

➔ TODAY'S VERSE

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.



➔ FACES OF HAMILTON COUNTY

People who call our community their own. What makes Victor Barker smile? "My beautiful wife and daughters," said the 35-year-old Noblesville resident. He has a wife, Alicia, and daughters, Presley, 10, and Adley, 5. They live in the countryside in rural Noblesville. Today's feature is a look back at one of The Times' previous Faces of Hamilton County. Barker is a 2006 graduate of Hamilton Southeastern High School, where he played football. He does heavy hauling for Miller's Towing & Transport in Noblesville. What else? "My family and I enjoy doing many things together as time allows," he said. "I love being able to watch both girls do their gymnastics." What else makes him happy? "I look forward to seeing the beautiful and successful women my daughters will become and growing old with my wife." He is a volunteer firefighter for White River Township Volunteer Fire Department. He is a member and past president of Wayne-Fall Lions Club and invites the community to the Lions' annual Palm Sunday Breakfast from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday, April 2, at the Club on East 191st Street at DeShane Avenue and Victory Chapel Road, in Noblesville, with a menu featuring pancakes, eggs, bacon and sausage for a freewill donation.

And Another Few Things...

1. Sheridan Easter Egg Hunt

The annual Easter Egg Hunt + Bunny Visit will return this year to the Sheridan Public Library on Saturday, April 1 from 9:30-11:30am. Hunts will begin every 15 minutes. This event is for ages 10 and under. Children are encouraged to bring baskets or bags to carry eggs. For more information on upcoming events, please visit sheridan.lib.in.us.

2. Anderson Museum of Art Women's League to Host 1920's Party

Tickets are now on sale for a roaring 1920s party, hosted by the Anderson Museum of Art (AMO) Women's League on May 20, 2023, at the Historic Carnegie Library building where the museum is housed. Tickets are \$40 and include admission, hors d'oeuvres from Cultured Urban Winery, and a fantastic evening of entertainment with the Indianapolis Jazz Orchestra featuring Rick Vale.

3. Men's Breakfast

Third breakfast of 2023 is Saturday March 25th
6:30 AM @ ABC 8989 East 266th St. Arcadia

Enter through the South Side into the fellowship hall.

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC for Men ages 13 and UP.

Men's Breakfast Last Saturday of the Month.

We will have pancakes, eggs, sausage and of course coffee.

Then we will look at a few Bible verses and hear how they can encourage us to grow in Godly Manhood.

You don't have to be a part of a church or ABC to attend this is a public event.

Schedule:

- Eat together
 - 10 minutes of Bible teaching
 - Table discussion
 - Close in Prayer
- We won't make you talk.
You won't have to pray out loud.
You will find normal guys
You can dress casual or in your work clothes.

See you in the morning.

4. CCPR to Hold River Heritage Park Rededication Ceremony

A rededication ceremony will be held on Monday, March 27 from 5-6 p.m. at River Heritage Park, 11813 River Road, to celebrate the newly reimagined park. Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation (CCPR) looks forward to commemorating the park's focus on inclusive and accessible play during Disability Awareness Month.

The TIMES

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Boomer Bits



Ask Rusty – Widow Stung by Social Security's "Claw Back" Rule

Dear Rusty: My husband of 48 years died on December 30th, and he received a Social Security direct deposit for December's benefits in early January, but Social Security demanded the bank return his December payment. I used part of his December benefits to pay for household expenses, so his bank account was overdrawn after his bank paid back his Social Security for the December benefit. My questions are:

1. Is it legal for Social Security to demand a return of his benefits because he died one day prior to 1/1/2023? That just seems so wrong to me!
2. Am I legally responsible for the overdrawn amount his bank repaid to Social Security? I was not notified by Social Security or his bank before



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.

"the deed was done".

3. Aren't there Social Security spousal benefits available for the surviving spouse, and how do I apply for them? (Form #, please)

My husband medically retired early, and his Social Security benefits were always lower than mine, but I fear that my benefits may be affected by his death. Is that true? *Signed: Grieving Widow, Feeling Wronged*

Dear Grieving Widow: Please accept our sincere condolences on your husband's passing. Unfortunately, I don't have good news for you about his December benefit payment. Social Security pays benefits in the month following the month they are earned, and the recipient must live the entire month to be eligible for that month's benefit.

➔ See RUSTY Page A5

Seniors Rip Biden For 'Woke' Investments

AMAC, the largest association of 50-plus aged conservative Americans, strongly condemns Biden's veto of bipartisan legislation - H.J. Res. 30 -- to protect individuals' retirement savings from being unilaterally invested by their fund managers in woke governed enterprises, thereby relieving them from their fiduciary responsibilities to maximize financial returns on the investments they manage. This legislation was passed overwhelmingly to block a new Labor Department rule encouraging retirement savings fund managers to consider environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) issues in their investments.

AMAC CEO Rebecca Weber says, "Once again, the Biden



REBECCA WEBER

Administration demonstrates how it continues to put politics ahead of hard-working Americans' pension plans. Environment, Social, and Governance

➔ See WOKE Page A5

Have a lump or bump on your foot?

(StatePoint) Whether it's painful or not, it could potentially signal a serious condition. Foot and ankle surgeons warn it's important to have it checked out, no matter its size or location on your foot.

"Whether your bump or lump is pea-sized or golf ball-sized, it should not go ignored. A proper diagnosis is key to proper treatment," says Michael Coyer, DPM, FACFAS, a board-certified foot and ankle surgeon and a Fellow Member of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS).

According to ACFAS, here's what to know about some of the more common types of lumps found in the foot:

Ganglionic Cysts
This soft, fluid-filled sac is a

➔ See FOOT Page A5

10 Local Ways For Kids To Spend Spring Break

Noblesville Schools' two-week spring break begins on Monday.

For some, vacation plans have long been made to head out of town. For others, it's a "staycation" at home, finding things to do here locally.

When my now junior daughter was elementary age, camps where participants can learn something new were always high among the choices.

Purdue Extension of Hamilton County's former one-day "I Can Do It Camp" was my daughter's favorite spring-break camp



BETSY REASON
Columnist

➔ See BETSY Page A6

➔ INSIDE TODAY

- Obituaries.....A2
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- In The Home.....A6
- Travel.....A7

➔ HONEST HOOSIER

A tip of the seed corn cap to my favorite former event planner! Happy Birthday!



➔ TODAY'S HEALTH TIP

See your dentist regularly - dental disease can contribute to a number of health problems like heart disease.

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 you want to know what God thinks of money, just look at the people he gave it to."
-Dorothy Parker

➔ TODAY'S JOKE

What'd the seed say to the flower?
OK, Bloomer!

➔ OBITUARIES

Judith Ellen "Judie" Gossard

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



7 DAY FORECAST

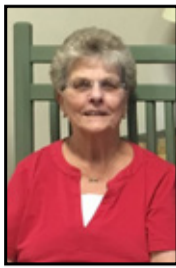
42/50 HEAVY RAIN FRI	45/54 WINDY SAT	31/56 MOISTLY SUNNY SUN	36/54 AM MIX MON	36/52 MOISTLY CLOUDY TUE	34/57 MOISTLY SUNNY WED	47/60 MILD, RAIN CHANCE THU
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➔ OBITUARIES

Judith Ellen "Judie" Gossard

September 15, 1939, Sunday, March 19, 2023

Judith (Judie) Ellen McConnell Gossard was born on September 15, 1939 at her family home in Anderson, Indiana to Paul Eugene and Helen (Reddin) McConnell. She passed away of a massive heart attack on Sunday evening March 19, 2023 while enroute by ambulance to Riverview Hospital.



Judie was a graduate of Sheridan High School and attended Indiana Central for two years. Our Mom liked to say that from the time she could walk she was outside playing and exploring until it was time to come home for dinner. Her love for anything outdoors served her very well when she married her beloved sweetheart Max Eugene (Gene) Gossard Jr. on June 29, 1956. He passed away on December 23, 2006.

They enjoyed fifty and a half years of a lifetime filled with a very special love and created a true sense of family who adored, loved and cherished them until their very last breath and will forever more. Our Mom and Dad had a true marital and business partnership in everything they did from the day they were married. As a newlywed she worked at Indiana Bell in downtown Indianapolis before having her first child and only daughter, daughter Julia (Julie) K. Gossard.

Our Mom started assisting our Dad in every single way possible on the family farm from the time they were first married and continued to do so after our Dad's sudden passing on December 23, 2006 assisting her only son Max (Alan) Gossard. Mom was always the true epitome of what a farmwife should be. In 1971 she started substituting for her husband's school bus route when the bus drivers purchased their own school buses and were independent contractors. She worked as the accountant and bookkeeper for the family owned Gossard Standard Service Station. She worked for many summers for teacher and swimming Coach Mr. Chuck Hise at Marion-Adams High School with their summer swim program.

After selling the family owned Gossard Standard Service Station she worked as the accountant and bookkeeper for the Standard Oil Fertilizer Plant which her husband operated. She worked as the accountant and bookkeeper for the family owned Gossard Fertilizer Custom Application. She became a long time, very beloved and permanent school bus driver for Marion-Adams Schools which eventually changed to Sheridan Schools. She drove for over thirty two years.

She, her husband Gene, daughter Julie and son Alan had, and currently have (for Julie) over 168 years of serving Sheridan, Westfield and the M.S.D of Pike Township students. It was and is a family tradition to love and help children. She was always a Marion Township Elementary School Room Mom for her daughter and son's classrooms planning the yearly holiday parties, other special school festivities and contributing anything that was needed throughout the years.

She would always accompany her children's classes on their field trips. One of the more memorable field trips was when her daughter Julie's Kindergarten class each got to go up and fly over Sheridan and the surrounding vicinity in a four person plane where take off was from the local Biddle Airport and the plane was flown by Bob Apple. She was amazed that every one of the Kindergartners happily took their turns, boarded the plane and went up very willingly. Mom's loyal participation and active involvement continued along with her husband Gene and son Alan for four more years while her daughter Julie was at Indiana State University. They faithfully came to every home football and basketball game to see their daughter perform with the Indiana State Sparkettes, and of course watch the games too. Since Larry Bird played his entire college basketball career during Julie's time at Indiana State, I always teased them that I thought he and the I.S.U. Basketball team just might have become their number one focus.

My family and paternal grandparents would always rent a hotel room in Greencastle just to watch all of the away basketball games on T.V., and then make the two hour trek back home the same night for work the next day. The home football games were made extra-memorable because my Mom, Dad and brother Alan would always drive the motorhome down on Friday after work and school to spend the lovely fall season at the Terre Haute KOA.

Indiana State sports weren't their only participation or involvement because that extended to all special parent and family events while Julie was an active member and officer of the Delta Gamma Sorority. Our parents always took my Sparkette friends and Delta Gamma sorority sisters under their wing for those whose parents couldn't attend the games typically due to distance by loading them up in the motorhome and including them in dining out or cookouts with the family.

Many of my collegiate friends will tell me to this very day that they always loved and adored my family and wished that they could have had them as their own family also and felt like they were just that. During her daughter Julie's forty-two year and counting M.S.D. of Pike Township teaching career she would help Julie and her second grade cherubs create things for special learning projects, fun holiday projects and gifts for their parents.

She loved to read classic children's books to the always captive audiences. She accompanied the second grade classes on field trips, attended the Miss Gossard's annual Thanksgiving Feasts often attending while bringing her grandsons Grant and Garrett. She would also bring them to College Park's end of the year Field Days, special school convocations and field trips. She enjoyed all of them but would often reminisce when the second grade cherubs went to Beef and Boards to see the production of Beauty and the Beast and her youngest grandson Garrett was frightened by his new surroundings and watched the performance from under the table. As her two grandsons, Grant and Garrett got older they would come with their beloved Mamaw to College Park where they all attained hero status and each year's second grade cherubs idolized them.

➔ See JUDIE Page A5

It's Springtime On The Nickel Plate Express



Photo courtesy of Nickel Plate Express

All aboard for an egg-citing ride Easter train ride on the Nickel Plate Express. This family experience will allow kids of all ages to enjoy a springtime adventure on April 1, 2 and 8. Passengers will ride historic railroad cars as they help the farmer find his missing eggs. This interactive on-board story with a farmer and an Easter Bunny is sure to entertain all ages. In addition to the fun on-board experience, passengers will get a springtime cookie, a special drink, and an opportunity to meet the Easter Bunny. New to the 2023 Easter ride will be Poppins Balloon Creations. Enjoy watching staff from Poppins twist up a balloon Easter bunny to take home. This family fun ride is available two weekends in April. Excursions will depart from Forest Park on April 1 and 8 at 12:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. and on April 2 at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Tickets start at \$28 per person for this ride. Rides are 65-minutes long and will board from Hobbs Station located inside Forest Park in Noblesville. Tickets can be purchased online at nickelplateexpress.com.

Best-Selling Author Coming To Noblesville

Formerly homeless, now best-selling author Frank McKinney will be in Indianapolis and Noblesville on Monday, Mar 27 and Tuesday, Mar 28, as part of a 25-city tour of the country that will see him spreading inspiring hope among the homeless population in each community.

Here in Indiana, Frank will be surprising worthy individuals with "lifeline" support - support that may change the course of their lives - at Juvenile Detention Center, Third Phase Homeless Shelter, and Dayspring Center, respectively, during his visit to your state, as a reminder that they can overcome this - the ultimate adversity of homelessness.

Frank has been working with these organizations to identify hard-working unhoused individuals whose life could be turned around by his support. He will also be making a donation to the organizations themselves, to further their missions to support the growing number of unhoused area community members. If you're interested in capturing these moments, please let us know in advance so we can coordinate your attendance at the facilities. With the growing number

of working unhoused due to the unaffordability of housing against stagnant minimum wages, this beautiful human interest story also connects to a widespread challenge we're facing here and across the nation. (see example HERE of Frank's "lifeline" to Joey in Delray Beach)

Frank's latest book that is sweeping the nation, Adversitology, is based on his recent battle with Leukemia, and the formula for overcoming adversity that it established for him. This formula is applicable to any of life's challenges, which is why Frank is currently touring America to share it with the country's most vulnerable population.

Here are the times and locations where you can find Frank and capture these surprise "lifeline" moments this week:

- Monday, Mar 27 at 10:30 AM, Juvenile Detention Center, 2451 N. Keystone Ave, Indianapolis, IN
- Monday, Mar 27 at 6:30 PM, Third Phase Homeless Shelter, 15755 Allisonville Rd, Noblesville, IN
- Tues, Mar 28 at 7 PM, Dayspring Center, 1537 Central Ave, Indianapolis, IN

City Of Westfield Groundbreaking Ceremony

You're Invited

GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY

Westfield Medical Office Building and Westfield Ambulatory Surgery Center
Wednesday, March 29th | 12:00 - 1:30 PM

Light refreshments will be served.

Westfield Blvd & Park St
Westfield, IN 46074

NexCore GROUP

Please RSVP to: Events@NexCoreGroup.com

Graphic courtesy of Nexcore Group

Wednesday March 19 the Nexcore Group with be holding a Ground Breaking Ceremony for the new Westfield Medical Building and Westfield Ambulatory Surgery Center. Nexcore Group is inviting Westfield citizens to come to the ceremony and enjoy some light refreshments. The ceremony will be held just west of the new Westfield Washington Public Library on the corners of Westfield Blvd. and Park Street in Westfield.

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Photo courtesy of Westfield Library Foundation

Staff of Church, Church, Hittle + Antrim Law Firm.



Photo courtesy of Westfield Library Foundation

The Caulfield family donated \$30,000.

Westfield Library Foundation Secures First \$100K In Funding For New Library

The Westfield Library Foundation has secured its first \$100,000 in support of the new Westfield Washington Public Library building.

Church, Church, Hittle, + Antrim, a law firm with offices in Westfield, has pledged \$50,000 to support a Playhouse Town in the Children's Department. The three playhouses will allow kids to use their imagination in a mock town.

Partner Doug Church says, "Our law firm believes strongly in the value of a library as a cultural and educational pillar of the community. We also believe that

you can never be too young to start a life-long habit of reading. The Playhouse Town will draw young readers into an environment of fun and learning that helps meet those objectives! Church, Church, Hittle + Antrim is proud to be involved in the development of the new Westfield Library. It will be the place to be!"

Scott and Marcella Caulfield have committed \$30,000 to the new library to sponsor three window seats in the Children's Department. "We are excited to support the Westfield Library, as it creates a new space for the community," Scott



Doug Church

says. "We look forward to this new community hub and are so happy we are able to help as the Westfield Library moves forward with Westfield."

And the Kiwanis Club of Westfield recently presented the library with a \$20,000 check to

support a Lactation Room at the new library. Club President Jake Plummer says, "We are proud to fund this important space in our new library. We believe that providing dedicated and intentional spaces for nursing mothers will have a positive and lasting impact on the children in our community. This donation reinforces the Kiwanis mission of improving Westfield one child at a time."

The Westfield Washington Public Library broke ground on the new building on the southwest corner of Park and Poplar Streets

in November. The new space will provide additional parking, an expanded teen area, a massive community room, and a coffee shop as well as outdoor activity space. Construction should be complete by the Summer of 2024.

"We are grateful for the commitment our sponsors have made to the new library," says Erin Downey, Executive Director of the Westfield Library Foundation. "They see the library like we see the library - a hub for the community and a true quality of life destination for the City of Westfield."



Erin Downey

Other naming rights and sponsorship opportunities are available at the new library. Anyone interested in learning more should contact Downey at edowney@wwpl.lib.in.us or (317) 896-9397, ext. 119.



Photo courtesy of Indiana Peony Festival

Indiana Peony Festival Returns To Noblesville's Seminary Park

Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 20 when the third annual Indiana Peony Festival powered by Duke Energy returns to historic Seminary Park in Noblesville. The free event, scheduled from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., features more than 70 vendors celebrating Indiana's state flower, the peony, with beautiful floral installations decorating the park as well as arts and crafts, food and drink, entertainment, and educational presentations.

The festivities kick off with a VIPP (Very Important Peony Person) event, "Peonies in the Park" on Friday, May 19 from 6 - 9 p.m. Sponsored by Smith Jewelers, the ticketed

event is a fundraiser for the 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to continue its work with beautification projects, peony gardens and horticulture education as well as promoting Hamilton County as a desirable destination for peony lovers.

In addition to the festivities in the park on Saturday, "Brunch and Blooms" provides visitors with peony-inspired food and drink throughout the day from local restaurants in seven outdoor locations around the historic downtown including four of them in "full bloom" in peony-inspired decorated alleys.

For more information, visit indianapeonyfestival.com.

Interview Times Set For Court Of Appeals Applicants

Nine judges and lawyers who applied for an opening on the Court of Appeals of Indiana will be interviewed by the Judicial Nominating Commission on April 24. The vacancy is the result of the retirement of Judge Margret Robb. The following applicants will be interviewed in person. Their applications and other information about the vacancy can be found online.

Monday, April 24 (all times listed below are Eastern)
 8:30 a.m.-9:15 a.m. - Executive Session to consider applications
 9:15 a.m.-9:45 a.m. - Stephanie K. Bibbs
 9:45 a.m.-10:15 a.m. - Hon. Timothy P. Spahr
 Break
 10:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m. - Paul C. Sweeney
 11:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. - Hon. Paul A. Felix
 11:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. - Carol N. Joven
 Lunch and Executive

Session to consider applications
 1:30 p.m.-2:00 p.m. - Hon. Marc T. Rothenberg
 2:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m. - Elizabeth C. Green
 Break
 2:45 p.m.-3:15 p.m. - Andrew R. Falk
 3:15 p.m.-3:45 p.m. - Justin P. Forkner
 Deliberations in Executive Session, followed by public vote to select nominees

The interviews are open to the public and will be held in the Supreme Court Conference Room (State House 319) at 200 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204. Media interested in attending should contact Kathryn Dolan to inquire about reserving a seat.

Members of the audience are asked to refrain from activities that might distract from the interview process. The following guidelines are in place:

- Only enter and exit

between interviews
 •Recording equipment must be set up during breaks
 •Artificial lighting shall not be used
 •Questioning of the applicants is reserved for the Commission
 •Media/public may interview the applicants before/after Commission's interview outside the interview room at the applicant's discretion

Following the interviews, the Commission will meet in executive session and then publicly vote to select the three most highly qualified candidates. The Commission considers applicants' legal education, writings, reputation in the practice of law, and other pertinent information. The three nominees will be submitted to Governor Eric Holcomb, who has 60 days from receiving the list to select Indiana's next Court of Appeals judge. According to the Indiana

Constitution and state statute, the seven-member Judicial Nominating Commission must recruit and select candidates to fill vacancies on Indiana appellate courts. With Chief Justice Loretta H. Rush as chair, the Commission includes three lawyers elected by their peers and three citizen-members appointed by the Governor. Details on the Commission, including membership, are online.

The Supreme Court Office of Communication, Education & Outreach is issuing this press release on behalf of the Indiana Judicial Nominating Commission as notice of executive session and public interviews of candidates for the Court of Appeals of Indiana pursuant to IC 5-14-1.5-5, 5-14-1.5-6.1(b) (10), and IC 33-27-3-6. Pursuant to IC 33-27-3-6(e), application materials can be available for public inspection and copying.

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Personal Injury Attorney Steven M. Crell
Indianapolis Law Office
8888 Keystone Crossing Blvd
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Phone: 317-669-9791

The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra Association Presents The Spring Jubilee Fundraiser: "Racing to the Music"

April 22 fundraiser will support ISO educational programming 6 p.m. Saturday, April 22, 2023
Dallara IndyCar Factory, 1201 Main Street, Speedway, Indiana

Individual Ticket Prices are \$200, \$300, and \$400. Reservations made by March 29, 2023, will receive a \$25 discount per person. All guests receive complimentary wine. Guests who purchase \$300 and \$400 tickets will receive two complimentary cocktail tickets per person, priority seating, special recognition, and other benefits. Prices for tables of eight are

\$2,000, \$3,000, and \$4,000. To reserve tickets and receive more information, visit isoa.ticket.qtego.net or contact Jane Wenzel at janewenzel@hotmail.com.

The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra Association is pleased to announce its upcoming 2023 Spring Jubilee Fundraiser: "Racing to the Music." The event will feature a gourmet dinner by Kahn's Catering and musical entertainment. Guests will have the opportunity to bid on live and silent auctions. The emcee for the evening will be television host Lauren Kanaan, wife of racing driver and 2013 Indianapolis 500 winner Tony Kanaan. All

proceeds will support the ISO's Metropolitan Youth Orchestra. The event will give everyone an opportunity to donate to this worthy cause.

Auction items to include:

- Numerous opportunities to bid on dinners and exclusive parties at private homes (including some with ISO musicians, one with Maestro Jack Everly, and one at the home of Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra CEO James Johnson).
- Two-seater ride around the Indianapolis Motor Speedway track with Tony Kanaan, along with a meet & greet photo opportunity with Tony.
- Four VIP field

sideline seats for a 2023 Indianapolis Colts' home game, along with a VIP parking pass and four pregame sideline passes.

- A week's stay at a Scottsdale, Arizona, vacation home located in the Terravita Golf & Country Club gated community.
- Four tickets to the ISO's 2023 AES Indiana Yuletide Celebration along with pre-concert dinner at the Skyline Club and overnight stay at the Westin Hotel.
- Four box seats at violinist Joshua Bell's concert with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra along with a pre-concert dinner, champagne dessert at intermission, and a one-night stay at the Milwaukee Marriott.

Over 55 Farming Families Honored With The Hoosier Homestead Award

At the Indiana Statehouse, Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch and Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) Director Don Lamb presented 56 farming families with a Hoosier Homestead Award in recognition of their commitment to Indiana agriculture.

"It is a true honor to be in the historic Statehouse today celebrating your incredible family farming history," said Lt. Gov. Crouch, Indiana's Secretary of Agriculture

and Rural Development. "Your commitment to Indiana and our agriculture history and future is renowned. It was awe-inspiring to celebrate this family achievement with you all today."

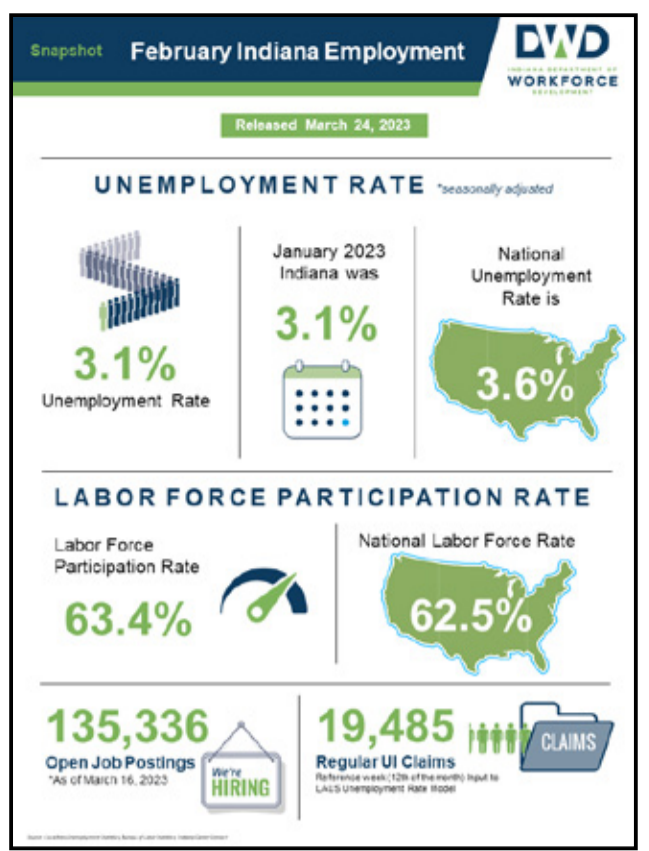
To be named a Hoosier Homestead, farms must be owned by the same family for more than 100 consecutive years, and consist of more than 20 acres. If less than 20 acres, the farm must produce more than \$1,000 of agricultural products per

year. Indiana farms may qualify for three honors: Centennial Award for 100 years of ownership, Sesquicentennial Award for 150 years of ownership and the Bicentennial Award for 200 years of ownership.

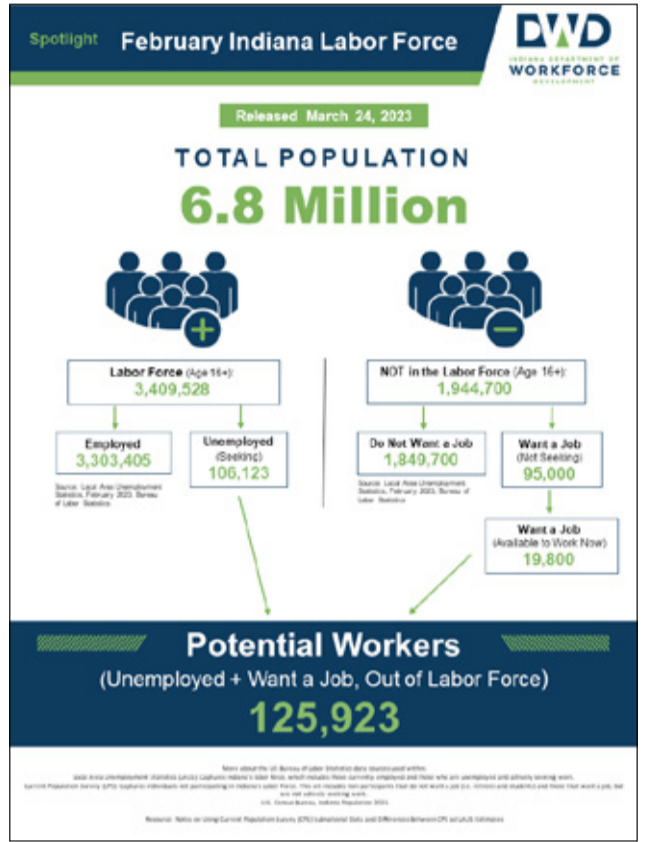
Since the program's inception in 1976, over 6,000 families have received the Hoosier Homestead Award. Many past awardees can be identified by the sign proudly displayed in front of the family farm or field.

"Being a farmer myself I know how challenging it is to farm today in general, and to keep the same property in the family for decades on end, no less," said Lamb. "This award being presented today to your farming families is proof of your dedication to agriculture, to our State and to feeding our world, so I thank you."

Sowers-Pickett is the Hamilton County farm and they won the Centennial Award in 1918.



Graphics courtesy of Indiana Department of Workforce Development



Graphics courtesy of Indiana Department of Workforce Development

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Indiana's February 2023 Employment Report

Indiana's unemployment rate in February stands at 3.1%, according to the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. By comparison, the national unemployment rate for February stands at 3.6%.

In addition, Indiana's labor force participation rate held at 63.4% for February, remaining above the national rate of 62.5%. Indiana's total labor force, which includes both Hoosiers employed and those seeking employment, stands at 3,409,528 - an increase of 427 from the previous month.

Private sector employment in Indiana increased by 3,100 jobs over the last month, translating to a gain of 72,900 jobs from this

time last year. Indiana's February private employment stands at 2,827,300. This is a new private employment peak for Indiana. Industries that experienced job increases in February included:

- Professional and Business Services (+3,600);
- Leisure and Hospitality (+1,500); and
- Private Educational and Health Services (+1,200);

As of March 16, 2023, there were 135,336 open job postings throughout the state. In February, 19,485 unemployment insurance claims were filed in Indiana.

Individuals looking for work, training or career information are encouraged to visit in.gov/dwd/job-seekers

The Times SERVICE DIRECTORY

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JUDIE From Page A2

When her daughter taught at Eagle Creek, Judie and her husband Gene, invited the classes up to take a tour of their grain and cattle farm for a very special hands on learning experience. The second grade cherubs got to enjoy getting up in the tractors and combine. She and her husband then had a cook out for the classes to enjoy for lunch. All of the students' parents volunteered to attend the Gossard Farm field trips and many would get up in the implements as well.

She would surprise her daughter's second grade classes when she was in the area and it was always like an A List Celebrity had arrived! The students would always clap excitedly, squeal with delight and envelop her with big heartfelt hugs. Her daughter Julie would always tease her, that after those surprise classroom visits she would be called Mrs. Gossard instead of Miss Gossard for days, and would be asked a million or more times when Mrs. Gossard could visit again.

She was always pleased and extremely touched when her former students from her school bus route would call or just surprise her with fun visits and special surprises each year. She loved watching them grow and continue their school successes at the college level or in their daily lives. She enjoyed being invited and attending their high school open houses. She cherished each and every one of those visits and invitations. She was always so very proud of all the students that rode her school bus each year and supported them in any way that she could or was asked to.

Our Mom was an extraordinary cook and baker learning the best tips, advice and practice very early in her marriage from her Mother-In-Law Mary Rachael Gossard. Traditional dinners and cookouts with delectable food, lots of love, laughing, games, and happiness was always had by all. Our Mom and Dad were always inviting the family to partake in family dinners. Their love of hosting family extended to the entire family tree of the Gossard's from all over the United States.

Many Gossard families planned their yearly summer vacations around attending the annual Gossard Family reunion, which they hosted yearly for over twenty-five years. The Gossard family reunions would include a pitch in dinner with badminton, croquet and swimming. So many families attended that Mom and Dad made large tables for the annual event and would borrow all of the chairs from the local Kercheval Funeral Home. Memorable times were had by all.

Our Mom was absolutely elated and in seventh heaven when her two grandsons Grant and Garrett were born. For the longest time she would tease and say that she thought her only grandchild would be the families beloved Irish Setter Brandy. She finally achieved Mamaw status at the age of fifty and enjoyed that cherished role for thirty-three years. No words can ever adequately convey the magnitude of love that she had for her two grandsons Grant and Garrett. She and her husband Gene could never have or see them enough that is for sure. Weekend overnights were standard routine and summers were spent with their paternal grandparents, Mamaw and Dadaw.

Vacations in the family motorhome traveling all over the United States was something they and the entire family enjoyed and treasured. The boys were taught how to drive a golf cart, fish, chop

wood, build campfires, roast marshmallows, swim and attained their National Parks Junior Park Ranger badges from many of the United States National Parks. They enjoyed taking a tour of, and inside the Hoover Dam and its inner workings, hard hats and all just before the Hoover Dam had to end that educational offering due to terrorism events happening in our country. She was absolutely in awe and thrilled when the next generation of three male Gossard great grandsons arrived within two years, six months and twenty three days of each other. She always looked forward and longed for visits from Max, Joe, and Tucker. The best, most joy filled, and memorable times of late, was when her living room was filled with the three of them and getting to hold and shower them with love and affection. Like her two grandsons Grant and Garrett she could never see Max, Joe, and Tucker as often as she would have liked to.

The love and pride that she had for her two grandsons and three great grandsons was immeasurable. Times during the Pandemic were extra-special when her daughter was teaching remotely from home on Zoom and Judie would make special appearances to compliment the students with lots of positive reinforcement. So, they got to meet Mrs. Gossard too. The special and loving times for both of them continued the past year when her daughter Julie was diagnosed with Stage Three Colon Cancer. They both talked about how they were blessed beyond measure to spend 24 hours a day with each other and the last time that happened other than school and summer vacations was before her daughter Julie began Kindergarten. She and her daughter Julie were very fortunate to have each other and lived together for decades, especially after losing her husband and Julie's father suddenly on December 23, 2006. They made a great team, did everything together and have been best buddies too. Julie and her Mom always told each other numerous times a day how much they loved one another and her Mom would always say, "I love you more and I don't know what I would do without you." Her daughter would always reply that, "she loved her more" and her Mom would say, "that is not possible" but Julie finally got to tell her for the very last time before she passed that indeed she loved her more. Her Mom would always tell her that no daughter should ever have to do all of the things that she did, caring for and loving her, and Julie would always reply that she could never ever live long enough to ever repay her with all of the nurturing, endless love, and care that she had given to her throughout her entire lifetime. To say that she was the very best Mom ever is truly, truly an understatement. Our Mom enjoyed a lifetime of stellar health and glowing Doctors reports.

On her very last Drs. appointment at Sheridan Family Physicians on March 2, 2023 one of the nurses kindly commented to Julie, that even when your Mom isn't feeling her very best she is always, always so sweet. While Julie was battling cancer all of her many dear friends would come to visit and spend time with she and her Mom. They would comment each and every visit how wonderful, sweet, kind, loving and awesome that Mom was. In addition to that, they always were saying how youthful, pretty and fit that she looked for her

age. That was always our beloved Mom.

She loved to cross stitch, needlepoint and macramé. She won numerous awards at the Boone County 4-H Fair Open Show and the Indiana State Fair. She enjoyed any indoor and outdoor type of games. She was the Queen of playing croquet and loved any type of board or card games as well. She was partial to playing marbles on a specially made game board made by her husband Gene. She was a master Scrabble player. She loved and completed the daily crossword in ink from the Indianapolis Star newspaper and weekly People magazine in super speedy fashion, completing her last ones in March. She enjoyed Word Searches and all types of Brain games and puzzles.

The Game Channel was always one of her favorites, giving all of the competing contestants on Jeopardy, Wheel of Fortune, Family Feud and a plethora of others, a real run for their money. Any movie mysteries were never a real challenge for her, as she had them all figured out, typically within the first half hour and was always spot on. Our Mom and Dad always provided from the time that we were born their daughter Julie, son Alan and grandsons Grant and Garrett with an absolutely unimaginable and truly extra-ordinary life filled with endless love, nurturing, support and modeling as the best role models and mentors that you could ever, ever dream of having.

Their monumental impact will continue to influence each and every one of us until our very last days. They may be gone for now but will never, ever be forgotten by any of us. They were, and are now again, truly a match made in heaven. Julie is survived by her only daughter, Julia (Julie) Kay Gossard; her only son, Max Alan (Alan) Gossard (Susan); her oldest grandson, Grant Alan Gossard (Michelle); her youngest grandson, Garrett Matthew Gossard (Brittany); her first born great grandson, Max (2 years and 11 months); her middle great grandson, Joe (7 months); her youngest great grandson, Tucker (11 days shy of 5 months); and her last surviving sibling and sister Joyce McConnell Small. She is also survived by several nieces and nephews, including her most cherished nephew Billy Joe Small and his wife Kathy Waitt Small who have been so loving, devoted, kind, and helpful since Julie has been unable to drive the past year. She was preceded in death by her husband, Max Eugene (Gene) Gossard Jr.; her father in law, Max Eugene Gossard Sr.; her mother in law, Mary Rachael Gossard; her father, Paul Eugene McConnell; her mother, Helen Reddin McConnell; her five siblings, sister, Barbara McConnell Dwigans, brother, Darrell McConnell, infant brother, Jackie McConnell, brother, Richard (Dick) McConnell, sister, Paula McConnell Tidwell, and several nieces and nephews.

Services will be held at 7:00 PM on Friday evening, March 24, 2023 at Kercheval Funeral Home, 306 E. 10th Street, Sheridan, Indiana, with visitation from 3:00 PM until the time of service. Reverend John Meunier will be officiating. Judie will be laid to rest at 11:00 AM on Saturday morning, March 25, 2023, at Crown View Cemetery in Sheridan, Indiana. Memorial contributions can be made, if so desired, to the Sheridan United Methodist Church, 207 East Second Street, Sheridan, Indiana 46069, where Judie was a 67 year member.

RUSTY From Page A1

the month, Social Security's rule says that he must live the entire month to be eligible for December benefits; thus, they took back (often referred to as "Clawed Back") the December benefits paid in January.

So, is all of this legal? Yes, I'm afraid it is. From what you've shared Social Security took back the money they are legally entitled to, so you have no further obligation to Social Security. The bank had no choice but

to return your husband's December Social Security payment - they were legally obligated to do so. Thus, your obligation to resolve your husband's overdrawn bank account resulting from the bank fulfilling its legal obligation to Social Security still remains.

As for any spousal or survivor benefits you might be entitled to - you say your husband's Social Security payment was less than yours, which means you weren't getting a

spousal benefit and cannot get a surviving spouse benefit as a widow (you can only get your benefit or his, whichever is higher). You will, however, be eligible for a one-time lump sum death benefit of \$255. I know it's not much, but you're entitled to it and should claim it. And, from what you've described - that your monthly Social Security amount is more than your husband's - your own benefit will not be negatively affected by any of this.

WOKE From Page A1

(ESG) is a new form of woke ideology that hurts seniors who have invested money in 401(k)s and other investment vehicles."

Weber continued, "The finalized regulation putting ESG over fiduciary duty as part of making investment decisions leaves senior Americans worse off over the long

run. Biden's veto rule puts retirees at risk, as investment decisions are no longer about ensuring returns. Biden effectively weaponized investment funds in order to reshape society at the expense of average Americans."

CEO Weber closed in saying, "The previous two years have shown

true ineptitude on behalf of the Biden Administration in dealing with the needs of seniors. It is not hyperbole to say the damage done to seniors' longevity, prosperity, and legacy by the Biden administration is the worst in the last 50 years.... And, there they go again."

FOOT From Page A1

non-cancerous bump that experts believe may arise from single or repetitive trauma. A ganglionic cyst can be caused by a leaking of jelly-like fluid from the "capsule" surrounding a joint or tendon and may be located on the top of the foot, near an ankle joint or even on the side of the foot. While the lump itself is often the only symptom experienced, you may feel tingling or burning if it's touching a nerve, or a dull ache if it's pressing against a tendon or joint. Often, ganglionic cysts cause irritation, making it difficult to wear shoes. Such cysts generally will not go away on their own and may return, even after being drained. Surgical removal by a foot and ankle surgeon can help prevent recurrence. However, if the cyst is not causing pain and doesn't interfere with walking, your surgeon may simply monitor it over time.

Plantar Fibromas
Plantar fibromas are benign, fibrous, hard nodules found within the ligament of the foot and

are especially common in the arch area on the bottom of the foot. These bumps tend to be less than an inch in diameter but can get larger over time. They can cause pain when shoes push against them or when you're walking or standing barefoot. Steroid injections, physical therapy or orthotic devices may help relieve associated discomfort but will not make the fibroma disappear. While surgical removal is an option if pain persists following nonsurgical approaches, it's important to know that recurrence can occur post-surgery, as can complications, such as a flattening of the arch or the development of hammertoes.

Haglund's Deformity
Haglund's deformity, sometimes called a "pump bump," is a bony enlargement on the back of the heel. When it rubs against shoes -- from high-heeled pumps to running shoes -- the soft tissue near the Achilles tendon can become irritated. This often leads to painful bursitis, an inflammation of the fluid-filled sac between the

tendon and bone. While certain foot structures are more prone to Haglund's deformity, you can treat the condition and help prevent recurrence with appropriate footwear, arch supports, orthotic devices and stretching exercises. Physical therapy, icing and NSAIDs can also reduce inflammation.

Sometimes, Dr. Coyer notes, a bump is suspected of being cancerous. In this case, your foot and ankle surgeon will perform a biopsy and if it is indeed cancer, will perform surgery to remove the mass, working in tandem with an oncologist for cancer treatment.

For more information on foot bumps or to find a foot and ankle surgeon near you, visit FootHealthFacts.org, the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeon's patient education website.

"Remember, the sooner we're able to properly evaluate your bump, the sooner you can have peace of mind and move forward with treatment," says Dr. Coyer.

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BETSY

From Page A1

when she was in fourth grade. It was where she learned to knit, how to plant gardening seeds and how to make vegetable soup, all in a day.

1. We've also enjoyed City of Noblesville camps. The Noblesville Parks Department offers full-day camps for ages 6-11, featuring games, crafts and other activities, plus field trips. Participants can choose 7:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday camps, including field trips, at Forest Park Lodge basement, March 27-April 6. Field trip dates: March 27, Bowl 32; March 29, Kiln Creations (full with an active wait list); March 31, Emagine Noblesville; April 3, Anderson Roll Arena (full with active wait list); April 5, Wright's Gymnastics (full with active wait list). Non-field trip days are \$26 residents, \$31 non-residents. Field trip days, \$40 residents, \$45 non-residents. Aftercare, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. is \$5 per day. Campers should wear gym shoes and pack their lunch, two snacks and a water bottle. Register at 317-776-6350 or visit www.noblesvilleparks.org. Registration is also open for parks summer camps for ages 3-15.

2. The Boys & Girls of Noblesville, of which we are big supporters, will have two different spring break opportunities. Camp Crosser for ages 6-13 will feature archery, arts and crafts, group games, STEM activities, fort building, nature education and campfire cooking, during a full-day weeklong camp, the week of March 27-31 and April 3-7, for \$115 per week. Camp Crosser is a high-energy, outdoor program designed to provide kids with adventurous and educational experiences. Campers meet at the Club in Noblesville each morning and are bused to the 20-acre Camp Crosser a few miles north

of Noblesville along the banks of the White River. Campers should bring a sack lunch, water bottle, warm clothes, sunscreen and a change of clothes and shoes. Register at 317-773-4372 or visit <https://bgcni.org/>.

3. Noblesville Township Trustee Office is covering the cost of Spring Break Pottery Camps at Noblesville Schools, with instructors Noblesville art teacher Darlene Patterson and Noblesville High School ceramics instructor John Smith. Patterson will teach hand-building clay class (full with a waiting list) for grades 3-8 at Promise Road Elementary, and Smith will teach a wheel-throwing pottery class for grades 9-12 at NHS. Visit nickelplatearts.org. Email shauna@noblesvilletownshiptrustee.com.

4. My Art in downtown Noblesville, offers half days of art camps, 9 a.m. to noon, open to ages 5 and older. Spring on the Farm at camp is April 4, Mushroom & More art camp is April 5, Fluttering Around art camp is April 6, at the Noblesville location on 10th Street. Cost is \$45 per camp and includes all art supplies. Visit www.myartindy.com

5. Conner Prairie in Fishers reopens for the 2023 outdoor season on March 28 with spring cleaning in Prairietown and Civil War Journey, plus the 1836 Balloon will be open, weather dependent. Visit connerprairie.org.

6. Hamilton County Parks offers free spring break programs, weekdays April 3-6: Silly Safari, April 3; Surprise Guest, April 4; Hoosier Owls, April 5; Indiana Wild: Animals in your Backyard, April 6, all at 11 a.m. at Cool Creek Nature Center in Westfield. Visit MyHamiltonCountyParks.com.

7. Ages 6-14 can enjoy painting, drawing and

sculpting at a Spring Break Art Camp April 3-7, 12:30-4:30 p.m., at Fishers Parks, in partnership with Indianapolis Art Center, for \$209 per person, led by a professional teaching artist. Register at <https://playfishers.com/>

8. Boys and girls pre-k to third grade and Grades 4-8 can enjoy spring break volleyball camps April 4-6 at the Monan Volleyball Center (new home of The Academy) at Grand Park in Westfield with all skill levels invited.

9. Take a class at Caravan Classes or the Nickel Plate Arts campus in Noblesville.

10. Bowl, play golf, do laser tag, ax throwing and arcades at Bowl 32 in Noblesville, or enjoy bowling and arcades at Pinheads in Fishers. Both have great restaurants. Or find some good books, CDs or DVDs and discover other activities at your local library.

-Save the date: Indiana Pacers and Fever Jr. Hoops Summer Basketball Camps will be offered 9 a.m. -2:30 p.m. June 26-30 at the Boys & Girls Club of Noblesville and include camp T-shirt, Pacers swag and a free ticket to a 2023-24 Pacers home game, for \$225, with 10 percent early bird discount if registered by March 31, at camps.tnbapacers.com

Heads up for 2024: Deadline has already passed for Purdue Extension's three spring break camps for grades 3-6, Miniature Gardens Day Camp and Style Your Bedroom Day Camp, both on April 4-5, and Surviving a Zombie Apocalypse on April 6, at the Hamilton County 4-H Fairgrounds in Noblesville. Be sure to check on Purdue Extensions camps in February or early March in 2024.

-Betsy Reason writes about people, places and things in Hamilton County. Contact Betsy Reason at betsy@thetimes24-7.com.

TAXES

From Page A1

ing market is still strong," says County Assessor Kevin Poore. "We're seeing an average 15-percent increase over last year in terms of overall residential values. Unfortunately, for some that could mean an increase in property taxes."

Property taxes are a primary source of funding for local government units, and include funding for counties, cities and towns, townships, libraries, schools, and special districts like solid waste. The Department of Local Government Finance, the state entity charged with approving the tax rates and levies, made an adjustment to its cost tables this year to better reflect the housing market and inflation.

"While demand and values are slowing in many parts of the country, they remain strong here in Hamilton County," says Oscar Gutierrez, President of Bondry Consulting. "This is still a byproduct of the reduced home production felt after the housing crisis, historic low interest rates enjoyed until 2022, and the county having some of the highest incomes in the state."

Indiana properties are

valued using mass appraisal techniques. These techniques consider age, grade, and condition of a property, but they also use market value "trending" data to determine if the value of nearby properties should change to match the market value found in the recent sales of similar properties.

Fortunately, Hamilton County's tax rate has remained at \$0.2744 per one hundred dollars of net assessed value since the county reduced it two years ago. In fact, Hamilton County has the sixth lowest tax rate of all Indiana counties and the lowest tax rate of the largest 10 counties in terms of assessed value or population.

"That's due in part to a strong tax base as well as conservative fiscal management," says Hamilton County Commissioner Mark Heirbrandt. "The county has been very deliberate about structuring its debt and managing the tax rate to avoid increases."

If you need specific assessment values for your property or wish to question existing assessed values for your property,

please call the Hamilton County Assessor's Office or find your satellite location here. <https://www.hamiltoncounty.in.gov/952/Office-Locations>

In the meantime, there are three ways all property owners can seek tax relief:

- Exemptions - a full or partial waiver of property tax liability for a given property. Exemptions are generally only available in limited circumstances, such as for not-for-profit organizations, religious groups, and economic development purposes.

- Deductions - a subtraction of assessed value for a property prior to the calculation of tax liability. Deductions are the most common types of property tax relief available to taxpayers and include relief for primary residences (homesteads), mortgaged property, veterans and disabled citizens, to name a few.

- Credits - a type of property tax relief applied directly to the tax liability after it is initially calculated. Common property tax credits include the circuit breaker credit and the local property tax replacement credit.

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WEEKEND

In The Home

A7

Weekend, March 25-26, 2023

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

Understanding Plant Tags & Seed Packets To Increase Your Gardening Success



MELINDA MYERS
Columnist



Photo courtesy of MelindaMyers.com

Check the back of seed packets for pertinent information so you provide the proper growing conditions for the plantings to flourish.

Gardening is a wonderful way to grow your own food and create a beautiful landscape. Proper plant selection can help you make wise purchases when visiting the garden center or ordering plants online.

Much of the information you need to know can be found on plant tags and seed packets. Understanding this information can help you select plants suited to the growing conditions in your yard.

Most gardeners first learn about plants by the names that friends, relatives, or fellow gardeners use to refer to them. Each plant also has a unique scientific, also called botanical, name. Since plants can have multiple or regional common names, it is important to check the botanical name when shopping. Checking the tag for the botanical name ensures you buy the right plant.

You will also see the word "zone" followed by numbers in the information on trees, shrubs, perennial flowers, and vegetables. These numbers reflect the plant's ability to survive the average minimum winter temperatures in the hardiness zones listed. You can find your hardiness zone on the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Plant Hardiness Zone Map. It is often included in plant cata-

logs and other gardening resources to help you find plants suited to your climate. Despite record summer temperatures, it is still important to select plants that can survive the average minimum winter temperatures in your area. Selecting plants that tolerate both the highs and lows where you live will increase their chance of returning each year.

Make sure the plants you select have sufficient frost-free growing days to mature and flower or produce fruit. This is listed as the number of days from planting until harvest. Count the number of days in your growing season from the time you can plant to harvest to see if it's a good choice.

Matching plants to the amount of sunlight they need to thrive is also important for growing healthy plants. In general, full-sun plants prefer six, preferably eight or more, hours of direct sunlight. Areas receiving only intense afternoon sun are often suitable for plants listed as full or part sun tolerant. Part-sun plants usually need four to six hours of direct sunlight. Part-

shade plants generally need two to four hours of direct sunlight preferably from east-facing or other locations where the sun is less intense. Shade plants usually perform well with two hours of direct sunlight or bright, indirect light throughout the day.

Always check the mature size and spread of the plant you select. Picking the right size plant for the available space will save you time and frustration having to prune the mature plant down in size.

No matter what plants you select, make sure to call 811 at least three business days before you begin planting. Wisconsin residents can also file online at www.DiggersHotline.com and gardeners in any other state can visit <https://call811.com/811-In-Your-State>. They will contact all the appropriate companies who will mark the location of their underground utilities in your designated work area. This free service can help reduce the risk of injury and the inconvenience of accidentally knocking out power, cable, or other utilities.

To remind everyone to

call before digging, April has been designated Safe Digging Month. Please make contacting 811 part of your gardening plans and remind family and friends to do the same.

For more gardening information, register for Myers' free webinar "Understanding Gardening Basics to Boost Your Gardening Success" on March 29 at 6:30 p.m. The webinar is free, but registration is required. Just visit Myers' website www.MelindaMyers.com. If you can't attend the live webinar, a recording will be available to watch 24 hours after the live presentation.

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

The Return Of The Hosta

Hostas are very strong plants and feel at home in many places. With their beautiful leaves and ease of care, these perennials are very popular right now. There is plenty of choice in colors and patterns: from dark green to blue and from spotted to variegated. Versatile hostas will bring you months of joy, year after year!

Color variations Hostas originate from northeast Asia. In 1784, the first seeds were brought from the Chinese port of Macau to the Jardin des Plantes in Paris. Initially a true collector's plant, today this perennial is loved by a varied audience. This is hardly surprising, given the beautiful leaves in all sorts of sizes, shapes and color variations from blue-gray to variegated white-green. What's more, in summer, graceful stalks bearing white, blue or lilac flowers also make an appearance.

Where to plant hostas Hostas like moist soil and organic fertilizer. Most hosta species thrive in a semi-shaded spot. The guideline here is that blue-leaved hostas do well in the shade and that

yellow-leaved ones can handle a little more sun. The more variegated the leaves, the less sun they will tolerate. Hostas with thicker leaves, on the other hand, can tolerate more sun. They look great in ornamental pots, in a mixed border, on water banks and as solitary plants. The lowest variety will grow to about 4 inches, while the tallest can grow higher than 3 foot.

Keeping snails away Many hostas suffer from slug infestations. Fortunately, there are plenty of environmentally friendly methods to protect your hostas against snails. A regular snail-catching session at dusk will go a long way. Setting up a wide circle with broken shells or coffee grounds around your plant (or pot) can also work as a slug barrier. Spraying hostas with garlic powder dissolved in water should also keep snails at bay.

Fun idea Create a hosta corner featuring plants with different leaf colors. Position taller varieties behind low-growing ones.

Cheerful Floral Styling For Easter

With bulb flowers, you can create a cheerful Easter atmosphere in the house in no time at all. What's more: floral styling is good for your mood and will make you happy. In other words: lots of positive vibes for Easter!

Instant Easter The fun starts when you go shopping. Choose spring flowers in bright, scintillating colors, like daffodils, hyacinths, and tulips. These bulb flowers symbolize love, springtime and new life: perfect for Easter! Combine bulb flowers with some budding branches. And don't forget to add some eggs!

Flowers, flowers everywhere A cheerful bouquet will lend your breakfast or brunch table a fun Easter atmosphere. And why stop there: you can apply floral styling even at the entrance to your home: think cheerful yellow daffodils in the hall - in a bouquet or simply some pre-forced bulbs. You can also dress up your garden table with pre-forced bulbs. Outside, the flowers will last even longer.

Flower-picking fun

Fancy even more flowers? Why not create some small picking bunches? Display them in glass vases, jam jars or (flowered) tea cups. Arrange a few tulips, daffodils, or hyacinths in each vase - keep it nice and casual for a fun, freshly-picked effect. A cheerful mix always works well, too. Put the picking bouquets in the kitchen, by your bed, and in your (home) office. You can also arrange several vases together; if you use a metal tray or a wooden shelf, you can create a sense of unity.

At www.ilsays.com, you will find many more ideas and tips for decorating your home with flowers.

Styling tip: bring the spring sunshine into your home with yellow flowers: think yellow tulips and daffodils. If you opt for yellow hyacinths, a delicious spring scent offers a nice bonus.

Share happiness! Are you planning to visit family or friends at Easter? Why not bring a cheerful Easter bouquet? Pre-forced bulbs are also great fun and easy to transport.



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Rail Passengers Applauds Continued Amtrak Food & Beverage Team Efforts To Restore Coach Dining

Dining Car service restoration will continue along the five major Western Long-Distance routes and also be expanded to include the Silver Star and potentially more routes to the East, Rail Passengers confirmed with Amtrak management today.

Representing the 40 million Americans who rely on passenger trains and rail transit, the Rail Passengers Association has been working closely with Amtrak management and others as part of the congressionally mandated Food & Beverage Working Group aimed at improving on-board food and beverage experiences in all classes of service and on all types of trains.

RPA Communications Manager Madison Butler helped draft the legislation that brought the Working Group into existence. Butler has worked alongside onboard Amtrak staff, Amtrak management, and other transit advocates to create service improvement proposals to be submitted

to Congress at the end of May.

Rail Passengers Association has been working to restore dining access to coach passengers since 2019. With the elimination of amendments previously added to Amtrak's authorizing legislation by former Rep. John Mica, and the new funding allocated by the Infrastructure and Jobs Act / Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, better onboard service is becoming a reality for many passengers.

Even though it's really only been a few days, the numbers coming out of the effort to restore coach passengers to the dining car have been impressive. Onboard the Empire Builder, the Southwest Chief, the Coast Starlight, the Sunset Limited and the California Zephyr, within the first ten days more than 1,300 coach passengers were served. It's a strong signal that passengers want the elevated dining experience emblematic of historic Amtrak service.

As Amtrak continues to ramp up onboard staffing, the Food & Beverage Working Group has slated additional improvements and is reinforcing the need to move forward. Growing this effort in a sustainable way has been a crucial factor in its initial success.

Upon receiving confirmation of expanded dining pilot programs, Butler stated "We're optimistic that this restoration pilot could lead to an improved passenger experience with continued accountability measures and monitoring of staff bandwidth. The challenges faced by Amtrak Food & Beverage teams are unique and can not be easily compared with airlines, cruises, or stationary service models. As we prepare our recommendations to Congress, we will factor in what the passenger response to this program has been like and how Amtrak can continue to actualize a realistic service model that caters to passengers regardless of

ticket class. Rail Passengers is looking forward to continuing our relationship with these teams and seeing how they progress towards exemplifying the desires of customers and taxpayers who rely on our national interstate passenger rail network."

About Rail Passengers Association

The Rail Passengers Association is the oldest and largest national organization serving as a voice for the more than 40 million rail passengers in the U.S. Our mission is to improve and expand conventional intercity and regional passenger train services, support higher speed rail initiatives, increase connectivity among all forms of transportation and ensure safety for our country's trains and passengers. All of this makes communities safer, more accessible, and more productive, improving the lives of everyone who lives, works, and plays in towns all across America.

Fairytales On Ice Featuring Beauty And The Beast Coming To The Historic Paramount Theatre

Fairytales On Ice takes classic fairytales and spins them with upbeat modern music, theatrical storylines, special effects, and the live sport of figure skating. Be mesmerized by world-class pro champion ice skaters, live singing, and cirque from all ends of the globe as they spin through show-stopping sets, bedazzling costumes, and enchanting effects that are sure to delight and excite. Featuring stories and characters from Beauty & The Beast, explore the fairytale land alongside Cinderella, Alice in

Wonderland, Little Red Riding Hood, and more!

Fairytales On Ice will be at the Anderson Paramount Theatre located at 1124 Meridian St. Anderson, IN 46016. The show is on Wednesday, March 29, 2023 at 7 p.m. Theatre doors open at approximately 6 p.m.

Most seats are \$15, \$25, with limited premium seating available for \$35. Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased via <https://www.andersonparamount.org/shows/Fairytales-on-Ice> or by calling the box office at 765.642.1234.

Cory Asbury Brings Tour To The Historic Paramount Theatre

Cory Asbury's 2018 album "Reckless Love" landed him at the top of the Billboard Christian Albums chart in 2018, leading to two Dove Awards and a Grammy nomination. The title track spent 18 weeks at No.1, earning Billboard, ASCAP, and BMI Christian Song of the Year honors, and has been certified triple platinum with over 3 million equivalent units. His follow-up album, "To Love A Fool," featured the single "The Father's House," which was certified a gold hit.

Cory brings his latest 17-city tour to the Paramount Theatre in Anderson, Ind. Friday, April 14, 2023.

The Anderson Paramount Theatre is located at 1124 Meridian St. Anderson, IN 46016. Theatre doors open at approximately 6:30 p.m.

Most seats are \$29, \$39, with limited premium seating available for \$79. Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased via <https://www.andersonparamount.org/shows/Cory-Asbury> or by calling the box office at 765.642.1234.

River Cruises Offer Exploration, Comfort

(Family Features) Travel for pure enjoyment is on the rise, so this may be your year to plan the ultimate dream vacation.

According to Sports and Leisure Research, 80% of people surveyed believe a vacation does wonders for mental health and travel is a top spending priority in the coming year. The survey indicated travelers want to immerse themselves in unique experiences, including new cultures, foods and people.

For those who delight in exploring entire regions, one downfall can be the burden of packing and unpacking at each new destination. Taking your accommodations with you is a practical alternative for curious travelers.

River voyages, for example, allow travelers to unpack once and visit

multiple destinations in one seamless journey, from major European cities to quaint towns and villages. These destination-focused journeys offer experienced travelers the opportunity to explore science, history and cuisine with culturally enriching itineraries on the world's great waterways.

If an intimate, relaxed journey is your ideal getaway, you may want to consider the revolutionary Viking Longships. These state-of-the-art river ships are engineered with guests' comfort and exploration in mind.

Sailing Europe's storied rivers, the award-winning fleet of identical longships showcase innovative engineering, streamlined Scandinavian design and understated elegance. River ships are also

small enough - hosting 190 guests - to dock in the heart of popular destinations, making it easy to explore.

The voyages range from 8-23 days with itineraries featuring Europe's Rhine, Main, Danube, Seine, Rhône, Douro, Moselle, Elbe, Dordogne, Garonne and Gironde Rivers.

Known as travel experiences for "The Thinking Person," each Viking journey includes a shore excursion in every port and an onboard and onshore enrichment program that provides deep immersion in the destination through performances of music and art, cooking demonstrations, informative port talks and carefully selected guest lecturers. Enjoy shore excursions that provide historical tours and visits to unique haunts where you can

experience some of the local culture, regional foods and everyday life.

On a Viking Longship, you can expect to relax in spacious public areas, including wide-open sun decks with ever-changing views. The ships feature spacious staterooms in a variety of categories, including true two-room suites with full-size verandas.

Additional ship highlights include al fresco dining on an indoor-outdoor terrace and onboard amenities including a restaurant, bar, lounge and library. Inclusive fares that cover your port taxes and fees also mean you can enjoy beer, wine and soft drinks with onboard lunch and dinner; specialty coffees, teas; bottled water; ground transfers; and more.

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