

**➔ TODAY'S VERSE**  
Isaiah 54:17 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.



**➔ FACES OF HAMILTON COUNTY**  
People who call our community their own.

What makes Molly Martin smile? "Anything," said the 26-year-old Noblesville resident. "I like to smile. I love nature. I like making other people smile. I love keeping Noblesville beautiful, help keeping it clean. I'm a person who just loves to smile." Wearing a T-shirt that reads "Hippie state of mind," she was found with her parents, Jack and Chris Martin, volunteering at the Keep Noblesville Beautiful nonprofit booth at the 2021 Noblesville Farmers Market, which just opened for the 2023 season at Federal Hill Commons. Hours are 8 a.m. to noon Saturdays. "Keep Noblesville Beautiful is a nonprofit organization that will help beautify our city, and we also put up a sculpture at the Midland Trace Trailhead." She was born and raised in Noblesville and graduated from Guerin Catholic High School in 2014. "After high school, I went and immediately got a job. I took a gap year from school, still haven't really gone to college. I'm not entirely sure what I want to do. I actually work for them" at Martin & Martin Insurance in downtown Noblesville. Molly and her parents belong to Keep Noblesville Beautiful. "I love Keep Noblesville Beautiful. I just love that we're able to bring awareness to our own city and to show off its beauty." She and her parents were also found in spring 2022 beautifying Logan Street with new plantings, readying for the Indiana Peony Festival, which this year will be 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday in Seminary Park in downtown Noblesville. Also, a VIP ticketed event, Peonies in the Park, will be 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Friday in Seminary Park, with peony-inspired dishes and drinks from 10 local eateries, for \$100 for VIP tickets. There is also a Brunch & Blooms brunch crawl on Saturday. For more on the Peony Festival, visit <https://www.indianapeony-festival.com/>

**And Another Thing...**

**1. How to grow number of women in STEM**

Shrinking the gap for women in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and math) is a difficult process. Brandon Sorge says that very few women go into STEM majors if they aren't interested before they reach eighth grade. This is why getting young girls interested in STEM through early childhood, elementary and middle school is vital. He says that encouraging children in their learning early on will give them a strong foundation for success later in life. Sorge says that diversity in STEM fields leads to differences in thought that help generate new ideas and innovation.

**2. The Waterpark in Carmel to Open Memorial Day Weekend**

The Waterpark in Carmel, located at 1195 Central Park Dr. W, will open on Saturday, May 27 at 11 a.m. Splash into summer with fun for all ages and abilities on the FlowRider®, AquaClimb®, kiddie pool, lazy river, and adventure slides. The Waterpark will open daily from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. from May 27 to August 6. Guests may purchase day passes in person at The Waterpark. Day passes are \$16 for adults (ages 16-64) and \$13 for youth and seniors (ages 3-15; ages 65+). Season passes are available in person or online at [carmelclayparks.com](http://carmelclayparks.com).

# The TIMES

Hamilton County's Own Daily Newspaper



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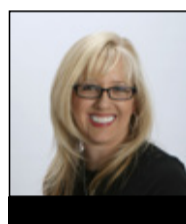
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Photo courtesy of Master Gardeners

Many of the plants at the annual Hamilton County Master Gardener Plant Sale, this Saturday, will be labeled "shade," "sun" or "part sun," and most plants have a descriptive sign with a picture of the plant in bloom and good information as to proper planting.

## Find Thousands of Plants, Gardening Advice, More, At Master Gardener Sale



**BETSY REASON**  
From The Editor's Desk...

Gardeners, it's time to shine up your little red wagons, make your plant lists and head for this weekend's plant sale. If you haven't attended Hamilton County Master Gardeners' plant sale, you need to go, particularly if you like gardening.

The annual spring Plant Sale is 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday at the Hamilton County 4-H Fairgrounds in Noblesville. The sale takes place in the 10,000-square-

**Want TO GO?**

**What:** Hamilton County Master Gardener Plant Sale.

**When:** 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday.

**Where:** Hamilton County 4-H Fairgrounds, 2003 E. Pleasant St., Noblesville.

**Cost:** Free admission. Credit cards, cash and checks accepted.

**Info:** [www.hcmga.org](http://www.hcmga.org), (317) 776-0854.

➔ See BETSY Page A6



Photo courtesy of HHEF

The Math Manipulative, recently funded by the Foundation, enables Kindergarten students to use colorful cubes for counting, building, making patterns, solving addition and subtraction problems, and much more.

## HHEF 34th Annual Golf Scramble Set For June 8 At Bear Slide

The Hamilton Heights Educational Foundation's 34th Annual Golf Outing is set for Thursday, June 8 at Bear Slide Golf Course. The community is invited to join friends, neighbors, and colleagues for a day of fun and networking on the green to help support the Foundation's work of enhancing

student achievement at Hamilton Heights.

The event, the organization's primary fundraiser, supports student achievement in innovative and impactful ways. To date, the organization has funneled back thousands of dollars

➔ See HHEF Page A6

## Carmel Marathon Weekend To Return For 14th Annual Event Under New Management

Popular central Indiana event poised for growth; CRRG Events to expand outside Indiana.

CRRG Events announced today that Full Circle Events has acquired the Carmel Marathon Weekend. Full Circle Events, based in central Indiana, will produce and manage the popular springtime race held annually in Carmel, Indiana. CRRG Events will work with Full Circle Events through the 2024 race to ensure a seamless transition for participants, event partners and community members.

On April 8, 2023, the 13th annual Carmel Marathon attracted a sold-out field for the third consecutive year with participants from 40 states and six countries. More than 20 percent of the full marathons finished with a Boston Marathon qualifying time, moving the Carmel Marathon Presented by Franciscan Health to fourth on MarathonGuide.com's list of top Boston qualifier races in 2023. The event was also recognized nationally by the Road Runners Club of America (RRCA), the largest running association in the country, with two Championship designations in 2023. With its increased recognition, the Carmel Marathon Weekend is well positioned for further growth under Full Circle Events.

CRRG Events will continue its focus on producing premier running events including their Indiana Women's Half Marathon & 5K at its new home in Carmel, the 8-Hour Dream Endurance Race on Butler University's campus, and the Donut 5K, one of the largest holiday run/walks in central Indiana. With Full Circle Events' acquisition of the Carmel Marathon Weekend, CRRG Events has plans for out-of-state expansion.

"There's no one I'd trust more with the future of the Carmel Marathon Weekend than Jay and Kati," said Todd Oliver, president of CRRG Events. "It's really rewarding to hand over this event to a group I know will take it to the next level. Additionally, I'm excited to have capacity again to expand CRRG Events into new markets while building back the Indiana Women's Half Marathon into one of the top-10 largest women's only half marathons in the U.S. In 2019 we were up to number eight, but then COVID hit. I am confident we can reclaim its top-10 national status here in Carmel."

Full Circle Events, led by Jay and Kati Druba, has longtime ties to CRRG Events. Jay served

➔ See CRRG Page A4

## The Daily Almanac

**Sunrise/Sunset**  
RISE: 6:28 a.m.  
SET: 9:00 p.m.

**High/Low Temperatures**  
High: 76 °F  
Low: 44 °F

**Today is...**

- Ascension
- Global Accessibility Awareness Day
- I Love Reese's Day

**What Happened On This Day**

- 1980 Mount St. Helens erupts. The eruption killed 57 people.
- 1927 45 people die in the United States' worst school massacre.
- 1804 Napoleon Bonaparte is appointed Emperor of the French.

**Births On This Day**

- 1912 Perry Como American singer, actor
- 1920 Pope John Paul II

**Deaths On This Day**

- 1799 Pierre Beaumarchais French playwright
- 2004 Elvin Jones American drummer

## Wrapping Up Reader's Choice

Readers' Choice is wrapped up for another year, and once again, The Times' annual promotion to recognize your favorites in a multitude of categories was a huge success.

Back when our company was founded, the staff at The Times brought Hamilton County this fun and good-natured promotion that features local businesses, people, products and more and gives you, our readers, the opportunity to vote for your favorites. We often joke that this is like Chicago politics and encourage you to vote early and vote often.

You see, this has never been about the rigidity of the process. Instead, it is designed to be an absolutely fun and very positive way for our readers to cast a good light on their favorites. And oh, how you have responded!

We annually see ballots that number in the hundreds of thousands – so many in fact that we had to find a way to automatic the counting process.

**Want MORE?**

The results for winners, runner ups and honorable mentions will be inside on A6!

➔ See WRAP Page A6

**➔ INSIDE TODAY**

- Service Directory.....A3
- EarthTalk.....A3
- Tim Timmons.....A5
- Indiana Facts & Fun.....A7
- Indiana News.....A8

**➔ TODAY'S HEALTH TIP**

If you want youthful skin, limit your exposure to the sun. 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 [thetimes24-7.com](http://thetimes24-7.com)



**➔ TODAY'S QUOTE**

"The years between 50 and 70 are the hardest. You are always being asked to do things, and yet you are not decrepit enough to turn them down."  
-T.S. Elliot

**➔ TODAY'S JOKE**

The boss tried to race once. He came in so late the man waving the checkered flag had on pajamas

**➔ HONEST HOOSIER**

John Beard Allen was born in Crawfordsville on this date in 1945. He served in Congress and was appointed governor in Washington.



**➔ OBITUARIES**

None



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

**13 WTHR 7 DAY FORECAST**

52/72 PARTLY PLEASANT WED	44/76 HEAT BUT PLEASANT THU	53/80 MAYBE HOT FRI	50/70 SLIPPERY BUT NOT AS WARM SAT	50/75 MAINLY SUNNY SUN	53/76 MAINLY SUNNY MON	55/80 MAINLY SUNNY TUE
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Photo courtesy of Hamilton Heights Schools

Erika Collins was selected as the Husky Hero for the month of April. Pictured (front row) BAC students. Back row (l-r): Amber and Craig Bowen (FC Tucker), Erika Collins (BAC), and Melissa Martin (HHEF).

## Erika Collins Named Husky Hero

Erika Collins, the Before and After Care (BAC) Program Manager and Camp Coordinator at the Little Huskies Learning Center, was named as a Husky Hero for April. Collins, who has been with Hamilton Heights since 2019, is responsible for planning and organizing activities and care for children pre-school through sixth grade throughout the school year as well as spring, summer, and fall camps.

Collins was nominated by Emily Wolfington who wrote, "Erika is such an asset to the Hamilton Heights elementary and pre-k program. The fun she provides our children throughout the year (even when school is out at camp) is such a helpful option for our community. How she and her team can keep that many children

of varying ages safe, having fun, learning, and organized is a testament to her gift of caring for others. I especially love that she does things like food and household supply drives to help others, makes donation asks to parents without pressure that are effective, and is quick to respond to any request for our kids. I hope she can receive this award as she is worthy of the praise!

"This award means so much because we are being recognized for the difference we are making in the lives of the children we care for," said Erika Collins who said the recognition was an overwhelming surprise. "The kids are absolutely my motivation in my role here at BAC. Being able to provide them with a fun, safe place to spend their time away from

home is what drives us every day. This award will be a great reminder of how this community shows their appreciation and how many families we impact each year. Thank you!"

Sara Cox, Director of the Little Huskies Learning Center, said "Erika eats, sleeps, and breathes Heights!" She has been a true asset to this school since her kids were little. I met her volunteering in our kiddos' classrooms years ago and she is very active in coaching baseball and other youth sports. When Little Huskies needed someone to reorganize and build the Before and After Care and Vacation Camp program to what it is today, we couldn't have asked for a better fit!"

"Erika pours her love and care into the students,

but also her staff, ensuring that everyone enjoys their time together," added Cox. "When you consider she has kiddos ALL YEAR LONG, it is quite impressive!"

Congratulations to our April Husky Hero! Thank you, Erika for making an impactful difference in our schools and being a Husky Hero!

Do you know a Husky Hero? Nomination forms and information about this special recognition program for Hamilton Heights employees are available at: <https://bit.ly/hhschuskyhero>. The Husky Hero Recognition program is made possible through the Hamilton Heights Educational Foundation in partnership with Craig and Amber Bowen (FC Tucker). #hhedfoundation

## Westfield Washington Public Library Ready To Launch Summer Reading Program

Registration for All Together now open.

Registration for the Westfield Washington Public Library Summer Reading Program is now open. The eight-week program officially starts on Thursday, June 1. All ages are encouraged to participate.

"We're encouraging everyone to spend more time at the library this summer," says Sara Reitmeyer Perry, the Summer Reading Program Coordinator. "Come meet new friends, cool off while reading a book, or participate in one of our hands-on activities."

The Wonderlab Museum of Science, Health, and Technology in Bloomington will be at the library twice this summer to help spark kids' imaginations. Their first program on Friday, June 2, will teach kids how to make a Rube Goldberg Machine. The second, on Monday, July 10, will focus on the science of electricity with a demonstration on how to make mini lightning bolts. Space is limited and registration is required.

And back by popular demand, the library will host three Foam Parties on Thursday, June 29. Participants will play on a dance floor covered in foam with live music and games. The hypo-allergenic foam, similar to baby shampoo, is safe for kids and biodegradable. Again, space is limited, and registration is required. Event registration can be found on the library's event page.

Nearly 3,000 Westfield residents - kids, teens, and adults - participated in last year's Summer Reading Program. They read a total of 2,577,886 minutes. This year's goal will be three million minutes.

"We hope to see hundreds of residents at the library this summer," says Sheryl Sollars, director of the Westfield Washington Public Library. "Summer break is a fun time for our young readers to learn to use the library and develop a lifelong habit of reading. Plus, reading over the summer helps to keep their skills up."

Registration for the Summer Reading Program can be found at <https://wwpl.beanstack.org>. Anyone who reads at least 40 hours between June 1 and July 31 will be entered into a drawing for the grand prize which includes an Experience Westfield gift basket with over \$300 in restaurant gift cards and family-friendly experiences. Prizes will also be distributed to participants throughout the program when they hit specific reading milestones. Special thanks to the Westfield Library Foundation and Friends of the Westfield Library for their financial support.

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Thanks for reading The Times!

# Maine Lobster Industry Under Fire And Firing Back

## EARTHTALK

**Dear EarthTalk:** Is the Maine lobster industry sustainable and why are the fishermen suing Monterey Bay Aquarium?

When one thinks of Maine, they can't help but think of Maine Lobsters. Lobster has been an integral part of Maine's culture and economy for centuries. In fact, the beginnings of the Maine Lobster industry can be traced back to the colonial settlement of the region in the 17th century, and is one of the oldest continually operating industries in North America. Since then, it has grown to become one of the most iconic industries in the country, and currently contributes over \$1 billion to the Maine economy annually via the harvesting of over 100 million pounds of lobster every year. However, whether or not the Maine lobster industry is environmentally sustainable has come into question in recent years.

The Maine lobster industry touts a fairly sustainable record. It has a number of sustainable fishing practices in place including tail notching (the marking of an egg-bearing female lobster to signify that it cannot be harvested), minimum and maximum lobster size limits and trap

size limits.

Laws to protect Maine lobster populations began in 1872 with the outlawing of harvesting egg-bearing female lobsters. Since then, the industry has continued to project lobster populations as well as other local marine life. The industry claims to have reduced lobster gear entanglements by 90 percent, as well as removed 27,000 miles worth of fishing lines.

Despite these measures, the Maine lobster industry has come under attack lately by environmental groups who claim that the industry's fishing practices are harmful to the endangered North Atlantic right whale. One of these groups, Monterey Bay Aquarium Foundation, changed their sustainability rating of Maine lobster under claims of harm to the right whale, thus discouraging customers from buying Maine's most iconic delicacy.

As a result, the Maine lobster industry sued the foundation, arguing that there is no evidence that its fishing practices are to blame for any harm to the endangered whale species.

Environmental groups believe that lobster fishing practices are to blame for right whale deaths, while the lobster industry denies these claims, stating that there have been no right whale deaths traced back to the Maine lobster industry. Environmental

groups counter that it is difficult to trace deaths back to specific industries or commercial fishermen, so there is no way to prove their innocence. While fishing regulations have been introduced by these groups, Maine politicians have backed the lobster industry and helped to delay the passing of new fishing regulations in order to protect their state's \$1.5 billion industry. As it stands, the Maine lobster industry is embroiled in a contentious debate between the survival of an iconic and economically critical industry, and the survival of the local ecosystem and an endangered species.

**CONTACTS:** "Maine lobster industry wins reprieve but environmentalists say whales will die," [npr.org/2023/01/04/1146637583/maine-lobster-industry-wins-reprieve-but-environmentalists-say-whales-will-die](https://www.npr.org/2023/01/04/1146637583/maine-lobster-industry-wins-reprieve-but-environmentalists-say-whales-will-die); "The Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative lobsterfrommaine.com"; "As lawsuits pile up, lawmakers consider new bill to extend lobster legal defense fund," [mainepublic.org/politics/2023-03-23/as-lawsuits-pile-up-lawmakers-consider-new-bill-to-extend-lobster-legal-defense-fund](https://www.mainepublic.org/politics/2023-03-23/as-lawsuits-pile-up-lawmakers-consider-new-bill-to-extend-lobster-legal-defense-fund).

EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. To donate, visit <https://earthtalk.org>. Send questions to: [question@earthtalk.org](mailto:question@earthtalk.org).

## EARTHTALK

**Dear EarthTalk:** What's the background on the "No Mow May" movement?

Lawns cover some 40 million acres—or two percent—of land in the United States, making them the single largest irrigated crop we grow. We mow, rake, fertilize, weed, chemically treat and water them!—sucking up time, money and other resources. And in spite of all that they provide little if any benefit to wildlife. In fact, they likely do more harm than good. Indeed, grass-only lawns lack floral resources and nesting sites for bees and other pollinators, and serve up a cocktail of toxic pesticides.

Addressing these issues is where the No Mow May campaign comes in, encouraging people to refrain from mowing their lawns during the month of May. The idea is to let wildflowers and other plants grow, providing important habitat for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. The campaign was started in the United Kingdom by the environmental charity Plantlife in 2018. Since then, it has gained popularity in other countries, including the U.S. and Canada. The

goal of No Mow May is to raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity and to encourage people to take action to support pollinators.

Many people mow their lawns frequently, often using gas-powered mowers that emit carbon dioxide and other pollutants. This can be harmful to the environment, as well as to human health. Mowing also destroys wildflowers and other plants that provide food and shelter for pollinators. By refraining from mowing their lawns during the month of May, people can help to create a habitat for pollinators. This can include bees, butterflies, moths and other insects, as well as birds and small mammals that feed on them. These creatures play an important role in pollinating crops, which is essential for the production of many types of food.

No Mow May is not only good for the environment, but it can also be good for your lawn. Allowing wildflowers and other plants to grow can help to improve the health of your soil, reduce erosion, and provide a natural fertilizer. This can lead to a healthier lawn that requires less maintenance over time.

If you decide to participate in No Mow May, there are a few things you can do to ensure that your lawn stays healthy

and safe. First, make sure that your lawn is free of any hazards, such as large rocks or debris, that could pose a risk to people or pets. You should also check for any weeds or invasive species that could harm native plants.

During the month of May, you can still perform basic lawn maintenance, such as watering and weeding. You can also mow any areas that are high traffic or that pose a safety risk. However, it's best to avoid mowing any areas where wildflowers or other plants are growing.

No Mow May is just one example of how individuals can take action to support biodiversity and protect the environment. By making small changes in our daily lives, we can help to create a healthier, more sustainable world for ourselves and future generations.

**CONTACTS:** "More Lawns Than Irrigated Corn," [earthobservatory.nasa.gov/features/Lawn/lawn2.php](https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/features/Lawn/lawn2.php); "Plantlife's No Mow May," [plantlife.org.uk/campaigns/nomowmay/](https://www.plantlife.org.uk/campaigns/nomowmay/); "Bee City USA's No Mow May," [beecityusa.org/no-mow-may](https://www.beecityusa.org/no-mow-may).

EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. To donate, visit <https://earthtalk.org>. Send questions to: [question@earthtalk.org](mailto:question@earthtalk.org).

Thanks for reading The Times!

## The Times

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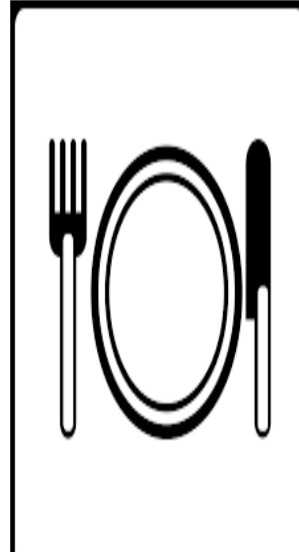
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## What Does G League Decision Mean?



**TIM TIMMONS**  
Two Cents

I grew up reading everything Don Jellison wrote. It's no secret that he was one of my newspaper heroes – and after almost half a century in this business I have still never come across anyone in the small daily newspaper world who writes better than he did.

So when the news broke last week about Noblesville getting the Pacers' G League team that had previously been in Fort Wayne, I wondered what Don would say.

There's no doubt he loved Noblesville. He loved sports. He wrote about both passionately. But he also wrote about life in general here and often crossed over from sports to news. One example that sticks out in my mind was when he caught wind of a plan involving government offices just off Indiana 37. Don asked straight questions, like he always did. Those questions had impacts.

So I wondered what he would think of the idea that the city was going to build a 3,400-seat arena for a mere \$30-something million bucks?

I think, on one hand, he would be thrilled that Noblesville is growing as a sports city. I also think, based on multiple conversations we had during the

period he worked for The Times, that he would have a lot of questions.

Will people pay to go to G League games when they can drive 45 minutes and see the varsity?

The agreement includes a projected \$5 million in arena naming rights. Will that be \$5 million in cash or a trade of some sort?

What will this mean for taxpayers?

If the city goes in debt for this, what does that mean for the future?

Is Noblesville becoming another Carmel in terms of building now and owing later?

The city used to bring in more money than it spent. Is that still true?

If the private sector built a 3,400-seat arena, would it cost \$30-something million, or would it be considerably less?

Was there any collaboration with Carmel or Fishers in this, or are they competitors?

Do partnerships make more sense for taxpayers?

It would seem clear that Noblesville officials – starting with Mayor Chris Jensen – think this is the right move going forward. And you have to believe they have studied other communities with sports as part of the overall growth plan. Westfield, for example, has financial issues with Grand Park. Those issues will likely outlast the mayor who helped make the whole concept of Grand Park a reality. That means future mayors will be dealing

with a financial problem not of their making – much like Carmel.

Will the same be true in Noblesville?

It depends on a couple of things. First, how long will Jensen be in the mayor's office? His predecessor John Ditslear was there for four terms, from 2004 to 2020. If Jensen stays that long, he'll be there long enough to start and finish this project. If he leaves before, then someone else will either reap the benefits of what proved to be a wise financial decision – or try to find an answer if it is not.

Take a look around Noblesville and you will see a lot of changes, perhaps more in the last three years than in the 30 before that.

And that's where everything stands now. Noblesville is in a different place now than it was just a few years ago. If voters think different means better, Jensen can stay in this job as long as he wants. If voters think differently, then what happens next?

Of all the questions percolating, that might be the biggest one.

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

## More Than 500 Community Leaders, Mental Health Professionals, State Officials Participate In Historic Mental Health Summit

The Indiana Roundtable on Mental Health, co-chaired by Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch and former Eli Lilly & Company CEO John Lechleiter, hosted the inaugural Indiana Roundtable on Mental Health Summit on Tuesday, May 16, 2023, at the Hyatt Regency Indianapolis. More than 500 Indiana community leaders, mental health professionals and state officials participated in the event.

Organized by the Sagamore Institute, the Summit is part of the Indiana Roundtable on Mental Health's mission to serve as a catalyst for change to improve the mental health status of all Indiana citizens. The Summit focused on three tracks: faith, youth and adolescence, and workforce bringing together thought leaders

within each intersection of mental health matters.

Participants included Gov. Eric Holcomb, Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, Indiana Chief Justice Loretta Rush, State Senator Mike Crider and State Representative Greg Steuerwald among others.

"Today's historic Indiana Roundtable on Mental Health Summit helped us remember where we've been, determine where we need to be and how we get there," said Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, Indiana's Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development. "I am so appreciative of the collaborative work being done at every level to assist Hoosiers struggling with mental illness and addiction issues. Today was an example of that effort."

Speakers included Monty Burks, Director of

Faith-Based Initiatives, Tennessee Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services, Donna Jackson Nakazawa, Award-Winning Science Journalist, Author, and Internationally Recognized Speaker, and Dr. Jerome Adams, Purdue University Executive Director of Health Equity & Initiatives and Former U.S. Surgeon General. In addition to featured speakers, breakout sessions were held throughout the day.

Summit sponsors included Pacers Sports and Entertainment Group, Indianapolis Colts, Riley Children's Health, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Hamilton County Community Foundation, Indianapolis Foundation, Salesforce, Syra Health Corp. and Eli Lilly and Company.

the Carmel Marathon," said Jay Druba. "This event has always been special to us, and the opportunity to play a bigger role is truly a full circle moment. We're looking forward to working with event partners and the city of Carmel to produce a great event for years to come."

Since 2011, Carmel Marathon Weekend has enjoyed the support of the City of Carmel, its businesses, Carmel Clay Schools and local community members. Full Circle Events will continue collaborating with Hamilton County Tourism, nearby hotels, charity partners, area running clubs and many others to maximize the race weekend experi-

ence for participants and Carmel residents alike.

"The Carmel Marathon under Todd Oliver's leadership has become a premier event and major economic driver for Carmel," said Jeff Worrell, president of the Carmel City Council. "I am looking forward to the future as Jay and Kati take over, bringing new ideas and sharing their expertise with our residents and visitors in April 2024."

The change in ownership does not affect the registration of participants with an active deferral from 2023 to 2024. Additional details on the 14th annual Carmel Marathon Weekend will be announced at CarmelMarathon.com.

## Black Hoosier Children Top The Nation For Likelihood Of DCS Investigation

By Whitney Downard  
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Nearly four out of every five Black Hoosier kids will be at the center of a maltreatment investigation during childhood — higher than the state's 54% rate for white and Hispanic families and above the 53% national average for Black families.

Indiana also has the third-highest rate for white children in the country — one of only three states with over a 50% cumulative risk.

The figures come from a national analysis that measures the likelihood that a hypothetical cohort of children will experience a child maltreatment investigation, a confirmed maltreatment case, foster care or the termination of their parents' parental rights.

In contrast to previous research, the paper not only studied differing rates of child welfare system contact by state but also broke it down by race. Authors found that Black children in nearly every state were more likely to become involved with a child protective agency investigation while Asian children had the lowest risk, according to data spanning from 2015 to 2019.

"Although there are commonalities across jurisdictions and agencies receive substantial federal funding, the child welfare system is largely decentralized and operates primarily at the state and local levels," the report said.

States typically take different approaches to child welfare and have different definitions of who is considered a mandated reporter and what constitutes child maltreatment — which can include abuse or neglect. Researchers used a "synthetic cohort" to measure the cumulative risk of child welfare contact at any point before the age of 18, rather than conditional risk.

Researchers with the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Rutgers University, Princeton University, Washington University in St. Louis, Yale School of Medicine, Columbia University and Duke University contributed to the paper, titled "State-level variation in the cumulative prevalence of child welfare system contact, 2015–2019."

Research was supported through a grant from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute for Child Health and Human Development through the National Institutes of Health and Casey Family Programs.

The Indiana Department of Child Services didn't respond to a request for comment.

Other findings from the study

Over one-third of children nationally will

experience a maltreatment investigation, but the likelihood varies considerably by race. Indiana's Black children faced the highest singular risk in the country at 79%, followed by 73% cumulative risk for American Indian/Alaskan Native children in Alaska.

In neighboring Kentucky, the majority of children in all but one ethnic group — Asian or Pacific Islander — were likely to undergo a maltreatment investigation.

As for cases of confirmed maltreatment, Indiana ranked second-highest for cumulative risk for confirmed maltreatment for all children, with 22%.

Kentucky ranked the highest for confirmed maltreatment cumulative risk, with 27% of all children likely to experience maltreatment. Pennsylvania children had the lowest risk, but unlike other states its policy for maltreatment didn't include neglect until relatively recently, deflating their numbers.

As a whole, roughly one in nine children will experience a confirmed maltreatment case, with an increased risk for Black children.

Indiana ranks in the top half of states where the cumulative risk of foster care placement for children is 10%, even though nationally an estimated 5% of children will ever be placed in foster care.

White children and American Indian children have a 9% risk, compared to 7% for Hispanic children and 2% for Asian children. Black children have an 18% risk — the second highest rate in the country, behind West Virginia's 32%.

In the last category analyzed, Indiana fell into the lowest segment, with just 2% cumulative risk of parental rights being terminated, a requisite step to start the adoption process. West Virginia again had the highest overall percentage at 8%.

But for Native American families and Black families in Indiana and several other states, the risk of parental rights being terminated was more than double that of white families.

Study takeaways prompt calls for reform

Authors emphasized that more analysis needed to be done to determine causes but said that their publication demonstrated state-level differences for children of color.

"Within the same state, children of different racial/ethnic groups had dramatically different risks of experiencing each event. Black and American Indian/Alaska Native children experienced exceptionally high cumulative risks of involvement with the child welfare system relative to white children," the report said.

Other weaknesses included children who may

have moved across state lines and been counted twice in different jurisdictions as well as only counting parental rights terminations associated with foster care.

But advocates pushing for change within the child welfare system pointed to the analysis as evidence for reform.

Richard Wexler, the executive director of the National Coalition for Child Protection Reform, called child protection agencies "state family police," saying that despite two decades of work, child abuse fatalities have only grown. At times, Wexler said, family poverty is "confused with neglect" and disproportionately targets the poorest, especially Black families and Native families.

"Of course, some of the difference may be due to better detection — but at a minimum there is no evidence that a system built on horror stories did a damn thing to stop the horror stories," Wexler wrote earlier this month. "More than two decades of inflicting ever more misery upon ever more impoverished families, especially impoverished families of color, did nothing to make children safer."

Wexler pointed to a pullback from child welfare agencies during COVID-19 and an influx of government aid, primarily in stimulus funds, enhanced food benefits and eviction prohibitions. During the pandemic, even when many were unemployed, childhood poverty and food insecurity decreased.

But Wexler said governments appeared unwilling to dedicate any of the \$33 billion in child welfare funding funding to the family aid programs from the pandemic that helped. He argued that the system, as it functioned now, didn't prevent the abuse it targeted.

"Before another generation of Black children and Native children has to endure the almost-guaranteed trauma of an almost-guaranteed investigation by the family police, should we shift the burden of proof from the reformers and the abolitionists to the defenders of the status quo?" Wexler said. "Shouldn't we demand the opponents of real change have to prove that what they have given us for decades is better than the alternative?"

*- Indiana Capital Chronicle is part of States Newsroom, a network of news bureaus supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501(c)(3) public charity. Indiana Capital Chronicle maintains editorial independence. Follow Indiana Capital Chronicle on facebook.com/IndianaCapitalChronicle and twitter.com/INCapChronicle*

## CRRG From Page A1

as an intern for the inaugural Carmel Marathon Weekend in 2011, and both Jay and Kati have volunteered for and raced the event several times throughout its history. Jay has more than a decade of experience working in event production. During his time with IRONMAN, he supported more than 80 events across the country. As a longtime entrepreneur, Jay has successfully guided and built teams throughout various industries. Kati brings years of experience in event production and management, as well as the perspective of a lifelong runner.

"We couldn't be more excited to build on the legacy of success that the CRRG team has built in

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# Readers' Choice 2023 Results

## BETSY From Page A1

### Health Club / Fitness Facilities

**Winner:** Fishers YMCA  
**Runner Up:** Anytime Fitness  
**Honorable Mentions:**  
 •LA Fitness  
 •Noblesville Athletic Club  
 •Cross Fit Indy North  
 •Gymmies  
 •Bang!  
 •Roundtrippers (baseball, softball, soccer training)  
 •Lifetime  
 •Planet Fitness

### Health Food Store

**Winner:** Fresh Thyme  
**Runner Up:** Trader Joe's  
**Honorable Mentions:**  
 •Whole Foods  
 •Days Healthy Living  
 •Earth Fare  
 •Market District Heating/Cooling Company

### Winner:

Purkey's H/C  
**Runner Up:** Williams Comfort Air  
**Honorable Mentions:**  
 •Price Heating  
 •Dial One  
 •North Suburban  
 •Appel  
 •Hoff Agency

### Hobby / Toy Store

**Winner:** Moonshot Games  
**Runner Up:** Mr. Muffin's Train Shop  
**Honorable Mentions:**  
 •Option 2  
 •The Cultured Wall  
 •Wood Crafts by Russ

### Home Builder

**Winner:** Old Town Design Group  
**Runner Up:** Carl Abbott Jr.  
**Honorable Mention:**  
 •Fischer Homes  
 •Joe Reel  
 •MI Homes  
 •Randall and Chamberlain  
 •Sobczak  
 •Williams Custom Art Builders  
 •Carl Abbott  
 •Coffey Construction  
 •Drees

•Pulte  
 •Davis Homes  
 •Lennar  
**Hospital**  
**Winner:** Community  
**Runner Up:** IU Health Saxony  
**Honorable Mentions:**  
 •St. Vincent Carmel  
 •Riverview Health  
 •Franciscan

### Hotel

**Winner:** Embassy Suites in Noblesville  
**Runner Up:** Hotel Carmichael  
**Honorable Mentions:**  
 •Cambria Suites  
 •Renaissance  
 •Courtyard by Marriott  
 •Drury Inn  
 •Fairfield Inn  
 •Hampton Inn

### Insurance Agency/Agent

**Winner:** Angie Sutton State Farm  
**Runner Up:** Indiana Farm Bureau  
**Honorable Mentions:**  
 •Ellinger Riggs Insurance  
 •Jeff Whitman - All State  
 •Farm Bureau  
 •Gordon Marketing  
 •Martin and Martin  
 •Jeff Whitman - All State  
 •Penwell Insurance  
 •Cicero Insurance Agency  
 •Hughes Insurance  
 •Myers and Lapel

### Internet Service Provider

**Winner:** Comcast  
**Runner Up:** AT&T  
**Honorable Mentions:**  
 •On Ramp  
 •Frontier Communications  
 •Net Zero

### Investment Broker

**Winner:** Charles Schwab  
**Runner Up:** Paul Dickos  
**Honorable Mentions:**  
 •Corey Sylvester - Edward Jones  
 •Bryce Adams Edward Jones

### Jewelry Store

**Winner:** Smith's Jewelers  
**Runner Up:** Moyer  
**Honorable Mentions:**  
 •Moser Jewelry  
 •Hoffmeister  
 •Jewelry Gallery

### Lawn Mower Dealer

**Winner:** Reynolds Farm Equipment  
**Runner Up:** Campbell's Sales and Equipment  
**Honorable Mentions:**  
 •The Mower Shop  
 •McGavic Outdoor Power

### Landscape/Lawn Care Provider

**Winner:** Noblesville Lawn Care  
**Runner Up:** Allisonville Nursery  
**Honorable Mentions:**  
 •Don and Kodi's  
 •Green Vista  
 •BAM

### Library

**Winner:** Hamilton East, Noblesville  
**Runner Up:** Westfield  
**Honorable Mentions:**  
 •Sheridan  
 •Carmel-Clay

### Liquor Store

**Winner:** Mr. G's / Noble Wine & Spirits  
**Runner Up:** Big Red Liquors  
**Honorable Mentions:**  
 •21st Amendment Liquor  
 •Sheridan Pkg Liquors  
 •Crown Liquors  
 •Payless Liquors  
 •Port Cicero

### Lodge

**Winner:** Noblesville Elks  
**Runner Up:** Noblesville Moose  
**Honorable Mentions:**  
 •American Legion, Noblesville  
 •Masonic Lodge  
 •Noblesville VFW

### Foot Exhibition Center

"We take up the whole building," said Michelle Arfman, of Fishers, a Master Gardener of 13 years. She's co-organizer of a committee of seven, who put on the sale.

She has always loved gardening but didn't get involved in Master Gardeners until her kids were older. And at the time, there was a waiting list to be a member. "It took me a year to get into it," she said. That's when Arfman learned about this wonderful annual Master Gardener plant sale, which started 25 years ago.

As many times as I've attended, I'm still always amazed when I walk in the door. So many plants. So many volunteers. So much work by our county's Master Gardeners.

Almost 20,000 plants -- all grown by Master Gardeners who, during usually about two dozen scheduled workday digs at Master Gardeners' homes -- are prepared for this sale.

Most of the plants come from county Master Gardeners' yards and are well-acclimated to thriving in this area. They pot the plants and keep them on hand at their homes, watering, weeding and encouraging them to grow.

When the doors open at 8 a.m. Saturday for the plant sale, expect a line.

And you'll be better prepared if you bring your own wagon.

While many Master Gardeners donate the use of their own wagons for this sale, there aren't enough wagons to meet the demand. Arfman said one of the Master Gardener's jobs is to get the borrowed wagons ready each year for the sale. "If we're really busy, the wagons disappear quickly," she said.

So what's the best way to prepare for the sale? Do an inventory of your garden beds. Check which plants are coming back and which plants need replacing. Also, take a moment or two and consider what additions or new garden areas would be fun for this year.

Then, make your shopping list. Some miniature plants for your fairy garden? Hostas for your shady area? An array of tomato varieties for your table? How about eggplants and herbs? Native plants, vegetables, annuals and perennials? Or small trees and shrubs? You'll find it all at Saturday's plant sale.

Arfman said Master Gardeners have been growing the native plant area over the past few years. Some of the largest areas of plants are hostas, herbs and vegetables. Many of the plants are labeled "shade," "sun" or "part sun" so that buyers can find what they want or need for their yards, she said.

What other advice? Take your time and browse. Most plants have a descriptive sign with a picture of the plant in bloom and good information as to proper planting.

And don't make the mistake of just shopping in the Exhibition Center. Go outside. Find dig-to-order bearded iris and daylilies.

Customers may also use a holding area to accumulate plants without having to haul them around as they shop. "Customers can buy several items and not have to carry them around," she said.

Got a question? Then ask a trained Master Gardener. The sale is about gardening education as much as selling plants. About 100 Master Gardeners are on hand each year at the sale to help you find just the right plant and are happy to give gardening advice. One educational stop is the tomato plant section, where volunteers discuss nearly every variety they sell, from the size of the fruit to the expected arrival. Arfman said buyers will find good prices on a wide variety of tomatoes, peppers and "anything you can imagine."

Usually, the Master Gardeners can find an answer to anything horticulturally related. If the Master Gardener you originally ask doesn't have the answer, he or she will locate a long-term Master Gardener on hand for difficult questions. And if your questions stump them all, they will take your name and phone number, research the question and get back to you.

Most of the plants come from county Master Gardeners' yards and are well-acclimated to thriving in this area. They pot the plants and keep them on hand at their homes, watering, weeding and encouraging them to grow.

Then make your purchase with ease. Since 2018, the sale has offered an automated checkout system that's faster and more efficient. Computers total and print out invoices quickly, with less wait time than the early days of the sale. Also, express lines serve customers purchasing six plants or fewer.

While cash and checks are eagerly accepted, plastic is also accepted. Then expect curbside pick-up and help loading plants into your vehicle.

Arfman said, after the pandemic, this is the first year it feels like the sale is back to normal.

There is so much work that goes into putting on this sale. So if you attend the sale, you need to thank every Master Gardener that you see there.

Arfman was on a team of Master Gardeners who went out and priced the plants, putting labels on each pot, last Friday through Tuesday. Information stickers for many of the plants, with the name of the plant and how to care for the plant, were also placed on many of the plants. Then Arfman was at the 4-H Fairgrounds at 6 a.m. Wednesday, setting up the display area. The county building and grounds employees set up the tables for Master Gardeners, who bring in their equipment needed for the sale. For Master Gardeners who are donating more than 200 plants, there are two box trucks that pick up the plants and bring them to the Fairgrounds, vegetables today then perennials on Thursday and Friday morning.

"It's a lot of work. I can vouch for that," Arfman said.

Later Friday, there is a Friends and Family Night for those with a special admission ticket, then the public sale is 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday.

The best part about the sale is being assured that all of the plants are acclimated to Indiana's climate. And that all proceeds support scholarships for students in Hamilton County interested in horticulture-related careers.

What else? Master Gardeners help fund monthly program speakers at monthly meetings. Master Gardeners put on one-day seminars on different subjects related to gardening, open to the public, too. Master Gardeners offer a Small Grants program where groups can apply for a grant to help with a gardening related projects or horticultural education. Master Gardeners fund their Growing Indiana's Future Together (GIFT) program that is outreach to teach people how easy and cost effective it can be to grow your own food. Master Gardeners fund more than 40 committees' work for the year. And Master Gardeners support 4-H when asked or needed, and support the Purdue Extension Office in Hamilton County.

"We love talking with people on the Fairgrounds property that stop to ask questions when we are working in our display beds," Arfman said. (The public can stop in and see the display beds anytime.)

"It's great to work with all of the Master Gardeners, who give their hours as they can or want to," Arfman said. She enjoys getting to know the different people and learning about different things. "We learn from all of these people. It (the sale) is a good time to bring all of the membership together and share something as one," she said. The plant sale is "an educational opportunity for all of us."

Arfman said, "It's going to be a nice sale ... There are a lot of different things you just can't find anywhere else ... I hope people come and enjoy. It's supposed to be a good day on Saturday. We'd love to see everybody out."

Want to become a Master Gardener? Just ask any Master Gardener who is volunteering at the sale. Most Master Gardeners love gardening, love plants and love digging in the dirt. Also, gardeners tend to be lovely people, and fun to work with and whom to share a passion.

Once you get home with your plants, you may still have more questions. Don't fret. Trained Master Gardener volunteers are available by email at the Master Gardeners' Education Center at Hamilton-Gardenline@gmail.com. Purdue Extension staff is also on hand during this time to answer questions about food preparation and preservation. Visitors can also schedule an appointment to have their pressure canner gauge checked for accuracy. Call 317-776-0854.

Another upcoming event later this year is Master Gardeners' Rose Committee, in partnership with Indianapolis Rose Society, will play host to the annual Rose Show & Rosefest, on Sept. 9 at the Hamilton County 4-H Fairgrounds. Admission is free to the public, and activities include: tour of rose garden, rose-related workshops, educational displays and soil PH testing. There will also be roses and rose products for sale.

For more details about Master Gardeners, visit <https://extension.purdue.edu>. For more about Rosefest, visit [www.IndianapolisRoseSociety.com](http://www.IndianapolisRoseSociety.com).

*-Betsy Reason writes about people, places and things in Hamilton County. Contact The Times Editor Betsy Reason at [betsy@thetimes24-7.com](mailto:betsy@thetimes24-7.com).*

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF DECLARATORY RESOLUTION AND PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Sheridan Redevelopment Commission (the "Commission") will conduct a public hearing on May 23, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) at the Sheridan Community Center, located at 300 East 6th Street, Sheridan, Hamilton County, Indiana, 46069, to consider a Declaratory Resolution (the "Declaratory Resolution") adopted by the Commission on November 28, 2022, which identifies the Main Street Redevelopment Area and designates a coterminous Main Street Allocation Area. The Declaratory Resolution has been prepared by the Commission pursuant to Indiana Code 36-7-14 for approval following a public hearing and adoption of a confirmatory resolution thereon.

The Declaratory Resolution may be inspected at the offices of the Commission, located at Sheridan Town Hall in the Clerk's Office, located at 506 South Main Street, Sheridan, Hamilton County, Indiana, 46049, during regular business hours.

During the public hearing portion of the meeting, the Commission will receive and hear comments, remonstrances and objections, written or oral, from persons interested in or affected by the proceedings pertaining to actions to be taken under the Declaratory Resolution and will determine the public utility and benefit of the proposed action. Written comments, remonstrances and objections may be filed with the Commission care of Parvin Gillam, President of the Commission, at Sheridan Town Hall in the Clerk's Office, located at 506 South Main Street, Sheridan, Hamilton County, Indiana, 46049, until May 23, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time). All written comments, remonstrances and objections will be dated and time stamped at such time of filing. At the public hearing, the Commission shall consider only those written statements that were filed in a timely manner.

Dated: May 9, 2023  
 SHERIDAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
 TL20393 5/13 1t hspaxlp

## HHEF From Page A1

annually in the form of grants to Heights' students and teachers.

The cost is \$125 per golfer and includes greens fee, cart, box lunch, two mulligans, and two drinks during round. Lunch is being catered by Big Dog's Smokehouse. Rain date is Thursday, June 15. Registration begins at 9 a.m. Shotgun start to follow at 10 a.m.

Special thanks to this year's title sponsors - Beck's Hybrids, Beaver

Materials, and Blades Audio Video Security. To register, become a sponsor, and/or for more information at this year's event go to: <https://bit.ly/hhef23golfouting>.

All contributions to the Foundation are tax deductible and 100% of its money is directed to student-oriented projects and programs. The Foundation accepts donations throughout the year to help support its work. Find us and follow us @hhedfoundation.

## WRAP

From Page A1

This year, rather than unveil all the winners at one time like we have in the past, we are revealing several categories a day.

Today's categories can be found inside and a quick list is also provided here.

When the final winners, runner-ups and honorable mentions are revealed, we will compile all of them into one keepsake edition that will stay posted on our website for the entire year.

Lastly, we encourage you to pay attention to the many businesses who are saying thank you with their ads. Without those supporters, local news and specifically your daily edition, wouldn't be here.



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HONEST HOOSIER



Author of "Little Orphant Annie" had his home right here in Hancock County!

Indiana

Facts Fun



30 Hancock

Number Stumpers

- Hancock County was founded in 1828 and was named after John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress.
- The county seat of Hancock County is Greenfield.
- Hancock County has a population of 70,002.
- Hancock County is included in the Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson Metropolitan Statistical Area.
- Famous poet James Whitcomb Riley was born and raised in Greenfield.

1. What is the population of Hancock County?
2. What city is Hancock County's county seat?
3. Who was the first signer of the Declaration of Independence?
4. When was Hancock County founded?

Answers: 1. 70,002 2. Greenfield 3. John Hancock 4. 1828

Got Words?

Thousands of people visit James Whitcomb Riley's childhood home every year. Why do you think people are so interested in the birthplaces of famous figures?

Blank lines for writing answers to the word puzzle.

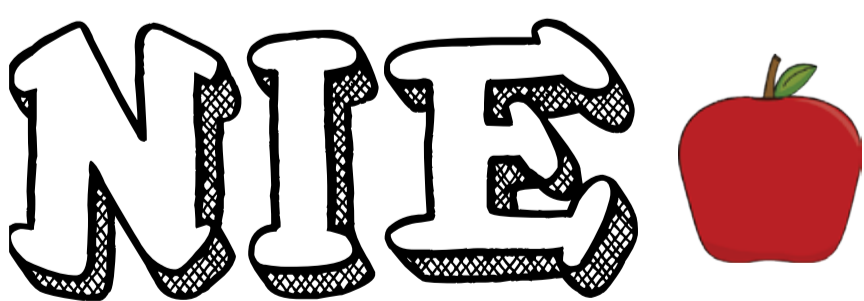
Word Scrambler

Unscramble the words below!

1. CKNACHO
2. LEDERIGEFN
3. CNSGREOS
4. NENIENEDDPEC
5. TWMHCBOI

Answers: 1. Hancock 2. Greenfield 3. Congress 4. Independence 5. Whitcomb

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# THURSDAY

## Indiana *the* Strong

Thursday, May 18, 2023

A8

### BBB Investigation: Vacation Schemes Unethical And Deceptive



Timeshares and vacation clubs are often synonymous with high-pressure sales. With the sun out and their guard down, vacationers can quickly find themselves on the hook for a life-long commitment. And, while they're easy to get into—these contracts are incredibly difficult to escape, according to a new study by the Better Business Bureau (BBB).

The study - Unpacking timeshare and vacation club sales - examines patterns of customer complaints, dollars spent and lost, customer reviews, related scams and more to show how predatory companies and scammers take advantage of consumers hoping to score deals on travel.

Some timeshare-related businesses, however, treat consumers ethically, resulting in positive experiences for buyers and owners. By calling out and denouncing substandard marketplace behaviors of businesses and scammers, this study intends to make consumers smarter and businesses better.

From the beginning of 2020 until the end of 2022, BBB received nearly 30,000 business complaints and almost 10,000 negative reviews related to travel companies. A majority of those were related to the timeshare industry, with \$32 million in disputed funds.

Most commonly, consumers said they felt reality didn't match the big promises made in

timeshare pitch meetings.

"During the high-pressure sales presentation, we were told amazing things about what this timeshare ownership would be. We were told we could easily travel anywhere. We were given this picture of traveling the world in the easiest, cheapest way possible. This timeshare ownership has been nothing close to this image," a Maine man said.

Complaints to BBB also reflect consumers' opinions that timeshares can be nearly impossible to sell, and consumers often feel misled about the amount and frequency of maintenance fees associated with timeshares. Some say their timeshare became unaffordable after several years of ownership due to increased fees.

A Maryland woman told BBB years of previously undisclosed maintenance fees and better vacation options led her family to want to sell their timeshare.

"We thought we would be able to give it to our children someday or sell it for extra money for our retirement, and the (timeshare) sales team made us feel like all of this was possible," she said. "We would have never purchased this had we known how much it would really cost."

BBB has monitored deception in the timeshare industry and warned consumers about timeshare exit companies for nearly half a decade. But some skilled sellers continue to talk buyers into unfavorable deals that often worsen when desperate investors try to offload purchases through the timeshare exit industry.

Owners looking to sell their timeshares find many exit companies claim to be able to sell timeshare commitments quickly for high prices. Months and even years tick by with no sale in sight, however, as owners continue to pay annual

maintenance fees. And complaints to BBB reveal exit companies often fail to honor money-back guarantees.

An Indiana woman paid a timeshare exit company \$5,500 which promised her a full refund if the process wasn't completed within 18 months. With two months of that timeframe left looming, nothing had been completed.

"I now have called and the people who are working with me and their phones are no longer in service," the woman said. "I am now worried we have been taken for a ride. I went to their site and called an [sic] their mailbox is full so I am really worried what is going on."

More than 1,100 BBB Scam Tracker reports reveal fraudsters have used the same high-pressure tactics common in timeshare sales to con consumers out of \$3.5 million in the last three years. Fake debt collection on supposedly unpaid timeshare fees is also a common ruse used on unsuspecting owners.

BBB urges timeshare-related industries to self-regulate by establishing and following ethical sales practices. Timeshare companies of all types should cease high-pressure sales tactics at pitch meetings and ease restrictions for longtime, non-delinquent customers who wish to cancel their timeshare.

BBB tips for anyone considering a timeshare or exit company:

- Extensively research timeshare properties, vacation clubs or exit companies and thoroughly read contracts for language about lifetime commitment, heirs' obligations, maintenance fee increases or guarantees.
- Beware of misleading or high-pressure sales tactics. If you feel like someone is trying to push you into a deal, walk away.
- To sell a timeshare,

contact the resort directly and see if they have a resale or buyback program.

- Be realistic about what you can get for your timeshare. Most of these contracts are not investments and may return considerably less than you paid.

- If it sounds too good to be true, it is. There are deals to be found on travel, but scammers know consumers want to save money and take advantage.

- Be wary of paying timeshare exit companies all fees upfront until services are rendered.

**How to report**  
 If you suspect you are the subject of fraud or dishonest business practices, there are many avenues to report your case:

- Better Business Bureau (BBB) [BBB.org/ScamTracker](http://BBB.org/ScamTracker)
- Federal Trade Commission (FTC) - [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](http://ReportFraud.ftc.gov)
- Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC) - Online or by phone at 1-888-495-8501
- State Attorneys General can often help. Find your state Attorney General's website to see if you can file online.
- American Resort Development Association (ARDA), timeshare trade association - [email customerservice@arda.com](mailto:emailcustomerservice@arda.com)

**ABOUT BBB SERVING CENTRAL INDIANA:** The Better Business Bureau has empowered people to find businesses, brands, and charities they can trust for over 110 years. In 2022, people turned to BBB more than 250 million times for BBB Business Profiles on more than 5.3 million businesses and Charity Reports on about 12,000 charities, all available for free at [BBB.org](http://BBB.org). The International Association of Better Business Bureaus is the umbrella organization for the local, independent BBBs in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

### Rokita Warns Churches And Other Nonprofit Organizations To Beware Cyberattacks

Hoosiers should be alert to the possible rising incidence of cyberattacks on churches and other nonprofit organizations. That's the message coming out of the state's attorney general's office.

"Hackers regularly carry out attacks on companies and governmental offices," Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita said. "Now, though, we're seeing signs that cybercriminals are expanding their lists of targets."

On April 30, data extortionists struck a national Catholic publishing house based in Huntington, Ind. — one day after a ransomware group attacked an evangelical megachurch in South Carolina.

"Nothing is sacred to these high-tech outlaws," Rokita said. "Our own office and law enforcement agencies nationwide are working to bring offenders to justice. At the same time, we encourage all

Indiana institutions, as well as everyday Hoosiers, to take proactive steps to implement cybersecurity measures."

Attorney General Rokita offered the following tips:

- Be on alert for communications with dangerous attachments or fraudulent links.
- Always verify the email addresses of those who send you emails.
- Don't reveal personal or financial information via email or text message.
- Encourage regular and updated cyberattack training for organizations' employees, members and volunteers.
- Ensure that your organization has updated appropriate software patches and that it monitors current schemes and scams by hackers.
- Avoid using gift cards, money orders or cryptocurrency to conduct transactions or regular organization business.

### Hoosiers Asked To Report Signs Of Human Trafficking

The state is asking Hoosiers to stay alert for signs of human trafficking in communities across Indiana and to report any suspicious activities to authorities.

Unfortunately, large events bringing throngs of spectators are known to create increased demand for trafficked individuals providing manual labor, sex for hire and other services. This month, Indianapolis is the site for the Indy 500 and the National Gymnastics Association Midwest Region Championships.

"Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery," Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita said. "We need the eyes and ears of people everywhere to help us root out this evil enterprise, rescue victims and put away perpetrators."

People in certain job roles — such as medical professionals, restaurant workers, teachers and truck drivers — are particularly likely to come into contact with trafficking victims.

Human trafficking is a \$150 billion criminal enterprise. It occurs anytime someone uses force, fraud or coercion to make another individual provide labor, services or commercial sex acts. If the person performing commercial sex acts is under 18, the crime of human trafficking still occurs even without the elements of force, fraud or coercion. ([humantraffickinghotline.org](http://humantraffickinghotline.org))

According to the U.S. State Department, those signs that someone might be a victim of trafficking include observations that someone:

- lives with their employer.
- lives with multiple people in a cramped

space.

- otherwise experiences poor living conditions.
- is prohibited from speaking alone to strangers.
- gives answers that appear to be scripted and rehearsed.
- has an employer holding their identity documents.
- shows signs of physical abuse.
- is submissive or fearful.
- is unpaid or paid very little.
- is under 18 and working in the commercial sex industry.

If you have suspicions that someone is being trafficked, you should immediately call local law enforcement. You may also call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at (888) 373-7888.

In America, the scourge of human trafficking is propagated in significant part by criminal cartels operating out of Mexico.

"Stopping human trafficking is one more reason we must secure the southern border," Rokita said.

In addition to waging lawsuits to force federal officials to crack down on border security and illegal immigration, Attorney General Rokita and his team are engaged in other efforts to combat human trafficking.

The Office of the Attorney General operates the Address Confidentiality Program, which helps protect victims of certain crimes — including those who have been trafficked — by concealing their residential address from the public and thereby their victimizers. Learn more about the program at the Attorney General's website.



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