

**➔ TODAY'S VERSE**

Mark 8:38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.



**➔ FACES OF HAMILTON COUNTY**

People who call our community their own.

**What makes Bonnie Zickgraf smile?** "Sunshine, handshakes and hugs," said the Noblesville resident. Also, "the pure joy of thinking about Jesus, puppies, all baby animals, the laughter of family, friends, grandkids and babies, the smells inside a bakery and a flower shop, (real) Christmas trees with shiny, silver tinsel and twinkling lights, and great contemporary jazz music. She was found giving the Noblesville First United Methodist Church's online daily prayer. She was born and raised in Reading, Pa., and is a graduate of Ball State University. She is an ordained, graduate-level pastoral counselor and registered nurse (psychiatric RN of 28 years). After moving north from Florida in the middle of Covid, she began at Noblesville First UMC in June 2020 as a hospitality coordinator, "thanks to the faith and trust of (former) senior pastor Jerry Rairdon," and now she works full time on UMC's pastoral care team. She helps to coordinate and participate in the pastoral care activities, including the Daily Prayer Service and Sunday morning worship services. When she's not working, she enjoys writing prayers and Christian nonfiction, walking her dog, Houston, and taking him for car rides, "because he can't drive yet," listening to contemporary jazz, thinking of the next new ministry" and more. What else? She loves to travel. She invites the community to UMC for a Ladies of the Noblesville First United Methodist Church Lydia Circle event, a Steppin' Up to Help line-dancing fundraiser 6:30 to 8 p.m. this Tuesday in Celebration Hall, with the community welcome, no experience necessary, and freewill offering collected to benefit Cherish, a nonprofit that protects children (cherishcac.org) with info at 317-773-2500.

**And Another Few Things...**

**1. Sheridan Library**

Experience a variety of educational exhibits on a fun trip to two museums with newly available passes at the Sheridan Public Library. Explore a large collection of artifacts, mastodon bones and three floors of fun when you check out the Indiana State Museum pass that is good for up to four general admissions. \$3 parking is available in the White River State Park parking garage located beneath the museum. Next up, immerse in the diverse culture of Native America at the Eiteljorg Museum. Young patrons will enjoy the Nina Mason Pulliam Education Center for play and discovery. This pass is good for 4 adults and all children 17 and under. Patrons will need a SPL library card to check out and each pass is available on a first come, first serve basis. For more information, visit sheridan.lib.in.us

**2. Organic Program**

The National Organic Program (NOP) recently launched a new course in the Organic Integrity Learning Center on Growing the Organic Workforce. Growing the Organic Workforce provides resources to support a robust, highly skilled workforce of qualified organic professionals. These resources promote organic market development, protect organic integrity, and enhance diversity, equity and inclusion. You can use Growing the Organic Workforce to find information on recruitment, educational programs, professional training and more. Current Growing the Organic Workforce topics include:

- Experiential Organic Agriculture Education Programs
- Organic Internship Best Practices
- Organic Field Crop Practices

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## Boomer Bits



### Ask Rusty – Can International College Students Get Social Security Benefits?

**Dear Rusty:** We have hosted international college students for years, all of whom needed to apply for a Social Security Number upon arrival in the United States. Would these students be entitled to some Social Security funds at some point? Some have worked as paid graduate assistants, but others have not worked while going to school. **Signed: Wondering**

**Dear Wondering:** In order to collect Social Security benefits later in life, the students you host would need to have at least 40 "quarters" of credit working and earning in the U.S. and contributing to U.S. Social Security from their "substantial" U.S. earnings. Forty is the minimum number of credits for anyone to claim Social Security retirement benefits. Foreign students who earn only some "quarters" of U.S. Social Security credit (minimum of 6) may, later in life, be able to collect U.S. ben-



ASK Rusty  
Social Security Advisor

**Social Security Matters**

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

efits depending on their country of citizenship/residence. The U.S. has bilateral "totalization" agreements regarding Social Security eligibility with most of its allies and, in some cases, a foreign citizen can "totalize" their Social Security credits from both countries to become eligible for U.S. benefits. Eligibility rules, however, vary somewhat by country, and Social Security payments cannot be made to certain countries (e.g., Cuba and North Korea). Payments to those living in countries with which the U.S. has no bilateral Social Security agreement may also be restricted.

In any case, U.S. Social Security benefits would not be available to any of these students until they are at least 62 years old, and then only if they had worked and earned sufficient U.S. credits (40) to be independently eligible for U.S. benefits on their own U.S. earnings record, or they later became eligible for U.S. benefits because they worked some in the U.S. and were eligible for benefits under a "totalization" agreement between the U.S. and their home country. In any case, any U.S. Social Security bene-

➔ See RUSTY Page A5

### BBB Tip: Having Trouble Finding A Qualified Contractor? Try These Tips

Even before the pandemic, the United States had a shortage of qualified contractors. However, supply chain issues and the changing economy have made hiring for home remodeling and repair projects harder - and it's likely to worsen.

What's a homeowner to do? BBB has the following tips if you are still looking for a contractor for your home improvement project.

Hiring a contractor during a shortage

- Understand the challenges. It's typical for specialized

subcontractors, such as electricians, to prefer to work for general contractors. That means they can get repeat work instead of depending on one-time projects. Your project may not be high on a contractor's priority list. Accepting this fact and knowing your search may take time can ease some of your stress.

- Be prepared to pay more. Be realistic when it comes to how much your project will cost. Don't be surprised if bids

➔ See BBB Page A5

### The Importance Of Regular Immunizations For Heart Health

(Family Features) While most parents are good at keeping track of vaccines their kids need to stay healthy, many adults don't realize there are immunizations important for keeping themselves heart-healthy, as well

Adults, especially those with a history of heart disease or stroke, should take steps to stay up-to-date on preventive vaccines, particularly for the flu and COVID-19.

➔ See HEALTH Page A5

## Lions' Guest, Superintendent Daniel Hile Proud Of District



**BETSY REASON**  
The Times Editor

Did you know that Noblesville High School has the largest internship program in Indiana?

That the NHS Class of '2022 earned a record-setting \$6.3 million in scholarships? That students speak more than 50 different home languages? And that NHS is the first school in the nation to offer an educator apprenticeship program that is giving its first student a jump start on college teacher certification while still in high school?

The district's new superintendent Dr. Daniel Hile is pretty proud of his new school district. Hile, who officially began his position more than seven months

ago, on July 1, was guest speaker this week at the Noblesville Lions Club bi-monthly meeting at Ginger's Cafe in Noblesville.

Hile is a former choir director of eight years who went on to serve as assistant principal, principal and then superintendent while gaining a great perspective on a wide range of student needs and student ages, before coming to Noblesville Schools.

He said while Hamilton County has a reputation of being a very wealthy area, about 22 percent of the district's students qualify for free or reduced meals based on family income. "A very important dynamic that we have

to remember, as educators, that not all of our children come to school with the same home life and opportunities."

Hile is focused on the many wonderful things happening in our school district everyday, "definitely a lot of things to be proud of," Hile said.

The superintendent, who came from a smaller school district and who was named 2022 Northeastern Indiana Superintendent of the Year, is still getting to know Noblesville Schools, and said it's "so exciting to go to school every day and see the great things

➔ See BETSY Page A5

**➔ INSIDE TODAY**

- Obituaries.....A2
- Capital Chronicle.....A3,A4,A5
- Service Directory.....A5
- In The Home.....A6
- Travel.....A7

**➔ HONEST HOOSIER**

In a few days it'll be March. Are we looking at lambs or lions?



**➔ TODAY'S HEALTH TIP**

Read to your child every day instead of sitting them in front of the TV.

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**

"Beware of monotony; it's the mother of all the deadly sins."  
-Edith Wharton

**➔ TODAY'S JOKE**

What'd one eyeball say to the other eyeball?  
Just between us, something smells!

**➔ OBITUARIES**

Robert "Bob" Rayle, jr.

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



**WTHR 7 DAY FORECAST**

27/33 WINDY FRI	22/45 BREEZY SAT	34/52 BREEZY SUN	37/49 MOSTLY CLOUDY MON	37/52 NEW SUNSHINE TUE	37/49 RAIN SHOWERS WED	22/67 BREEZY AND WINDY THU
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## ⇒ OBITUARIES

### Robert "Bob" Rayle, Jr.

January 27, 1940 - Monday, February 20, 2023

Robert Roy "Bob" Rayle, Jr., age 83, passed away at his home in Sheridan, Indiana, with his family by his side on Monday morning, February 20, 2023. Born January 27, 1940, in Sheridan, Indiana, he was the son of the late Robert Roy Rayle, Sr. and Viva L. (Van Scyoc) Rayle-Wright.



Following graduation from Westfield High School with the Class of 1960, Bob honorably served his country in the United States Air Force. He was very proud of his time in the service, and even prouder to be a member of the K.V. Elliott Sheridan Legion Post #67.



He loved his legion family very much. He was a past commander of the Legion and dutifully served for many years as a member of their military funeral honors detail. Bob was also a member of the Boxley United Methodist Church, and Fidelity Lodge F&AM 309 of Sheridan.

Upon the completion of his military service, he hired on with International Harvester, which became Navistar, Inc. during his tenure with the company. Bob was cooped up in the office for the first 20 years, after which the manufacturing gods saw fit to transfer him where he would enjoy himself more outside in the yard.

For the remainder of his 40-year career with the company, Bob was behind the wheel of a spotter truck, keeping things in order like only he could. If the weather was even the least bit nice, you could either find Bob out on the golf course, or gettin' in a little fishing. When winter rolled around, NASCAR (until Sr. died) and IU Basketball (while Bob Knight was still there) were welcome substitutes. And just like the rivalry between Gene Keady and the General, so it was between Bob Rayle and "Uncle Shug", with fewer chairs thrown, but just as much cussin'. Family was all that really mattered to Bob. He loved coaching his kids and following every activity that his grandchildren were involved in.

Bob is survived by his 2 sons, Robert R. "Rob" Rayle III (Penny) of Lebanon, and Benjamin L. "Benny" Rayle of Kirklin; 2 daughters, Melissa L. "Missi" Rayle-Muir (Ed) of Sheridan, and Candace R. "Candi" Rayle of Sheridan; 9 grandchildren, Katie Muir (Jake), Nikki Muir (Chris), Eddie Muir, Robbie Rayle IV, Ethan Rayle, Brody Perry, Trebor Rayle, Julianne Clendenen (Jared), and Eric Lowe (Kelley); 2 great grandsons, Jaxon, and Sylus; brother, Richard "Dick" Rayle of Noblesville; sister, Jackie Cook of Noblesville; many nieces and nephews; and many, many bonus children... you all know who you are.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Robert Roy Rayle, Sr. and Viva L. (Van Scyoc) Rayle-Wright; grandson, Justin Muir; sister, Mary Ruth McDonald and husband Keith; sister, Marie Dawson Covey; brother-in-law, Pat Cook; brother-in-law Robert Honnold and wife Malia; and by his loving wife, Carolyn (Honnold) Rayle on December 21, 1991. She and Bob were married on April 14, 1962.

Services with Military Honors will be held at 10:30 AM on Monday, February 27, 2023, at Kercheval Funeral Home, 306 E. 10th Street, Sheridan, Indiana. Burial will follow at Boxley Cemetery in Boxley, Indiana. Pastor Mike Bullick will be officiating. Visitation will take place at the funeral home from 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM on Sunday evening, February 26, 2023, with Masonic Services starting at 7:00 PM. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be presented to the American Cancer Society, or to the Sheridan Youth Assistance Program.

## Samuel W. Hughes Named Partner At CCHA Law

Church Church Hittle and Antrim (CCHA Law) is pleased to announce that Samuel W. Hughes has been named Partner.

Sam is a partner in the firm's Litigation and Insurance Defense practice sections. Sam is licensed to practice law in Indiana and Georgia. His practice includes representing individuals and corporations in all aspects of litigation, from pre-suit negotiation through trial. Sam's defense practice focuses on representing and defending public entities, public

employees, and elected officials in personal injury, wrongful death, and civil rights claims. Sam looks forward to providing high quality, results driven legal representation to clients for years to come.

"Since joining CCHA, Sam has been an instrumental part of our growing and thriving litigation practice," said Alex Pinegar, Managing Partner. "Moreover, he is simply a delightful colleague and a joy to work with. We are very pleased to welcome Sam into the partnership."

## Court Rules Against Tiger King in Indiana

Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita and his team announced a win in the case against Tiger King's Timothy Stark in the Court of Appeals of Indiana.

The court affirmed Stark is personally liable for funds and assets misappropriated from his nonprofit corporation Wildlife In Need. Rokita said this case should serve as an example to all nonprofit organizations that they must use donations for their intended purposes and cannot misrepresent their activities to would-be donors.

"Despite his 15 minutes of fame in the Netflix documentary Tiger King and Tiger King 2, Stark was still required to abide

by the law - just like any other citizen," Rokita said.

A Marion County Court ordered the priority distribution of assets to the State and the Indianapolis Zoo. In September 2020, the Attorney General's Office in conjunction with the zoo as a receiver, removed approximately 161 animals from WIN, which operated in Charlestown, Indiana. In the same month the animals were removed, WIN's board of directors voted to dissolve the nonprofit organization.

In May 2022, a Marion County Court issued an order addressing the distribution of WIN's assets being held for distribution. In its order, Judge Da-



vid Dreyer wrote, "The Attorney General, Animal Receiver, and Corporate Receiver have gone to extraordinary lengths to perform their duties under this Court's Orders and Indiana law. Due to their efforts, the animals rescued from the conditions at

WIN that would have not survived and/or would have continued to be subject to abuse and neglect without the intervention of the Attorney General and Animal Receiver, are now living healthy and enriched lives."

Rokita also recognized the hard work of Deputy Attorneys General Michelle Alyea and Tamara Weaver for their efforts and dedication on this case.

If Hoosiers believe a nonprofit has exceeded its authority or violated the law, they are encouraged to file a complaint with the Indiana Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at indianaconsumer.com

## Indiana Homeowner Assistance Fund Offers Monetary Assistance For Delinquent And Future Property Tax Bills

The Indiana Homeowner Assistance Fund (IHAF) is a support program for eligible Hoosiers who have experienced hardship from income loss.

Administered by the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA), the IHAF has helped more than 3,500 eligible applicants and disbursed more than \$40 million through the program to date.

"As the time for annual property assessments approaches, it is important for Hoosiers to know that

IHAF can possibly pay for delinquent and future property charge fees, including property taxes," said Indiana Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch, Indiana's Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development. "Homeowners in Indiana who anticipate having difficulties paying their property taxes, or who already have delinquent property taxes, should visit [www.877gethope.org](http://www.877gethope.org) for more information and to start an application."

Applicants can also connect with a housing

counselor who can provide advice and information on their options.

Homeowners may be eligible for assistance if they meet the following requirements:

- Impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and experienced a financial hardship on or after January 21, 2020;
- Own only one mortgaged home;
- Property to be assisted is the primary residence;
- Have an income equal to or less than 150% of the Area Median Income

adjusted for household size, or 100% of the National Median Income, whichever is greater; and, • Live in Indiana.

"In addition to property tax assistance, applicants may also be eligible to receive mortgage reinstatement, up to six months of monthly mortgage payment assistance, and assistance with other property charge fees including homeowner insurance and homeowner association fees," said Jake Sipe, executive director of IHCDA.

## Westfield Welcome To Host Third Annual Shamrock Drop On Saint Patrick's Day

Westfield Welcome is pleased to announce the return of Shamrock Drop, presented by Indiana Members Credit Union. This Saint Patrick's Day event, held at Grand Junction Plaza, doubles as a Westfield Washington Parent University fundraiser. Community members are invited to purchase paper shamrocks for \$5 each. Each shamrock purchased serves as a chance to win a pot o' gold (prize basket) filled with donations from local Westfield businesses.

Shamrocks will have the purchaser's name on them and will be placed in a large, lucky pot o' gold. On Friday, March 17th, all shamrocks will be dropped from Grand Junction Plaza in hopes of landing in one of the many pots o' gold prizes. The event runs from 6 - 8 p.m. Other activities include Irish music from Indy Ceili Band, Irish dancing from Celtic Motion, themed games, crafts, retail, food vendors, and more!

Funds from the shamrocks will be donated to Westfield Washington Parent University to provide additional educational opportunities for students and teachers. "WWS Parent University remains dedicated to our students, families, and staff. We are lucky to partner with Westfield Welcome for

Shamrock Drop. Funds raised support the needs of students like shoes, clothes, school supplies, programs, and more. Academic success and well-being are both essential to a student's successful educational journey," said Ashley Knott, Coordinator of Family & Community Engagement for Westfield Washington Schools. "Thank you for supporting Shamrock Drop and impacting our community."

Shamrock Drop's presenting sponsor, Indiana Members Credit Union, will also have a "cash cube" on-site with additional prizes from local businesses.

"This is a great event for the entire family to enjoy on Saint Patrick's Day. In 2022, we were able to donate \$3,000 to Parent University with the help of our community, and we enjoy seeing this event grow year after year," stated Kayla Arnold, Director of Westfield Welcome.

Businesses are encouraged to reach out to Westfield Welcome if they are interested in providing donations for this event. Please direct your inquiry to [welcome@westfield.in.gov](mailto:welcome@westfield.in.gov). Ticket sales will end on Thursday, March 16th at noon. Event and ticket information can be found here: [westfieldwelcome.com/shamrock-drop](http://westfieldwelcome.com/shamrock-drop).

## Spring Into Conservation With Native Plants And Rain Barrels

Spring rains, sunshine, and blooms are on the horizon. Plan ahead for your property by ordering your native plants and rain barrels from the soil and water conservation district. The SWCD has all the tools you need to conserve water and support pollinators like bees and butterflies with beautiful native plants.

Native plant kits allow you to take the guesswork out of plant selection by providing a set of plants that will be perfect for your yard. Each native plant kit contains 50 native plant plugs for \$135. There is a kit for all areas of your yard including pollinator, rain (for wetter areas), shade and prairie grass.

Rain barrels are also available for pre-order for \$85. These re-purposed barrels capture rainwater from your downspout and roof and hold it for use at a later time. Rain barrel water is great for watering plants and gardens or even washing the car. In peak summer months, a rain

barrel can save around 1,300 gallons of free, naturally soft water for your use. Pre-pay for your barrel and choose between grey and black fifty-five-gallon rain barrels. Accessories like diverters systems for easily installation, wooden stands, and linking hoses are also available.

Plant kit and rain barrel pre-orders can be placed online at [www.hamiltonswcd.org](http://www.hamiltonswcd.org). Orders for plants are due March 30th and rain barrel pre-orders are due April 27th. Rain barrels can be picked up May 9th and 10th in Noblesville and plants the week of June 5th. All proceeds support conservation projects and education in Hamilton County.

More information on native plants and rain barrels can be found on the Hamilton County SWCD website (<http://www.hamiltonswcd.org>).

Questions regarding the sales or SWCD resources can be directed to [soil.water@hamiltoncounty.in.gov](mailto:soil.water@hamiltoncounty.in.gov) or 317-773-2181.

## VW Committee Approves Over \$3 Million To Reduce Diesel Emissions Across Indiana

The Indiana Volkswagen Mitigation Trust Fund Committee (Committee) awarded a total of \$3,361,120 to nine projects around the state that will reduce diesel emissions in local communities. The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) received nine eligible applications totaling \$3.4 million of the \$3.5 million allocated in this latest round of funding. Here is a list of the recipients:

- Carter Express, Inc. \$600,903
- Consolidated Terminals and Logistics \$235,564
- Fastenal Company \$278,303
- GE Marshall \$294,077
- Indiana Metal Manage-

ment \$829,066

- Kokomo Grain Co. \$100,000
- Metro Ports \$504,023
- Nucor \$324,184
- Steel Dynamics \$195,00

The awards will be used to replace diesel-powered fleet vehicles or equipment. Vehicles/equipment funded include seven all-electric, one clean-diesel, and one diesel-electric-hybrid-powered alternative. Four first-time applicants to the program, representing economic impact to four different counties, were awarded funding.

For more information about the Indiana Volkswagen Mitigation Trust Program, please visit [idem.IN.gov/vwtrust](http://idem.IN.gov/vwtrust).

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# Indiana Township Association Releases Findings Of Comprehensive Task Force Study On Efficiency And Effectiveness Of Township Government

In response to continued legislative efforts to change or eliminate township government, the Indiana Township Association created a task force and worked with the Indiana University Public Policy Institute to study the efficiency and effectiveness of Indiana township government and develop policy recommendations. The task force was made up of ITA officials, state legislators, state agency representatives, and a variety of other stakeholders.

“Part of the value of township government is found in the important and timely services we provide to the people. These services include township assistance including case management; fire protection and EMS; parks and recreation; and the maintenance, preservation, and restoration of cemeteries,” said ITA Executive Director Debbie Driskell. “ITA will use the data and recommendations in this report to continue our collaborative work with townships and with legislators to make township governments stronger as well as more effective and efficient. We look forward to initiating and supporting changes that will enhance our delivery of critical services to Indiana’s citizens.”

Data was collected from township offices across the state and compiled in six different population

tiers. The Task Force met nine times and developed a set of recommendations that were adopted by township officials at the ITA conference last fall.

The 27 total recommendations are broken down into categories of: township structure and mergers, finances, township assistance, fire and EMS services, education and communication. Below are some of the key recommendations:

- Encourage townships to consider interlocal arrangements to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of local services
- Provide support to townships that wish to pursue voluntary mergers
- Allow nonvoluntary mergers of townships if certain criteria is met
- Make townships eligible for state grants and low-interest loan funding
- Strengthen board oversight of township finances
- Expand the circumstances that allow a public safety levy appeal
- Require townships with fire and EMS services to be included in public safety local income tax allocations
- Mandate annual continuing education for elected officials and critical staff
- Expand education of the public, K-12 students, and policy makers about the duties and values of township government

“During the interim of the 2022 legislative year, I participated in the Indiana Township Association task force. The task force included township mergers, elected officials, and academia,” said State Representative Doug Miller. “I found the data eye opening and the discussion around the data informative. I have high expectations that recommended actions will upgrade customer service to Hoosiers, provide fewer layers of government, and ensure all Hoosiers have ready access to police, fire and ambulance services.”

There is currently legislation pending at the statehouse regarding the allocation of funds for townships that supply EMS and Fire. Senate Bill 78, proposed by State Senator Rick Niemeier, would allow for these qualifying townships to apply for a distribution of public safety local income tax revenues from the county. The bill passed unanimously through the Senate Tax and Fiscal Policy committee and passed the full Senate by a vote of 48-1. It is now headed to the Indiana House of Representatives.

“ITA seeks to use the results of the study to work together with state legislators and agency officials to enact many of the associated recommendations to ensure the needs of Hoosiers continue to be met at the local level,” concluded Driskell.

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# Houses Passes \$43.4B Budget With No Democrat Votes

By Whitney Downard

Indiana Republicans passed their \$43.3 billion budget proposal without any Democrat support, with the minority party denouncing the millions earmarked to expand school vouchers.

Nearly half of the budget, 48%, goes to K-12 education, which will get a boost of nearly \$2 billion over its current appropriation – of which one-third will go to vouchers.

Democrats denounced the budget for taking funding away from traditional public schools. Under the new proposal, families making up to 400% of the federal poverty level, roughly \$220,000, qualify for vouchers.

“We’ve gotten rid of the whole idea that this is based on poverty or even based on bad schools,” Rep. Ed DeLaney, D-Indianapolis, said. “In my view, we’ve turned the voucher program into an entitlement. A vast, new entitlement for people who are doing pretty darn well in life.”

Republicans said it was a matter of school choice and giving more power to parents who wish to control their children’s education.

“Ninety percent of parents are saying that the best (option) is a traditional public school,” Rep. Jeff Thompson, R-Lizton, said. “But it’s important, I believe, that we put parents in charge.”

The budget advanced on a 66-29 vote and advances to the Senate for further consideration.

Dems decry education provisions

Thompson, the primary architect of the measure, said that it created opportunity for Hoosiers and saved taxpayers money in the long run.

“We’re making strategic, one-time investments that are going to affect our citizens for decades and decades to come,” Thompson said. “It sets Hoosiers on a great path going forward with a lot of great opportunities.”

The budget funds a \$1,400 operations “floor” for public and charter schools per student, which increases to \$1,500 in the second year. Additionally, eligibility for vouchers increases from 300% of the federal poverty level to 400%.

“The budget is unreasonable because the stated promise to provide real, great (increases to the) school funding formula for traditional schools, from our perspective, was not honored,” Rep. Greg Porter, D-Indianapolis, said. “Traditional public schools will receive an average ... of about 6% in the first year of the biennium but vouchers receive about a 70% increase.”

Concerns about Kinsey defunding

House action on Wednesday barred the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University, which researches sexual health, from receiving state funding in the budget.

House Speaker Todd Huston declined to comment on the specific allegation that Indiana University shields sexual predators currently but signaled his distaste for the allegations.

“I think that the introduction, the presentation of that amendment was extraordinarily disappointing,” Huston, R-Fishers, said. “But I think the majority of our caucus just wanted to ensure that no (public) dollars were going to the Kinsey Institute.”

Huston said that discussions were ongoing and didn’t rule out the possibility of restoring funding.

Senate Pro Tem Rodric Bray said that he hadn’t had time to review the amendment’s language.

“I probably need to (spend more time on that) before I can really articulate whether it’s something that we’ll be supportive of or whether we’ll pull back,” Bray said.

House Democrats were much harsher in their condemnation.

“Not long ago, the GOP was driven by ideals of free markets, minimal government and ‘traditional family values.’ Now it has become the party of culture wars,” Rep. Phil GiaQuinta, D-Fort Wayne said in a statement. “A Republican elected official even implied that anyone who has ever voted for a state budget – because of its funding for Indiana University’s research – is complicit in the sexual abuse of children.”

GiaQuinta, whose father also served in the General Assembly, called the

Republican party of today ‘unrecognizable’ when compared to previous generations.

“This behavior doesn’t belong on the floor of the House or in the mainstream of our society,” he concluded.

Senate takes cautious approach to House budget

But the Republican caucus’ leaders appeared to disagree about the approach to tax cuts and tying them to revenue outcomes.

The two chambers reached an agreement last session to cut Indiana’s income tax rate from 3.23% to 2.9% over seven years only if revenue growth continues and an additional \$1 billion was appropriated to pay down pension debt.

Huston said he trusted the Senate Republicans, he said that cutting revenue through tax cuts was the only way to reduce spending and stop government growth.

“I’m not sure (the revenue growth) guardrails were ever really practical... I think they’re just unnecessary,” Huston said.

Bray disagreed that the guardrails weren’t practical or necessary, saying they protected future state revenues from economic downturns.

“We want to do so in a responsible and thoughtful way and I, frankly, think that those guardrails probably won’t stop,” Bray said. “If we see (the economy) dip, we’ll be able to have some flexibility.”

Sen. Ryan Mishler, who chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee, said senators were disappointed by the House’s \$250 million additional contribution to the pre-1996 Teacher Retirement Fund, the state’s only unfunded pension obligation.

Previous discussions had that number at \$1 billion.

“I think that should be a non-starter, and it needs to stay at what we agreed to,” Mishler, R-Bremen, said.

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## HEALTH

From Page A1

Influenza - While many experience just a few days of aches and chills, the flu can be deadly for some, including young children, the elderly and those with chronic conditions like heart disease, stroke and diabetes. There has also been research linking flu infection to cardiovascular disease (CVD). Getting a flu shot can not only prevent the flu, it may also reduce the risk of having a heart attack or stroke.

In fact, a study published in "Stroke" found that, among a group of people hospitalized for various reasons, those who experienced a flu-like illness within a month of their hospitalization were 38% more likely to have a stroke. Receiving the flu vaccine within a year prior to hospitalization lowered a person's stroke risk to 11%.

"Getting an annual flu shot should be part of routine health care for all individuals, especially for people who are already living with chronic health conditions that put them at higher risk for heart attacks or strokes," said Eduardo Sanchez, M.D., M.P.H., FAHA, American Heart Association chief medical officer for prevention. "The potentially serious complications of the flu are far greater for those with chronic diseases. This is true not just for older people but even those age 50 and younger who have a history of high blood pressure, heart disease or diabetes."

COVID-19 - At the onset of the pandemic, the American Heart Association established the COVID-19 Cardiovascular Disease Registry, which found people with or at risk for CVD were more likely to become infected with and die from COVID-19. Additionally, the research found many people experience heart and vascular disease after getting COVID-19.

A study from the registry published in "Circulation: Arrhythmia and Electrophysiology" found new-onset atrial fibrillation in 1 in 20 patients hospitalized with COVID-19. Additionally, research also found people hospitalized with COVID-19 had a higher risk of stroke compared with people who had similar infectious conditions such as influenza or sepsis.

"We can't stress enough the connections between COVID-19 and cardiovascular disease," Sanchez said. "There is clear evidence that people who have heart and vascular disease and even those with CVD risk factors are more likely to get COVID and to have more severe complications from the virus."

Other Immunizations - While flu and COVID-19 vaccines are of the utmost importance, there are a number of other immunizations that can help keep people heart-healthy.

\* The pneumococcal vaccination protects against a common cause of severe pneumonia and is especially important for people 65 and older, and others with certain underlying medical conditions. This type of pneumonia can be deadly, especially for people already at high risk for health complications, including CVD. One shot is usually good for several years, although you may need a second one later depending on your age at your first shot.

\* Shingles, a viral infection caused by the chickenpox virus, has been linked to an increased risk of stroke. More than 99% of people age 40 or older in the United States may carry the dormant chickenpox virus, also known as the varicella-zoster virus, and not even realize it.

Learn more about important immunizations and find other preventive health tips at heart.org.

## BBB

From Page A1

on your project are considerably more expensive than what you would have expected it to cost pre-pandemic. Being willing to pay more for materials and quality work will make you more attractive to contractors.

• Be a good communicator. If you communicate clearly and create a comfortable working environment for contractors, they will be more willing to take on your project.

• Find contractors by asking other contractors. Beyond asking your friends, neighbors, and family members for recommendations, you can also ask for references from contractors you know. For example, if you're looking for an electrician, ask your plumber if they can recommend someone.

• Be flexible with evening and weekend work. You may be able to find a contractor who is moonlighting while working a 9 am-5 pm, Monday-Friday job. Perhaps this person is building up a client base before starting their own business, or they simply want the extra income.

• Start looking before you need someone. If your neighbor gets a stellar kitchen remodel from a quality contractor, get their contact information, even if you aren't planning a kitchen remodel. This contact information can reduce your search time when you are ready to hire a contractor.

• Check with a national association. If word of mouth doesn't get you any results, try using a pro-finder tool on the National Association of Home Builders or the National Association for the Remodeling Industry. Remember, you'll still need to check out individual contractors you find on

these sites before you hire them, such as looking at their profile on BBB.org.

• Do a background check. Once you have a candidate or two, ask the contractor for proof of insurance and licensure. You can also look them up on BBB.org to check their licensure, see their business rating and read customer reviews and complaints.

• Don't make a hasty decision. Hiring just anyone who says they'll accept the job can be tempting if you've been searching for weeks or months already. Still, it's best to wait until you find a qualified professional with a good business reputation. If you don't and things go awry, there won't be much you can do to get your money back or the damages repaired.

For more information Find trusted, vetted contracting pros near you and get a quote. Review BBB's tip on hiring a reliable contractor for more advice on this topic, and visit our HomeHQ page for even more information for homeowners.

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# Indiana Senators Not So Keen On "School Choice" Voucher Expansion In House-Proposed Budget

By Casey Smith

Top Indiana senators said they aren't so sure about a House Republican budget plan that would more than double taxpayer spending on the state's "school choice" voucher program.

House lawmakers on Thursday approved their version of the budget, punting it over to the Senate.

But pushback is already mounting against provisions that seek to generously expand eligibility for the state's "school choice" program — which allows families to receive vouchers to attend private schools.

Republican Senate Pro Tem Rodric Bray said that while his chamber is "passionate about school choice, too," he's skeptical his caucus will be on board with the House proposal.

"I'm a little hesitant on that," he said Thursday, pointing to "a big number" price tag to allow a majority of Hoosiers to qualify for the school choice program.

"Every year the voucher piece is a big discussion on the budget. We'll have some other conversations, as well, but that will be a big one."

He also hinted at support for more voucher school accountability, but spared any specifics.

Republican House Speaker Todd Huston remained firm, however, that his caucus has no interest in adopting additional transparency or accountability guardrails.

"The program as it exists has been extraordinarily successful," Huston said. "We feel very good about where we are ... (the Senate) will have different priorities, and we'll work through those different priorities with them."

Senate expected to hit the brakes

The new voucher dollars account for roughly a third of the \$2 billion in new, additional state funds that House Republicans want to earmark for K-12 education over the biennium.

## Andrew Shane Announced As COO At American Senior Communities

Andrew Shane has joined American Senior Communities as Chief Operating Officer. As COO of Indiana's largest senior care provider, Andrew will develop and oversee the strategic direction for ASC's day-to-day operations across nearly 100 communities.

Andrew comes to ASC from Sava Senior Care in Dallas/Ft. Worth, where he served as Division President. Prior to that, he served as COO of the Urban Division at Signature Healthcare. He specializes in the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) process and has a strong commitment to quality customer service, which

Rep. Jeff Thompson, R-Lizton, who chairs the House Ways and Means Committee, said the decision comes as a way to increase "options" for Hoosier parents.

Expanded eligibility for the Choice Scholarship program — which allows families to receive vouchers to attend private schools — would raise the income ceiling to 400% of the amount required for a student to qualify for the federal free or reduced price lunch program, equal to about \$220,000, according to the House budget.

Currently, vouchers are limited to families that make less than 300% of the federal poverty level, meaning a family of four can make up to \$154,000 annually.

Bray said he also wasn't sure the Senate would support the House's proposed elimination of the eight pathways currently in place — in addition in income requirements — that determine student eligibility for the program.

"When you move it up to 400% of the poverty level, it's a big number there. And when you get rid of the pathways, that really accentuates that," Bray said. "We're going to take a very close look at it."

Voucher schools receive state funding, too, but are not required to operate within the same parameters as local public schools. For instance, they don't have elected school boards and don't have to justify their spending. Critics have long maintained that such schools lack transparency and accountability to the public.

The latest pushback came from a top GOP senator who called for voucher school reforms — not expansion — in the current legislative session.

Sen. Ryan Mishler, R-Mishawaka, said that Senate and House disagreements on voucher spending predated this year's expansion and senators consistently preferred a smaller amount than their House

counterparts.

"That's something we've always negotiated," Mishler told the Indiana Capital Chronicle Thursday.

When crafting the last state budget, Mishler said his caucus agreed with the House's voucher request though he personally objected.

In his recent letter urging Hoosier parents to rethink charter schools he called for additional guardrails, pledging not to support "one additional dollar spent" on the voucher program without student protections.

But even though he chairs the Senate's powerful Appropriations Committee, Mishler said he still abided by the wishes of the overall caucus.

"That's what people are misinterpreting — I can't control that," Mishler said. "I personally am reluctant to support an expansion until I can get some protections... (but) I'm not trying to take down this program, I'm actually trying to strengthen the program."

Mishler said he was meeting with voucher proponents to discuss future guardrails for voucher schools but specific solutions would come out later.

"Our caucus members just have to ask themselves — they're spending over half a billion dollars to increase the eligibility. For our members ... What do they want to give up to get to that dollar? I think that's really the overall question," Mishler said. "But I can't control what we do. I always go to the caucus."

House leadership still committed to expansion

After the expansion, the program would cost the state an estimated \$500 million in fiscal year 2024, and another \$600 million in the following fiscal year. The current state budget appropriates \$240 million annually for the Choice Scholarships.

Indiana has about 87,000 private school students, according to the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE).

About 44,000 of those use the state's Choice Scholarship program — which allows families to receive vouchers to attend private schools. But under the House GOP plan, the remaining 43,000 would be eligible for the grant, which would average around \$7,500 statewide.

Still, about 90% of Hoosier students currently attend a traditional public school.

Huston held that the "hundreds of thousands of kids" that have used Indiana vouchers in the last decade are a testament to the program's popularity — and a sign that increased eligibility would boost participation even more.

"They're popular. They're popular with families," he said. "We see no reason why we shouldn't continue to expand."

Thompson additionally maintained earlier this week that private school tuition vouchers will "save the state money."

"We're educating 100,000 students (at voucher schools) for half the cost of those at traditional public schools," Thompson said, pointing to debt service costs at public schools that "costs the state more money."

"That's a great deal for taxpayers, and also just honors a philosophy that I think a lot of us have, that parents should make what they believe is the best choice for their students," he continued.

The Senate now takes the reins on the budget. But the chamber isn't likely to unveil its spending plan for another month, closer to the release of the state's next fiscal forecast.

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## RUSTY

From Page A1

fits earned under a totalization agreement would be based only on their actual U.S. earnings (and not earnings in their home country) and, thus, would likely be very small.

I assume that most international students you host are only in the U.S. for a short time, perhaps one year. The maximum Social Security credits that can be earned each year is four, so it's highly doubtful that the students you host for such a short time would later become eligible for U.S. Social Security benefits, unless they extend their U.S. presence and continue to work and earn in the United States long enough to later become

eligible for U.S. benefits.

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# Just 25% Of House Bills Have Survived Session so Far. Here's What Didn't.

By Casey Smith

House lawmakers filed 673 bills this year – but only about 178 survived key deadlines this week. Some of the bills that aren't advancing have been woven into the budget instead, like a proposal eliminating public school textbook fees. But the language often looks a little different — the budget simply requires schools to waive the fee, for example, and doesn't make a separate line item for the proposal.

But the majority of those bills are dead. They include increased family support in the wake of an abortion ban, legal online gambling, driving cards for unauthorized immigrants, limited vaccine requirements and an official state sandwich.

Any bill not heard by a House committee this week died, as well as any House bill that didn't get a second reading on the floor.

The Senate's committee deadline, meanwhile, passed on Thursday. That chamber's second and third reading deadlines are next week.

Skipping support for families

Lawmakers this summer focused exclusively on two topics during a special session: passing a near-total abortion ban, and expanding social services for newly expectant parents.

That ban is tied up in court. But the legislature has also declined to go

boost adoption assistance and give pregnant Hoosiers more protections.

A bill establishing a zero-cost adoption fund failed to gain any traction, despite vocal support from a Republican gubernatorial candidate.

Rep. Tim Wesco, R-Osceola, and Eric Dorden, a GOP candidate for governor, floated the idea over the summer, linking the bill with the anticipated bump in Hoosier births following the ban's passage.

Wesco's proposal this session would've created a fund to pay \$10,000 per adopted child into a 529 college savings plan and to support various adoption assistance programs. But the bill had no state money earmarked toward it — it would've relied on tax-deductible donations instead — as noted in the fiscal.

Another proposal, which would've let pregnant Hoosiers claim child support beginning at conception, was stripped back in committee. Now, the House priority bill would allow courts to make fathers pay for a wider range of pregnancy-related expenses.

On the Senate side, a bill that would have required employers to grant an employee's request for reasonable pregnancy accommodations failed to get a committee hearing.

Lawmakers have defeated every pregnancy proposal in the last few years, although Indiana has one of the nation's

highest infant and maternal mortality rates. Gov. Eric Holcomb's support in back-to-back priority lists hasn't swayed them.

Gambling to remain a drive away — for now House Bill 1536 would've brought casinos and lotteries right to Hoosier phones, potentially earning hundreds of millions for operators and for the state — while sparking addiction fears and other concerns.

But i-gaming bill author Rep. Ethan Manning, R-Logansport, didn't bring the bill up in his own committee.

"We need to do a better job educating the [General Assembly] membership and the public about need for i-gaming," Manning told reporters Thursday, when asked why he didn't hear the bill — thus killing it.

Manning said a legislative fiscal analysis showing i-gaming could cannibalize from brick-and-mortar gaming establishments — in contrast to an Indiana Gaming Commission report saying it wouldn't — also gave him pause.

"There's a disconnect there," Manning said. "... We need to work on that and figure out why the [commission] report's not being pushed through onto the [Legislative Services Agency] fiscal side. I think there's some concern about the source of the data that was used."

And there are some more wrinkles in the plan

— industry tussles, tax rate details, addiction funding accountability and recent federal convictions.

Bumpy road for driving privilege cards

The Senate's powerful fiscal body killed a bill earlier this month that would've expanded driving privileges to immigrants residing in the state without authorization.

The bill's Republican author said it would ensure those people are held to the same driver training standards as citizens who are able to get driver's licenses.

But other Republicans said immigrants to the United States should "follow the rules" to establish legal residency before getting to drive.

"I think there's value in making sure that people that are going to be driving on our roads have training and have insurance and are more likely to stay and accept responsibility when there's been an accident," Senate Pro Tem Rodric Bray told reporters Thursday. "That's very appealing to me."

"The bill has made it farther than it has in the past," Bray noted. "In this building, sometimes it takes six, seven years to get something passed ... It's an idea that I would imagine will continue to come back, but it's just hard for some people to get there."

The measure narrowly survived its first committee hearing, passing 5-4. But it never got taken up

by the Appropriations committee for a fiscal impact analysis, and died.

Vaccine uproar fading? Vaccines — and an increase in skepticism and rejection — were big news during the depths of the Covid-19 pandemic. But the public policy discussion has faded out — with a flurry of bills intended to limit the jabs dying without ever getting heard.

One bill would've blocked the state and units of local government from requiring that minors get Covid-19 vaccines. Another bill would've limited employers' ability to mandate Covid-19 tests.

Some bills extended to all vaccines, like a bill that would've made it easier for prospective foster families to bypass the state's vaccination requirements. Another would've taken all student vaccine information off records and transcripts, and given lawmakers the power — instead of the Indiana Department of Health — to change the list of mandatory vaccines.

None got a hearing. Lawmakers "hold the mayo" on state sandwich Indiana isn't any closer to putting the breaded pork tenderloin into law.

Senate Bill 322, authored by Sen. Andy Zay, R-Huntington, sought to declare the Hoosier favorite as the official state sandwich. But the proposal died in committee without ever getting a hearing.

That's despite support

from Gov. Eric Holcomb, who said last month he wanted to settle the state sandwich question "once and for all."

Zay's bill specifically intended to honor Nick's Kitchen, home to the first Hoosier breaded pork tenderloin. It's located in downtown Huntington and has been serving up the famous creation since 1908.


It was the latest in a string of bills in recent years to establish more state emblems beyond the bird (cardinal), tree (tulip) and river (Wabash). Recent additions include the insect (Say's Firefly), fossil (mastodon), and snack (popcorn).

Earlier this week, House Bill 1143, which sought to establish "The Hoosier State" as Indiana's official nickname, also died in a House government committee after historians raised questions about the "Hoosier" origin story outlined within the proposal.

Until next time. Capital Chronicle reporters Casey Smith and Whitney Downard contributed reporting.

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Photo provided by Chatham Village

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## Congress Must Stop This Insanity



Photo courtesy Office of Rep. Spartz

**This week, Rep. Victoria Spartz (IN-05) traveled to Yuma, Arizona. "This is the sixth sector of the southern border in three states I have visited since being elected to Congress in 2020, so I will be very blunt," said Rep. Spartz. "Our federal government has created perverse incentives to benefit Mexican cartels and China at the expense of the American people. We are incentivizing women trafficking, child trafficking, drug trafficking and modern-day slavery with your tax dollars. This insanity must stop."**

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# WEEKEND

## In The Home

A6

Weekend, Feb. 25-26, 2023

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# Clean Energy Home Upgrades



## Make dependable environmental improvements

### FAMILY FEATURES

When you're considering upgrades for your home, earth-friendly enhancements that impact your energy usage are smart investments. Energy-saving home upgrades can offer long- and short-term advantages for the earth, your wallet and even your safety.

Many homeowners evaluate their energy needs as they plan home improvements. There are several low-carbon, resilient energy options available that can help safeguard your family. Consider these environmentally friendly upgrades to diversify your home's energy sources, reduce energy consumption and ensure your home is well-prepared to withstand interruptions to power service if the electrical grid fails.

### Diversify Energy Sources

The growing conversation to "electrify everything" will require an overhaul on the aging electric grid just to manage the increase in demand. Accomplishing this will take decades and cost billions, according to the Department of Energy. In fact, according to a study conducted by Acupoll Precision Research on behalf of the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC), 54% of respondents believe electricity for everything will be too expensive for taxpayers while 70% strongly agree Americans should have a choice when it comes to their energy source. Propane is a clean, affordable and abundant energy option that reduces carbon emissions right now. Using propane appliances like furnaces, water heaters, fireplaces and kitchen appliances alongside other energy sources reduces the strain on the fragile electrical grid. Unlike electric appliances, propane appliances can work even during power outages.

### Seal In Energy

Outdated doors and windows often lack energy benefits. Newer models have stronger, thicker panes that reduce the transfer of heat from inside to outdoors (and vice versa in the warmer months). Updating doors and windows allows you to easily repair any cracks or faulty seals that make it easy for energy to escape. When your home is well-insulated, your heating or cooling system works more efficiently.

### Consider Solar Panels

When many homeowners think of renewable energy, they often think "solar." Some states are mandating solar adoption, and while financial rebates help, solar panels are still considered an expensive upgrade for many people. The number of panels you need depends on your geographic location and weather, as well as the size of your home and your family's energy consumption habits, which can add up. If you have access to propane and electricity, and are planning to upgrade to solar, consider adding propane appliances to offset the energy load required from your solar system.

### Install a Backup Power Source

The Department of Energy's "Electric Disturbance Event Annual Report" showed an increase in power outages from 2000 to 2020. More than half of consumers nationwide indicated they or a close family member or friend have been personally impacted by a power outage in the past two years, according to PERC.

As a result, many homeowners are saying "yes" to backup power generators. A propane standby generator can be a key part of resilient home upgrades by offering supplemental electricity in as little as 10 seconds after an outage. Propane doesn't degrade over time, making it an ideal standby power fuel. Plus, it's cleaner than diesel so you can keep your home functioning and family safe while being a good steward for the environment.

### Increase Energy Efficiency

While landscaping plays an important role in curb appeal, it also serves more practical purposes. Thoughtfully placed trees and shrubs can block the heat that comes from powerful direct sunlight while serving as a break against blustery winds and providing a natural form of external insulation for the home. In outdoor living spaces, propane-powered appliances can offer increased energy efficiency. For example, propane can power full outdoor kitchens, fireplaces and fire pits, patio heaters, flame lighting or pool and spa heaters.

Find more ideas and information to inspire your earth-friendly home upgrades at Propane.com.



### When the Grid Fails

In 2021, a winter storm decimated a major electrical power grid, leaving thousands of Americans in the dark and cold. Some people lost their lives while others battled to overcome extensive damage to their homes and businesses.

Jennifer Borget's family is one of many that weathered those winter storms. However, the Borget family home used propane to power their water heater, stove, furnace and fireplace.

"When your power goes out, you can still use some propane appliances," said Borget, who blogged about her experience. "This is one of those things I didn't realize but learned during the historic winter storms.

When the power was intermittent, our propane-powered fireplace and water heater quickly warmed our family." One year later, the Borgets are discussing investing in a standby generator to mitigate future power outages.

Another way to reduce the risk of large-scale disasters is increasing Americans' reliance on a broader mix of energy sources. Using a combination of propane, solar, electricity and natural gas can keep homes and businesses alike running efficiently and safely.

Relying on alternative energy sources like propane can also make a meaningful environmental impact in the long-term while offering short-term advantages, including continued access to power during emergencies when another energy source fails.

# WEEKEND *Travel or stay! and Play*

A8

Weekend, Feb. 25-26, 2023

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## Comfort Food Cruise Returns To Ohio's Hocking Hills

After a two-year COVID hiatus, the wildly popular annual Hocking Hills Comfort Food Cruise is back March 4-5 and March 11-12, 2023. The cruise features a dozen stops, each offering a generous sample of a signature comfort food dish. AT just \$20 for all 12, \$5 of every comfort cruise pass benefits local food banks. Tickets are available online at <https://www.explorehockinghills.com/things-to-do/hocking-hills-comfort-food-cruise/>, by mail or in-person at the Hocking Hills Regional Welcome Center, 13178 State Route 664 in Logan, OH. Attendees can pick up their cruise tickets, along with a special logo Comfort Food Cruise souvenir, at the Welcome Center.

Travelers can go for the gusto and hit all 12 culinary stops in one weekend or visit on both Comfort Food Cruise weekends. Reservations at stops are not needed, but one pass is required for each sample. With 2023 being the 8th year for the Cruise, details, as

well as complete visitor and lodging information, is available at [ExploreHockingHills.com](http://ExploreHockingHills.com).

Each stop will also offer its full menu of items available for purchase. The following Hocking Hills restaurants will feature these tastes for the 2023 Comfort Food Cruise:

- Hocking Hills Coffee Emporium: Danish & Medium Coffee
- Hocking Hills Diner: Banana bread French toast
- Hocking Hills Frozen Yogurt: Mini Froyo Parfait
- Home Tavern: Pulled pork sliders and white mac and cheese
- Inn & Spa at Cedar Falls: Triple Berry Cobbler
- Jack's Steak House: Beef and noodles over mashed potatoes
- Rock House Restaurant: Crispy Evergreen Garlic Fries
- Mam's Rusted Skillet: Hamburger slider with Fries
- Tacie's Sweet Treats: Broccoli Cheese Soup & Pinwheel
- Urban Grill/Hocking Hills Golf Club: Ultimate

Grilled Cheese

- The Ridge Inn: Meatloaf
  - Treehouse Treats & Treasures: Junior Scoop of Ice Cream
- "The Hocking Hills food scene is all about comfort," said Explore Hocking Hills Executive Director Karen Raymore. "This is the land of locally owned eateries serving up classic, made-from-scratch comfort food every day. Visitors will find homemade noodles, banana bread French toast, mom's meatloaf and the ultimate grilled cheese, just to name a few of the offerings."

Raymore added that the Comfort Food Cruise is a guilt-free culinary tour, as visitors can hike any of the region's many parks, forests, nature preserves and miles of hiking trails to work up an appetite and work off the calories. Hocking Hills waterfalls are typically rushing in March, which is also the start of the area's lush wildflower season. Thus, the Comfort Food Cruise offers travelers an ideal time to visit the Hocking

Hills to immerse themselves in both Mother Nature and "Mom's" home cooking.

Located 40 miles southeast of Columbus, Ohio, Hocking Hills offers once-in-a-lifetime experiences that make every day feel like Saturday, with plenty of Admission: FREE activities, including the new John Glenn Astronomy Park. The region boasts a wide variety of affordable lodging, from glamping, cabins, cottages and luxe woodland lodges to hotels and inns. In addition to hiking trails, parks and forests, the Hocking Hills offers rappelling, guided hikes, kayaking, off-road segway tours and ziplines. Stellar stargazing at the John Glenn Astronomy Park, unique galleries, gift and antique shops; canoeing; horseback riding; birding; fishing; spas and more add to the allure of Hocking Hills as the perfect place to unplug. Complete traveler information is available [ExploreHockingHills.com](http://ExploreHockingHills.com) or 1-800-Hocking (800-462-5464).

## February Update At The Haan

The Richmond Group Exhibit is currently on display through April 8. This group of artists are from Indiana's 1st art colony and are primarily self-taught, but still gained national recognition. Be sure to stop in to see it - tour hours are Wednesday through Saturday from 1-4 p.m.

Don't forget about the Lunch and Learn at 11:30 on Tuesday March 21st. Our guest speaker is Shaun Dingwerth, Director, Richmond Art

Museum. He is an expert on the Richmond Group and his book "The Richmond Group Artists" 1st printing sold out.

Registrations for GENERATIONS Fine Art Sale and Exhibition will be available online starting March 1 for the April 29 Luck of the Draw sale and for Purchase Awards. Purchase Awards participants get exclusive access to purchase the artwork online from March 8-22. You don't want to miss out!

## Lincoln Amphitheatre 2023 Performance Series Announced

The Lincoln Amphitheatre will head into its 36th summer with a diverse and eclectic lineup of live events and performances. Anchored by KISS' original guitarist Ace Frehley, Eddie Montgomery of Montgomery Gentry, Grammy nominee Southern Avenue, as well as Peter Beckett of the band Player, the 2023 season will also feature a number of tribute performances to some of the all-time great rock and roll bands and country artists.

2023 marks the eighth summer of a unique multi-state agency partnership between the Indiana Destination Development Corporation (IDDC) and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). IDDC is part of Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch's family of business.

"The Lincoln Amphitheatre celebrated its 35th year with a fantastic season in 2022," Lt. Gov. Crouch said. "We look forward to seeing the continued success of this resurgent southern Indiana facility in 2023 as it, again, offers a diverse and entertaining lineup of events."

The Lincoln Amphitheatre's 2023 Performance Series includes:

- Saturday, May 20: Johnny Folsom 4 - a tribute to Johnny Cash
- Saturday, June 3: Rearview - a tribute to

Pearl Jam

- Saturday, June 10: '84 - a Van Halen tribute
- Friday-Saturday, June 23-24: The Rivalry by KISS' original guitarist Ace Frehley, Eddie Montgomery of Montgomery Gentry, Grammy nominee Southern Avenue, as well as Peter Beckett of the band Player, the 2023 season will also feature a number of tribute performances to some of the all-time great rock and roll bands and country artists.
- Saturday, July 8: Electric Avenue - the 80s MTV Experience
- Saturday, July 29: Ace Frehley
- Saturday, Aug. 12: Southern Avenue
- Saturday, Aug. 26: Turn the Page - a tribute to Bob Seger
- Saturday, September 2: The Yacht Rock Radio Cruise starring Peter Beckett the voice of Player with Monsters of Yacht
- Saturday, Sept. 9: Eddie Montgomery of Montgomery Gentry
- Saturday, Sept. 23: Led Zeppelin 2

Individual tickets for each of the 2023 Lincoln Amphitheatre events are on sale now at [www.LincolnAmphitheatre.com](http://www.LincolnAmphitheatre.com). Each ticket price is inclusive of concert admission, parking, facility and service charges, as well as Lincoln State Park's gate fee. Seating for all shows and sections is general admission/festival seating. VIP tickets include preferred seating, as well as a complimentary drink token redeemable for Pepsi or beer/wine products. Concessions, venue merchandise, and artist merchandise (when applicable) will be available at each event.

## The Queen's Cartoonists At Ball State

The Queen's Cartoonists Bring Their "Perfect Synchrony of Sound and Pictures" (Mashable) to Ball State on Friday at 7:30 p.m.

The Queen's Cartoonists (TQC) perform live in front of a screen, where cartoons from the golden age of animation, cult cartoon classics, and modern animated films are projected. The band either recreates a cartoon's soundtrack note-for-note - performing works from jazz composers like Carl Stalling, Raymond Scott, and Duke Ellington alongside classical giants like Mozart, Rossini, and R. Strauss - or write their own fresh compositions to accompany the on-screen action. Tying everything together is TQC's unique brand of comedy - anecdotes about the cartoons and their composers, humor, and elements of a musical circus.

This season, The Queen's Cartoonists bring their family friendly show "Ages 2-102" to thirty-four cities spanning North America. Since their founding in 2015, The Queen's Cartoonists have sought to answer the question: is it possible to create jazz and classical music in the 21st century that appeals to everyone? The band - led by Dr. Joel Pierson (piano), and including Greg Hammontree (trumpet, trombone),

Mark Phillips (clarinet, soprano saxophone), Drew Pitcher (flute, tenor saxophone), Rossen Nedelchev (drums), and Malik McLaurine (bass) - seems to have unlocked the answer, breathing new life into two uniquely American forms of art: jazz and animation.

"This is a theatrical concert," says band-leader Joel Pierson. "It is mainly focused on presenting characters from classical American animation. But there are also contemporary elements, plus the 'musical circus' that people didn't know they wanted to see!" Audiences can expect to hear both recognizable classical and jazz tunes in addition to new works.

"The show should keep people guessing from start to finish," says Pierson. "I want people to think they've never seen anything like it before! For younger audiences, I hope this is an introduction to concert halls and also a reminder that music can be both serious and fun."

FOR LISTINGS: The Queen's Cartoonists: "Ages 2-102" Friday, February 24, 2023 at 7:30 PM Ball State University, Pruis Hall 1800 W Riverside Ave, Muncie, IN 47306 Tickets \$22.50, Youth \$10, Students \$5, visit [bsu.edu/web/emens](http://bsu.edu/web/emens) or

call 765-285-1539

About the Artists The Queen's Cartoonists perform music from cartoons! Pulling from over 100 years of animation from around the world, The Queen's Cartoonists bring animated films to life, perfectly synchronizing their performances with the films projected on stage. The band matches the energy of the cartoons, leading the audience through a world of virtuosic musicianship, multi-instrumental mayhem, and comedy.

Projections of animated films dazzle the audience, while the band re-creates original soundtracks note-for-note, or writes their own fresh compositions to modern pieces, all the while breathing new life into two uniquely American forms of art: jazz and animation. Tying everything together is the TQC brand of comedy - anecdotes about the cartoons and their composers, stream-of-consciousness humor, and elements of a musical circus.

Watch your favorite classic cartoon characters interact with the musicians on stage, and expect the unexpected from the Golden Age of Animation, cult cartoon classics, and modern animated films. Inspired by the cross-roads of jazz, classical music, and cartoons, TQC features

Jazz Age composers like Carl Stalling, Raymond Scott, and John Kirby, alongside classical giants Mozart, Rossini, and Strauss (to name just a few).

The six members of The Queen's Cartoonists, all now residing in Queens, New York, originally hail from four continents. TQC has performed in wide variety of venues, including opening for the New York Philharmonic, selling out the Blue Note Jazz Club, a residency at Konzerthaus Berlin, and an extended run at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. They have been featured in over fifty publications, including The Wall Street Journal, The Chicago Tribune, The L.A. Times, The San Diego Tribune, The Houston Chronicle, NPR, and Mashable.

Online Ticket Sales Pruis Hall and Emens Auditorium stands behind Ticketmaster.com as the only Internet site licensed to sell tickets at Emens or Pruis. No other site has been authorized by Emens Auditorium to sell, re-sell, or auction tickets. To ensure you receive the best possible service, receive your tickets promptly, and to ensure you are not purchasing counterfeit or stolen tickets, we urge all our ticket purchasers to make their purchase via Ticketmaster.com or the Emens box office.

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