially disadvantaged producers, military veteran producers, and underserved communities.

USDA will host two informational webinars to provide information on MPPEP. The first, Feb. 28 at 2 p.m. Eastern Time, will provide an overview of the program. The second, March 7 at 2 p.m. Eastern Time, will cover application requirements. Registration information for the webinars is available on the MPPEP website.

For additional information, applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to visit the MPPEP website: www.rd.usda.gov/mppep. Questions may be submitted through the website or sent to MPPEP@usda.gov. All application materials can be found at www.rd.usda.gov/mppep or at

www.grants.gov. Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on April 11, 2022, through www.grants.gov. USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) will invest an additional \$40 million through existing workforce development programs to provide a pipeline of well-trained workers to meet the demand for both current processors and increased independent processing capacity. The primary investment will be through competitive grants to support workforce training at community, junior and technical colleges with programs specifically for meat and poultry processing. A Request for Applications will be published in April 2022. Additional investments will leverage existing regional USDA education and Extension networks and establish new, or supplement select existing, Centers of Excellence at Minority-serving Institutions focused on meat and poultry research, education and training. Each of these investments is designed to deliver needed support more quickly. Additional investments, either through the same or new programs and partnerships, are expected later this year. To sign up for notifications of these and other NIFA funding opportunities, visit the NIFA website.

USDA expects to continue working with the Department of Labor to support and encourage the development of good jobs in the agricultural sector, including jobs in meat and poultry processing. USDA also is helping to ensure that entities proposing independent meat and poultry processing projects through the Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion Program (MPPEP) have full service technical assistance support from application

through post-award. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will provide approximately \$25 million in American Rescue Plan funding to establish partnerships with organizations that will provide technical assistance to MPPEP applicants, recent recipients and future applicants of the Meat and Poultry Inspection Readiness Grant program, and to entities who require general guidance and resources on meat and poultry processing. Of the \$25 million, AMS will utilize \$10 million to implement the first phase of support by establishing an initial technical assistance network and lead coordinator. More information about the technical assistance is available at the Meat and Poultry Supply Chain website. USDA's one-year supply chain report, also published today, assesses the opportunities, including today's significant

investment in the meat and poultry sector, that USDA, other Federal agencies and Congress have made over the long-term to infuse stability, improve equity, diversify and expand infrastructure and markets, and transform the food system. This funding announcement follows the Biden-Harris Administration's September 2021 announcement about the steps it is taking to address concentration in the meat-processing industry and the January 2022 announcement about an Action Plan for a Fairer, More Competitive, and More Resilient Meat and Poultry Supply Chain. It also follows USDA's December 2021 announcement of \$100 million for guaranteed loans on top of the previously announced \$500 million investment to expand meat and poultry processing capacity. See all recent actions taken to support the American food supply chain on

www.usda.gov/meat. As Co-Chair of the Biden-Harris Administration's Supply Chain Disruptions Task Force, Secretary Vilsack and USDA have brought together industry, labor and federal partners to address the short-term supply chain disruptions arising from the Administration's strong economic recovery. This is one of several key steps that USDA is taking to build a more resilient supply chain and better food system and to increase competition in agricultural markets. These steps are pursuant to President Biden's Executive Order on Promoting Competition in the American Economy and his Executive Order on America's Supply Chains. This initiative will support key supply chain infrastructure investments to expand and scale existing capacity, as well as support long-term investments in new operations.



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Over 800k Hoosiers Healthier as They Swap Long Commutes for WFH

A recent study by Swiss economists came to the demotivating conclusion that long commutes destroy happiness. Up until this study's release, the conventional wisdom among other economists was that long commutes did not make people unhappier than others – rather, based on the economic principle of rational choices, they saw commuting as a tradeoff that you are prepared to put up with the tediousness of long-distance travel in order to do a job that not only remunerates you well, but also improves your general wellbeing. But it turns out – they were wrong – people who undertake regular long commutes are just plain

miserable. The Swiss economists' hypothesis has been further reinforced by subsequent research which shows that long commutes can have significant effects on people's physical health too. A person's likelihood of becoming obese increases by 6% for every hour spent commuting, as well as an increased risk of high blood pressure. Long commute times are linked to factors like insufficient physical activity, and poor sleep habits. As our post-pandemic world has seen a remarkable shift in employees moving to a WFH or hybrid model, it appears millions of workers across the country are reaping the mental and physical health benefits

of no longer having to commute. Indeed, 1AND1 Life, a mental health and wellness performance company, conducted an analysis of official data from County Health Rankings, and calculated how many workers in each state have reduced their risk of developing mental and physical problems, such as obesity, high blood pressure, stress and fatigue, by choosing to work from home instead. The study revealed that a whopping 800k Hoosiers who previously commuted over an hour per day before the pandemic, are now working from home and are living healthier lives. When broken down by

state, almost 5 million Californians have reaped the mental and physical benefits of WFH since the pandemic started. Even in Wyoming, which is the least populated in America, over 73,000 employees who previously spent a minimum of 20 hours behind the wheel each week are now WFH. A survey of 1,000 employees by 1AND1 Life revealed that more than half (58%) said the biggest benefit of not having to commute to the workplace is being able to spend more time with family (like having breakfast together), while 20% said they're getting in more hours of sleep each night. This makes sense considering the chain of

negative events that can occur at work if you've had a poor night's sleep previously! Another 14% said they now have more time to get household chores done before the day starts when there's no work commute involved. And nearly 1 in 10 love the added benefit of being able to have a proper workout in the morning. It seems we are a nation of big sleepers as 46% of respondents say they use this extra time of not having to travel, to sleep in a bit longer, while 20% spend it making a healthy breakfast before work. Seventeen percent do housework during this time and another 17% get in their daily workout. Surprisingly, however,

er, nearly 1 in 5 (18%) respondents said they actually miss commuting long distances to and from work. And almost half (45%) of those who still have long commutes said weight gain concerns them, given that studies show a direct link between these two lifestyle factors. 'Of course, there's no denying that the pandemic has had devastating effects on the lives on many Americans,' Thomas Drew, Co-Founder & President of 1AND1 Life Inc. 'On a more positive note, however, there have been unexpected health benefits as a result of the change in peoples' work habits, contributing to an overall happier, healthier lifestyle.'

BETSY From Page A1

melindiana.com
 8. Join the Turntable Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. Thursdays at Primeval Brewing in downtown Noblesville, where folks bring their favorite vinyl to play on the provided turntable.
 9. Join Downtown Noblesville merchants for the annual Sip and Shop, which promotes Shop Small, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. March 4 in downtown Noblesville.
 10. Enjoy March First Friday with live music and "Boosting the Signal" Women's History in Art, art show opening, in Gal's Guide to the Galaxy Library from noon to 9 p.m. March 4 at the Nickel Plate Arts Campus in Noblesville. Also, visit

the Noblesville Schools' Young Artists exhibit at First Friday and throughout March.
 11. Check out the art at the Hamilton County Artists' Association, which will offer its next HCAA First Friday event 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. March 4 at the Birdie Gallery, 195 S. Fifth St., in downtown Noblesville, this month featuring an award ceremony for the inaugural Midwest Juried Art Exhibit for which accepted mediums were oil, acrylic, watercolor, pastel, charcoal, pencil, ink and mixed media. The Best of Show will be awarded \$1,000 with merit awards for best in categories. Visit www.hcaa-in.org/

12. Get up your courage for the Nefarious Ghost Walk from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. March 4 in downtown Noblesville with reservations.
 13. Join the 2022 Elks Challenge benefiting Fueled for School from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. March 6 at TopGolf in Fishers, with entry \$600 per team of up to six players, includes buffet silent auction, drawing and more.
 14. Noblesville Miller Palooza Aloha-style fundraiser to benefit Noblesville Schools Education Foundation is March 4 at Embassy Suites in Noblesville, with tickets at \$125 each, at noblesvilleschools.org/foundation.
 15. Shop consignment

at the Spring 2022 Indy Kids Mega Pop-Up Sale March 10-12 at Finch Creek Fieldhouse in Noblesville.
 16. Join the Saint Patrick's Weekend Comedy Extravaganza at 7:30 p.m. March 11-12 at The Cat in Carmel, featuring Dave Dugan, Irish dancers, music and more, with tickets at eventbrite.com.
 17. Enjoy Jai Baker 3 at 1205 Distillery St. Paddy's Day gathering from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. March 11 at the Distillery.
 18. Climb aboard the Nickel Plate Shamrock Express train excursions on March 12 at Forest Park for family and adult-only 65-minute trips 1950s vintage coach and dining cars. Irish music

will fill the historic cars with special fortunes and a visit from a leprechaun who will give chocolate coins from his pot of gold.
 19. Enjoy the sounds of Noblesville Schools' many choirs -- from middle school to NHS Singers -- during a District Show Choir Concert at 7 p.m. March 17 at Noblesville School.
 20. The Belfry Theatre presents "The Lilies of the Field," by F. Andrew Leslie from the novel by William E. Barrett, March 18-27, at Ivy Tech Hamilton County in Noblesville, with Linnéa Leatherman directing.
 21. Shop at Whale of a Sale Upscale Children's Consignment Event March 24-27 at Grand

Park Sports Campus in Westfield.
 22. Main Street Productions presents "Flaming Idiots" by Tom Rooney, at Basile Westfield Playhouse, March 31-April 10, directed by Brian Nichols.
 23. TopGolf Tournament April 7 at TopGolf Fishers to benefit the Boys & Girls Club.
 24. Carmel Community Players presents "The Fantasticks" musical, April directed by Rich Phipps.
 25. Auditions for The Belfry Theatre's "Drinking Habits" comedy are April 24-25 at the theater in Noblesville.
 - Contact Betsy Reason at Betsy@thetimes24-7.com

RACES From Page A1

scholarships."
 Since its inception, the annual Bed Race has been generously title sponsored by Darlington Snacks. "The Bed Race has always been an exciting event for Darlington as a company to rally around and help both organizations be successful in their endeavors. Their events help support and develop the leadership skills of youth in the community. Both organizations are great assets for local families," stated Darlington Snacks CEO, Phil Hockemeyer. "We

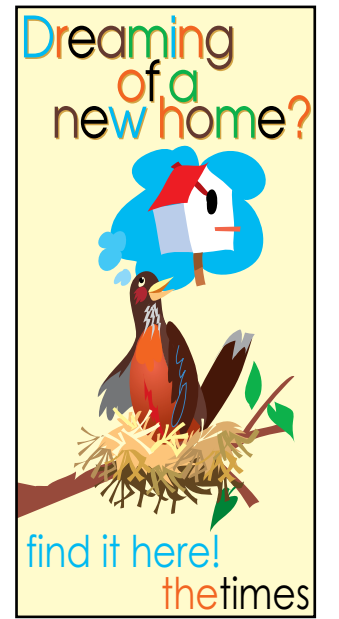
envision ourselves supporting this fun community event for years to come."
 New in 2022, to honor the 10th year of the 'Greatest Spectacle in Bed Racing', organizations made the decision to reach out to the community for help to illustrate the event through the renderings of a commemorative logo. Thanks to sponsor Peterson Architecture, all ages are invited to participate in a T-shirt design contest with a \$150 cash prize to the winner. The contest is currently open for entries

through March 31st, and a winner will be chosen by a fan favorite, head-to-head vote on BGCN's Facebook page. More information can be found online at BGCNI.org. Sponsorship and partnership opportunities to support the event are now available, and teams are able to reserve their spot in the 10th annual event at BGCNI.org. For information, questions and requests, contact BGCN Director of Club Operations, Abigail Stutesman, at astutesman@bgcni.org.

SPARTZ From Page A1

be!"
 Weeks of negotiations and talks between the Biden administration, the Ukrainian government, the Russian government and NATO collapsed on Wednesday evening as Russian military forces deployed out of the occupied regions of Luhansk and Donetsk and into Ukraine itself.
 The Biden administration, in conjunction with EU member states, announced a sweeping, unprecedented set of sanctions targeting Russian

oligarchs, key members of Vladimir Putin's inner-circle, and Russian banks and businesses. The administration has maintained that US forces will not engage with Russian troops in Ukraine, but in a press conference on Thursday to announce the new set of sanctions, President Biden reiterated the United States commitment to Article 5 of the NATO treaty, which requires all NATO members to consider an attack on one member to be an attack against all members.



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FRIDAY Business Notes and NEWS DAY

Friday, Feb. 25, 2022

A7

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NFIB State Director: Our Small Business Have Suffered Enough From Pandemic

NFIB, the National Federation of Independent Business here in Indiana, is urging lawmakers to pass sensible legislation that would reduce the tax burden on Hoosier small businesses who are already suffering from the continuing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. NFIB, which represents nearly 11,000 small business owners across the state, supports HB 1002, which is being heard by the Senate Tax and Fiscal Policy Committee tomorrow. The legislation would help entrepreneurs across the state by reducing the cost of purchasing and operating production equipment and machinery in Indiana. The bill would also reduce the individual income tax rate from 3.23% to 3%. This would benefit all taxpayers, especially small businesses that operate as pass-through entities and pay taxes at the individual rate.

State Director Natalie Robinson is testifying in support of this bill at 9 am on Tuesday February 15th in room 431.

Here's why this bill matters to small business owners across Indiana:

In Anderson, John Raine

of Raine Tactical Gear encourages legislators to let entrepreneurs make their own decisions on how to spend their own hard-earned money. Raine Tactical has been in business since 1986. John's small business was the first to produce gear with nylon and has been used in every military operation since Grenada. Their motto is to build a well-engineered product like a tank.

"What Indiana small business owners need right now is to have the flexibility to spend their income where it makes the most sense. Legislators need to understand that their local mom and pop entrepreneurs are the backbone of their community. They should trust that we will spend our money wisely, and what we need right now is to be able to invest back in our workforce. Instead of paying the government more in taxes on equipment, we could take that money to increase our wages or hire a new employee," said John Raine. "Over time, these tax cuts will pay for themselves."

Military members returning from the front lines regularly

tell John that his gear is reused and not thrown out, giving our U.S. service members the best bang for their buck.

According to a recent NFIB survey, a historic number of small businesses are struggling to increase their workforce. Half of all small business owners have reported raising compensation, up two points from December and a 48-year record high. Open positions are at record levels. About half of small businesses say they have already raised wages to hire workers and other 27% plan to in the next 3 months.

"This legislation would provide small business owners across the state with much-needed tax relief. They're facing historic workforce shortages and the highest inflation levels in 40 years. Tax savings would free up funds to help main street better compete with big business in this tight labor market and adjust to the increased cost to do business," said Natalie Robinson, NFIB State Director in Indiana. "Indiana's business personal property tax is a levy on small business, and many have been bearing the bunt of this for years."

Nominations Sought For Statewide Human Resources Award

The Indiana Chamber of Commerce is accepting nominations for the 2022 Ogletree Deakins Human Resources Professional of the Year Award, which will be presented at the 58th Annual Indiana HR Conference, May 4-6 at the Indiana Convention Center.

The award is open to all full-time human resources practitioners in Indiana. Individuals who have made significant contributions to their organization over the past year through implementation of best practices, organization design and effectiveness, and alignment and accomplishment of the strategic direction of their company are encouraged to apply. Nominees for Ogletree Deakins HR Professional of the Year should also have a proven track record of giving back to the community and the HR profession.

"HR professionals are increasingly expected to administer a multitude of tasks at their respective organizations," says Indiana Chamber President Kevin Brinegar. "Throw in the challenges of the pandemic and

a talent shortage and you have the makings of a very difficult job. We'll be especially excited to recognize an HR star this year."

Nominations can be made via self-nomination or by a peer, subordinate, supervisor or other, but must be accompanied by a sponsorship letter from the nominee's organization.

The award winner will be announced during the 2022 Human Resources Awards Luncheon on May 6 at the Indiana Convention Center.

Deadline for nominations is March 4. Submissions can be made at www.indianachamber.com/hrpro. Please send direct questions to Jesse Brothers at jbrothers@indianachamber.com.

Three industry leaders shared the award in 2021: Geoff Gailley, vice president of human resources at Miller Pipeline in Indianapolis; Melissa Hubler, senior manager of human resources at Subaru of Indiana Automotive (SIA) in Lafayette; and Jean C. Neel, vice president of corporate affairs at Haynes International, Inc. in Kokomo.

Braun, Burr Lead Senate Colleagues In Preserving Independent Contractor Classification

Senator Mike Braun and Senator Richard Burr, Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, are leading an amicus brief to the National Labor Relations Board regarding The Atlanta Opera, Inc. 371 NLRB No. 45 (2021), which may upend the established precedent for classifying workers as independent contractors under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). They are joined by Senators John Barrasso, Cynthia Lummis, James Lankford, Ted Cruz, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Jerry Moran, Rand Paul, Bill

Hagerty, Roger Marshall, and Tim Scott.

This action by the National Labor Relations Board is a thinly-veiled attempt to institute worker classification changes contained within the Protecting the Right to Organize ("PRO") Act that Congress could not enact. In August, Senator Braun anticipated that supporters of the PRO Act would "enact the remaining portions of the PRO Act by regulatory fiat through the NLRB," which is now under Democrat control.

The Senators write: "The Amici are the 12 under-

signed United States Senators that are concerned with the potential attempt by the National Labor Relation Board ("NLRB" or the "Board") to revise the definition of independent contractor under the National Labor Relations Act ("NLRA" or "Act"). Such a revision would constitute significant overreach and circumvention of Congress. Further, the questions posed by the Board are of great importance to our constituents, as the Board's determination will have both immediate and long-term effects on millions of workers currently classified as indepen-

dent contractors."

In the House of Representatives, Republican Study Committee Chairman Banks (IN-03), Rep. Rick Allen (GA-12), and Ranking Member Virginia Foxx (NC-5) are also leading an amicus brief on this case. They are joined by Madison Cawthorn (NC-11), Jeff Duncan (SC-03), Scott Perry (PA-10), Glenn Grothman (WI-06), Tim Walberg (MI-07), Elise Stefanik (NY-21), Marinette Miller-Meeks, M.D. (IA-02), Chris Jacobs (NY-27), Michelle Steel (CA-48), Bob Good (VA-05), Scott Fitzgerald (WI-05), Byron

Donalds (FL-19), Glenn 'GT' Thompson (PA-15), John Rose (TN-06), Jay Obernolte (CA-08), Ralph Norman (SC-05), Debbie Lesko (AZ-08), Dan Bishop (NC-09), Tom McClintock (CA-04), Russ Fulcher (ID-01), Burgess Owens (UT-04), Ted Budd (NC-13), Diana Harshbarger (TN-01), and Buddy Carter (GA-01).

Read the full amicus brief <https://www.braun.senate.gov/sites/default/files/2022-02/Senate%20NLRB%20Amicus%20Brief%20on%20Worker%20Classification%20Standard%202.10.22.pdf>

Materials Prices Soar 20 Percent Between January 2021 And January 2022

Prices of construction materials jumped more than 20 percent from January 2021 to January 2022, according to an analysis by the Associated General Contractors of America of government data released today. The association recently posted a new edition of its Construction Inflation Alert, a report to inform project owners, officials, and others about the challenges volatile materials costs, supply chain disruptions, and labor shortages posed for construction firms.

"Unfortunately, there has been no letup early this year in the extreme cost runup that contractors endured in 2021," said Ken Simonson, the associ-

ation's chief economist. "They are apparently passing on more of those costs but will have a continuing challenge in getting timely deliveries and finding enough workers."

The producer price index for inputs to new nonresidential construction—the prices charged by goods producers and service providers such as distributors and transportation firms—increased by 2.6 percent from December to January and 20.3 percent over the past 12 months. In comparison, the index for new nonresidential construction—a measure of what contractors say they would charge to erect five types of nonresidential

buildings—climbed by 3.8 percent for the month and 16.5 percent from a year earlier.

A wide range of inputs contributed to the more than 20 percent jump in the cost index, Simonson noted. The price index for steel mill products soared 112.7 percent over 12 months despite declining 1.6 percent in January. The index for plastic construction products climbed 1.8 percent for the month and 35.0 percent over 12 months. The index for diesel fuel jumped 5.1 percent in January and 56.5 percent for the year. The index for aluminum mill shapes jumped 5.6 percent in January and 32.7 percent over 12 months, while

the index for copper and brass mill shapes rose 4.1 percent in January and 24.8 percent over the year. Architectural coatings such as paint had an unusually large price gain of 9.0 percent in January and 24.3 percent over 12 months. The index for lumber and plywood leaped 15.4 percent for the month and 21.1 percent year-over-year. Other inputs with double-digit increases for the past 12 months include insulation, 19.2 percent; trucking, 18.3 percent; and construction machinery and equipment, 11.4 percent.

Association officials said construction firms are being squeezed by increases costs for

materials and labor shortages. They urged federal officials to take additional steps to address supply chain disruptions and rising materials prices. These include continuing to remove costly tariffs on key construction components.

"Spiking materials prices are making it challenging for most firms to profit from any increases in demand for new construction projects," said Stephen E. Sandherr, the association's chief executive officer. "Left unabated, these price increases will undermine the economic case for many development projects and limit the positive impacts of the new infrastructure bill."



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FRIDAY

Voice of our PEOPLE

Save The Spoon

Regardless of what you're hungry for, the next time you dine out, I'm going to change the way you look at your next meal. There's something you've enjoyed at every feeding that is fast becoming extinct.

No, it's not the snowy egret or the flamingo. Although I've been told they both taste like chicken, few of us have dined on those through the years. What I've noticed missing is actually not on the plate. It is next to it.

Gone, gone perhaps forever, is the spoon.

Have you noticed? It took my friend, Brian, to bring it to my attention. He likes sweetener in his iced tea, and goes livid every time he has to stir his beverage with a knife or fork. Each time we dine at a restaurant, he sets the tone

for indigestion when he asks the waiter to retrieve a tea-spoon for his drink.

"What's a guys supposed to do to get a spoon around here?"

The spoon used to be the mainstay of our table setting. It is the oldest of our utensil trinity. The fork wasn't innovated until conceived by the Ancient Greeks and Persians in the fourth century. The knife dates way back 1.8 million years when early humans discovered how hard it was to pierce dinosaur flesh with chop sticks.

Nevertheless, we were all gatherers of food long before we became meat eaters, and



JOHN MARLOWE
With the Grain

let's face it, there's little reason to stab a raspberry.

The word itself gives us a clue to its antediluvian ancestry. "Spoon" is derived from the Scandi-navian/German "Span", which means "chip of wood".

I imagine that our caveman forerunners finally got tired of scooping Ranch™ dip with their fingers at their Super Bowl™ parties.

The spoon is the most elegant of our dinnerware. It is smooth, with inviting lines and soft rounded edges. It is graceful and welcoming — almost intimate. Lovers "spoon".

And when we snuggle, front to back, with our knees folded inside the bend of our partner's

knees, that's called "spooning".

Split up, and we are knifed in the back.

We give babies spoons! Who wants to be impaled by flying peas? We don't introduce babies to forks until age 15 months, and let kids have knives until they are much older ... age seventeen, in some cases.

Today, unroll the napkin shrouding your dinnerware next time you eat out, and you will normally find only a knife and fork. Often, you'll find a knife and two forks, which is awfully pretentious. I've discovered very little food that is so delicious that we need to shovel it in with both hands.

The only time a restaurant brings a spoon these days is if you order the soup. Even then, the utensil that arrives

looks more like a ladle, with a scoop so wide they must have pinched it from Carol Channing's silverware drawer.

I understand the reasoning. We have no one to blame but ourselves. We don't order soup like we did in the past. We have sacrificed elegance for efficiency. Restaurants must wash every utensil that is brought to the table, regardless if it is used or not.

Personally, at the fancy establishments that I frequent, I believe that if restaurant owners just understood how hard it is to scoop out the last remnants of ketchup from those little white cups, they'd bring spoons back immediately.

Stick a fork in it.

John O. Marlowe is an award-winning columnist for Sagamore News Media.

The Last Time That I Saw Harris

I almost deleted the e-mail, thinking it was spam, but lately I have nothing else to do, so I read everything. I didn't recognize the sender's address but I clicked on it, anyway. Maybe it was some rich guy in Uganda who wanted to send me a million dollars—after I send him \$5,000 for shipping and handling, of course. I didn't want to miss out on an offer like that.

I stared at the correspondence in disbelief. It wasn't from a chief financial officer in Africa. Or any kind of chief. It was from Harris, my freshman year roommate at college. The e-mail went something like this:

"Hi there! Remember me? Harris? Your long-lost roommate? I think the last time we saw each



DICK WOLFSIE
Life in a Nutshell

other was 1967. How have you been? I've been fine. I Googled you and found your phone number. I'll give you a call tonight and we can catch up.

Signed, Harris, class of '69

My mouth dropped open. I hadn't talked to this guy in 55 years—including the year we shared a dorm room. We didn't have a lot in

common. He was a night person and I was a morning person, which made for lousy roommates, although 14 years later that combination made for the start of a very successful marriage for me.

What would Harris and I talk about? How do you "catch up" with someone you never "caught" anything with in the first place? I was panic stricken. When my wife came home, I shared my concern.

"Mary Ellen, who is the last person in the world you'd think would email me?"

"Your cousin, Leo. He doesn't have a computer."

"No, it was an email from Harris. And he's calling me tonight."

"Harris? Your freshman roommate from col-

lege? That's wonderful. You two can talk about old times."

"I don't think so. We didn't have any old times."

About 8:30 the phone rang. "Hi, it's Harris. I hope I caught you at a good time. How have you been?"

"Let's pick a decade, Harris. I've really had some ups and downs." "You were always a comedian. So, what's been going on with you?"

"Well, I got married after college, we had a kid and I've been working for the last 40 years until I recently retired. What have you been up to?"

"Wow! That is an amazing coincidence. That's pretty much exactly what has been happening with me, also." (Looooooooooooong

pause.) Finally, Harris picked the conversation back up. "My wife's name is Sherrrie."

"My wife's name is Mary Ellen. I guess that ends those amazing coincidences right there." "Let's see...you don't have a dog named Hector, do you?"

"No, every dog we ever had is dead. I forgot to mention that, when you asked me what's been happening."

"How's the weather there?"

"Uh...since we last saw each other, there's been some global warming. Have you heard about it, Harris?"

"No, I live in Michigan now."

(Another long pause.)

Harris spoke again: "Hey, I gotta go. We could probably talk for-

ever. We should do this again."

"Harris, I'm afraid if we talk every half century, this was probably our last conversation."

"Well, it was fun to catch up with you, Eric."

"Eric? Wait, Harris, my name is Dick. Wasn't Eric your roommate sophomore year?"

"Oh! I'm sorry. Eric is my 8:45 call. It was fun talking to you, anyway. Just like old times."

"Yup, exactly like old times."

Dick Wolfsie spent his career sharing his humor, stories and video essays on television, radio and in newspapers. His columns appear weekly in The Paper of Montgomery County. E-mail Dick at Wolfsie@aol.com.

Ask Rusty – Swiss Immigrant Asks About Spouse Benefits

Dear Rusty: I am originally from Switzerland. I moved to the States, got married in 2012, and became a US Citizen in 2016. I never worked in the United States but have 44 years of Social Security contribution in Switzerland and have received a pension from there since I turned 62 (I'm now 64). Is it correct that I cannot apply for Social Security here in the States on my husband's account unless he is collecting his Social Security benefit? He will turn 62 this year but is still working and does not want to collect before 70.

Signed: Immigrant from Switzerland

Dear Immigrant:

Yes, it is correct that you cannot collect U.S. Social Security spousal benefits from your husband until he starts collecting his own Social Security



ASK Rusty
Social Security Advisor

benefit. As soon as your husband's benefits start, you can apply for your benefit as his spouse, even though you aren't eligible for U.S. Social Security on your own. As a U.S. Citizen and current legal resident of the United States, you are eligible for U.S. spousal benefits from your husband even though you spent most of your life as a resident of Switzerland.

Since you mentioned

Social Security Matters by AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor Russell Gloor

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your contributions to the Swiss social security program, I'd like to point out that there is a Social Security "totalization" agreement between the U.S. and Switzerland which permits using some of your Swiss credits to qualify for U.S. Social Security retirement benefits, but since you have never worked in the U.S. that bilateral agreement won't work for you. To use some of your Swiss

credits to get U.S. Social Security on your own, you would need to have at least six (6) credits from working in the U.S. in a job which contributed to the U.S. Social Security program. Unless you have at least 6 U.S. Social Security credits, you cannot use the bilateral agreement with Switzerland to get your own SS retirement benefit, so you will need to wait until your husband claims his

Social Security to start collecting spouse benefits from him. Assuming your spousal benefit from your husband will be higher than you would be eligible for on your own anyway, not getting your own Social Security retirement benefit using the bilateral totalization agreement is inconsequential.

You should be aware, too, that by your husband waiting until age 70 to claim his maximum SS benefit, and since you will have passed your own full retirement age by that time, the higher amount he gets at age 70 will be your survivor benefit if your husband should pass before you do. Upon his death you would get his full age 70 benefit instead of the smaller spousal benefit you will get while you are both living. Your benefit as his spouse while both of you

are living will be 50% of the benefit your husband is entitled to at his full retirement age, but your benefit as his surviving widow will be 100% of the benefit he is receiving at his death.

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FRIDAY

Voice of our PEOPLE

Dear American Truckers, God Bless You And Please Keep Driving

by Dr. Glenn Mollette

Grocery store shelves are not like they used to be. Before the pandemic there was plenty of whatever we typically wanted. It's not like that today.

Car dealerships have changed. Before the pandemic most dealers had plenty of new and used cars to sell. We were accustomed to browsing several lots as we shopped and compared models and prices. It's not like that today.

When you needed your car fixed, parts were readily available or just an overnight order away. Today, you might wait three or four months for a part.

I recently looked into adding an additional heating unit to my house and



GLENN MOLLETTE
Guest Column

was told, "Order it now and you might have it by summer."

A friend of mine ordered a small boat last August with the hopes he will have it by May or June this year, maybe.

The pandemic has changed our lives in more ways than sickness and death. The new normal is having to wait longer

on what used to be so available.

If you think America's products, food and merchandise are difficult to get now, then can you imagine if our American truckers all went on strike?

Canadian truckers have recently blocked the flow of goods into the United States. The protest follows rallies over opposition to COVID-19 mandates in cities across Canada. In a show of solidarity with a demonstration in Ottawa that has gone on for more than a week by the so-called Freedom Truck Convoy. The protests have paralyzed the Canadian capital's business district and led the mayor to call for 2,000 extra police officers to quell the

nightly demonstrations.

Several people involved in the protest Tuesday in Canada said the demonstrations had expanded from its original purpose, opposing mandates for cross-border truck drivers, and were there in opposition to all vaccine mandates, in addition to supporting truck drivers, the Windsor Star reported.

"Any delay or disruption in the supply chain creates problems, not just for agriculture but the state economy," said Chuck Lippstreu, president of the Michigan Agri-Business Association, which represents businesses that support farmers, early in the closure.

The Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Associa-

tion, which represents the Detroit Three automakers, called for an end to the protest, citing its effect on the country's economy. (NNY.360.com)

If the American truckers stopped driving today, the grocery stores would dry up and the movement of most everything you would want or need would not be available.

Truckers work hard. They have long hours. They sacrifice a lot by being gone so many hours, days and weeks. They deserve whatever they are paid and I'm sure in many cases are deserving of more. However, to our truckers, I have this request, please help us keep this country moving. We have enough problems in this country. A

shut-down of any kind by America's truckers would create severe hardship on the people everywhere in America.

We respect you. We appreciate you. We need you to keep this country moving. Furthermore, God bless you for what you do.

Enjoy the book titled, Grandpa's Store, a reflection of my childhood by Glenn Mollette. Available from Amazon.com or wherever books are sold. The book is told from the perspective of a child and young teen from an era of simpler American small community life of the late fifties and early seventies.

Hear Glenn Mollette every weekday morning EST at 8:56 on XM radio 131

Inflammaging; Making Aging, Itself, A Disease

by John Grimaldi

As we age we become more susceptible to inflammatory diseases such as Rheumatoid arthritis. Thus a new moniker for the process of growing old has emerged - inflammaging. It makes sense once you consider that the majority of age-related diseases have an inflammatory origin and that aging, itself, is a disease.

The National Institutes of Health [NIH] has weighed in on the discussion arguing that: "Aging as the passage of time and the accumulation of wisdom is not undesirable; the physiological decline that accompanies the process, however, most certainly is ... aging

is a 'special form of disease' ... Whilst many aging researchers have openly declared that the universality of the aging process means it is not a disease, aging fits the given medical definition of a disease. There is no disputing the fact that aging is a 'harmful abnormality of bodily structure and function.' What is becoming increasingly clear is that aging also has specific causes, each of which can be reduced to a cellular and molecular level, and recognizable signs and symptoms ... As aging appropriately fits the definition of disease, there is a shifting consensus that aging should be seen as a disease process in itself,

and not a benign progression of age that increases the risk of disease."

Meanwhile, the National Library of Medicine points out that inflammation is a normal bodily response to cell injury; it's part of a natural healing process when one is injured or has an infection. The inflammatory response occurs when tissues are injured by bacteria, trauma, toxins, heat, or any other cause your body releases chemicals that cause swelling. This, in turn, isolates the injury and attracts white blood cells that help the healing process.

But a runaway reaction can occur when there is no injury or infection.

Since there's nothing to heal, the immune system cells that normally protect us begin to destroy healthy arteries, organs and joints, according to the Scripps Clinic Health Website.

And now the folks at Stanford University and the Buck Institute of Research on Aging have come up with a way to use a blood test to determine an individual's so-called inflammatory age - or iAge. Your iAge differs from your chronological age in that it's a measure of the chronic inflammation in our bodies.

Stamford's Dr Nazish Sayed, who helped develop the iAge blood test, says that "Our

chronological age shouldn't matter to us so much. What should matter is how well we age. Our goal should be a healthier old age, one in which we prevent some of the ill health that is all too commonly associated with it ... Chronic inflammation is characterized by being low-grade and persistent, and ultimately it leads to collateral damage to tissues and organs. It has been associated with heart disease, cancer, and neurodegenerative diseases. Thus, we hypothesize that by testing for and then working to lower iAge, we can minimize the diseases that are associated with chronic inflammation."

Sayed explains that they tested blood samples from 1,000 individuals. He said it turned out that some of those blood tests showed that a number of donors with a chronological age of 45 had high levels of inflammation and an iAge of 65. The iAge factor is essentially a measure of an individual's inflammatory markers. "Our test isn't commercially available yet, but we hope it could be used to screen for these inflammatory markers as part of annual check-ups. This could allow for early detection of a variety of chronic conditions including heart disease and maybe even type 2 diabetes and dementia," he said.

Should We Be Celebrating Presidents' Day In 2022?

by Dr. Gary Scott Smith

Given the low approval ratings of both Donald Trump and Joe Biden, should we celebrate Presidents' Day this year? Trump's highest approval rating during his four years in office was 49 percent, and he ended his tenure with a 34 percent positive rating. Biden's approval rating at the end of his first year in office was only 42 percent, the second lowest since pollsters began measuring this in the 1930s. Only Trump had a lower approval rating after one year as president. Meanwhile, statues of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, and Theodore Roosevelt are being removed or torn down because of their involvement in slavery, racism, or imperialism.

Are our recent presidents performing more poorly than their predecessors? Are they less popular because of their personal traits? Do their lower approval ratings reflect the challenges the world and our nation are dealing with, most notably a pandemic? Are Americans becoming more cynical, judgmental, and difficult to please? To what extent has our nation's toxic and divisive political climate contributed to these neg-

ative assessments of our chief executives? To what extent have the outrage and public shaming so common on social media and the increased critical analysis of politicians on online, on radio, and on television affected our perceptions?

George Washington died in December 1799, and thereafter his birthday, February 22, became an important occasion for honoring his indispensable role in guiding our nation. During the antebellum years, Washington was widely venerated as the most notable person in American history. The centennial of his birth in 1832 and the beginning of construction of the Washington Monument in the nation's capital in 1848 were extensively celebrated. Unofficially commemorated throughout the 1800s, Washington's birthday became an official national holiday in 1879, making it one of only five federal bank holidays along with Christmas, New Year's Day, July 4th, and Thanksgiving.

During the Great Depression in 1930s, many newspapers and magazines featured portraits of Washington on his birthday to help uplift millions of Americans grappling with economic woes. On the bicentennial

of Washington's birthday in 1932, the federal government reinstated the Purple Heart, a military decoration he created to honor soldiers who had been killed or wounded while serving the nation.

In 1971, Congress created Presidents' Day to honor all our chief executives and designated it as the third Monday in February so that it would fall begin the birthdays of two of the greatest giants in the pantheon of presidents—Washington and Lincoln.

Throughout the history of the United States, our presidents have often led us courageously and effectively as we have dealt with national and global challenges. The pressures they have confronted are immense, and the criticisms they have endured have often been brutal. Presidents have frequently been blamed for matters that are beyond their control. Many times they have felt that they are between a rock and a hard place, that no matter what choice they make, many Americans will be upset.

We have rightly looked to our presidents to serve as role models, to exemplify good character, to provide comfort during tragedies, and to inspire us to tackle obstacles. The founders insisted that the success

of the fledging republic depended on the character of both its leaders and citizens. "The destiny of the republican model of government," Washington proclaimed in his First Inaugural Address, rested upon high levels of both private and public morality.

Americans have wanted presidents to be moral exemplars, to establish lofty standards for ethics and excellence. The president, Franklin Roosevelt declared, "sets the moral tone for our nation. He is a mirror in which we see what kind of people we are." The president needs to be "the moral leader of our country," Harry Truman maintained. Many of the presidents who are rated most highly by scholars have been men of exceptional character. Their moral fortitude and integrity have enabled them to deal with crises, criticism, and controversy.

Their trials and tribulations have stimulated many chief executives to develop a deeper faith. Many of them have testified that the enormous responsibilities of their office prompted them to seek God's guidance and assistance more than they previously did. Numerous presidents have applied Lincoln's statement to themselves: "I have been driven many times

upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go."

Perhaps we should be less critical and condemning and more charitable and sympathetic in our appraisal of presidents. We live in an era that claims to value tolerance, but people quickly denounce the apparent, alleged, and actual failures of others whether it is athletes falling on the snow or ice at the Olympics, individuals not realizing their potential, Congress not passing the legislation we desire, businesses not supplying the material goods we crave, or presidents not promoting the political policies we prize.

As President Biden said recently at the National Prayer Breakfast, "It's hard to really dislike someone when you know what they're going through is the same thing you're going through." And we are going through many of the same things today—a global pandemic, economic struggles, racial strife, and escalating violence at home, and worries about hostile relations between nations—so let's be kind, considerate, and civil toward each other.

Biden also declared in his speech that "I pray that we follow what

Jesus taught us: to serve rather than be served." Many presidents have said something similar. And they have sought to serve our marvelous country, promote the common good, and make our nation more productive, stronger, and more just. So, we should celebrate Presidents' Day with great enthusiasm and gratitude. Even though we disagree with some of their decisions, let's be thankful for the gifted, dedicated, and hard-working chief executives who have led our nation for the past 222 years.

--Gary Scott Smith is Professor of History Emeritus at Grove City College and is a fellow for faith and politics with the Institute for Faith and Freedom. He is the author of "Duty and Destiny: The Life and Faith of Winston Churchill" (January 2021), "A History of Christianity in Pittsburgh" (2019), "Suffer the Children" (2017), "Religion in the Oval Office" (Oxford University Press, 2015), "Faith and the Presidency From George Washington to George W. Bush" (Oxford University Press, 2009), "Religion in the Oval Office" and "Heaven in the American Imagination" (Oxford University Press, 2011).