

➔ TODAY'S VERSE

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.



➔ FACES OF HAMILTON COUNTY

People who call our community their own.

What makes Ian Hauer smile? "My wife makes me smile," he said. "It's not just that I enjoy being with her -- which I do -- it's that she causes smiles to creep up unaware ... Being with her means I'm always in danger of smiling when I least expect it." The 32-year-old Noblesville resident was born in Minnesota and spent most of his youth in Newburgh, Ind., before ending up in Central Indiana a decade ago to take a job at the Statehouse and finish school at IUPUI. He is director of marketing and communications for the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority and former deputy chief of staff for the Indiana Treasurer of State. "I moved to Noblesville in 2019 and absolutely love it here." Passions? "All of the worthwhile jobs, hobbies and pursuits in my life have had one common thread, storytelling." In college, he studied history because of his fascination with the past and could understand things better if he knew where they came from. In his free time, he and his wife, Emily (Smith) Hauer, are involved in community theater and actually met while doing a show. He is a playwright, actor and director. He's acted in 37 full-length plays for eight different theater groups. He co-founded Hyperion Players theater group with a childhood friend. He's currently directing his 14th full-length play, his first at Basile Westfield Playhouse, "Night Must Fall," a psychological thriller that is onstage today through Sunday, with tickets at westfieldplayhouse.org/

And Another Few Things...

1. Braun Police Bill

Yesterday, Senator Mike Braun and Senators Ted Cruz, Ron Johnson, Marco Rubio, James Lankford, Eric Schmitt, Thom Tillis, Bill Hagerty, John Kennedy, John Hoeven, John Boozman and Ted Budd reintroduced the *Thin Blue Line Act*, a bill to increase penalties for crimes targeted at police officers.

The *Thin Blue Line Act* makes the targeting, killing or attempted killing of a police officer an aggravating factor in favor of maximum sentences. Currently, this applies to federal law enforcement; the *Thin Blue Line Act* would apply this to local and state police as well.

In just the first month of this year, thirty-four police officers were shot in the U.S. As Law Officer reports, the number of officers shot in line of duty has more than doubled since 2020. The death of Indiana officer Noah Shahnnavaz, who was killed by a criminal with multiple prior violent encounters with law enforcement but was released after serving 13 years of a 25 year sentence, motivated Braun to re-introduce the bill.

2. Broadband Ready

Earlier this week, Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, the Indiana Broadband Office (IBO) and the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) announced Henry County as a Broadband Ready Community. At a press conference Wednesday afternoon, the lieutenant governor officially announced the newest BBRC and celebrated the community's accomplishments.

The Broadband Ready Communities Program was created as a tool to encourage broadband development throughout Indiana. The Broadband Ready Community certification signals to the telecommunication industry that a community has taken steps to reduce barriers to broadband infrastructure investment.

The certification was approved by the Indiana Broadband Office and the Office of Community and Rural Affairs following Henry County's adoption of a Broadband Ready Community ordinance.

Via 2020 legislation, the Broadband Ready Community Program was transitioned from the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) to the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA). IBO began the day-to-day management of the Broadband Ready Community Program on July 1, 2020. For more information, visit in.gov/indianabroadband.

The TIMES

Hamilton County's Own Daily Newspaper

NOBLESVILLE, INDIANA

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Photo courtesy of Indy Ghost Light Photography

Lizzie Schultz, a 2022 Noblesville High School graduate, portrays Nurse Libby in Basile Westfield Playhouse's production of "Night Must Fall," directed by Noblesville's Ian Hauer, 7:30 p.m. today and Saturday and 2:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday with tickets at westfieldplayhouse.org

'Little Mermaid,' Moontown Pickle Stompers, Living History Trade Fair, Charity Ball, More This Weekend



BETSY REASON
The Times Editor

See a kids musical, a dark drama, a lively comedy, shop at a living history and music, live music, trade fair, antique arms show and more can be found in our list of 25 things to do this weekend and beyond:

1. Enjoy a night under the sea at The Attic Theatre's production of "The Little Mermaid" musical, directed by Rebecca Roy, today through Sunday at The Ivy Tech Auditorium in Noblesville, with tickets at theattictheatre.com

2. Listen to live music with Hill and Oaks at 7 p.m. today at

Primeval Brewing in downtown Noblesville.

3. Experience Basile Westfield Playhouse's production of "Night Must Fall," directed by Noblesville's Ian Hauer, 7:30 p.m. today and Saturday and 2:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday with tickets at westfieldplayhouse.org

4. Enjoy live music with The Moontown Pickle Stompers at 8 p.m. today at Syd's Fine Food and Spirits in downtown Noblesville.

➔ See BETSY Page A6

Update #101 Courtesy of Dr. Derek Arrowood



DR. DEREK ARROWOOD
HHSC Superintendent



February 15 was School Resource Officer (SRO) Appreciation Day and it gives me the

perfect opportunity to share a shout out to our amazing SROs - Deputies Josh Ireland, Jon Tindal, and Alex Petty. They serve as an important bridge between our students, law enforcement, and our community. They are engaged, involved, work to protect our campus, and help provide a safe environment for our staff and students. Moreover, they are inspirational mentors and role models. The lasting relationships they build with our students and staff are lifechanging. Thank you for your presence, commitment, and service.

Also in February we have the opportunity to publicly acknowledge the invaluable role our school counselors play in supporting our students as part

➔ See ARROWOOD Page A6



Photo courtesy of HHSC

Hamilton Heights Elementary School's K-Kids Club after delivering and shelving food collected from their Thanksgiving food drive

Heights' K-Kids Club Celebrate K-Kids Week

This is K-Kids Week (Feb. 13-17). K-Kids Clubs worldwide like the K-Kids Club at Hamilton Heights Elementary School are celebrating the impact of

some of the youngest servant leaders. K-Kids is the largest service organization for elemen-

➔ See K-KIDS Page A6

➔ INSIDE TODAY

- Obituaries.....A2
- Dick Wolfsie.....A2
- Meeting Notice.....A2
- News Brief.....A2
- Ken Thompson.....A3
- Legal Notice.....A3
- Meeting Notes.....A3
- Capital Chronicle.....A4, A5
- Classifieds.....A6
- Business.....A7
- Voices.....A8, A9

➔ OBITUARIES

David Joseph James
Linda McWilliams

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

➔ HONEST HOOSIER

Been to a high school sports event this winter? If not, the popcorn smells delicious. Come on, let's go!



➔ TODAY'S HEALTH TIP

Applying heat to an injury the first few days can actually make it worse. Today's health tip was brought to you by Dr. John Roberts. Be sure to catch his column each week in The Times and online at www.thetimes24-7.com.



➔ TODAY'S QUOTE

"If freedom of speech is taken away, then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to slaughter."
George Washington

➔ TODAY'S JOKE

What'd the icy road say to the car? Hey, wanna go for a spin?

WTHR 7 DAY FORECAST

45/64 STORMY START, SEVERE	25/32 FLURRIES, WINDCHILL: 18-19	20/47 SUNNY	32/54 SUNNY	36/48 COLDER, LATE DAY SHOWERS	35/46 PARTLY CLOUDY, WINDY	35/42 CHANCE OF RAIN/SNOW
THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED



⇒ OBITUARIES

David Joseph James

January 21, 1951-February 15, 2023

David Joseph James, 72, of Westfield, went to be with his Lord and Savior on Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2023 after his battle with cancer. He was born on Jan. 21, 1951 to William and Eva (Roby) James in Noblesville.

David was a 1969 graduate of Noblesville High School. He worked in banking and mortgages for many years and retired from the Noblesville Trustee Office. David was a member of Grace Church in Noblesville. When his kids were younger, he was known for his video recordings at their many events. David was a member of the Blue Star Band. He loved to karaoke, write music and was a big Beatles fan. David was an IU Basketball and Colts Football fan. He loved vacationing in Florida and being on the beach with sun shining on his face.

Survivors include his wife of 20 years Andrea James; daughters Valerie (Bruce) Martin, Joanna James, April (Lance) Welker and Amanda (Michael) White; brothers Ronnie Pouch and Fred James; grandchildren Josiah, Emma, Ezra, Miriam, Blake, Reese, Alexis, Henry, Sidney, Andrew and Taylor; & loving dogs Holly and Pearl.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his sisters-in-law, Patty Pouch and Wanda James; and dogs, Tolia and Bailey.

Services will be held at 1 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 20, 2023 at Randall & Roberts Funeral Home, 1150 Logan St. in Noblesville, with Pastor Tim Ayers officiating. Visitation will be from 11 a.m. to the time of service at the funeral home. Burial will be at Crownland Cemetery in Noblesville.

Condolences: www.randallroberts.com

Linda McWilliams

November 30, 1940-February 15, 2023

Linda McWilliams, 82, of Westfield, IN, formerly of Ten Mile, Tennessee, passed away Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2023. She was born Nov. 30, 1940 in Mount Carmel, Illinois, daughter of Ralph and Marjorie (Fuller) Marx.

After several years working at Goettle Construction, Linda retired, which allowed her more time to enjoy cooking as well as reading.

On Oct. 29, 1961, Linda married the love of her life Bob, and they were blessed with 60 years together. She was a dedicated and active member of the Luminary United Methodist Church in Ten Mile, Tenn., where they lived 26 years.

Survivors include her daughter, Louanne Fay of Westfield; 3 grandchildren, Cameron Fay, Amanda (Vince) Fay Walton, and Dr. Ashleigh (Mark) Magill; 2 great-grandchildren, John Dickson and Vincent Walton; sisters, Marilea McConnell of Douglasville, Georgia and Deanna (Nick) Peters of Mount Carmel, Ill.; and several nieces, nephews and other extended family members.

In addition to her parents, Linda was preceded in death by her husband, Robert "Bob" McWilliams; and sisters, Betty June Marx and Pat Marx.

A Memorial Service for Linda will be held in Mount Carmel, Ill. at a later date.

In memory of Linda, donations may be made to the Luminary United Methodist Church, 3401 River Rd., Ten Mile, TN 37880.

Bussell Family Funerals is privileged to assist the McWilliams family.

⇒ Meeting Notice

Noblesville Economic Development Commission

The Noblesville Economic Development Commission will meet on Friday, March 17, 2023 at 9 a.m. in the Council Chamber at City Hall, 16 South 10th St.

⇒ News Briefs

Lane Closure

Beginning as early as Feb. 27, there will be temporary lane closures on 116th Street between Hazel Dell Parkway and Eller Road. ICC Group will close one lane at a

time to perform repairs to the bridge joints.

These closures are expected to occur between 9 a.m. and 2:30 pm each day. The repairs are expected to take 1-2 days, depending on the weather. Use caution while in the

And The Survey Says . . .



DICK WOLFSIE
Life in a Nutshell

At first glance, it seemed like a pretty good deal. Enjoy a complimentary \$25.00 gift card from one of the local supermarkets. All it required was answering a few questions online. I figured it was a marketing scam. I wasn't born yesterday. In fact, as you'll see, I was born 100 years ago.

I had to agree to certain contractual terms, including giving my permission for the research firm to forward my responses to businesses that could contact me to pitch their products or services. What was I thinking?

The first line asked me the date I was born. I was honest about the exact day in March, but I scrolled all the way to the bottom of the drop-down menu and found the earliest birth year listed. I clicked on 1923. I thought that might dissuade the life insurance sales people from pestering me with calls.

Next, I was confronted with several odd questions. 92% of females who fill out this survey want to receive free samples. Do you? (Was this a trick? I'm a guy. How do I answer that? I think the first question on tests should be the easiest.)

40% of those who fill out this survey meditate. Do you? (Yes, and right now I'm deep in thought, wondering why I am doing this for a lousy 25 bucks.)

Then things started getting really serious:

8% of those who fill out this survey are unemployed. Are you?

6% of those who fill out

this survey are clinically depressed. Are you?

11% of those who fill out this survey are in debt. Are you?

13% of men who fill out this survey need ED medicine. Do you?

Next, they asked my level of education. One of the choices was: "I'd rather not answer this." No such option was available for my mental state, my sex life or my financial status. But did I complete high school? Apparently, that's getting way too personal.

Here was another inquiry: Have you considered replacing the aluminum siding on your home?

I clicked "yes," because I was afraid that too many "no" answers would have suggested I was just in this for the free frozen pizzas I was going to get with my gift card. While I was still typing, the phone rang.

"Mr. Wolfsie, this is A. A. Monroe Home Improvement. Based on your response 45 seconds ago,

we have determined that you are exactly the kind of person who can benefit from our aluminum siding, which comes with a lifetime warranty for as long as you own your home."

"Look at the survey. I'm 100 years old. Could I rent your siding?"

In a final notation, the research company reserved the option of substituting a prize worth the equivalent of the \$25 in free groceries, which probably meant a knock-off Rolex. I called the hotline number and told the woman that I felt I had been conned and that the entire questionnaire was a waste of my time.

She said 82% of the people who took the survey felt exactly the same way.

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.

Purdue Ventures Invests \$250K in Educational Technology Company

Purdue Ventures, which manages three funds to support Purdue University-connected startups, has invested \$250,000 in Tactile Engineering Inc., a company that has developed assistive educational technology to enable people affected by blindness and low vision.

Purdue Ventures' investment is part of a larger \$1.5 million funding round for Tactile Engineering that includes investments from Elevate Ventures, Queen City Angels and private individuals.

CEO Dave Schleppebach said the company's Cadence tactile tablet allows readers to access up to eight lines of electronic Braille cells.

"Students, professionals and leisure readers can use Cadence to navigate long equations and access technical diagrams," Schleppebach said. "Multiple Cadence devices can be linked to form larger readable surfaces."

Cadence's refreshable display of electronic cells uses standard Braille size, spacing and height. The modular cells are replaceable, and Tactile Engineering provides web-based support tools to enable remote calibration.

Schleppebach said Cadence can be used as an e-reader, a graphing calculator and an image viewer.

"It downloads and displays books and documents in a wide range of

formats," Schleppebach said.

"It duplicates the functions of a traditional scientific calculator and allows users to pan, zoom and highlight its tactile output. It also can be used as an image viewer with animated, highlighted and interactive images to demonstrate scientific, geographic and other complex subjects."

Additional applications are in development, including a web browser, classroom aids, annotation tools, and notetaker and leisure software. Cadence's built-in Wi-Fi allows users to download and install new apps as they become available.

Schleppebach said Tactile Engineering strongly supports the national objective to strengthen Braille literacy. He said literacy is critical for gaining employment, especially in high-demand technical and scientific roles.

"According to the National Federation of the Blind, 70% of adults who are blind are unemployed," Schleppebach said. "Of those persons with vision impairments who are employed, 90% are Braille-literate."

"Although advances in voice control and speech synthesis might seem to offer a solution to workplace accessibility, such tools cannot provide access to mathematics, technical content or graphics, all of which are vital for

equal-opportunity STEM education and employment. The goal of providing this access drives everything we do at Tactile Engineering."

Schleppebach said the Purdue Ventures investment and the funding round will allow Tactile Engineering to invest in additional capital equipment, parts and labor to manufacture Cadence in larger quantities. He said the company has other significant ties to Purdue.

"Several of our founders and employees have a Purdue academic background; our original research in the field started while at Purdue," Schleppebach said.

"The Purdue Manufacturing Extension Partnership has been immensely helpful in providing expertise to develop our robotic assembly plant. Finally, because Cadence has an educational focus, Purdue would be a great avenue for us to develop accessible content and test results with students."

Riley Gibb, associate director of Purdue Ventures, said Tactile Engineering is a strong addition to the investment portfolio.

"Tactile Engineering has strong connections to Purdue University research, which is a key qualifier for an investment," Gibb said.

"We also appreciate the company is serving an unmet need - strengthening learning in the STEM fields for people who are

affected by blindness and low vision - in a unique way with the multiple applications of its Cadence tool."

About Purdue Ventures:

Purdue Ventures manages multiple pools of capital in collaboration with the Purdue University entrepreneurial ecosystem and local corporations, enabling Purdue startups to improve the world. It has invested over \$12 million since its formation.

To support various technologies coming out of the university as well as student or alumni founders, Purdue Ventures manages three funds, each with a different investment focus.

Ag-Celerator funds startups looking to commercialize Purdue IP or Purdue "know-how" technologies related to or impacting agriculture. The Foundry Investment Fund supports life science innovation by making up to 30% of institutional capital investments made in Purdue-affiliated startups. The Purdue Startup Fund supports innovation commercialization through early-stage investments.

About Tactile Engineering:

Tactile Engineering was founded in 2013 with the goal of developing and manufacturing an affordable tactile graphics tablet for use by blind and visually impaired (B/VI) individuals around the world.

2914 Fordham Lane
Indianapolis • \$99,900
SOLD!

Attention investors! This condo is ready for your expertise. 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, eat-in kitchen, laundry on main level, brick hearth fireplace in family room, great patio, assigned covered parking. BLC#21897547

26 Forest Bay Lane
Cicero • \$695,000

Stately and well maintained brick 2-story, 2.24 acres with wooded backyard. 3 BR, 3 full and 2 1/2 baths, huge finished basement, 3-car garage, screened porch, access to lake. BLC#21896185

7123 Burlat Lane
Noblesville • \$359,900
PENDING

Over 3,000 square feet of living space in this beautiful home in Cherry Tree Meadows featuring 4 BR/2.5 BA office and loft. LVP Hardwoods on main level, fenced backyard with large deck. New roof! BLC#21902247

1999 N Harbour Drive
Noblesville • \$379,900
PENDING

Pristine home situated in the heart of North Harbour on over half an acre (.65). Features include 4 BR, 2.5 BA and a stunning 22x15 sunroom. Lovely view of Harbour Trees Golf Course #7 across the street. BLC#21893242

As Spring approaches the housing market is warming up!

Speak to Deak!

Jennifer
Peggy

THE Deak Team
REALTORS®

Speak to Deak.com 317.439.3258 Peggy or 317.695.6032 Jennifer

Talk to Tucker
REALTORS
F.C. TUCKER COMPANY

Kenny Looks at Big Ten Schedule Shakeups

Media reports indicate the Big Ten Conference's top officials will meet sometime this month to work out plans for football schedules in 2024 and beyond.

It's not going to be as simple as plugging in new members USC and UCLA alongside Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, Northwestern and Wisconsin in the West while shifting Purdue to the East. The East and West divisions will cease to exist for one very lucrative reason.

FOX, CBS and NBC aren't paying ridiculous sums of cash to show USC traveling to Wisconsin in November. They want matchups like USC-Ohio State and UCLA-Penn State to lure viewers and advertisers and offset the cost of doing business with the Big Ten.

Then there are the annual rivalry games. Most, like Michigan-Ohio State and Purdue-Indiana will be protected. But how does the Big Ten make sure that the Illibuck Trophy game is played more than four times in a decade? Before 1987, it wasn't a worry that Illinois and Ohio State wouldn't meet annually.

Then Penn State came along. Since 12 was a nice even number, and it opened the door to a lucrative football championship game, Nebraska was welcomed into the fold in 2010. When commissioner Jim Delany cast his eyes toward New York City and Washington D.C. in 2014, he saw Rutgers and Maryland as a chance to extend the Big Ten Network's reach.

Now that the Big Ten has planted its flag from sea to shining sea, the



KEN THOMPSON
Columnist

hard work begins. How to please the fans and television partners, and not necessarily in that order, with games that will raise interest in Big Ten football but preserve the traditions in a league co-founded by Purdue president James H. Smart in 1896?

Let's give it a try, using the oft-rumored scheduling format of three permanent rivals and six opponents that will rotate every two years to ensure every Big Ten school plays the other 15 members.

Purdue – Protected rivals Indiana, Illinois and Iowa. Yes, Northwestern is closer to West Lafayette but there would be cries – especially from Bloomington – that some years this would give the Boilermakers quite a head start in conference play.

Since 2000, Purdue is 14-8 vs. Indiana, 14-6 vs. Illinois (for The Cannon) and 10-10 vs. Northwestern. The series with the Hawkeyes over the last 22 years is 8-12.

I also would recommend the first six rotating schools come from the pre-expansion era Big Ten: Michigan, Michigan State, Minnesota, Northwestern, Ohio State and Wisconsin. In these changing times, familiarity may help ease older fans into accepting this is not their father's Big Ten.

Replace them in 2026-27 with Maryland, Nebraska, Penn State, Rutgers, UCLA and USC for a home and home series.

Indiana – Next to the Old Oaken Bucket game, the Hoosiers' longest rivalry is with Ohio State (96 games). However, the Buckeyes are locked in with Michigan and probably some combination of Penn State, USC and UCLA for marquee matchup reasons.

Fortunately, the Old Brass Spittoon gives the Big Ten a reason to extend the series with Michigan State. As for the third permanent rival, Illinois makes a lot of sense.

Illinois – Speaking of the Fighting Illini, they might be one of the easiest schools to assign permanent rivals.

They would be Purdue (The Cannon), Northwestern (Land of Lincoln) and Indiana, a reasonable drive (169 miles) between Bloomington and Champaign. This would relegate the Illibuck Trophy game with Ohio State and a longtime rivalry (97 games) with Michigan to 4-6 times a decade.

Iowa – The Hawkeyes' Floyd of Rosedale rivalry with Minnesota has gone on for 116 games, one fewer than Michigan-Ohio State. This is a lock to continue annually.

Since we have Purdue as a permanent foe (the Boilermakers have played the Hawkeyes 93 times), let's plug in Iowa-Wisconsin for the Heartland Trophy each year.

Maryland – Believe it or not, the Terrapins have won just four times in 46 games with Penn State. So why would we advocate

the Nittany Lions as a permanent rival?

Travel, the same reason I'd assign Rutgers as permanent foe No. 2. By process of elimination, as you'll see later, Northwestern is the pick for the third permanent opponent.

Michigan – Something will have to give for the Wolverines if a permanent slot is saved for a second marquee TV game outside their matchup with Ohio State.

Three of the Big Ten's oldest rivalry games belong to Michigan: Ohio State (117), Michigan State (115, Paul Bunyan Trophy) and Minnesota (109, Little Brown Jug). Jim Harbaugh wouldn't mind if those three games are permanent but if FOX/CBS/NBC request annual Michigan/USC contests, the Gophers might be the odd rival out.

Michigan State – The Spartans and Michigan carry grudges to the extreme.

Michigan believes MSU cost them a trip to the Rose Bowl in 1973, being the swing vote in the secret balloting among athletic directors. The Spartans have reason to believe Michigan tried to keep them out of the Big Ten in the 1940s.

The name calling and deep-seated resentment between the two programs sells this game without the usual rivalry hype. While not as bitter, Michigan State and Indiana have had some really good rivalry games. Let's pick Minnesota for the third permanent game.

Minnesota – We've already mentioned Iowa and Floyd of Rosedale, but the Gophers play for an even bigger (literally) trophy in Paul Bunyan's

Axe with Wisconsin. The Badgers and Gophers have met 132 times, easily the Big Ten's longest standing rivalry.

Since we've cast aside the Little Brown Jug, Michigan State would be a worthy substitute for Michigan.

Nebraska – Alas, the "\$5 Bits of Broken Chair Trophy" (I'm not making this up) with Minnesota is unlikely to make the annual cut.

The Heroes Trophy matchup with Iowa won't work either if the Hawkeyes are permanently linked with Purdue.

The rivalry most likely to remain is the annual struggle with Wisconsin for the Freedom Trophy. As the closest geographical school to the Los Angeles branch of the Big Ten, let's pencil in UCLA as permanent rival No. 2. Rutgers has to play someone permanently so why not a fellow expansion team?

Northwestern – The Wildcats have just one natural rival, Illinois. This fact makes Northwestern a wild card to fill out permanent schedules, and I've chosen to fit in Maryland and Ohio State.

Ohio State – The Buckeyes are a valuable TV commodity and as much as FOX/CBS/NBC would love to stack their lineup with games against name opponents (Penn State, UCLA, the Cleveland Browns - kidding), the 3-6-6 scheduling model limits the Big Ten in its options. That's why I have Northwestern paired with Maryland and USC.

Penn State – Maryland and Rutgers make too much sense geographically and would allow the Nittany Lions to retain

their traditional East Coast sensibilities.

But a name brand like Penn State needs a worthy annual rival, and UCLA has the cachet.

Rutgers – The Scarlet Knights feel like everyone's last choice when selecting teams for a pickup basketball game.

Penn State and Maryland aren't fits athletically but the shorter road trips will help pay for those flights to Los Angeles for basketball, volleyball and Rutgers' other athletic teams. Nebraska completes the expansion triumvirate.

USC – The Victory Bell rivalry with UCLA will claim the honor of closest Big Ten rivals (14.2 miles or an hour in Los Angeles traffic) from Michigan/Michigan State (87 miles).

Ohio State is almost a certain second permanent foe, and the guess here is Michigan will be the third.

UCLA – Looking at the Bruins' football history, the most games they have played against a current Big Ten school is 13 against Nebraska. The Cornhuskers still possess a big enough name to lure casual viewers.

The third permanent rival after USC and Nebraska? Penn State is a strong bet.

Wisconsin – Three traditional rivals, three permanent scheduling slots.

It just makes too much sense to choose anyone but Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska so why complicate things?

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.

Judges May Allow Press Cameras in Trial Courts

Beginning on May 1, 2023, judicial officers around the state will have the authority to allow news media into their courtrooms to record, photograph, and broadcast court proceedings that are not confidential.

Rule 2.17 of the Code of Judicial Conduct has long prohibited broadcasting, recording, or taking photographs of court proceedings and areas adjacent to courtrooms without prior approval by the Indiana Supreme Court. An order

amending Rule 2.17, effective May 1, 2023, gives the discretion to allow cameras to the local judges.

"This is the culmination of years of work and pilot projects with discussion and evaluation," said Chief Justice Loretta H. Rush. "Trial court judges are in the best position to determine how to balance the importance of transparency while protecting the rights of people involved in a court matter."

This change follows a

4-month pilot program, a public comment period, and careful evaluation by the Indiana Supreme Court. Longtime work by the Indiana Judicial Conference Community Relations Committee and Court Security Committee, along with the Hoosier State Press Association and the Indiana Broadcasters Association, led to the most recent pilot project. The judges who opened their courtrooms during the pilot—Judges Fran Gull, Marianne Vorhees, Bruce Parent,

Sean Persin, and Leslie Shively—provided essential feedback.

Under the new rule, cameras are still prohibited in court unless authorized by the judge. Commentary included with the rule provides further conditions; for example, certain people—including minors and jurors—may not be shown on camera, only news media as defined in Ind. Code 34-46-4-1 may be authorized, and the judge may revoke authorization at any time for any reason.

PUBLIC NOTICES

CITY OF FISHERS ADVISORY PLAN COMMISSION NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING: CASE RZ-23-1 "PUBLIC HEARING FOR REZONE"

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY SUBMIT COMMENTS BY GOING TO: https://townofishers.formstack.com/forms/public_meeting_comment_form

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY STREAM THE LIVE MEETINGS BY GOING TO: <http://tinyurl.com/CityOfFishers>

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held by the Fishers Advisory Plan Commission at 6:00 PM on Wednesday, March 1st, 2023 at Launch Fishers Huston Theater, 12175 Visionary Way, Fishers IN 46038.

REQUEST: At that hearing, the public will be invited to offer comments on the following request ("Proposal"): Case #RZ-23-1 - Consideration of a rezoning of 60.5 acres from Marina PUD (PUDM) to Open Space (OS).

LOCATION: 10811 OLIO RD, FISHERS, IN 46040, generally located at Generally located south of Geist Reservoir, east of Ohio Rd, and north of Waterway Blvd.

The case file about this project is available for public review in the office of the Department of Planning and Zoning, located at Fishers City Services Building, 3 Municipal Drive, Fishers, IN 46038. The meeting agenda with room location details and case related information will be posted on the City's website forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting specified above. If you have specific questions or want to provide written contacts to the case planner directly, please contact:

City of Fishers Planning & Zoning Department
planning@fishers.in.us
 (317) 595-3155
www.fishers.in.us/notice

TL20101 2/17 1t hspaxlp

Meeting Notes

Carmel Common Council

Meeting Agenda
Monday, Feb. 20, 2023
at 6 p.m.

Council Chambers, City Hall, One Civic Square

1. Call to order
2. Agenda approval
3. Invocation
4. Pledge of Allegiance
5. Recognition of City Employees and Outstanding Citizens
6. Recognition of persons who wish to address the Council
7. Council and Mayoral comments/observations
8. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Minutes a. Feb. 6, 2023

Regular Meeting

- B. Claims

- a. Payroll - \$3,479,080.53 (2/10/23 payroll), \$182,187.83 (uniform allowance) and \$269,187.15 (sick vacation payout)
- b. General Claims - \$4,194,796.10

- c. Retirement - \$110,410.79
- d. Wire Transfers - \$9,673,399.38

9. Action on Mayoral vetoes

10. Committee reports
- A. Finance, Utilities and Rules Committee
- B. Land Use and Special Studies Committee
- C. All reports designated by the Chair to qualify for placement under this category.

11. Other reports – (at the first meeting of the month specified below):

- A. Carmel Redevelopment Commission (Monthly)
- B. Carmel Historic Preservation Commission (Quarterly – January, April, July, October)
- C. Audit Committee (Bi-annual – May, October)
- D. Redevelopment Authority (Bi-annual – April, October)
- E. Carmel Cable and Telecommunications

Commission (Bi-annual – April, October)

F. Economic Development Commission (Bi-annual – February, August)

G. Library Board (Annual – February)

H. Ethics Board (Annual – February)

I. Public Art Committee (Annual – August)

J. Parks Department (Quarterly – February, May, August, November)

K. All reports designated by the Chair to qualify for placement under this category.

12. Old business

- A. **Sixth Reading of Ordinance D-2657-22;** An Ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Carmel, Indiana, Amending Chapter 2, Article 2, Section 25 of the Carmel City Code; Sponsor(s): Councilor(s) Rider, Worrell, Aasen, Finkam, Nelson and Campbell. **Remains in a**

Committee of the Whole.

- a. **Synopsis:** Amends the definition of "public art," and clarifies that only permanent public art acquisitions will be subject to review by the Carmel Public Art Advisory Committee.

13. Public Hearings
14. New Business
15. Agenda Add-On Items
16. Other Business

A. City Council Appointments

- a. Carmel Audit Committee (Terms Expire 12/31/23 and 12/31/24, two-year terms); Two appointments.

- b. Carmel Climate Action Advisory Committee (two-year terms); Four appointments.

B. Notice of Cancellation of Outstanding Checks for Fiscal Year 2020 - \$1,414.09 (Acknowledgement Only)

17. Announcements
18. Adjournment

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Tensions Rise at Statehouse Over Bill Targeting 'Harmful' Library Materials for Minors

By Casey Smith

Tensions rose at the Indiana Statehouse Wednesday after a bill targeting materials deemed "harmful to minors" in school libraries was rolled back — and then amended again — in committee.

Language in the original version of the bill, authored by Sen. Jim Tomes, R-Wadesville, sought to remove "educational purposes" as a reason that public schools and libraries could claim legal protection for sharing "harmful material" with underage students. That includes books and other materials deemed to be obscene, pornographic or violent.

An amendment filed by Senate Judiciary Committee chairwoman Sen. Liz Brown, R-Fort Wayne, was adopted before testimony began on the bill, striking language that would make librarians criminally liable for distributing "harmful" materials to minors.

Numerous parents who testified pushed back, demanding that lawmakers reinstate language from Tomes' original bill.

They argued that students should not have access to "raw" and "disturbing" works, pointing to school library books that deal with sex education, drug use, violence, sexual abuse and gender identity. They maintained, too, that school boards do nothing when parents complain about specific titles.

Testimony was later paused for the committee to adopt, along party lines, an impromptu amendment to bring back the provision removing the "educational" defense for school libraries and teachers. Colleges and public libraries could still use the defense against a charge of disseminating harmful material to minors, however.

The latest draft of the bill passed 7-4 from the committee and now heads to the full Senate.

Advocates for schools and libraries contend the issue goes beyond claims about pornography in libraries or legal defenses available in state statute.

More broadly, they said the issue stems from "fundamental differences" in values and opinions over what material is "appropriate" for Hoosier youth.

"I'm worried that librarians are going to stop collecting materials because they're afraid of prosecution. They're afraid of being taken into a criminal process," said Chad Heck, representing the Indiana Library Federation. "We need to preserve this defense so that our librarians feel safe to represent the diverse values of our communities and patrons and students in our schools."

The latest version of the bill

Under the bill in its current form, a local prosecutor could decide to charge a K-12 school teacher or librarian for giving harmful material to minors, meaning the educator could not argue in court that the material has educational value.

But they could still argue that the material has literary, artistic, political or scientific value as a whole.

As amended, the bill would also require school libraries to publicly post lists of books in their collection and create a formal grievance process for parents to object to certain materials in circulation.

Current Indiana law already outlines criteria that has to be met for a book to be considered illegal.

But Heck and others said the bill could embolden some prosecutors across the state to go after teachers and librarians if parents believe the books available to their children are harmful.

"If prosecutions do

Want MORE?

Matter or performance harmful to minors
Sec. 2. A matter or performance is harmful to minors for purposes of this article if:

- (1) it describes or represents, in any form, nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excitement, or sado-masochistic abuse;
- (2) considered as a whole, it appeals to the prurient interest in sex of minors;
- (3) it is patently offensive to prevailing standards in the adult community as a whole with respect to what is suitable matter for or performance before minors; and
- (4) considered as a whole, it lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors.

come from this law, should it be passed, they're not going to survive a court — a jury is not going to find a teacher or a librarian guilty of having obscene materials or content harmful to minors in our collections, because we don't have those types of materials in our collections," Heck said.

He added that grievances are more appropriately handled by local school boards: "Sometimes people aren't happy with the outcomes, and the result of that should be an election."

Sen. Sue Glick, R-LaGrange, joined Democrats in voting against the bill. She said Tomes was "not happy" with the amended bill and is the reason the committee should "slow down" and "revisit this issue."

Tomes did not comment Wednesday on the latest draft of the bill, but said his intent was not to censor or ban books.

"If you have these books ... put them where these kids can't get them," Tomes said. "I'm just trying to see that our kids can at least get through school and still have a level of innocence about them."

A similar bill from Tomes failed in the 2022 session after K-12 librarians and educators argued they would be unfairly criminalized.

Anti-CRT bill likely dead — for now

Meanwhile, the Senate Education Committee met for less than 30 minutes Wednesday after a bill that seeks to ban "critical race theory" from being taught in classrooms was removed from the agenda.

Senate Bill 386, authored by Richmond Republican Sen. Jeff Raatz, would limit classroom discussions about race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation and other factors. The bill states teachers could not "compel, promote or indoctrinate" the belief that one race is superior or inferior to another, for example.

Indiana teachers and education advocates rallied at the Statehouse one day earlier to demand that lawmakers abandon Raatz's proposal — as well as multiple other divisive "culture war" bills.

Raatz did not respond to multiple requests for comment from the Indiana Capital Chronicle about why the bill was removed from the schedule, or if it will still be heard before the committee next week.

The bill must pass out of committee before the deadline next week. Language from the bill could still be revived in other legislation before the end of the session, however.

Four other bills did advance from the committee on Wednesday, including a proposal requiring schools to adopt "science of reading" curriculum, as well as those that seek to automatically enroll all eligible students into the 21st Century Scholars program and require Indiana's high school seniors to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Other bills on the move

Two other bills unanimously advanced from the House Education Committee Wednesday; one that would require students to pass a personal finance course before graduating high school, and an omnibus bill that tweaks school

data reporting requirements and other education policy matters.

Three more bills in the House Education Committee will be up for votes on Monday.

One measure, House Bill 1447, addresses third-party surveys and evaluations given to K-12 students. Under the bill, schools would be required to provide parents with at least two separate notices, giving them the chance to opt their child out of such surveys.

Schools must also post a copy of the survey on their website, according to the bill.

Bill author Rep. Donna Schaibley, R-Carmel, said she's targeting surveys that "have to do with feelings," not academic success or career aptitude. The proposal only applies to surveys conducted by third-party vendors.

"This issue was brought to me by parents who were concerned about third party vendors that were capturing personal, identifiable information about feelings and beliefs of students in their surveys," Schaibley said. "This bill is for transparency for the parents and the families, just to see what is actually being surveyed."

The bill is reminiscent of another that failed to pass in the 2022 session.

The earlier measure would have required schools to get parental permission before administering any mental, social-emotional or psychological services (SEL) to a student, or before asking a student to participate in a "survey, evaluation or personal analysis" that attempts to affect a student's "attitude, habits, traits, opinions, or beliefs."

John O'Neill, with the Indiana State Teachers Association said the state's largest teacher's union supports the privacy component in the bill but has "concerns" with a different provision that requires schools to establish grievance procedures.

"We just want to avoid overly burdensome litigation prospects and blaming educators for certain groundless accusations, in many cases," he said. "The bill has some positives on privacy issues and structures, but we still have concerns about the general approach to what's being done to the evaluation and survey language."

ISTA and other education groups additionally opposed House Bill 1591 due to a provision that could open up the state's Choice Scholarship school voucher program to children in pre-K, as young as age 5.

A separate measure, House Bill 1609, would allow the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) to award a diploma to adult learners who demonstrate high school level skills through a competency-based test. DWD is charged with creating that assessment.

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Spring Turkey Reserved Hunt Applications Open on Feb. 19

DNR

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Beginning Feb. 19, hunters can apply for spring turkey reserved hunts at on.IN.gov/reservedhunt.

The online method is the only way to apply for the hunts listed below. Applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, March 19. No late entries will be accepted. Applicants must possess a hunting license that is valid for the hunt they apply for.

Hunters will be selected through a random computerized draw. An email will be sent to all applicants when the draws have been completed. Applicants will be able to view draw results online within two weeks after the application period closes.

Specific hunt information for individual properties can be found by visiting on.IN.gov/reservedhunt.

Spring turkey hunts on Division of Fish & Wildlife properties:

- Atterbury Fish & Wildlife Area
- Aukiki Wetland Conservation Area
- Crosley Fish & Wildlife Area
- Deer Creek Fish & Wildlife Area
- Fairbanks Landing Fish & Wildlife Area
- Glendale Fish & Wildlife Area
- Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area

- Hillenbrand Fish & Wildlife Area
- Hovey Lake Fish & Wildlife Area
- J.E. Roush Lake Fish & Wildlife Area
- Jasper-Pulaski Fish & Wildlife Area
- Kingsbury Fish & Wildlife Area
- LaSalle Fish & Wildlife Area
- Pigeon River Fish & Wildlife Area
- Sugar Ridge Fish & Wildlife Area
- Tri-County Fish & Wildlife Area
- Willow Slough & Wildlife Area
- Winamac Fish & Wildlife Area

Spring turkey hunts on National Wildlife Refuges:

- Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge
- Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge (Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge also has a youth spring turkey hunt reserved draw. The application for the youth hunt is open Feb. 15 – March 12.)

Spring turkey hunts on State Parks-managed lakes:

- Mississinewa Lake
- Salamonie Lake

Only one application per hunt is allowed. No changes can be made once an application is submitted.

The application process is now consolidated into the online services web-

site along with licenses, CheckIN Game, and HIP registration. An online account is not required to apply, but a Customer ID number is needed.

In the online system, hunts without a registration fee will follow the same process as hunts with a fee. To register for hunts with no required fee, applicants will still use these prompts: "Add to Cart," "Proceed to Checkout," and "Place Order." If the transaction total is \$0, the applicant will not be asked to enter credit card information. Applicants must place the order to submit their application.

To view draw results, applicants can log into their online services account or click "View results" at on.IN.gov/reservedhunt. Applicants should select "click here" under the heading "Reserved Hunts" to see the status of registered hunts. The link will only show upcoming hunts that an individual has registered for. Logging into an account online is required to see the full history of reserved hunt registrations.

More information on reserved turkey hunting is available at on.IN.gov/reservedhunt.

To view more DNR news releases, please see dnr.IN.gov.

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Bill Bringing Voter ID to Mail-In Ballot Applications Advances

By Leslie Bonilla Muñiz

A Republican-led House committee on Wednesday approved a heavily amended bill adding voter identification requirements to mail-in ballot applications, among other restrictions.

Proponents said the legislation would boost election confidence and push in-person voting, while opponents said it could lead to confusion and disenfranchisement for Hoosier voters.

“The desired intent of this bill is not to disqualify absentee ballots, but it is to validate and authenticate that the person applying for the absentee ballot is the person that they say they are,” bill author Rep. Timothy Wesco, R-Osceola, said. He also chairs the elections committee.

The original bill would have vastly limited who could vote by mail but that provision was removed.

Expansion of voter I.D. laws

Right now, voters requesting mail-in ballots are asked — but not required — to provide the last four digits of their Social Security Numbers on their applications. House Bill 1334 would make that mandatory, and more.

It would require a voter to put down those last four numbers, or one of three other identifiers: an Indiana driver’s license number, a non-driver identification card number or a unique identifier for those who registered to vote decades ago. A voter could instead include a photocopy of the license or non-driver card in the envelope with the application.

County election boards would have to match at least one of the numbers with information in the voter’s registration record. If there were no match, the county’s partisan clerk would send back a new application with an explanation of what went wrong.

Co-author Rep. Mike Speedy, R-Indianapolis, said the identification match adds security,

and that the bill was in response to constituent election doubts and complaints.

“Absentee voting was designed for people who couldn’t make it to the polls for one reason or the other,” Speedy said. “This bill, as amended, tries to get us back to that place.”

Others said the requirement would be more objective than practices like signature-matching, as signatures can change with age and health problems.

Voting rights advocates pushed back.

“We should be removing those kinds of barriers [to voting], not adding additional ones. This bill is unnecessary,” said Julia Vaughn, who leads nonpartisan elections watchdog Common Cause Indiana.

“We’ve got a solution here in search of a problem, and I wish we would just abandon these efforts,” she added.

And elections officials cautioned that the bill could lead to more rejected applications.

Indiana’s voter registration system only contains the social security number and license numbers a voter entered at the time they registered, said Indiana Election Division Co-Director Angie Nussmeyer, a Democrat. Some people might not know which they used.

And she noted that before 2001, state law didn’t require either. Hoosiers that registered prior to that have only a randomly generated identifier on file, which they’d only be able to find by calling the county clerk’s office through which they originally registered.

Opponents also expressed concern for voters who don’t want to provide those identifiers for security concerns, as well as how securely county elections officials would store the numbers and I.D. photocopies.

Highlights could render application “defective”

The bill would ban groups who register voters from highlighting

or otherwise marking up anything on the mail-in ballot application.

Wesco said he didn’t want voters pushed to sign up for one party or another on primary mail-in ballot applications — “That’s an important decision for them to make independently,” he said.

Lake County Board of Elections Assistant Director LeAnn Angerman said she believed forms were already well-designed to draw the reader’s eye through all of the necessary fields, and that the forms should stay “uniform.”

Numerous Republican lawmakers also argued that if highlighting were truly required, almost all the fields would end up with markings.

Nussmeyer, the Democrat elections chief, said that in a past role running elections for Marion County, her team often highlighted the missing fields in rejected mail-in ballot applications before sending them back to voters.

“The largest number of applications that were rejected in our primary were because the voter did not mark the primary, or they quite simply forgot to sign it,” she said.

While the provision sparked hearty debate as written, there’s more left: the language doesn’t include details on how to tell apart highlights made by organizations versus those made by voters themselves — or the consequences of highlights.

“The voter can mark or highlight anything on the absentee ballot application. However, the person providing the absentee ballot cannot,” Wesco told the Capital Chronicle. “How would you know who ... marked it up in that way? That’s an excellent question. We might want to discuss that further.”

Asked if mail-in ballot applications would include large notices warning readers against highlighting or marking up the forms, Wesco said he wasn’t sure. He said enforcement might be up to county clerks.

“If it’s just some miscellaneous marking on a single ballot, that’s not going to raise any red flags. But if you’re getting back dozens and dozens of ballots that are marked, then you have a problem,” Wesco said.

But there’s no procedure set out in the bill.

Changes to who can request an application

The bill would also bar state agencies and local units of government from sending out unsolicited mail-in ballot applications. State law already requires political parties and voting registration groups to include “disclaimers” when they send out unsolicited applications.

Nussmeyer pointed out that the provision, intended to stop large-scale send-outs, could block state and local election officials from sending applications to multiple people in the same household.

“You would say, ‘I need an absentee application for three people in my household,’ and I would say, ‘I’m sorry, I can only send it to you — what is your name and address?’” she said. “That’s how I would handle it if this bill becomes law.”

“I don’t understand the need to verify who the individual is if I’m sending a blank, publicly available form,” she said.

Wesco, after the committee meeting, was already considering a fix.

“We don’t want a state or local government entity mass-mailing absentee ballots [applications]. However, if somebody requests absentee ballots for those in their home, I think that’s something that I’m content with,” he said.

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Adult Learners and Indiana Employers Celebrated at 2023 Adult Education Day

Recently, the Indiana Department of Workforce Development and the Indiana Association for Adult and Continuing Education honored Hoosier adult learners and Indiana employers at the 2023 Adult Education Day ceremony, held at the Indiana Statehouse.

“DWD is assisting individuals by continuously providing opportunities to increase their knowledge, skills and abilities through various programs and services our agency administers and our partners offer throughout Indiana,” said DWD Commissioner David J. Adams.

Through numerous programs, adult education students earn credentials, receive post-secondary education, achieve sustainable employment and ultimately reach economic self-sufficiency. In Indiana, 70% of adult learners are employed after earning their HSE and experience an average wage increase of \$8,400 annually. In 2022, 3,795 Hoosier adult learners earned their high school equivalency.

“Indiana remains a leader in providing adult education programming that transforms the lives of Hoosier job seekers and workers,” said DWD Associate Chief Workforce Strategy and Design Marilyn Pitzulo.

“Hoosiers learning new skills and completing their high school equivalency or certification are upskilling to meet the needs of Indiana employers. Congratulations to each business for making an investment in its employees and for the learners who are earning higher wages and increasing their career opportunities.”

There are more than 250 adult education class locations — in-person or online — in the state that give students opportunities to increase skills, learn English, access training, obtain industry-recognized credentials and earn a higher-paying job.

“I was making around \$11 an hour in a job I had for several years but I felt I was never going anywhere in my career,” said Brandy Gilstrap, a Greene County resident.

“I enrolled in a 10-week certification program with an adult education provider and graduated last April. I finally feel freedom.”

Gilstrap now works as an emergency medical technician in Sullivan County.

During the ceremony, 16 business partners were recognized for offering adult education classes to their staff. Employers were honored for one or more of the following:

- Providing employees’ wages for attending adult education classes;
- Supplying classroom space and computers or other technology to support students;
- Providing other classroom materials and supplies;
- Funding the cost to pay teachers and instructors; and
- Offering permanent employment to workers who successfully completed classes.

“The partnership between the Indianapolis dormakaba manufacturing plant and Warren Township Adult Education has proven to be a great success,” said Ty Howard, a senior human resources manager at dormakaba’s Indianapolis plant. “This program has had a positive impact on communication and engagement within the workplace, leading to a sense of belonging among employees. It also increases worker competency, leading to potential growth opportunities within and outside the company.”

Adult Education programming is administered by DWD and has a presence in all of Indiana’s 92 counties. Indiana is among the nation’s top states in multiple adult ed categories:

- No. 1 for student achievement and growth;
- No. 2 for the number of high school equivalency diplomas awarded; and
- No. 4 for certificates earned through Integrated Education and Training.

For more information about the 2023 Adult Education Day ceremony at the Indiana Statehouse, including a list of businesses and individuals honored, visit in.gov/dwd/career-training-adult-ed/adult-ed/statehouse-day/

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K-KIDS From Page A1

tary school students with more than 1,200 clubs worldwide.

Club members, supported by an adult advisor, have the opportunity to discover their passion to serve, desire to lead, and ability to engage and collaborate with others to make a positive impact on their school and community.

Heights' "student-led" K-Kids Club is a part of the Kiwanis International Family and is sponsored by the Cicero Kiwanis Club. The club, founded in 2010, provides opportunities for working together in service to develop leadership potential, foster strong moral character, and encourage loyalty to school, community, and country.

Tracy Zachary, a 1996 graduate of Hamilton Heights, has been working

for Heights as a special education teacher for 22 years and serving as the K-Kids Club sponsor for the past 5 years. Club membership is open to any fourth-grade student who wants to learn leadership through planning and participating in service projects that help make the school and community a better place to live.

Zachary said the biggest way the K-Kids Club is making a difference is by starting small serving the local elementary from packing food backpacks to recycling. Projects this year range from participating in the annual Cicero Kiwanis' Veterans Day celebration, holiday food drive, Penny Wars for the Angel's Tree, bus driver appreciation, and the bicentennial celebration parade in the spring to name a few.



Photo courtesy of HHES

Several members of HHES K-Kids Club are pictured putting money in for the Penny Wars project to raise money for Angel Tree shopping to help make the holidays a little brighter for those in need.

BETSY From Page A1

5. Experience Hamilton County Theatre Guild and The Belfry Theatre's "Around the World in 80 Days," directed by Eric Matters, at 7:30 p.m. today and Saturday and 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at Arts for Lawrence's Theater at the Fort on Indianapolis' northeast side, with tickets at thebelfrytheatre.com

6. See the story of Anne Frank come to life in "The Diary of Anne Frank" through Feb. 25 at Booth Tarkington Civic Theatre in Carmel.

7. Join the party with Dave and Rae 8 to 11 p.m. today and Dad Jeans live at 8 p.m. Saturday at Parks Place Pub in Fishers.

8. Enjoy live music with My Yellow Rickshaw at 10 p.m. today at Britton Tavern in Fishers.

9. Shop at more than 240 vendors selling handcrafted artifacts, antique arms, blacksmith creations, horn carvings, pottery, jewelry, Native American collectibles and more during Conner Long Rifles' Living History Trade Fair and Annual Antique Arms Show 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday at the Hamilton County 4-H Fairgrounds in Noblesville.

10. The Boys & Girls Club of Noblesville's 37th

annual Auxiliary Auction, Mardi Gras Charity Ball, is 6:30 p.m. Saturday at Harbour Trees Golf Club, with a live and silent auction, and \$175 tickets available in advance. For information, visit bgcni.org or call the club today at (317) 773-4372.

11. Enjoy Ted Yoder's solo return for a free concert at 2 p.m. Sunday at the new Carmel Clay Library.

12. Go to Conner Prairie in Fishers on President's Day Monday for Free Admission Day for hands-on activities, games and cultural storytelling about the lives of the presidents and first ladies.

13. Hamilton County teens can win prizes in the annual free All Star Basketball Contest 1 to 4 p.m. Monday, President's Day, at the Boys & Girls Club of Noblesville Community Center.

14. Westfield Winter Farmers Market is 9 a.m. to noon Saturdays, through April 1 at West Fork Westfield Event Center on East 191st Street.

15. Enjoy live music with The Molter Brothers 7 to 9 p.m. Saturday at Spencer Farm Winery in Noblesville.

16. Check out the comedians at The Brick Room Comedy Club, featuring Cam O'Connor

and Willie Bostic tonight, Will Concannon and Marz Timms on Saturday; Katie Kincaid and Tyler Ross on Feb. 25; at the downtown Noblesville Maple Avenue club, with tickets \$10 at thebrickroom.cc. Comedians Eric Hoole and headliner Dan Barnardo.

17. Enjoy live music of Craig Thurston the first and third Thursdays at Grindstone Public House in Carmel.

18. Come out and see Carmel Community Players' production of "The Murders of 1940," a musical comedy whodunit, Feb. 24-March 3 at The Ivy Tech Auditorium in Noblesville.

19. Embrace the chilly temps of winter at Clay Terrace's Winter Blast, a free family event, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Feb. 25 in the Village Green in front of Dick's Sporting Goods in Carmel, with carriage rides, face painters, train rides, ice sculptures, giant snow globe, hot chocolate, Silly Safari Animal Meet & Greet.

20. Experience Dr. Seuss's "The Cat in the Hat" Feb. 28 and March 4 at Booth Tarkington Civic Theatre in Carmel.

21. Enjoy First Friday Sip & Shop from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. March 3 throughout downtown Noblesville.

22. Get your tickets for

Noblesville High School Thespians' "Mrs. Packard" play at 7 p.m. March 9-11 at NHS Auditorium, with tickets online soon and at the door.

23. Noblesville Schools Education Foundation's Miller-Palooza is 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. March 10 at the Embassy Suite in Noblesville, with \$125 tickets, sponsorships available, dress casual Noblesville school spirit, and featuring Dueling Pianos from Felix and Fingers. To donate to silent auction, email adriann_young@nobl.k12.in.us

24. Hyperion Players presents "God of Carnage" play, directed by Noblesville's Nicole Amsler, on March 10-12, at 8 p.m. March 10-11 and 2 p.m. March 12, at The Switch Theatre at Ji-Eun Lee Music Academy in Fishers, with tickets at hyperionplayers.com

25. Hamilton County Theatre Guild's The Belfry Theatre presents "The Great Gatsby," directed by Noblesville's Andrea Odle, opening March 17 and continuing through March 26 at Arts for Lawrence's Theater at the Fort in northern Marion County, with tickets by calling (317) 773-1085.

Contact Betsy Reason at betsy@thetimes24-7.com.

ARROWOOD From Page A1

of National School Counseling Week (first full week in February) sponsored by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). Our school counselors are leaders and vital resources who work to ensure a healthy, positive, and safe school environment for students to learn, achieve school success and plan for a career. They are truly the glue that holds so many aspects of our schools together. Thank you Nikki Wert and Tricia Rudy (HHES), Chelsea Pacheco and Sabrina Duncan (HHMS), and Lori Watson, April Baugher, and Rebecca Johnson (HHHS) for your commitment, professionalism and dedication. We appreciate you every single day!

A special book launch and signing of the newly released, *The Monsters of Math Plan a Party*, is set for 7 p.m. next Tuesday at Hamilton Heights Elementary School's Media Center at 25350 SR 19, Arcadia. Enter through Door A. Here you can meet and learn more about how three Huskies, Theresa Morris (1988), Lu Hubbell (2022) and Ryan Reed (2033) collaborated their talents to create this new series. Copies of this book will be available. The event is sponsored by the Hamilton Heights Educational Foundation.

In other exciting news, Hamilton Heights junior Tyler Tuntland, his parents, Jason and Kelly Tuntland, and Grant Venable ('20) have been doing something pretty cool in their spare time. They were among the participants in a reality TV inventor show, *Make48*, whose challenge was to produce a solution for food perseveration. Check out the preview of Season 6 competition, filmed in Indianapolis, by visiting youtube.com/watch?v=7K7Yxgjlppw. The show will be aired exclusively on This Old

House Makers Channel - Roku TV (Channel 458) on Feb. 22 starting at 7 p.m. Catch this episode at therokuchannel.roku.com/watch/2f7855ad196b57fc8e1dcb9cb74ea161/ this-old-house-makers-channel. The winner of this competition advances to the national competition in March.

On the sports front, senior Evan Tilton advances to the state finals in Wrestling, senior Kyle Trexler is State Runner up in Bowling, senior Teegan Madara placed 12th at State Swimming in the 500 free, breaking her own school record, and last month, junior Camryn Runner became the 7th Lady Husky to reach the 1,000-point career milestone. The Lady Huskies Basketball team is on fire! They advance to semi-state play against Twin Lakes at LaPorte High School on Saturday. Tip-off is at 10 a.m., CST. The winner will play the winner of the Fairfield vs. Tippecanoe Valley game in the championship game at 7:30 p.m., CST. Information and tickets can be found online at websites.eventlink.com/s/laportehigh-school/Tickets.

We are also in the midst of celebrating Black History Month. Our students, staff, and community can greatly benefit through culturally relevant teaching, learning, and activities centered around the rich cultural heritage, achievements, sacrifices, triumphs, and the essential role of African Americans in shaping our country. Please join us this month and every month to better understand and appreciate the countless Black individuals who have given their gifts and their lives in pursuit of a society that is free, just, and equitable for all. #WeAreHuskies

Dr. Derek Arrowood is the Superintendent of the Hamilton Heights School Corporation.

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FRIDAY Business Notes and NEWS DAY

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BBB Warning: Quest Concrete Has Generated High Volume Of Complaints



BBB Serving Central Indiana is warning consumers to exercise caution before doing business with Quest Concrete LLC, a remodeling contractor headquartered in Indianapolis, Ind. The company currently has an “F” rating, the lowest on the BBB scale, due to 18 complaints including a pattern of collecting deposits, leaving projects incomplete, and failing to respond to consumers’ concerns.

“I know companies get busy; I just want some communication,” said Tony Hueston, a Franklin, Ind. consumer.

Hueston secured a \$12,000 project with the understanding his patio would be poured in eight to ten weeks. After signing his contract, “Quest” failed to provide Hueston a project manager.

Several weeks later, Hueston had yet to receive any sort of sufficient response regarding his project and \$6,000 deposit despite the multiple voicemails left with the business.

When speaking with consumers during BBB’s investigation, confusion pertaining to the distinction between Quest Exteriors and Quest Concrete was apparent. BBB discovered Quest Concrete shared various business details with Quest Exteriors such as contact information, building address and office personnel. At one point, Quest Concrete did have a separate phone number and website, however, both were unavailable when BBB attempted to contact the business.

Originally, consumer complaints were filed against Quest Exteriors LLC, but Quest Exteriors notified BBB that complaints should be directed to a separate entity, Quest Concrete.

“Quest Concrete is a wholly separate entity with different ownership structure than that of Quest Exteriors,” said Mike Gossett of Quest Exteriors in a statement. “The entity that owns Quest Exteriors is also a minority owner in Quest Concrete. While I have been actively working with both companies, I have no control over the majority ownership of Quest Concrete or what direction they take the company. For startup purposes both companies ran out of the same office and used some of the same back-office staff until early November.”

Gossett further indicated their office had to close in early November due to labor issues brought on by the nationwide raw material shortage of Portland cement (an ingredient used to make concrete). As a result, Quest Concrete was put on a material allocation for five to six weeks from mid-September through late October. Gossett claims Quest Concrete could not continue normal business operations after the five-to-six-week period when the business was unable to perform work.

“Our attorneys are working on the path forward as it relates to Quest Concrete,” Gossett continued in its statement to BBB. “As it relates to Quest Exteriors, Quest Exteriors has met and continues to meet all its contractual obligations and did not contract any concrete work with the above-mentioned customers and should not have the complaints attached to its BBB Accreditation.”

Quest Exterior’s BBB Accreditation was revoked on Dec. 13, 2022 by BBB’s Board of Directors due to the business’s failure to adhere to two of the requirements BBB Accredited Businesses must meet and abide by. The first unmet standard relates to transparency, which according to BBB.org, BBB Accredited Businesses must “openly identify the nature, location, and ownership of the business, and clearly and prominently disclose all material facts that bear on a customer’s decision to buy.” The second requisite pertains to responsiveness where BBB Accredited Businesses must “address disputes forwarded by BBB quickly and in good faith.”

Prior to the revocation, BBB found additional information through an Indiana Secretary of State data search shortly after receiving Gossett’s statement. The discovery indicated the co-owner of Quest Exteriors, Carie Gossett, is listed as “Manager” on a Change of Principal Address form for Quest Concrete. Quest Exteriors was asked to provide ownership clarification and reliable contact information for Quest Concrete but failed to respond to BBB’s request.

As a result, BBB has been unable to identify a complaint handler for Quest Concrete outside of Quest Exteriors, leaving 18 unanswered complaints and a total monetary loss of around \$74,000.

BBB followed up with several complainants in November 2022. During these conversations, the pattern of complaint was discovered, as consumers’ concerns pertained to unfulfilled contracts and lack of communication from the business.

Consumer, Justin Barkey, told BBB the business visited his home to begin the job but has since left his yard damaged and

without the patio for which he paid a significant deposit. After several attempts to gain answers from Quest Concrete, the Fortville, Ind. resident was met with “excuse after excuse” as to why his project had been delayed, including a broken-down truck, dispatch issues, and the lack of cement powder.

“I am going to have to pay someone to come out and undo what they have done,” Barkey stated. “All I want from Quest Exteriors at this point is my deposit money of \$4,500 back and nothing else.”

A couple from Fishers, Ind., shared a similar experience. Amanda and Dan Hackworth found the company online and stated “Quest” came out rather quickly to assess a project in the summer. In June 2022 they put down a \$7,600 deposit and agreed to a contract stating work would begin in five to seven weeks. A. Hackworth claimed they didn’t receive much communication about their project after putting the deposit down and were left with quiet waiting periods. In fall 2022, they were told a new project manager was assigned to their project who came out to assess the project one more time. After that visit, all communication from “Quest” ceased and the Hackworths could no longer reach the business.

Indianapolis consumer, Brandi Belucci, put down a \$4,500 deposit when she signed a Quest Concrete contract in June 2022 for a project estimated to take six to eight weeks. However, Quest Concrete pushed the project back several times after their initial agreement.

“I understand that he couldn’t complete the job, but he gave us the run around since August, said Belucci. “If he couldn’t do the job, he should have just given us our deposit back.”

Originally, Belucci assumed they “were just behind,” but as of November 2022, she indicated she had been dealing with back-and-forth communication for months and can no longer reach anyone about her concerns.

Consider these tips when hiring anybody to work in your home:

- Research and gather information. Search for a contractor’s BBB Business Profile at BBB.org for free information on their history of complaints and read verified customer reviews.
- Request references. Ask the contractor for a list of recent local references you may contact to verify the services performed and their overall experience with the contractor and the quality of the work.
- Ask for multiple quotes. You should always shop around and get at least three quotes from different businesses. Make sure all bids consider the same set of criteria. Keep in mind, the lowest bid

may not necessarily be the best bid; if one bid is significantly lower than the others, the contractor may be cutting corners or may not understand your work requirements.

- Get it in writing. Always get estimates in writing and never let any work begin without a written and signed contract. Do not be pressured into signing an agreement before you are ready and make sure you read and understand everything before signing. The contract should include contact information, start and complete dates, a detailed description of the exact work to be done, any material costs, payment arrangements, and warranty information. Specify who is to obtain the necessary building permits and who is responsible for clean-up. Make sure all verbal promises are included in the contract. Never sign an incomplete or partially blank contract.
- Verify license and insurance. Ensure the company you decide to hire has the necessary licenses and insurance to work in your region. Your local BBB can help with this. Once you have your contractor’s insurance information, call the carrier to confirm appropriate coverage for worker’s compensation, property damage, and personal liability in case of accidents.
- Confirm building permits. Your contractor must have the correct permits before starting your project. They will usually obtain the permits, but you will probably pay for them which should be detailed in your contract. Request all final inspections be completed by the local building official prior to final payment.
- Inquire about a lien waiver. A lien waiver, in the United States, is a statement from your contractor that says all suppliers and subcontractors have been paid for their work.
- Think about future service issues. Make sure you are aware of your warranty coverage and how to deal with service issues.
- Arrange a payment schedule. Never pay in full up front. Stagger your payments so your final payment is not due until the project is complete and you have fully inspected the work. Do not pay cash; make sure your check is written to a company, not an individual, or that you use a credit card. Paying with a credit card will provide some recourse should the job not be completed as stated in the contract.
- Get a receipt. Request a receipt marked “Paid in Full” when the job is completed, and your final payment made.
- Keep your contract. Hold on to your contract for future reference or if any questions arise after the work is complete.

How to Know if Your Business Qualifies for the ERC Federal Assistance Program

(StatePoint) The strength of the country relies on its estimated 33.2 million small businesses, which comprise 99.9 percent of all American businesses. COVID threatened, and in some cases forced, the closure of many small enterprises and tens of thousands are still reeling from the aftermath of the full pandemic.

In an effort to offer some relief, the federal government created the Employee Retention Credit (ERC) Program under the IRS that has already helped thousands of qualifying businesses receive up to \$26,000 per employee. Unfortunately, not enough small business owners are aware of the program. Others don’t think they will qualify, leaving billions of dollars on the table that could help them recover and continue to move forward.

Companies such as ERC Helpdesk, www.erchelpdesk.com, have been created to help small businesses determine their qualifications and navigate the ERC program. Now is the perfect time for business owners around the country to see if they make the cut.

A small business can receive an ERC even if it received PPP. The program is flexible enough that most businesses will likely be eligible. The average claim is \$150,000, but there is no cap on the amount.

“I was the owner of a marketing business that assisted dozens of small business owners so I witnessed firsthand the challenges and sweat equity involved in taking such a big risk,” said ERC Helpdesk chief marketing officer, Greg Ross-Smith. “Our founder was and remains a small business owner himself who was initially told his businesses would not qualify for an ERC and there was nobody he could find to make sense of the program. When he finally learned about the program details and what the actual qualifications are, not only did he apply and receive funds, he decided to create a way to assist other small

business owners in taking advantage of the funding available for their businesses.”

Here are the basics to see if you qualify:

- Your business is based in the United States.
- You retained and paid W2 employees during 2020 and 2021.
- Your business was impacted by COVID restrictions in one or more of the following ways:

1. Loss of revenue
2. Supply chain disruptions
3. Full or partial shutdown of your business

Now a growing industry, ERC companies are popping up all over so be wary about who you work with. Ideally, try to work with a company you know, or at least one that understands the needs and inner workings of a small business. Often, it helps to work with a smaller sized ERC business that’s accessible and that will work with your submission on a one-on-one basis. Bigger isn’t always better in this industry. Of course, partnering with a company that maintains a high approval rate for its clients is a critical point of measurement as many companies can waste your time and get your hopes up by simply submitting anything knowing the chances of success are slim. Finally, to the degree you can determine it, try to work with a company that will process your application as quickly as possible while focusing on reducing errors that can delay the process.

“So many small businesses are built organically with the participation, support and hard work of family and friends. As a result, we understand the investment of time, resources and relationships that go into every business we work with,” said Ross-Smith. “In the ERC business, integrity, trust and customer service rule and that’s what I’d urge all applicants to consider in navigating their eligibility for the program. Our only goal is to help them qualify and then maximize their efforts and amount of compensation they receive.”

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FRIDAY Voice of our PEOPLE

The Times of Noblesville

Friday, Feb. 17, 2023

AS

Timmons Talks This, That and 'Tuther



TIM TIMMONS
Two Cents

Scattershooting while wondering whatever happened to Jane Webb and Dawn Wells.

LET ME START by saying thank you to the good folks at St. Bernard's church. They invited me to share some highlights of the Israel trip, and even went out of their way to feed me. How's that for a great day! A special thanks to Jan Sears for being so kind and making it easy!

ON THAT subject, if you would like a slightly used vagabond journalist to pay your community or church group a visit and share highlights from a trip to the Holy Land, let me know. You don't even

have to feed me!

FOLKS HAVE asked about John Marlowe. I can share, with his permission, that he is fighting prostate cancer. The 60-something-year-old found out just before Christmas and is going through chemotherapy now. I've spoken with him several times and he hasn't lost his sense of humor or wry wit. And he did say prayers are appreciated.

Needless to say he has mine – and I am sure a lot of yours. Here's hoping for a full and complete recovery!

SPEAKING OF great writers battling health issues, I corresponded with one of my favorite sportswriters from back in the day, Jack Hess, a couple of weeks ago. Jack, a Fishers resident and retiree from the Indianapolis News and Star, has been under the weather as well. Like John, I'm looking forward to seeing my friend for a cup of coffee when he is feeling better!

WE'VE BEEN talking about politics a lot lately.

Here's a thought. What if every panel, every committee, every group that the Legislature or Congress creates always had an equal number of Republicans and Democrats? That premise would force them to compromise. Decisions would no longer simply be a reflection of the party in power. Probably wouldn't work but we need to find some answer, don't we?

WHILE ON politics, one reader asked a great question after the column on the national debt. Who owns it? Some quick research shows that the debt is divided into intragovernmental holdings and public debt. The intragovernment is mostly debt through the Federal Reserve and Social Security. The public debt, unfortunately, involves a lot of money owed to Japan and China. In the U.S., public debt includes savings bonds, pensions, insurance companies, banks and more.

AT THE end of today's scribbblings, we're talking a bit about comic books. But how many of you

remember the big little books? My favorites had small drawings in the corner of some pages and when you flipped through quickly the drawings came alive. I remember a man running and another one with Tarzan swinging on a vine.

ARE YOU tired of the filth that passes for comedy on TV now? Well, if you can find it, check out Dry Bar comedy. If you have streaming TV, it's there. I think you can find it on the internet, too. There are a lot of very funny comedians and the humor isn't anything that would embarrass your mother. What a concept, huh!

DID YOU see the news reports about the Chinese balloon flying over the U.S.? It was reported to be the size of a few school buses and, disturbingly, was flying over areas where we have missile silos. Apparently, this isn't new and has happened a few times before. Still, with Russia and North Korea publicly discussing nuclear strikes . . .

DID YOU catch the comment Joe Biden made the other day? "More than half the people in my cabinet, more than half the women in my administration are women." Before that he was telling people how to report fraud online. He told us to go to "report fraud D-O-T-F-T-C dot gov." If it wasn't so sad it'd be funny.

FOR ALL the fans of Readers' Choice, fear not. We usually kick off our biggest annual promotion early in the year. We're just running a little behind – which the older I get seems to be more and more common. Sigh. All I can ask is to be patient, and don't be fooled by our competitors' efforts to copy us. You know who's been doing this the longest and the best.

AND FINALLY, Jane Webb. A lot of guys I grew up with were either Betty or Veronica fans, Ginger or Mary Ann. You know what I mean? They either went for the girl next door or the high society type. Me? I always

leaned toward Betty or Mary Ann. Jane Webb Karyl was the wonderful voice of Betty in the TV cartoon, Archie. Dawn Wells played Mary Ann on Gilligan's Island. Dawn passed away in December, 2020 at the age of 82 and Jane in 2010 at the age of 84. May they both rest in peace.

BTW, do you recall the last names of our four fictional ladies? Betty was Betty Cooper. Mary Ann was Summers. Ginger was Grant and Veronica was Lodge. Yeah, I had too much time on my hands as a kid and read all the comic books I could get my hands on. My favorites were Batman, Superman, Combat, Archie and the Lone Ranger. What were yours?

Two cents, which is about how much Timmons said his columns are worth, appears periodically in The Times. Timmons is the chief executive officer of Sagamore News Media, the company that owns The Noblesville Times. He is also a proud Noblesville High School graduate and can be contacted at timmons@thetimes24-7.com.

Ask Rusty – Canadian Expat Angry About Reduced Social Security



ASK Rusty
Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I am a 62-year old Canadian expat who has lived in the U.S. for the last 30-years. I worked in both Canada and the U.S. throughout my career. I came to this country, worked hard and contributed faithfully to the tax base, but I am being cheated for what is rightfully owed to me. Everyone else's Social Security calculation is based on lifetime earnings; mine should be

Social Security Matters

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calculated using the same parameters, with the only difference being that some of my earnings were in Canada. I have filed an appeal to that end, but the end result is that I get taken to the cleaners. Why would they intentionally put in place a Totalization scheme with Canada which results in me receiving thousands of dollars per year less than someone who has the same lifetime earnings? This is just wrong and terribly unfair. Is there any legal recourse for me? *Signed: Angry Ex-Pat*

Dear Angry Ex-Pat:

The so-called "Totalization Agreement" between Canada and the U.S. isn't "unfair" – rather it is a way for those who don't independently earn full Social Security eligibility in one country to still get benefits in that country using credits (not earnings) from the other country to gain eligibility. It also allows a citizen of one country to work in another country without paying Social Security taxes in their home country on those foreign earnings. If you have worked in the U.S. long enough to become eligible for U.S. Social Security on your

own U.S. work record, the Totalization Agreement between the U.S. and Canada doesn't apply to you nor affect your U.S. Social Security benefits. Overall, the Totalization Agreement is there to help those who work in both countries but aren't fully eligible for benefits. So, it's likely not the Totalization Agreement you take issue with – rather, it is a U.S. Social Security provision called the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).

WEP reduces the Social Security retirement benefit of anyone who has a pension earned while not contributing to the U.S. Social Security program. That includes those with foreign pensions, as well as retirees with pensions from US employers who do not participate in the US Social Security program, including older US Federal retirees as well as state-retirees from any of the 26 U.S. state govern-

ments which have chosen to exempt their employees from paying into the national Social Security program.

Without getting into the details of how the WEP reduction is computed, suffice to say your US Social Security benefit is based only on your earnings from working in the United States but, because you also have a Canadian pension earned without contributing to U.S. Social Security, and you apparently have less than 30 years of U.S. earnings, WEP reduces your U.S. benefit – just as it does for nearly 2 million U.S. citizens who also have a non-covered pension. Legislation for WEP reform (or repeal) has been introduced in just about every U.S. Congress since WEP became law in 1983, but no such reform legislation has ever been enacted. Most in Congress understand that, although the formula isn't perfect,

WEP better equalizes benefits paid to all Social Security recipients, thus helping to fulfill Social Security's original purpose – to mitigate poverty in our elderly population.

Do you have any legal recourse? If you mean recourse that will exempt you from WEP or change the U.S. benefit formula to include both your U.S. and Canadian earnings when computing your US Social Security benefit, I do not believe you do. Many U.S. unions representing WEP-affected retirees have been wrestling with this issue for decades, to no avail. WEP can only be changed by an act of Congress, and Congress – for nearly 40 years – has been unwilling to change it. So, while I fully understand your frustration and respect your opinion, unfortunately I cannot be optimistic that your current appeal, nor any legal action you might take, will be successful.



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Voice of our PEOPLE

Deconstructing 'My Body, My Choice' Hypocrisy On Both Sides

By Dr. Luke Conway

To show partiality in judgment is not good. Proverbs 24:23

There is nothing more dangerous to authoritarianism than a principle applied impartially.

Authoritarianism thrives on group bias. Thus, one of the cures for authoritarianism is a willingness to be fair to your opponents, to judge both your own group and their group with the same lens. Like a fungus exposed to constant fresh air, authoritarianism simply cannot survive when a sustained principle is fairly applied to all sides. The danger of authoritarianism is one of the many reasons that to show partiality in judgment is not good.

Given the current tendencies for extremists across the political spectrum to spiral into an authoritarian abyss, it is worth remembering this sobering proverb as we debate the key issues of our time. Anytime we approach any issue—even ones we care passionately about—we should show no partiality in judgement. We should apply the same principles to both our side and theirs.

Nowhere is the need for impartiality more evident than when we consider the twin issues of abortion and vaccine mandates. Although not necessarily related, these two issues have been brought together by one of the most curious linguistic turnabouts in history. For most of my lifetime, "my body, my choice" was the rallying cry of liberals who wanted abortion rights. Yet, during COVID, this same phrase was co-opted by conservatives to resist vaccine mandates. This was purposeful: Most conservatives were adopting the phrase polemically, with irony, to turn it back against pro-choice liberals. The strategy seems to have partially worked: In fact, some liberals have even begun to distance themselves from the "my body, my choice" motto as a result.

Along the way, both political groups have argued that they have more of a right to the phrase than the other side. Yes, there were intelligent commentaries. Yes, there were a smattering of thoughtful debates. However, in the main, from where I sit, rather than these two concurrent usages of "my body, my choice" sparking self-reflection, this linguistic overlap appears instead to have largely inspired blind spots on both sides. To the outsider, the result has sometimes looked like rather bizarre theater. Conservatives on the ground appear to scream

"my body, my choice" for vaccine mandates and then turn around and oppose abortion without a great deal of thought; liberals on the ground appear to scream "my body, my choice" for abortion and then turn around and support vaccine or mask mandates without considering the deeper implications. In both cases, each side seems largely to use the principle when it suits them, and then simply ignore the clear application of the principle when it doesn't.

If we don't want to devolve into authoritarianism, we need to dig more deeply. We need a discussion revolving around a consistent set of principles applied equally to liberal and conservative positions on these issues. With that goal in mind, I offer a few thoughts here. I do not view these comments as either original or definitive answers, but rather—as someone who falls into one of the "hypocritical" boxes that opposes both abortion and vaccine mandates—an attempt to prod discussion with a few summary thoughts.

Let's start with an obvious truth: "My body, my choice" cannot be absolute across all times and all places, and therefore we must consider when it applies. On the one hand, most Americans will likely cede that the government should not decide what brand of peanut butter you put into your body. On the other hand, if you randomly punch a stranger in a mall, I doubt a judge would find a "my body, my choice" defense especially compelling. You don't have the right to merely do anything you want with your body, because often what you do with your body affects others. So, one reasonable starting point is that for every issue, we have to weigh the potential costs to individuals of losing their freedom against the potential costs to other people around them if they have their freedom.

Let's take each of those in turn as applies to our present case. In the aftermath of the Dobbs Supreme Court decision that overturned Roe, liberal Jessica Tarlov noted that "my body, my choice" arguments were more impactful in the case of abortion (compared to vaccine mandates) because the cost to the individual person who loses her freedom is greater in the case of abortion. Tarlov notes, for example, that it is far more of a hardship to carry a baby to term against one's will—and to subsequently be responsible for that child—than it is to get a vaccine. In her words: "I would still argue

that a shot in your arm is a little bit different than a commitment to a person for 18 years."

There likely isn't anyone in the country more opposed to vaccine mandates than I am; but Tarlov is largely right here. It almost certainly is more of a hardship on a woman losing her freedom for an abortion than it is for someone losing their vaccine freedom. Vaccines are not without risk (something liberals have long been aware of—many people forget that pre-COVID, the "anti-vaxx" movement was largely on the left), but one has to say that on balance, forcing someone to take a vaccine shot is arguably less of a hardship than forcing them to carry a baby to term and beyond.

On the other hand, when we turn our attention to the effects of freedoms on others, the issue isn't as favorable to liberals. COVID vaccines may reduce the likelihood of harm to those who take them, but they almost certainly do little to stop the spread of COVID. As a result, granting one individual the freedom to avoid taking vaccines will have very little impact on other people. If I take a COVID vaccine, it may or may not help me; but it almost certainly will not help you, or anyone in my orbit. The larger effect of my freedom on other people is thus very minimal. It may not cost me much to get a shot, but it doesn't cost anyone else much if I have the freedom not to get it.

As conservatives have consistently noted, abortion fails the second half of our test spectacularly. Almost by definition, abortion has a 100% kill rate. Every time a woman exercises her right to an abortion, a fetus dies. Now, part of the liberal argument has always been that the fetus doesn't have the same status as a regular person. But to understand the current cost/benefit analysis, we don't need to spend hours debating the exact personhood status of the fetus. Rather, let's focus on something most people can agree on: A fetus is a living thing. That's probably why the vast majority of the world—including most liberal European nations—effectively ban elective abortions after 20 weeks, and why most Americans oppose abortion after 15 weeks. As a result, it seems clear that a person who has an abortion generally does a lot more harm than a person who refuses a vaccine.

Where does this leave us? If we dissect the "my body, my choice" linguistic collision by applying

consistent principles, we get a mixed bag. Liberal positions score higher when considering hardships to the person whose freedom is at stake; conservative positions score higher when considering hardships to others who might be affected by their freedom. I offer these (undoubtedly imperfect) thoughts not to provide definitive answers, but as a means of prodding reflection to combat authoritarianism. The "my body, my choice" hypocrisy provides a moment for all of us to learn a lesson. It might be good for both sides to stop shouting at each other, and instead bring reflective, fair, and principled arguments.

Indeed, reflecting on the linguistic "my body, my choice" collision that is the subject of this piece had an impact on my own views. It didn't make me like abortions more, but it highlighted the need to apply the same standard across issues. Vaccine mandates reminded me that there is always a cost to taking away personal freedoms. Because I want to set a high bar for restricting my own freedoms in the case of vaccine mandates, I think we should be careful in setting that bar for other areas. Liberals have a point. I think we should consider the freedom of the pregnant mother just like we should consider the freedom of the unvaccinated person. Those aren't the only things in each cost/benefit equation; but if we are going to consider them at all, they should be considered equally on all sides.

If we don't—if we continue to twist any old principle to our advantage without considering it fairly—authoritarianism will ultimately have its day. And if that happens, we all lose.

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Is It A God Thing?



RANDALL FRANKS
Southern Style Columns

Whenever I find myself facing an uncertain future, whether it's in work or my personal life, ultimately, I always find myself praying for Divine intervention.

I ask for guidance. I ask for forgiveness. I ask for patience. I ask for inspiration.

It always seems I am asking Him for something. But seldom am I thanking Him for what He has already given.

From my personal experience, I know He hears and in His own way answers our requests. Sometimes the answer is no.

We seldom understand that result. In fact sometimes we interpret it, as He is not there. He is not listening. He has forsaken us.

From our own actions, many of us deserve to be forsaken but thankfully, as part of His family we will not be. We may not always get what our hearts desire. Our lives may not be easy. And sometimes they may be downright miserable. He is still with us.

In the face of what seems to be an ever-increasing presence of things that are ungodly being placed in front of us through media and in our own vision of the world around us,

I must conclude if there was ever a time for us to cry out to Him and ask His mercy upon us, it is now.

In recent weeks, I have been in prayer over lack of direction in my life, over falling short in His service and in trying to walk ever closer to Him. We all fall short of His love.

Yet, in the simplest thing, He can remind us "I am here and I love you."

I have a small golden key chain I was presented when I graduated from high school. I had never used it, only pulled it out and looked at it, thinking I will use it for a special occasion. Despite many years coming and going, I had not used it. I finally pulled it out and put my car keys on it. A small golden ball that served as a nut held the mechanism into place, thus holding the key ring into the golden circle into which it was mounted.

One day I went to the post office, I got out and the key ring fell apart dropping pieces to the ground. I bent over picked everything up and went on my way. I did not realize that the small golden ball

that served a nut was not among what I picked up. I realized later at home it was gone. It could have unscrewed and fell off anywhere, I checked my clothes, the floorboard of the car, around the house, to no avail.

A couple a weeks passed when the thought hit me as I pulled into the post office again, go and look where you were parked that day. So I did. I walked over to the empty parking space, took two steps beyond where my drivers door was and there it sat. It had rolled and sat there for two weeks with no vehicles rolling over it. Not a soul had noticed this little golden ball the size of a large bb. After I had become acclimated that I would never be able to use the key chain again. God sent a thought, moved my body, and there was something I had lost, a piece of something I cherished just lying on the ground safe in a place it should not have been.

I have spent a lifetime in the music industry. I have strived to attain recognition for my music on the mainstream charts. That, along with awards is one of the ways we gauge our acceptance and success. I can tell you, those things just do not just happen. Behind the scenes, there are many actions taken by you and folks who support you which facilitate such an opportunity. I have been praying tirelessly for career guidance for months. This past week, I was notified that I had topped the Cashbox Magazine music charts with a song I wrote with Cotton Carrier and released years ago – "God's Children" performed with the Watkins Family.

Never in my life had I been on the Cashbox charts, and then out of the blue I was number 1 on a mainstream entertainment chart with a song picked out of the blue by radio presenters with no behind the scenes promotion, no single release, not even trying. If that is not a God thing, I don't know what is.

Look for the God things in your life. They are there, big and small. And when you find them don't forget to thank Him!

Randall Franks is best known for his role as "Officer Randy Goode" on TV's "In the Heat of the Night." His latest 2019 #1 CD release, "Americana Youth of Southern Appalachia," is by the Share America Foundation. He is a member of the Old Time Country Music Hall of Fame. His latest book is "A Badge or an Old Guitar: A Music City Murder Mystery." He is a syndicated columnist for <http://randallfranks.com/> and can be reached at rfrankscatoosa@gmail.com.

Relay Cropping Can Improve Profits, Conservation

By Kelsey Willardson, policy associate, Center for Rural Affairs

Producers are facing a dire need to increase production in the current market. More are also looking for ways to engage in conservation. Relay cropping may provide the solution for both of these issues.

This method of farming, which allows producers to stagger the production of two cash crops during the same growing season, can improve profits and create healthier land. To help increase its adoption, the U.S. Department of

Agriculture's Risk Management Agency has added relay cropping as an insurable farming practice.

Relay cropping extends the growing season by incorporating varieties that can be grown in cooler conditions. In the Midwest, farmers commonly pair soybeans with winter wheat, rye, or other cereal grains, which often results in similar or increased yields for each individual crop. This is largely attributed to improvements in soil health and stability—a result of maintaining a living root in the soil for a longer portion of the year. The practice can trans-

late to measurable cost savings by reducing the need for insecticides and herbicides. The increased biodiversity of two cash crops can prevent insect infestations by creating a balanced ecosystem of predator and prey species. Increased weed growth helps suppress soil cover, and the varied planting times also disrupt pests' growing cycles.

This is a great time to consider relay cropping. Soybeans paired with cereal grains may be covered under a written agreement. Written agreements provide coverage for insurable products with special con-

ditions or when local rates of comparable products are unavailable. This added protection reduces the risk for producers and ensures operations implementing this beneficial practice are financially secure. Get in touch with a crop insurance agent to learn about enrolling in this coverage.

Established in 1973, the Center for Rural Affairs is a private, non-profit organization working to strengthen small businesses, family farms and ranches, and rural communities through action-oriented programs addressing social, economic, and environmental issues.

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