

▶ TODAY'S VERSE

John 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.



▶ FACES OF HAMILTON COUNTY

People who call our community their own.

What makes Shantel Morris smile? "When I see high school kids of all ages finding success when they didn't feel they could be successful," said the 1991 Noblesville High School graduate and former NHS Singer of three years. She was the choreographer for NHS's fall theater production, "Chicago: Teen Edition." Born Shantel Fiechter, she was in theater all four years of high school, and Greg Richards was her play director. Deborah Wittstein was her choir director. After she graduated, Mrs. Wittstein called her back to start doing choreography. She is a graduate of Ball State University with a degree in entertainment architecture. Shantel worked at Walt Disney and Universal Studios in the show and ride department, as a show and ride designer and lived in Orlando, Fla. Her expertise was combining theater and design, and also used that in Orlando, where she and her husband, Jim Morris, operated Trilemma Productions equity theater company. She met her husband when he was executive director for a theater alliance in Florida. "Our worlds crossed in theater; that's how we met." They have two children in school. She is now a real-estate broker and owns her own brokerage and still does design and has her own design company. Since moving back to Indiana, she has been choreographing NHS productions since about 2013 and is considered a part-time musical assistant. She operates a dance program for a couple of schools in Indianapolis, Center for Inquiry School 84 and has helped out with Brave Youth Society in Indy, and has helped with choreography with some other schools. **What else makes her smile?** "The No. 1 thing that makes me smile is when I see a kid actually figure out their character and they finally figure out how to bring that character to life. It's like a light bulb goes on for them in all things, the acting side and for the importance of the story they're telling."

And Another Few Things...

1. Road Closure

Beginning next Thursday, 196th Street between Promise Road and Summer Road will be closed to traffic for the installation of a pipeline through the Surveyor's Office. The hard closure is between the addresses of 11345 & 11390 E. 196th St. The project is expected to be complete by Feb. 9. For any questions regarding this project, contact the Surveyor's Office at (317) 776-8495.

2. Braun on Farming

Indiana Sen. Mike Braun is among a group of Congressmen leading an effort to protect America's agricultural industry from improper foreign investment. The Congressmen introduced the Foreign Adversary Risk Management Act to bolster the U.S. agriculture industry's role on the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, the governmental body that oversees the vetting process of foreign investment and acquisition of American companies. "Many Hoosiers are concerned about foreign countries buying up farmland, and it is a serious national security and food security concern," Braun said. "I signed on to the FARM Act to protect American Agriculture from foreign interference."

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Boomer Bits



Ask Rusty – About Difficulty with Social Security's Sign-in Process

Dear Rusty: Last month I tried to contact Social Security who never picked up a phone on their end. The same with the IRS. When I finally got through, they said I had to join ID.me before they could help me. That took me over a week, and many applications and rejects, to get through. The last step was holding up my Social Security card and my driver's license on a Zoom call to an ID.me representative. I found this very peculiar - why do I have to go through this place to get information from my government agencies? Now I am receiving catalog offers to buy things from ID.me online. I think this is very strange and out of line. How do I get unreg-



ASK Rusty Social Security Advisor

Social Security Matters

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

istered from this place? I am very afraid they will share my information with the world. Is this a government agency and why do we have to register there, only to have offers to buy things? **Signed: Frustrated Senior**

Dear Frustrated: Many others have shared with us their frustration when seeking enrollment

in the federal government's newest credential verification programs so, though I know it's no comfort, you are not alone.

Social Security has, since Sept. 18, 2021, required all newly created online accounts to use either ID.me or Login.gov to authenticate the user's identity. "ID.me" is a private compa-

▶ See RUSTY Page A6

Solo Travel Tips: 7 Ideas for Venturing Out Alone

(Family Features) Whether you're a lone wolf at heart or looking to broaden your sense of independence, traveling solo can be a richly empowering and satisfying experience.

Setting out on your own has many practical advantages. You're not worrying about accommodating another's schedule, interest or needs, and you're free to decide what you want to do and when. Solo travel also elicits some mental and emotional benefits, as you experience a unique sense of freedom, liberation and self-sufficiency.

If you're considering a solo journey, consider these tips from the book "101+ Tips for Solo Women Travelers," which is offered by Overseas Adven-

ture Travel in free digital and print editions.

Make Sure Your Passport is Updated

Many countries now require your passport to be valid for six months after your return to the United States. If you don't have a passport, or need to renew one, apply for one as soon as possible. Ideally you should have your application in six months before you depart.

Look for Trips with No Single Supplement

Often, quoted rates are "per person, based on double occupancy." This is because travel hosts know they can make more from a couple traveling than an individual. You can avoid

▶ See TRAVEL Page A6

Yearly Health Exam Key for Older Adults

(StatePoint) You've selected your insurance plan for the year. Now, it's time to start using your benefits, beginning with an annual wellness exam.

An annual wellness exam with a health care provider is important for everyone, but especially for older adults. As we age, we are more likely to develop chronic health conditions, according to Dr. J.B. Sobel, chief medical officer for Cigna Medicare, which serves hundreds of thousands of older adults through its products. An annual wellness exam can help detect potential health issues early so they can be addressed

▶ See EXAM Page A6

Sheriff's Office Warning of Scam Calls



The phone numbers are being ghosted to show that the call is from the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, when in reality the call is coming from another location. This adds another layer of false validity to the call for the victim.

The scam works like this: A victim answers the telephone, and the caller says a warrant is being issued for not appearing for jury duty (or paying taxes or another offense). The caller may give the name of a courthouse employee, a deputy, or a name similar to an employee. Caller ID may even show the call originating from a local number, as these ID's are easy to fake with current technology.

The caller then states the victim can avoid the arrest by

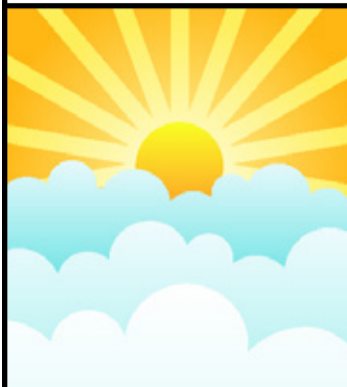
paying a fine submitted by wire transfer or pre-paid gift credit card. Pressure is put on the victim to make a payment quickly to avoid jail time since once the paperwork is submitted, the arrest is imminent.

The caller may even provide another telephone number to call to verify the offense and pending arrest. Sometimes the caller is advised that there is a Gag Order in place and they are not to talk about it.

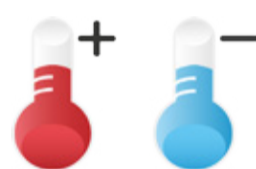
As a reminder, arrest warrants in Hamilton County are not served over the telephone. If in doubt about speaking with an official county employee, hang up the phone, research the appropriate number, and contact

▶ See SCAM Page A6

The Daily Almanac



Sunrise/Sunset
RISE: 7:56 a.m.
SET: 5:58 p.m.



High/Low Temperatures
HIGH: 46 °F
LOW: 27 °F



Today is...

- Daisy Day
- Date Privacy Day
- Pop Art Day



What Happened On This Day

- 1521 The Diet of Worms begins, lasting until May 25
- 1878 Yale Daily News becomes the first independent daily college newspaper in the US
- 1915 An act of Congress creates the United States Coast Guard as a branch of the US Armed Forces



Births On This Day

- 1912 Jackson Pollock American painter
- 1968 Sarah McLachlan Canadian singer-songwriter, pianist and producer

Deaths On This Day

- 1939 W. B. Yeats Irish poet and Nobel Prize laureate
- 2002 Astrid Lindgren Swedish author and screenwriter

▶ INSIDE TODAY

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▶ HONEST HOOSIER

I know it's still cold out, but hey, we've had a lot of winters waaaay worse than this.



▶ TODAY'S QUOTE

"If it is art, it is not for all, and if it is for all, it is not art."
- Arnold Schoenberg

▶ TODAY'S JOKE

What's the difference between a bull and a cow? Well, it's either one or the udder.

▶ TODAY'S HEALTH TIP

Keep your fingers away from your eyes if you want to minimize your chances of getting "pink eye." 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



▶ OBITUARIES

Emma Jane Whitmore

The Times appreciates all our customers. Today, we'd like to personally thank **CHRIS B. EARL** for subscribing!



7 DAY FORECAST

39 WINDY RAIN/SNOW MIX	27/46 CLOUDY, LATE DAY RAIN	41/41 BREEZY, FALLING TEMPS	27/31 PARTLY CLOUDY	13/26 COLD AND DRY	13/29 COLD	15/26 COLD
FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU

OBITUARIES

Emma Jane Whitmore
July 6, 1931-January 25, 2023

Emma Jane Whitmore, 91, of Noblesville, passed away on Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2023 at Harbour Manor Care Center in Noblesville.

She was born on July 6, 1931 to Leroy and Nellie (Bright) Nightenhelser in Cicero on the family farm.

Mrs. Whitmore was a graduate of Arcadia High School. She worked for H&R Vending after retiring from Indiana Farmers Insurance Company. She was a life long member of Bethel Lutheran Church. Mrs. Whitmore enjoyed reading, word search, and square dancing in her younger days.

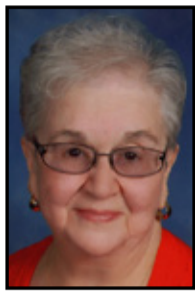
Survivors include her 3 children Darrell Whitmore, Kathy (Jeff) Huffman and Robert (Patsy) Whitmore; 4 grandchildren Jennifer (Larry) Boucher, Kathryn (Russell) Slatton, Doug (Mandy Idelwine) Whitmore and Andrea Whitmore; 8 great-grandchildren Gerrid (Alyssa) Barnes, David (Cheyenne) Barnes, Hailey Barnes, Nolan Slatton, Lucas Slatton, Ethan (Eliza) Whitmore, Shaley Whitmore and Eli Whitmore; 4 great great-grandchildren, Miley Barnes, Katie Edwards, Zayden Whitmore and Zander Whitmore; sister-in-law Sandy Fetty; brother-in-law John (Sue) Daywalt; and many nieces and nephews.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband Billy Nolan Whitmore; 4 siblings Hubert (Pauline) Nightenhelser, Opal Nightenhelser, Mrytle (Floyd) Overdorf and Wayne (Joann) Nightenhelser; 3 brothers/sisters-in-law, Shirley Oyler, Morris (Butch) Daywalt and Melvin Daywalt.

Services are scheduled for 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 4, 2023 at Bethel Lutheran Church, 20650 Cumberland Rd. in Noblesville, with Pastor Dave Hill officiating. Visitation is scheduled to run from 10:30 a.m. to the time of service at the church. Burial will follow at Arcadia Cemetery in Arcadia.

Memorial contributions may be made to Bethel Lutheran Church, 20650 Cumberland Road, Noblesville, IN 46062.

Online condolences may be made at randallroberts.com



Letters

Noblesville Helping to Change Lives Overseas

Dear Editor,

I am writing to thank Noblesville-area residents for sharing the true meaning of Christmas with children in need this past holiday season.

Generosity throughout contributed to a successful shoebox gift collection season at drop-off locations for the Samaritan's Purse project Operation Christmas Child. Across the U.S., the project collected over 9.3 million shoebox gifts in 2022. Combined with those collected from partnering countries in 2022, the ministry is now sending nearly 10.6 million shoebox gifts to children worldwide.

Through shoeboxes—packed with fun toys, school supplies, and hygiene items—Noblesville-area volunteers brought joy to children in need around the world. Each gift-filled shoebox is a tangible expression of God's love, and it is often the first gift these children have ever received. Through the continued generosity of donors since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has collected and delivered more than 209 million gift-filled shoe-

boxes to children in more than 170 countries and territories. This year, Samaritan's Purse delivered its milestone 200 millionth shoebox, which was packed on a country-wide tour and then hand-delivered to a young girl in Ukraine.

Across Indiana, shoebox packers often shop for deals on shoebox items throughout the year, and many serve at a deeper level by becoming a year-round volunteer. Information about ways area participants can get involved year-round can also be found at samaritanaspurse.org/occ or by calling (937) 374-0761.

Although local drop-off locations for gifts are closed until Nov. 13–20, 2023, anyone can still be a part of this life-changing project by conveniently packing a shoebox gift online in just a few simple clicks at samaritanaspurse.org/buildonline.

These simple gifts, packed with love, send a message to children worldwide that they are loved and not forgotten.

Sincerely,

Casey Goodwin
Samaritan's Purse



Photo courtesy of Dave Johnson

Dave Johnson stands with his filing papers to run for Noblesville City Council in District 4.

Dave Johnson Files to Run for Noblesville City Council

Community leader and longtime Noblesville resident, Dave Johnson will run for Noblesville City Council, District 5. Johnson has lived in District 5 for 40 years.

"I've invested in Noblesville over the years by serving the community. I'm thrilled to bring experience and deep knowledge of Noblesville to the council," said Johnson.

Johnson has been a

pillar of service in the Noblesville community. He was named Noblesville Chamber of Commerce's Volunteer of the Year, has been a part of Noblesville Schools Miller Ambassador Program, has served as a Noblesville Boys & Girls Club Meals for Members volunteer, Noblesville Lacrosse Club President, a youth soccer coach and involved in Boys Scouts

of America.

In addition to his community work, Johnson's city involvement will be key in leading on the City Council. Johnson has been on the city's Economic Development Board, the Police Merit Commission, Prevailing Wage Board, Hamilton County Riverwalk Board and on the Hamilton County Solid Waste Board.

Johnson is a licensed professional geologist whose practice focuses on environmental site investigation and remediation.

Johnson and his wife, Michele, have lived in Wellington Northeast for 40 years and have raised two children, both attended Noblesville Schools. Their family attends Faith Community Church, where they also volunteer.

Runners Will Melt the Trail on Feb. 25

Westfield Welcome's 9th annual Melt the Trail 5k, presented by River-view Health, returns on Saturday, Feb. 25 at 10:30 a.m. at Grand Junction Brewing Company.

"Each year, we continue to build our trail network, and this winter tradition reminds residents that our trails are a year-round amenity. While each year can bring different weather conditions, we know that runners are willing to brave the elements", said Mayor Andy Cook.

Westfield Welcome continues to partner with Grand Junction Brewing Company to host the

race festivities. After the race, participants can redeem their drink tickets, purchase food, and enjoy music and arcade games. The taproom is kid and dog friendly, allowing the entire family to join.

The registration cost is \$35 and will increase to \$40 on Feb. 11. To guarantee a Melt the Trail long-sleeve shirt, the registration deadline is February 6th. Packet pickup is available on Feb. 23, from 4–7 p.m. at Riverview Health Westfield Hospital (17600 Shamrock Blvd.) and on race morning at Grand Junction Brewing Co. To sign up, visit meltthetrail.com

Sheriff's Office Receives Autism Society Grant for Communication Boards

Through a grant provided by the Autism Society of America and Today's Champions, the Autism Society of Indiana purchased picture communication boards to be placed in the patrol vehicles of the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office.

The communication boards will give police, firefighters and EMS providers a way to communicate with a person who may be nonverbal, have limited English skills, have autism or mental health issues. All participants also received a training video on how to implement the communi-

cation board.

The Autism Society of Indiana and Today's Champions recognize the need for this type of assistance to first responders and the citizens of Indiana who struggle with communication, and want to provide communication boards for every law enforcement and first responder agency in the state of Indiana.

For more information or to inquire about the communication boards, contact the Autism Society of Indiana at autismsofindiana.org or kbrownlofland@gmail.com

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Photo courtesy of HHSC

Several members of the HHMS Builders Club are pictured watching *The Grinch* after a gift-wrapping event to make Christmas a little brighter for nine different families in the community. The club is also hosting an after-school dance in February to help build camaraderie among students through music and dance.

Cicero Kiwanis Take Part in Activities for World Kiwanis Week

Each year on January 21, Kiwanis International kicks off a weeklong anniversary celebration of the service club's first official meeting.

Kiwanis, an international service club that has been in existence for more than a century, lifts and empowers members to pursue creative ways to serve the needs of children through local service projects centered around children. These service projects ensure that children have what they need to be secure and successful in their community. Serving the Children of the World is the organizations motto.

Kiwanis offers multiple participation levels: Circle K International (CKI): The world's largest collegiate service leadership organization. AKTION Club: Service club where adults with disabilities learn leadership skills. K-Kids Club: Primary school students learn about leadership skills and self-empowerment. Builders Club: Students between the ages of 11 and 14, develop leadership. Key Club: The oldest and largest service leadership organization for teens.

Together, Kiwanis Club members devote more than six million hours of service. Additionally, club members raise nearly \$100 million every year for communities, families, and projects.

The organization has chapters throughout the world, including six clubs in Hamilton County. The Cicero Kiwanis Club supports various programs and activities at Hamilton Heights School Corporation and throughout the greater Northern Hamilton County area. At Hamilton Heights the club supports Youth Assistance,

Educational Scholarships for Graduating Seniors, Educational Foundation Golf Outing, Business Professionals of America (BPA) Club, Hamilton Heights Girl and Boy Scout Troops.

Community groups, activities, and programs the club currently supports include, Agape, Prevail, Hamilton North Public Library (HNPL), Angel's Attic, Hope Family Care Center, Riley Hospital for Children, Batesland Elementary School at the Pine Ridge Reservation, Special Olympics, Legacy Fund, Hamilton Centers, Friends of Cicero Parks, and Cicero Volunteer Fire Department.

In addition, the club sponsors the Key Club at Hamilton Heights High School, Builders Club at Hamilton Heights Middle School, and K-Kids Club at Hamilton Heights Elementary School.

Tracy Zachary, HHES Special Education Teacher, is the advisor for the K-Kids Club, Sophia Wright, HHMS Media Center Instructional Assistant, and Chelsea Pacheco, HHMS School.

Counselor, are the advisors for HHMS Builders Club, and Lillian Morris, HHMS Special Education Teacher, is the advisor for the HHMS Key Club.

"The biggest way the K-Kids Club is making a difference is by starting small by serving the local elementary from packing food backpacks to recycling," said Tracy Zachary, K-Kids Club advisor.

"The Builders Club has the ability to change lives," said Sophia Wright, Builders Club advisor. "Our students understand

the power they have to positively impact their peers, their school, and their community."

"Students have the opportunity to grow in their leadership and community service skills giving them the opportunity to make a difference on and off our campus through their involvement in this club," added Chelsea Pacheco, Builders Club advisor.

"Involvement in Key Club helps kids to be a part of their school and community," said Lillian Morris, HHMS Key Club advisor. "I love that kids are able to step out of themselves and see what others experience in our community. I can see that this makes an impact on them and their perspectives. Kids are so busy anymore between sports, school, clubs, and work that it can be challenging to balance their time. I feel like a lot of students think it is just one more thing on their very full plates but when they do volunteer to help, they get so much from the experience."

"The members of the Cicero Kiwanis are a civic-minded group whose focus is building a better community one child at a time," said Emily Pearson, President, Cicero Kiwanis. "We are proud of the contribution we have made to Hamilton County, the State of Indiana and the world, and look forward to doing even more to make a difference in the lives of children."

The Cicero Kiwanis Club meet at 7:30 on Saturdays at the Red Bridge Park Community Building. For more information about the local club, email cicerokiwanis@gmail.com.

USDA Announces Grants for Urban Agriculture & Innovative Production

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is making available up to \$7.5 million for grants through its Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP). The competitive grants will support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects through two categories, Planning Projects and Implementation Projects. USDA will accept applications on [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov) until 11:59 p.m. on March 27, 2023.

Planning Projects: Planning Projects initiate or expand efforts of farmers, gardeners, citizens, government officials, schools and other stakeholders in urban areas and suburbs. Projects may target areas of food access, education, business and start-up costs for new farmers and the development of plans related to zoning and other needs of urban production.

For example, the Texas Coalition of Rural Landowners used 2022 awarded funds to conduct a feasibility study and develop a business plan to establish a cooperative for small-scale agricultural producers serving low food access markets in Harris County, Texas.

Implementation

Projects: Implementation Projects accelerate existing and emerging models of urban, indoor and other agricultural practices that serve farmers and communities. Projects may improve local food access, include collaboration with partner organizations, and support infrastructure needs, emerging technologies, and educational endeavors.

For example, the Moka Urban Agriculture Initiative used 2022 awarded funds for a project to increase local food access and provide culturally relevant options that create economic opportunities for urban farmers. The project will help to reduce food insecurity, improve health and establish outdoor spaces for food production in Missouri.

Webinar: A pre-recorded webinar on Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Grants | USDA provides an overview of the grants' purpose, project types, eligibility and basic requirements for submitting an application.

More Information: OUAIP was established through the 2018 Farm Bill. It is led by the Natural Resources Conservation Service

(NRCS) and works in partnership with numerous USDA agencies that support urban agriculture and innovative production. The grants are part of a broad USDA investment in urban agriculture. Other efforts include:

- Creating and managing a Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production to advise the Secretary on the development of policies and outreach relating to urban agriculture.

- Reopening the People's Garden Initiative. People's Gardens across the country grow fresh, healthy food and support resilient, local food systems; teach people how to garden using sustainable practices; and nurture habitat for pollinators and wildlife and greenspace for neighbors.

- Providing cooperative agreements that develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans.

- Providing technical and financial assistance through conservation programs offered by NRCS.

- Organizing 17 Farm Service Agency urban county committees.

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Hundreds Rally for Public Health Day

By Whitney Downard

Health care workers from across the state gathered at the Statehouse Thursday to push the General Assembly on public health funding – an ask that has repeatedly given legislators pause.

The Governor's Public Health Commission, spurred by the role local public health departments played in the COVID-19 pandemic, sought to analyze the state's shortfall and find funding solutions. After receiving lawmaker pushback, they revised their initial ask down from nearly \$250 million to a phased-in approach granting \$125 million in the first year followed by the full amount in 2025.

Nationally, the average per capita state spending on public health is \$91 but Indiana spends just \$55 – putting it 45th in the nation for funding.

Gov. Eric Holcomb, who called for the commission, said the public health funding recommendation didn't even strive to be a leader and only asked to get Indiana to the "middle of the pack."

"We don't want to be a national laggard; we don't want to linger for any more time," Holcomb said. "Very rarely do I shoot for the middle of the pack but we've got to start

somewhere."

What funding means for local public health departments

Mindy Waldron, the administrator of the Allen County Department of Health, said Indiana's low public health rankings were directly tied to its near-bottom state funding. Waldron, and hundreds of others, rallied Thursday to call for more state investment during Public Health Day.

Departments, like hers rely heavily on local funding — half of which she said came from the county and the remainder came from various government grants and community foundations.

"Counties being very disparate around the state — relying on tax money that only funds a portion of their budget — you do the urgent things and you really don't get to the chronic, preventative things that could be a game changer," Waldron said.

Having a dedicated funding source from the state government would allow departments to go beyond their duties required by statute, which includes inspecting restaurants, permitting tattoo and body piercing shops or utilizing contact tracing to fight local outbreaks of communicable diseases.

"You should be able



Photo by Whitney Downard courtesy of Indiana Capital Chronicle

State Health Commissioner Kris Box, left, and Gov. Eric Holcomb urge state investment for public health.

to eat at a restaurant in one county and go to the adjacent county (with the same type of restaurant and the rules should have been enforced," Waldron said. "Likewise, you should see some of these basic public health programs like maternal or child health at the local level. They don't because there (aren't) resources funding them."

The commission, of which Waldron was a member, found that public health spending varied widely from county to county – from \$83 per capita in Marion County to

\$1.25 in Shelby County.

Even though Fort Wayne is the second-biggest city in the state, Waldron said her county fell closer to the middle – spending just over \$10 per capita.

"We should be at least top five with the population we have," Waldron said. "(But) when you're reliant on tax money, particularly property taxes, it comes and goes."

With more reliable funding, she said initiatives like decreasing lead poisoning could have continued steadily, rather

than starting in the 70s and restarting again in the last five years. Instead, as attention left, so did the money that funded programs investigating and testing for lead.

"We need consistent funding to do consistent good," Waldron said. "We are so far below average at this point that it'll take us a while to gain tread and start to make a difference in areas like maternal and child health."

Poor Hoosier health impacts economic development

Holcomb described the state's poor health as a

workforce development issue, noting that a healthier workforce costs less than an unhealthy one on both a micro and macro level.

"When I'm sitting down, talking with folks who are interested in investing in the state of Indiana, counties are competing against each other. CEOs want to know who values the health of their workforces," Holcomb said. "If you don't have the human capital... they'll look somewhere else."

State Health Commissioner Dr. Kris Box said part of the effort would be educating everyday Hoosiers about public health and its importance.

"It's not just masks and it's not just about one pandemic," Box said. "(It's) moving the needle on the percentage of people smoking, moving the needle on the overall infant mortality rate."

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Indiana Tax Cap Proposal Would Help Homeowners, Hurt School Corporations

By Casey Smith

Property owners could get temporary tax relief under a top Indiana lawmaker's bill that seeks to stymie the impacts of high assessments last spring.

A new study projects homeowners' bills payable this year could increase as much as 15%. That's more than double what previous reports estimated for the upcoming bills.

Rep. Jeff Thompson, R-Lizton, filed legislation that would temporarily provide a supplemental homestead credit and lower the 1% cap on residential property taxes. He chairs the House Ways and Means Committee, meaning the bill could get more traction.

Multiple other property tax measures are also floating around the General Assembly.

While it could mean relief for property owners, schools are expected to take on the brunt of the tax burden if Thompson's policy change takes effect.

Between 2024 and 2027 — during which property owners would pay reduced taxes — school corporations are estimated to lose more than \$364 million in revenue.

That's significantly more than cities, towns, counties and other units that are also expected to see decreased revenues.

"We'll look at all that, because some will shift, and some will decrease," Thompson said about tax burden responsibility. "We've got both options, maybe a marriage of both. I don't know, we'll see."

Taxpayer savings in Thompson's bill

Thompson's legislation would temporarily reduce the homestead tax cap for taxes payable in 2024 and gradually increase the cap back to 1% in 2028.

Caps would be set at 0.9% for property taxes payable in 2024, 0.925% in 2025, 0.95% in 2026 and 0.975% in 2027.

The bill also creates a supplemental homestead credit to be applied to tax

bills after all other credits are applied. The added credit for each homestead would be equal to \$100 in 2024, \$75 in 2025, \$50 in 2026, and \$25 in 2027. The credit is not allowed to exceed what a taxpayer owes, however.

The Indiana Constitution states that property tax liability "may not exceed" the 1-2-3% caps, giving lawmakers an ability to establish the lower caps.

The reduced property tax bills for homeowners is estimated to result in \$357 million in tax relief in 2024, according to Indiana's Legislative Services Agency. The tax savings for homesteads is then estimated to drop to \$275 million in 2025, \$183.4 million in 2026, and \$136 million in 2027.

Taxable assessed values shot up 15% from 2021 to 2022 — even after tax abatements, deductions and credits — according to data from the Association of Indiana Counties (AIC). That's compared to a 5% increase the year before, and increases under 5% in each year since at least 2014.

A new study from the nonprofit organization paints a daunting picture for taxpayers, though.

Although the average tax increase for all property owners is expected to go up by 7.4%, on average, residential property owners specifically are estimated to see a 15% increase in tax liability, according to an AIC study conducted with Indianapolis-based economic research firm Policy Analytics.

Increases will mostly be dependent on what type of property a taxpayer owns and whether they're already at the circuit breaker cap.

Homeowners are projected to see the largest increases due to 2022's higher assessments, and because net assessed values rise faster than gross assessed values according to the study. The fixed standard homestead deduction is what largely

contributes to the inflated bills for residential property, but not to other property types.

AIC Executive Director David Bottorff said the group advocates for new policy that would affect taxes in 2024, but not anything that would be retroactive for 2023 property owner bills due in March.

David Ober, vice president of taxation and public finance for the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, said that while much of the conversation at the Statehouse is currently focused on residential property bills, caps for those taxpayers would have "far reaching implications" for business entities.

"It remains to be seen what may happen, but shifting the cost of local government to (businesses) is something that we're very much concerned about," he said.

Commercial property taxes are estimated to increase by 2.2% in 2023, and industrial property tax are expected to go up 5.7%, according to the AIC study. Businesses with large amounts of equipment are likely to see the smallest tax liability increases, however.

Where lawmakers stand

A range of other bills filed by lawmakers include those that seek to eliminate or limit annual market-based adjustments, freeze property taxes for certain homeowners and allow local governments to recover lost revenue.

It's not clear where lawmakers stand on particular bills, or whether there's enough support to take any action at all on property taxes in the current legislative session.

House Speaker Todd Huston, R-Fishers, said there's still "a lot of uncertainty around property taxes right now" and emphasized that "our constituents are very concerned about what their property tax bills are going to look like."

Huston did not comment specifically on the propos-

al to cap property taxes, and the GOP majority in the Senate isn't so sure about taking any action to address property taxes during this session.

Republican Senate Pro Tem Rodric Bray said if Thompson's bill advances to the Senate "then we'll certainly talk about it," but he didn't know whether the proposal would have enough caucus support.

"The challenge with doing anything right now would be that anything that we do would not be able to impact the property tax bills that people are going to get in March, it would be doing something a bit after the fact, which may not be as effective as we would all want," Bray said Thursday.

He said his chamber is more so focused on a Senate GOP priority bill that seeks to form the State and Local Tax Review Commission to study the feasibility of ending Indiana's income tax and reforming property taxes for Hoosiers.

Still, if a property tax measure can make it through both chambers, Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb suggested he would be willing to give the greenlight.

"I wouldn't be surprised if we do something during the course of this session," Holcomb said Thursday. "We're going to get at the root causes of the increases that are occurring. We're in close conversation with the House and the Senate leadership and members on having the ability to do something that doesn't change, fundamentally, the advancements we've made."

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Indiana Senate Passes Bail Denial Constitution Change

By Leslie Bonilla Muñiz

Indiana's Senate on Thursday approved a constitutional change that would let judges deny bail to anyone they deem "a substantial risk to the public," as long "the proof is evident, or the presumption strong."

Currently, people accused of all offenses except murder and treason have a right to bail.

Proponents — some prosecutors and Republicans — contend that Senate Joint Resolution 1 would prevent repeat criminals from committing additional alleged offenses while out on bail. Opponents — mostly defenders, Democrats and civil rights advocates — say it's rife with potential for abuse.

"There are actually 31 states, the District of Columbia and the federal system where defendants of certain crimes do not have an express right to bail. We are in the minority," said author Sen. Eric Koch, R-Bedford, on the Senate floor Thursday.

"Indiana should join ... in recognizing that there are times when it is simply too dangerous to public safety to release the defendant before trial under bail or any other conditions," Koch said.

'Revolving door' vs. system vulnerabilities

The majority of Koch's caucus members — but not all — were behind him.

"I've heard for the last three or four years here in Central Indiana over and over again about the revolving door [of] people being arrested for violent crimes and being released," said Sen. Jack Sandlin, R-Indianapolis. "... We have an opportunity to stop that revolving door."

Democrats argued that people innocent of the charges against them could be incarcerated pre-trial for long periods of time: under Criminal Rule 4, that's up to six months, or 70 days if an arrestee files a motion asking for an early trial.

"If the court deems, 'Well, you had a little bit of a run-in with the law in the past and you run with some folks that are not the best people, so we deem you a risk,'" Sen. Rodney Pol, D-Chesterton, said on the floor. "We're going to hold you without bail, meaning that you'll likely lose your job. You may lose your kids, you may lose your family."

Pleas to "add parameters" fail

Several Republicans defected. The most vocal GOP opponent was Sen. Sue Glick, R-LaGrange, who has served as both a prosecuting attorney and a public defender.

Glick said people often challenged her throughout her legal career for defending people "who are guilty," but pushed back, saying that public defenders "serve to defend the rule of law."

"And the rule of law," Glick said, "is the presumption that everyone who comes before judgment is presumed to be innocent as they stand in the docks."

Glick criticized SJR 1 as being too vague in terms of what constitutes a "substantial" risk, and a "risk" of what. She argued that Indiana's hundreds of judges could interpret the proposal's language differently, and that the General Assembly should build in controls.

"The great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed, and in the next place, oblige it to control itself," Glick said, quoting from the pro-

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Koch's proposal would add the bolded words to existing language in Indiana's Constitution: "Offenses, other than murder or treason, shall be bailable by sufficient sureties, unless the accused poses a substantial risk to the public. Murder or treason, or if the accused poses a substantial risk to the public, shall not be bailable, when the proof is evident, or the presumption strong." Source: SJ1 (d37sr56shkhr08.cloudfront.net/pdf-documents/123/2023/senate/resolutions/SJ0001/SJ0001.01.INTR.pdf)

U.S. Constitution Federalist Papers.

"Do we let judges fill in the blank or do we, the lawmakers, put those parameters in place and protect those people we have sworn to come down here and protect?" she asked.

The Senate passed SJR 1 with a vote of 34-15.

Five Republicans besides Glick voted it down: Sens. Eric Bassler of Washington, Vaneta Becker of Evansville, Chip Perfect of Lawrenceburg, Jim Tomes of Wadesville and Greg Walker of Columbus.

Democrat attempts to alter the proposal previously failed. One would have narrowed SJR 1's scope to people accused of "serious violent felonies" who posed a risk of "serious physical harm." The other would have done the same, plus added a 48-hour bail deadline following arrest and the right to a lawyer at a bail hearing.

Next steps: a "favorable reception" in the House

After the Senate's passage, the resolution now heads to the House for consideration. House Speaker Todd Huston, R-Fishers, said Thursday "it makes sense to me and I would guess it'll probably be a pretty favorable reception over here. He did acknowledge he hadn't had a ton of conversations about it yet."

Senate President Pro Tem Rodric Bray, R-Martinsville, — who is second author on SJR 1 — said he and his caucus were "open to changes" in the proposal's language. The two chambers must agree to a final version of every proposal in conference committees.

But he didn't support changes that would make it more specific, telling reporters that constitutions are "generally vague" and are "defined by court cases and statutes." SJR 1 doesn't have any accompanying legislation filling in the blanks this session, however.

If it's passed in March, the proposal's journey isn't over.

Because SJR 1 seeks to change Indiana's Constitution, two successive general assemblies must approve it: this session, and after a new legislature takes office in 2025.

Then, it would go to ballot in 2026. A majority of Hoosiers would need to support SJR 1 for it to take effect.

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Indiana DOE Encourages Hoosiers to Take Part in Summer Meals Program

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) is encouraging schools and qualified community organizations to participate in the 2023 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

The SFSP reimburses local sponsors that serve healthy free meals and snacks to children 18 years old and younger. Sponsorship is open to public and private nonprofit groups, including local governments, summer camps, religious organizations and recreation centers. Organizations may also consider partnering with



an existing sponsor, such as a school corporation, to serve students in areas where children may lack good nutrition during the summer months.

In 2022, more than 180 Indiana sponsors served nearly 2.5 million meals during the summer months. In addition to providing free meal service in

a local community, many sponsors also offer educational or physical activities for students.

Created in 1968, the Summer Food Service Program is funded and operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is administered by the states. Participating organizations

must adhere to all USDA regulations.

The program is funded through a reimbursement based on the number of meals served to eligible participants. Any student age 18 or under is eligible to receive meals through the Summer Food Service Program by visiting a meal site.

The application deadline for new sponsors is April 30, 2023. More information on program eligibility and sponsor requirements is available online at in.gov/doe/nutrition/summer-food-service-program/

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READI Makes Quality of Place Investments in North Central Indiana

Secretary of Commerce Brad Chambers joined local officials and regional leaders on Thursday in Kokomo as the North Central Region celebrated five quality of place investments that will support current and future residents. Fueled by the transformational Indiana Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI), the region is investing \$98.9 million to advance community amenities, infrastructure and workforce development to support talent retention and attraction.

"Across Indiana, communities are making unprecedented investments in their neighborhoods and their people thanks to READI," said Sec. Chambers. In north central Indiana, the region has come together to advance initiatives focused on quality of life, quality of place and quality of opportunity, and because of their collaboration, the future of the North Central READI

region is bright."

The nationally recognized READI program is allocating \$500 million to 17 regions across the state to accelerate shovel-ready projects and programs that are expected to transform Indiana communities, attract talent and improve the quality of life for Hoosiers in the short and long term.

The North Central Region, led by the North Central Indiana Regional Planning Council (NCIRPC), was awarded \$30 million in READI matching funds to advance its strategies to grow its population base, improve quality of place and quality of life, increase and diversify the region's quality of opportunity, and spur innovation and entrepreneurship to attract and retain talent.

"The North Central region has seen tremendous successes over the past eight years, and the READI investment enables us to rapidly advance that success, keep the momentum going and secure a

bright future for our families," said Paul Wyman, NCIRPC Board President.

"Our community leaders work together for a larger purpose, and as a result, we are now seeing unprecedented levels of private investment and job creation."

On Thursday, the North Central Region announced its first READI funding allocations, designating \$9.25 million to support five projects:

- **Industry 4.0 Training Lab at Ivy Tech Kokomo** (\$2M total project investment; \$1M READI allocation)

At Ivy Tech Kokomo, READI funds will be used to help prepare the region's workforce for the future of advancing manufacturing as the sector continues to modernize operations and integrate smart technologies and processes. This initiative will enable the region to proactively develop an educated workforce pipeline and upskill its current workforce to support

Industry 4.0 and fuel the future of manufacturing.

- **Riverfront Development in Peru**

(\$22.523M total project investment; \$2.75M READI allocation)

In Peru, the region is transforming 40 acres of idle real estate along the Wabash River, bringing new vibrancy and quality of place to the area. Revitalization of the riverfront property includes the newly constructed Miami County YMCA and a 174-unit development that will include apartments, duplexes and senior housing. READI funds will be used to enhance the streetscape at the site along Forrest and Maple streets.

- **US-31 & SR-28 Infrastructure in Tipton County**

(\$67M total project investment; \$3.5M READI allocation)

In Tipton County, the region is investing in infrastructure near the recently-developed US-31 & SR-28 interchange to fa-

cilitate further commercial and residential development in the area and along the SR-28 corridor. The city of Tipton, Tipton County and Tipton Municipal Utilities are partnering to extend water and sanitary sewer services with support from READI funds. The project is expected to lead to \$60 million in private investment and development.

- **Broadband Development in Cass & Howard Counties**

(Cass County: \$4.455M total project investment; \$1M READI allocation // Howard County: \$3.952M total project investment; \$1M READI allocation)

The North Central region will allocate \$2 million of READI funds to increase broadband in Cass and Howard counties, working to resolve the digital divide and increase digital accessibility. In Cass County, READI funds will build on the county's prior investment, adding an additional 237 miles of fiber to the existing 117 mile

fiber ring. This expansion will increase broadband infrastructure and fill in the gaps inside the ring, creating an affordable, scalable, reliable fiber network supplying upload and download speeds of 1G.

To the southwest, Howard County will build a fiber backbone with an estimated 300 miles of laterals to better serve rural communities, reaching approximately 250 businesses, 3,000 households and five schools.

Through READI, 17 regions across the state that represent all 92 counties are moving forward with projects and programs designed to enhance Indiana's regions for current and future generations of Hoosiers. Collectively, the state's \$500 million investment is expected to yield more than \$9 billion of additional public, private and nonprofit dollars invested in enhancing Indiana's quality of life, quality of place and quality of opportunity.

RUSTRY From Page A1

ny contracted by the government to ensure that you are who you say you are, thus avoiding any fraudulent activities. Login.gov is the government's own authentication program set up to allow access to multiple government agencies for the same purpose. The intent of both is to give you one set of sign in credentials which can be used to access multiple government agencies, rather than a unique login procedure for each agency. And, most importantly, the purpose is to protect you from any fraudulent activities which could cause you financial harm. Rest assured that your personal

information is safe using either of these government-sponsored methods to verify your identity for government business.

Those who have a "my Social Security" account set up before September 2021 can still use their previous SSA-unique identity verification method (a "2-factor ID process") to access their "my Social Security" online account. This method is as secure as the newer methods but is only good for accessing your Social Security account (not the IRS or any other government agency). Nevertheless, creating a new online Social Security account now requires

you use the government's current identity verification methods - either ID.me or Login.gov. If you select ID.me (a private company) you do have control over the type of communication you receive from them and can opt out of receiving any offers for additional services. To do so, it is basically a matter of signing into your ID.me account, accessing your Profile, and selecting "Unsubscribe All" in the Preferences section. And in the meantime, you can also select "Unsubscribe" at the bottom of any promotional email you receive from ID.me.

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of Mature American Citizens (AMAC):

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TRAVEL From Page A1

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Join Group Tours

Once you reach your destination, you may enjoy joining small groups for excursions or to explore local cuisine. Or you can make your entire journey a group experience. A small group

adventure with Overseas Adventure Travel has many benefits, and built-in dining companions is just one of them.

Take Precautions in Your Hotel Room

When you check in, ask the receptionist to write your room number down instead of announcing it to everyone can hear. Make sure your room's locks work on both the door into the hallway and the balcony. Never let any repair person or staff member into your room without confirming with the front desk first. Bring a rubber doorstop, which makes a hotel room door nearly impossible to open. Finally, have an exit plan: Know where the nearest exit is located and the route from your room.

Make New Friends

For some, making friends seems to happen naturally while traveling alone by chatting with strangers at a neighboring restaurant table or striking up a conversation while waiting in line at a store. If those situations don't occur naturally, there are useful apps that can connect you with local people as well as fellow travelers.

Find more tips to prepare for your journey at oatravel.com

EXAM From Page A1

before they worsen, he added.

"By meeting with your primary care provider early in the year, you can highlight the things that are important to you, and work together to develop a plan for your care for the year ahead," Sobel said. "This will ensure you live each day with vitality, happiness and improved health."

Many providers will reach out to schedule an annual wellness exam. If your provider doesn't contact you, make sure to call them.

A number of annual check-ups are available at no extra cost to those with Medicare. They include a "Welcome to Medicare" visit for customers who have just reached Medicare eligibility and an "Annual Wellness Exam" for existing customers. Many Medicare Advantage (MA) plans offer more extensive annual visits at no extra cost. Some even offer incentives for completing a vis-

it. Talk with your provider and Medicare insurer about your benefits.

Each annual exam may be a little different. Regardless of the type, Sobel offers the following tips to ensure you get the most from your visit.

Prepare. Before you go, write down anything you'd like to discuss with your health care provider, including changes to your health over the past year. Bring your prescription and over-the-counter medications with you. Ask plenty of questions and take notes. You might even want to take along a family member, trusted friend or caregiver to ensure you understand everything your provider has shared.

Be open and honest. It's tempting to make things look rosier than they are when talking to your health care provider, but minimizing what you are feeling can lead to an incorrect diagnosis or prescription. Speak openly about unhealthy habits,

like smoking or lack of exercise. Your provider won't judge you. Being honest is the only way your health care provider can help you reach your goals.

Mind mental health. Your emotional health impacts your physical health. Many people think depression is a natural part of aging, but it doesn't have to be. Talk to your doctor if you are feeling sad, anxious or hopeless. Treatments, such as talk therapy, medication or both, may be covered by Medicare.

Monitor medications. Adults age 65 and older tend to take more medications than other age groups, increasing the risk for adverse reactions, such as cognitive impairment and falls. It's a good idea to take your medications to your annual wellness exam and discuss any potential problems or side effects you're experiencing. Don't forget about over-the-counter drugs, vitamins or nutritional

supplements you take.

Schedule screenings and get vaccines. There are a number of important health screenings and vaccines that you may need depending on your age and gender, such as colon cancer screening, bone density test, mammogram, flu shot or COVID-19 immunization. Ask your provider about the screenings and vaccines you've had already and schedule any you need as soon as possible. You may even be able to do that before you leave the office. Also, don't forget to visit your eye doctor and dentist. These visits are covered by many MA plans as well. Find out more at www.cignamedicare.com.

"You wouldn't drive your vehicle without proper preventive maintenance, so please don't ignore preventive maintenance for your most prized possession - your health," Sobel said. "An annual wellness exam is a great place to start!"



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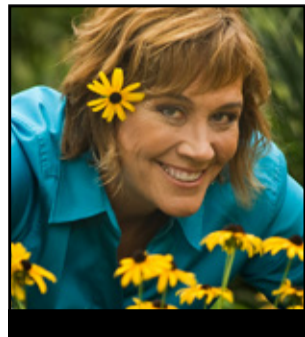
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Grow Tasty, Nutritious Leafy Greens Indoors



MELINDA MYERS
Columnist

Boost the flavor and nutritional value of winter meals by growing a container of greens indoors. Plant, tend and harvest greens for garden-fresh flavor now and throughout the year.

Green leafy vegetables are healthy sources of carbohydrates, typically rich in fiber and nutrients, while also being low in fat and calories. Many of these vegetables can help reduce the risk of stroke, anemia, high blood pressure, certain cancers, and diabetes. They also help improve the health of your gut, heart, bone, and skin while boosting your body's immunity.

To create your own indoor garden of greens, all you need are seeds, a container, potting mix, and a sunny window or artificial lights. Select a container or planter with drainage holes or reduce maintenance with the help of self-watering containers like the Viva Round or Square self-watering planters. Their water reservoirs reduce watering frequency.

Fill the container with a quality potting mix that is well-drained and retains moisture. Plant seeds as recommended on the seed packet. You can grow each type of green in its own container or mix them up for an attractive display in larger planters like the Tartu Elevated Rectangular Planter (gardeners.com).



Photo courtesy of Gardener's Supply Company/gardeners.com

Tabletop light stands work well on kitchen counters and provide plenty of light for greens to grow.

Water thoroughly and often enough to keep the soil moist while waiting for the seeds to sprout. Reduce the need for frequent watering by covering newly planted containers with a plastic sheet or dome. Once sprouts appear, remove the plastic and begin watering thoroughly when the top inch of soil begins to dry.

Boost productivity and increase planting space with the help of artificial lights. You will find a variety of setups for any space in your home. Counter and tabletop light stands like the Micro Grow Light Garden can be conveniently located in the kitchen or dining room. Stand-alone light shelves provide more growing space within a small footprint. Furniture-grade light stands make them easy to use in any room in the house.

Grow greens you and your family like to use in your favorite recipes and

salads. Green or red leaf lettuce is easy to grow indoors and its mild flavor is most appealing to children and picky eaters.

Spinach is another popular and easy-to-grow leafy green vegetable used fresh in salads and smoothies or added to soups and sauces. It contains many vitamins and nutrients, including iron, folic acid, and calcium.

Kale is considered a superfood. This nutrient-dense vegetable is packed with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. If the flavor is a bit too intense for you, try the baby leaf types that are milder in flavor, or try braising kale for a milder flavor and more tender texture.

Add a bit of peppery flavor to salads, soups, pastas, and other dishes with arugula. Add a spicier flavor with mustard greens. Sauté mustard greens or add them to your favorite Southern, Asian, Indian or savory dish.

Include color and flavor

in your winter meals with beet greens. The leafy part of this vegetable is often overlooked but is the most nutritious part of the plant. Use these the same way you would spinach or kale. You can purchase beet varieties selected for growing the best greens to harvest from baby to full size.

Make it more fun by getting others involved. Hand family members and guests a plate and kitchen shears so they can harvest and help prepare the meal.

Melinda Myers is the author of more than 20 gardening books, including Small Space Gardening and Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition. She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" DVD series and Melinda's Garden Moment TV & radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and was commissioned by Gardener's Supply for her expertise to write this article. Her website is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Six Tips to Enjoy Tulips For as Long as Possible

Tulips are one of the best-loved flowers. They are iconic eye-catchers that bring spring into our homes. But how do you make sure that you can enjoy these seasonal flowers for as long as possible? Here are six tips for you.

1. Fresh
It is best to buy tulips that show some color but whose buds are still closed. If the buds are already open when you buy them, flowering has already been set in motion and there is a chance that you will enjoy them for less time. The freshest tulips are grown locally. So, it's best to ask your vendor about their origin.

2. Transport
When you buy a beautiful bunch of tulips, make sure to have it wrapped properly in paper or newspaper. This protects the flowers and leaves from knocks and bumps. Paper wrapping will also protect the flowers against temperature differences between indoors and outdoors.

3. Newspaper
Before you display your tulips in a vase, carefully wrap them in newspaper. Put them in clean water and leave them in a cool

spot for an hour. When you unwrap them afterwards, you will find that the stems have grown nicely firm and straight.

4. Cutting
Your tulips will have been out of water for a while after buying them, which may cause the bottom of the stems to dry out. Therefore, trim an inch off the bottom of the stems with a clean knife. Cutting them at an angle helps the flowers absorb water more easily.

5. A vase
Flowers are sensitive to bacteria. Therefore, clean your vase thoroughly with green soap and rinse with water. Fill the vase with fresh tap water at room temperature. Change the water regularly to keep it clear and clean.

6. The right spot
Once your tulips are shining in a beautiful vase, it's important to pick the right spot to display them. This means avoiding direct sunlight and the vicinity of fruit. Fruit produces ethylene, a gas that makes flowers and leaves wilt more quickly.

Would you like to know more about bulb flowers? Then go to www.ilsays.com.



A Sense of Space Thanks to the Color Contrast of Flowers

Urbanization encroaches on available living space. As a result, multifunctionality and a sense of space are important prerequisites for a home. Did you know that flowers can make your interior feel more spacious?

Layering
Due to the lack of space which leads to smaller homes, there is a great need for multiple functions in the same space. This creates layering in homes. What is so great about flowers is that they can make the interior feel less small and cramped.

A sense of space
To reinforce layering, you can create interlocking surfaces on walls and in wall and floor decorations. This playful effect makes the interior feel more spacious. Bulb flowers and pre-forced bulbs enhance this experience if you use them in places where you

don't expect them.

Color contrast
The right use of color is also essential if you want to increase the spatial effect. Robust color contrasts such as light and dark, warm and cold and bright and greying are effective. One color combination appears to come towards you while another moves away. Try it out for yourself.

Dynamics
Feel free to play with color contrasts. Why not try combining pale-pink tulips and warm orange amaryllis with bright yellow hyacinths and bright-blue grape hyacinths. You will see that this application removes the flat and plain atmosphere and adds dynamism and a sense of space instead.

Would you like to know more about bulb flowers? Then go to www.ilsays.com.

New Winning Flower and Vegetable Varieties



MELINDA MYERS
Columnist

It's never too early to start planning new additions to this year's gardens and containers. Start compiling your list now so you are ready to place your seed order or buy plants early when the selection is the greatest.

Consider including a few All-America Selections (AAS) winners. These plants have been "Tested Nationally & Proven Locally™" for their superior performance in home gardens and containers. Grow a few of these 2023 flower winners for a new look to some long-time favorites.

Coral Candy Coleus is part of the Premium Sun series of coleus. It is the first coleus grown from seed to be selected as an

AAS Winner. This uniformly compact coleus has unique narrow, serrated, multicolored leaves. The AAS judges found this variety maintained the color even when grown in full sun. It performed well all season and had almost no flowers. You will only need three seeds to fill a 14 to 16" container.

Bring a bit of the tropics to your garden, patio, or balcony with Royal Hawaiian® Waikiki colocasia. This beautiful elephant ear wowed the judges with its sturdy burgundy stems and large glossy leaves featuring pink veins and creamy white centers. Waikiki reveals these striking colors earlier than other variegated colocasia. This compact variety holds up well in wind and rain.

The stunning orange flowers of Doubleshot snapdragons will have you looking for spaces in the garden and containers to include this winner. This 18 to 20" tall snapdragon features open-faced double flowers that start out in shades of orange and orange-red transitioning to a dusty shade as they age. Its strong stems produce lots of flower-filled branches

all season long that don't break off in high winds.

Blue By You salvia is bursting with bright blue flowers from late spring into fall when spent flowers are removed. This perennial blooms up to two weeks earlier than similar varieties already on the market. It was tested over three seasons, including winters and proven to be hardy in zones 4b to 9a. It is a favorite of hummingbirds and butterflies, makes a great cut flower, is suitable for containers, and is heat tolerant. All this and it's less favored by deer and rabbits.

Make space in the vegetable garden for the high-yielding Kabocha Sweet Jade winter squash. The fruit weighs between one and two pounds, making it perfect for single servings of squash, as an edible soup bowl, or added to a variety of Asian-style dishes where a sweet, earthy nutritious squash is typically recommended. Roast, bake, or puree Sweet Jade's deep orange flesh that has a dry texture with a sweet flavor.

Grow San Joaquin jalapeno pepper when

looking for big harvests in a short timeframe. This means you'll have lots of peppers available for canning, pickling, and serving roasted and stuffed to large groups of guests. Leave them on the plant longer, allowing them to turn a beautiful red while maintaining their flavor. These thick-walled peppers have just a hint of heat at 2,500-6,000 Scoville units.

Make room in your gardens and containers for these and other winning varieties. Adding new introductions that have been trialed by horticulture professionals across North America helps increase your gardening success.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the recently released Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition and Small Space Gardening. She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" instant video and DVD series and the nationally syndicated Melinda's Garden Moment TV & radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and her website is www.MelindaMyers.com.

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THE TIMES

WEEKEND

In The
Home

Weekend, Jan. 28-29, 2023

A8

TIM TIMMONS, Publisher @ JOE LARUE, Vice-President of Readership @ MELISSA MEME, Account Executive @ BETH HEDGE, Business Manager

Tech Time

FAMILY FEATURES

Encouraging a successful education for your kids while promoting fun after-school learning may never be easier than right now. From wearables to virtual reality headsets and beyond, the latest tech-enabled devices let families enhance classroom experiences while engaging in downtime together after the final school bell rings.

Find more gadgets to help families balance learning and pleasure this school year at qualcomm.com.



Photo courtesy of Getty Images

Technology-enabled devices for parents and children

Lightweight, Powerful Computing

Weighing in at less than 1.2kg, the convertible Acer Chromebook Spin 513 is not only light but also barely larger than a sheet of paper so it slips easily into any compact bag or backpack. Powered by the Snapdragon 7c Compute Platform, it delivers more than enough processing power, battery life and reliable connectivity to get you or your student through the day. A quick flip between laptop and tablet modes means it can be used to doodle, watch classroom instruction and learn on the go. Built-in cellular connectivity means the device seamlessly converts between 4G LTE and trusted Wi-Fi networks.



A Phone to Keep Everyone Connected

Choosing a phone means looking for the fastest speeds, highest resolution camera, loudest audio and boldest display. Powered by the latest Snapdragon 8 Gen 1 Mobile Platform processor, the Motorola Edge+ (2022) delivers. This industry-leading smartphone is a high-performance choice that brings unparalleled processing power on the industry's fastest mobile platform, fueling cutting-edge 5G, AI, gaming, camera and Wi-Fi and Bluetooth technologies. What's more, features like extended battery life and 512 GB of storage mean your phone is ready whenever you are.



Headset Hero

Designed from the ground up to drive advanced features, Snapdragon XR2 is the force behind the Meta Quest 2 headset's freedom of movement and high-resolution display. This headset allows families to become completely immersed in the virtual reality applications and games played for maximum adventure experiences. Even better, hundreds of hit games, one-of-a-kind experiences and a growing community await users of this next-level hardware that's both easy to set up and safe to use.

Wearable Connectivity

Powered by the Snapdragon Wear 2500 Platform, the Gabb Watch is a safe wearable phone for kids that does extra duty as a GPS tracker, phone and interactive smartwatch. The watch offers kid-friendly sweat and dirt resistance and enables GPS tracking, calling, voice and text messaging to help parents and kids stay connected. With a lock mode, safe zone location management and emergency notifications, it's a smart first step toward independence for junior users.



First Work Then Play

A practical choice, the Lenovo Duet 3 Chromebook is an ideal work and play device for a hyper-mobile student, delivering superior experiences with an 11-inch 2K near-borderless display. Faster connectivity options, all-day battery life and the powerful, fanless and efficient performance of the Snapdragon 7c Gen 2 Compute Platform ensure things get done. Thanks to the speedy, secure and simple-to-use Chrome OS, you can tackle tasks on this 2-in-1's detachable keyboard with anti-ppy, water-resistant keys then seamlessly switch to pleasure pursuits by folding into tablet mode.



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WEEKEND *Travel or stay! and Play*

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Study Ranks Ohio's Hocking Hills Among Nation's Most Beautiful, Popular State Parks

A recent in-depth Travel Lens study of Yelp and TripAdvisor reviews, Instagram popularity and Google search data showed that Ohio's Hocking Hills State Park is one of the nation's fastest growing in popularity and is ranked as on the nation's most beautiful state parks. Cited for one-of-a-kind travel experiences and mind-blowing natural beauty, Hocking Hills State Park ranks fourth in the nation for beauty and is ranked sixth in the U.S. for increased popularity, following Niagara Falls and California's Redwoods.

With more than 13,000 acres of unbroken forest, travelers give the region

five-star reviews for spectacular scenery marked by deep gorges, lush forests, soaring rock faces, unique rock formations and stunning waterfalls. The Hocking Hills region's unique outdoor and arts experiences sparked a record number of searches and positive reviews, causing it to surge in popularity. Travelers research and book their travel at ExploreHockingHills.com or by calling 1-800-Hocking (800-462-5464).

Located 40 miles south-east of Columbus, Ohio's Hocking Hills' miles of wooded trails offer extraordinary hikes in winter and every season. Spring through fall, night

moth lightings, hands-on butterfly experiences, canopy tours, kayaking, pontoon boats and more give visitors even more opportunities to immerse themselves in the beautiful nature of Ohio's Hocking Hills. A visit to John Glenn Astronomy Park shows the region's dark skies awash in stars and planets with educational programming on weekends giving visitors a fascinating astronomy lesson, complete with incredible access to high-powered telescopes.

Local artists open their studios and help visitors to tap their inner artists with lessons in glass blowing, painting or ceramics.

Unique galleries, gift and antique shops are home to wonderful locally crafted and hidden treasures. The region is also home to loads of affordable and truly unique accommodations, from cabins in the woods, cottages, hotels and country inns, to treehouses, yurts, geodomes, hobbit houses, a cabin built into an actual cave -- and even more unusual lodging. A salt cave, woodland spas and sauna pods add to the allure of the Hocking Hills as the perfect place to unplug any time of year.

Complete traveler information is available ExploreHockingHills.com or 1-800-Hocking (800-462-5464).

Tribute to the Troops Event

Badlands Off-Road Park is excited to announce their next event in their line of giving back, Tribute to the Troops, happening on July 29, 2023, in Attica, Indiana! Headlining this year is a duo whose sound is instantly recognizable! Known for hits such as "Save a Horse (Ride a Cowboy)", "Comin' to Your City", and "Lost in This Moment" - Big & Rich will be in Attica, Indiana with Cowboy Troy! More artists will be added to the schedule at a later date as well!

Tribute to the Troops is all about our troops and honoring them! In 2021 - Badlands, in partnership with Attica

Motorsports, Polaris, and other great sponsors gave away a custom 2021 Polaris Off-Road Ranger to a well-deserving service member. This year they are also planning for a big giveaway that will be announced very soon, as well as information on how to win!

Tickets for the event are available at www.tributetothetroops.com. The first 1,000 military members who verify through the website (via an outside verification process - VerifyPass) will receive FREE tickets to the event! Riding passes for Badlands Off Road Park and Parking Passes for the concert will also be available.

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