


# The TIMES

Hamilton County's Own Daily Newspaper




NOBLESVILLE, INDIANA

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**TODAY'S VERSE**  
Psalm 37:4 Delight thyself  
also in the LORD; and he  
shall give thee the desires of  
thine heart.



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

What makes Diana Ephlin smile? "My grandchildren, my pets, my husband," said the 77-year-old Noblesville resident. She is married to Phil Ephlin and has three children, Tracy, Josh and Kyle, and has eight grandchildren. The New Albany native grew up in Lafayette. She owns The Dancin' Place and also operates White River Ballet Co., which is presenting "The Nutcracker" ballet on stage at 7 p.m. Dec. 21 and 22 at Noblesville High School. Tickets are available at the door. "I've been teaching for over 50 years. I started dancing when I was 3. And I love it so much. I love the little children. When I walk in, and there they are, that first day, their little ballet shoes, their tutus, it makes me very, very happy. It makes me smile. And I'm going to do it 'til I'm 94." She said, "I love doing the story ballets and watching these children who have been with me since they were 3, and then they become a senior, and they go off to some great, wonderful college, but during that time, they've gotten to play beautiful roles. I feel like that's wonderful." Diana last danced in her ballet pointe shoes, portraying aging Russian prima ballerina Elizaveta Grushinskaya in Footlite Musicals' "Grand Hotel" more than 20 years ago. She also has Stone Soup, a children's theater program that presents a musical each July in Noblesville. Diana loves to garden and visit her children and enjoys a photography hobby. She volunteers at Agape therapeutic riding center for children with disabilities. She reads a lot and likes to go to the theater, operas and ballets. What else? "I love Noblesville."

**And Another Thing...**

**1. Immediate Opening!**

The Times has an immediate opening for someone who is good with computers and creative to help build our daily pages. The job pays between \$12 and \$15 an hour, depending on experience. If interested, please send resume to timmons@thetimes24-7.com.

**2. Leaping lizard**

The Collins family of Hollywood, FL found an unwelcome guest recently in their guestroom toilet—a rather large iguana. How it got there is anybody's guess. It seemed to be dead at first, but when Mr. Collins brought in a neighbor to help catch the cagey cadger it tried to wriggle its way to freedom. In fact, Mr. Collins and his neighbor managed to trap the lazy lizard in a garbage bag and released it into the great outdoors where it belonged.



Photo courtesy of Noblesville Preservation Alliance

**Adriann and Aaron Young are opening their Swiss chalet-style home, which formerly belonged to Aaron's great-uncle, late Noblesville Furniture store owner Vin Haggan, on Indiana 37, just north of the city, overlooking the White River.**



Photo courtesy of Michelle Schmidt

**The Schmidt Home, in the 1100 block of 11th Street in Old Town Noblesville, is nearly ready for Noblesville Preservation Alliance's Holiday Home Tour from 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday.**

## Old Homes Deck The Halls For NPA Holiday Home Tour



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

I just love seeing old houses decorated for the holidays. If you also love old houses and holiday decor, then you're in luck this Saturday night, as Noblesville Preservation

Alliance presents a Holiday Home Tour open to the community.

Four homes will be on the tour, plus NPA's Preservation Hall, where the tour will begin and end. Tour hours are 5 to 8 p.m., with a gathering until 9 p.m. at Preservation Hall, 1274 Logan St. Tickets are available at preservationhall.org and at the door.

NPA is showcasing some of Noblesville's "hidden gems, while promoting historical preservation and the love of local history. Being a nonprofit organization, we rely on events and community involvement to help keep the love of local history and historic preservation alive," said Jessica Vandergraff, NPA board member and 1999

**Want TO GO?**

**What:** Noblesville Preservation Alliance's Holiday Home Tour.  
**When:** 5-8 p.m. Saturday, with a gathering until 9 p.m.  
**Where:** Tour will begin and end at NPA's Preservation Hall, 1274 Logan St., Noblesville.  
**How much:** \$18 in advance through Friday, \$20 at the door at Preservation Hall.  
**Good to know:** Preservation Hall will be open all evening to sell tickets, offer building tours and accept new NPA memberships.  
**Tickets and info:** preservationhall.org.

Noblesville High School graduate. She was NPA's Outstanding New Volunteer of the Year in March and designs NPA's flyers and brochures.

This Holiday Home Tour is really NPA's gift to our community.

"By offering a chance to connect with new and old friends during the holiday season, we really feel that this is a way to bond our residents," she said. "When welcoming others

➔ See BETSY Page A6



Photo courtesy of Hamilton County Parks

**Hamilton County Parks Board Member, Dr. Judith Campbell (left) being sworn in by Hamilton County Clerk Kathy Kreag Williams.**

## Veteran Parks Board Member, Dr. Campbell Reappointed

Longtime parks and community advocate, Dr. Judith Campbell, was recently sworn in following her reappointment as a Hamilton County Parks and Recreation parks board member, a position she has held for nearly twenty years. Her appointment to another four-year term was made by Judge Thomas Clem. Hamilton County Clerk Kathy Kreag Williams conducted the swearing-in proceedings. Dr. Campbell will continue to

➔ See PARKS Page A6

## New District Plans Highlight Annual State Of The Schools Address

Noblesville Schools Superintendent Dr. Daniel G. Hile presented his annual State of the Schools address today at the Noblesville Schools Community Center. The event was hosted by the Noblesville Chamber of Commerce as their holiday luncheon.

Hile's presentation to the sold-out crowd noted several achievements for Noblesville Schools including:

- National recognition for STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) for the sixth year in a row.
- National recognition for music education for the eighth year in a row.
- New national grant for innovative civics education coming in 2024.
- National recognition for Noblesville High School (NHS) educators Bethany Robinson and Andrew Wilkins.
- Enhanced workforce development initiatives.
- State record-setting athletic championships.
- Expanded resources for elementary STEM learning.

➔ See SCHOOLS Page A6

## The Daily Almanac

**Sunrise/Sunset**  
RISE: 7:54 a.m.  
SET: 5:23 p.m.



**High/Low Temperatures**  
High: 53 °F  
Low: 33 °F



**Today is...**

- Letter Writing Day
- Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- National Cotton Candy Day



**What Happened On This Day**

- **1941** Attack on Pearl Harbor. The Imperial Japanese Navy attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The attack was the impetus for the U.S.'s entry into World War II.
- **1787** First state to ratify the U.S. Constitution. Delaware became the first state to ratify the United States Constitution. Because of this, it is sometimes called the First State.
- **1732** Royal Opera House opens its doors. The popular performing arts venue in Covent Garden, London houses the Royal Opera and the Royal Ballet.



**Births On This Day**

- **1956** Larry Bird American basketball player
- **1949** Tom Waits American singer-songwriter, guitarist, actor

**Deaths On This Day**

- **1985** Robert Graves English author
- **983** Otto II, Holy Roman Emperor

➔ **INSIDE TODAY**

- Service Directory.....A4
- EarthTalk.....A4
- Tim Timmons.....A4
- Indiana Facts & Fun.....A7

➔ **TODAY'S HEALTH TIP**

Exercising at least five days a week can cut sick days in half. 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



➔ **TODAY'S QUOTE**

"Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people only once a year."  
-Victor Borge

➔ **TODAY'S JOKE**

Did Rudolph go to school? No. He was Elf-taught!

➔ **OBITUARIES**

Larry Eugene Kinkead  
John Houston Bays



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



**13 WTHR** 7 DAY FORECAST

42 A.M. FLURRIES ONLY	33/53 BROKE WINDY	42/56 BALMY AND BREEZY	52/60 BREEZY, BALKY, BAWDY	37/39 WINDY, RAIN TO SNOW EAST	26/42 SUNNY, SEASONAL	29/45 MILD
WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE

## OBITUARIES

### Larry Eugene Kinkead

June 1, 194, Friday, December 1, 2023

Larry Eugene Kinkead, age 83, passed away at his home in rural Kirklin, Indiana, surrounded by his loving family, on Friday morning, December 1, 2023. Born June 1, 1940, in Lebanon, Indiana, he was the son of the late Ray and Annabelle Marie (Snyder) Kinkead.



He graduated with the Sheridan High School class of 1958. Larry was a self-employed carpenter, who with the right set of tools, could tackle just about anything. He was a hard-working jack-of-all-trades who never met a project he couldn't figure out. Many people that work with their hands always have a passion project, and for Larry, it was building houses. Building homes for both himself and his daughter was among his favorite accomplishments.

Larry enjoyed crossword and jigsaw puzzles and loved to play Bingo. He also enjoyed hunting, fishing, and camping whenever he had some free time. When he needed downtime, Larry had favorite TV programs. Watching Jeff Gordon race was always high on the list, as were Western movies, but afternoons were reserved for Young and the Restless. He watched enough of his favorite soap, that even his grandkids became avid fans. There was nowhere Larry would rather be than at home with his family. He and Jannette considered themselves homebodies; that gave them plenty of time to spend with their growing family. Larry loved his grandkids, and cherished every minute he was able to spend in their lives. He got a real kick out of teaching them to walk and talk... putting their feet on his and walking them around the house over, and over, and over again, until they got the hang of it (or Young and the Restless came on), then after some quality soap time with them, it was back to the lessons at hand. His infectious smile was always guaranteed to brighten your day, and he will be deeply missed by everyone who had the privilege of knowing him.

Larry is survived by his daughter, Teresa Evans (Tracy) of Kirklin; step daughter, Judy Shields (Gary) of Thorntown; stepson, Niles Cummins (Tammy) of Sheridan; 8 grandchildren, Leana Marcum (Orry), Ashley Boyles (Cory), Jake Evans (Taylor Reed), Shawn Gunn, Ryan Gunn (Brandy), Rachelle Cummins, Josh Lintz (Erin), and Heather, Lintz; 16 great grandchildren, Parker, Paisley, Quinn, Quenton (on the way), Evan, Jamison, Lexie, Carter, Emma, Natalie, Austin, Keegan, Kobe, Kailie, Jordan, Whitney, and Dakota; 2 brothers, Rex Kinkead (Roberta) of Lebanon, and Randy Kinkead (Marilyn) of Sheridan; sister, Marlene Burroughs (Ronald) of Sheridan; brother-in-law, Grover Cooper (Geneva); and many, many, many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Ray and Annabelle Marie (Snyder) Kinkead; brothers, Charles Kinkead, Kevin Kinkead, and Jerry "Smiley" Kinkead; sister, Marcia Ann Kinkead-Melvin-Duncan; father and mother-in-law, Bee and Vicky (Haynes) Cooper; sisters-in-law, Beverly Irene "Bev" Kinkead, and Shirley (Jennings) Kinkead; 7 brothers-in-law, Kenny Duncan, Garland Cooper, Leander Cooper, George Cooper, Jimmy Cooper, Calvin Cooper, and Harold Cooper; and by his loving wife, Jannette (Cooper) Kinkead on February 24, 2007.

He and Jannette were married on August 26, 1966. Services will be held at 2:00 PM on Thursday, December 7, 2023, at Kercheval Funeral Home, 306 E. 10th Street, Sheridan, Indiana, with visitation from noon until the time of service. Burial will follow at Spencer Cemetery in Sheridan, Indiana. Larry's nephew, Mark Kinkead, will be officiating.

### John Houston Bays

January 30, 1958, Saturday, December 2, 2023

John Houston Bays, 65, of Noblesville (and self-appointed "King A Clare"), passed away at home on Saturday, December 2, 2023 surrounded by family. He was born in Noblesville, Indiana, on January 30, 1958 to John and Lela (Muse) Bays.



John was a graduate of Hamilton Southeastern High School (1976), concurrently attended the Anderson Vocational School Building Trades and Junior Achievement. He became a member of the General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn in Elwood in 1980 and ordained a Bishop in 2006.

John was a hard worker holding various positions throughout life. As a young man, he worked as a Bobcat operator for Jay's Excavating. He was a Quality Control Chemist for Firestone for 15+ years. John earned his CDL and was a driver for Schneider Trucking. Eventually retired from Mitchel & Scott Machine Company where he worked as a Material Handler. Most recently, he held his most beloved position as a bus driver for Hamilton Heights School Corporation. He called the students "my kids" and came home with many an anecdote.

John never met a stranger, notoriously talking to people for hours! His life centered around church and family. He was especially close to his children and grandchildren, instilling in them the philosophy that "your brother is your very best friend", while continually teaching them life skills and demonstrating the importance of maintaining high family values. He was a talented small engine hobbyist, an avid Coleman lantern and Cub Cadet garden tractor collector.

John is survived by his loving wife of 42 years, Pamela (Leeman) Bays; five sons, Rusty (Amanda) Bays of Noblesville, Calvin Bays of Lapel, Clinton (Jessica) Bays of Pendleton, Spencer Bays of Anderson, and Ian Bays of Anderson; six grandchildren, two brothers, James (Martha) Bays of Trafalgar and Jeffrey Bays of Noblesville

He is preceded in death by his parents; and one son, Mitchell Bays.

Visitation will be held from 5:00-8:00 pm on Friday, December 8, 2023 at the General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn, 1927 S. P Street, Elwood, Indiana, 46036.

Funeral services will be conducted at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, December 9, 2023, at the church with one hour of visitation immediately prior. Bishop Gary Leeman and Jeramie Cooke will officiate. Burial will follow in the Aroma Methodist Cemetery in Atlanta.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn in Elwood.

Arrangements entrusted to Keller Mortuary Services.

## Give Blood With Red Cross Ahead Of Busy Holiday Weeks

Give a gift, get a gift when donors come to give in December

As people make travel plans to celebrate with family and friends this year, the American Red Cross asks donors to set aside time to give blood for patients waiting for care over the holidays.

From a record number of people expected to travel to seasonal illnesses and the potential for hazardous winter weather, it can be difficult for the Red Cross to collect enough blood for patients during the winter months. When donors come to give the gift of a blood or platelet donation in December, the Red Cross will say thank you with several exciting opportunities:

- Thanks to Prime Video and their new film Candy Cane Lane, featuring an all-star cast, including Eddie Murphy and Tracee Ellis Ross, and directed by Reginald Hudlin, those who come to give blood, platelets or AB Elite plasma Dec. 1-31, 2023, will automatically be entered for a chance to win a \$1,000 Amazon.com Gift Card and a 65-inch Omni QLED Series Amazon Fire TV. Details available at RedCrossBlood.org/Amazon.

- Those who come to give blood, platelets or AB Elite plasma Dec. 1-17, 2023, will receive a \$10 Amazon.com Gift Card by email. Details available at RedCrossBlood.org/Amazon.

- Those who come to give blood, platelets or AB Elite plasma Dec. 18, 2023-Jan. 5, 2024, will receive an exclusive Red Cross long-sleeved T-shirt, while supplies last.

Making and keeping

appointments throughout the month can help safeguard the national blood supply into the new year. Schedule an appointment by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Upcoming blood donation opportunities Dec. 7-31

### Carmel

12/15/2023: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., Monon Community Center, 1195 Central Park W.

12/18/2023: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Cool Creek Nature Center, 2000 E 151st Street

12/20/2023: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Hotel Carmichael, 1 Carmichael Square

### Fishers

12/7/2023: 1 p.m. - 6 p.m., Pennington Park Church, 13222 E 126th St

12/11/2023: 11:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., Sun King Brewing, 9713 District N. Drive, Suite 1220

12/14/2023: 2 p.m. - 6 p.m., IU Health Saxony Hospital, 13100 East 136th Street

12/21/2023: 1 p.m. - 6 p.m., Billerica Park Multi-Purpose Community Building, 12690 Promise Road

12/23/2023: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., Fishers YMCA, 9012 East 126th Street

12/26/2023: 1 p.m. - 6 p.m., Billerica Park Multi-Purpose Community Building, 12690 Promise Road

12/28/2023: 2 p.m. - 6 p.m., IU Health Saxony Hospital, 13100 East 136th Street

## Austin Nicole Named Husky Hero

Austin Nicole, a Business Teacher at Hamilton Heights High School, has been named the Husky Hero for the month of October. Nicole, who is in his second year of teaching at the high school, has been a great addition to the staff. If you ask students to describe Nicole in one word, it's "kind" which goes a long way for student engagement and inspiration.

"In a short period of time, he has been able to really make a difference in our students," said Jarrod Mason, Principal, Hamilton Heights High School. "He brings a fresh approach to the classes he teaches, and he seems to be really good at fostering student buy-in and interest in his courses. I feel like the industry experience he brings to our students has blended perfectly with his instructional approach, and students can clearly see themselves in careers in the workforce because of it."

"What an honor!" said Austin Nicole when presented with this recognition.

"Being a Husky Hero means that I am serving our students well while they chase their life passions. I believe it is important to come into school each day with an innovative and positive mindset. The goal is that our school can create well-rounded individuals through real-world experiences and purposeful projects. This award is a reminder for me, and others, that there are a lot of good things going on within our community. I am honored to contribute to this great community! As always... There is power in positivity. LEAD WITH LOVE!"

"[Mr. Nicole] is always looking out for his students and makes class engaging and fun!" said junior Campbell Liveley. Junior Casey Beatty agrees. "He is always very kind and willing to help everyone until they understand something completely. He makes learning so much fun and is engaging."

For Levi Chandler, a junior, Mr. Nicole is "re-



Photo courtesy of HHSC

Austin Nicole, HHHS Business Teacher, was selected as the Husky Hero for the month of October. Pictured (l-r): Melissa Martin (HHEF President/HHSC Integration Coach), Craig Bowen (FC Tucker), baby Laken Bowen, Amber Bowen, Austin Nicole, and Jarrod Mason (HHHS Principal).

ally cool, relatable, and overall a great teacher to have." Junior Greta Gelling said he is willing to help and always wants the best for his students.

"He has just been very kind to our SRT and helped us stay on top of our grades," noted junior Carson Felger. "He's very kind, nice, and helps us with homework," noted junior Ewan Shaffer.

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

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# Chambers Places Economy At Forefront Of Campaign

Will bring 'empathy and understanding' to social issues

By Whitney Downard  
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Education, health care and China will be prongs of his campaign for governor but Brad Chambers is banking on experience in his first foray into elected office with an emphasis on business and the economy.

After two years as the unpaid Indiana Secretary of Commerce, he stepped down with a goal to succeed outgoing and term-limited Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb. With his entrepreneurial background, Chambers remains focused on the state's economy and still doesn't consider himself a politician — a stance he acknowledged would need to change if he won.

"I think there's enormous potential in this state and I don't think we're maximizing that potential," he told the Indiana Capital Chronicle Tuesday. "It's a very, very difficult decision to leave a private life ... to enter public life."

"But I believe that's, in some ways, what the founding fathers wanted: people that cared and had experience to serve. This is not a career change; for me, this is service."

Chambers founded his real estate business, Buckingham Companies, as a student at Indiana University in 1984 and now commands a portfolio exceeding \$3 billion as the company's president and CEO. Though Chambers has a bipartisan record as a political donor, he hasn't run for office until now.

For Chambers, having a state that falls in the middle of the pack or, worse, below average in education, wages or economic growth is frustrating.

"It frustrates me that Indiana's average wage is below the U.S. average and it's been that way for a long time. There's been a lot of great governors that have worked on that and we cannot stop working on that," Chambers said. "We have this great product I call Indiana and it frustrates me that it's average or below average in any metric... We need to aspire for more, be bold and be confident in this great state."

## How he would fare against the competition

Chambers entered an already crowded race in August, following announcements from: U.S. Sen. Mike Braun, Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, Fort Wayne businessman Eric Doden, former Attorney General Curtis Hill and the devout Jamie Reitenour — all of whom are running in the May Republican primary.

But he said he felt compelled to enter the race because none shared his views or priorities.

"I believe that the number one job of a governor is to grow the economy and I think I'm uniquely qualified for that," Chambers said. "... I didn't see that the (five) other people have my unique background and laser focus on growing the economy of the future and lifting Hoosiers up through higher wages. I think economic stability, economic prosperity is fundamental to quality of life."

"When people are economically prosperous and they're stable, guess what happens? Government can get smaller."

Aside from that contrast, Chambers said he trusted voters to differentiate him from the rest of the contenders.

"I believe that voters are smart and they're going to filter through the noise and nonsense and they're going to laser in on the things that they believe in and the person they believe that can deliver the most," Chambers said.

He pointed to his two-year tenure with the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) as evidence of his ability to deliver upon promises, saying that he had to assess the global economic landscape and Indiana's role in it to enable the state to compete.

"And I think the results speak for themselves," he said.

Under Chambers, the IEDC reported \$22.2 billion in capital investment, surpassing a 2021 record of \$8.7 billion, and created over 24,000 new jobs with an average hourly wage of \$34.71.

"I under-promised and overachieved in my two years at the IEDC from an economic results perspective and I think that's what voters want. They don't want promises broken," Chambers said.

Another key part of his IEDC legacy is the controversial LEAP District in Lebanon and its related water war.

## Leaving social issues to lawmakers

Chambers' role as secretary also put him face-to-face with the most powerful members of the Senate and House when crafting economic development bills and pushing for funding. Indiana's gubernatorial role is relatively weak in favor of the legislature, meaning that any administration must work closely with lawmakers to advance their policy priorities.

Health care, especially its affordability, is something that Chambers said he'd like to tackle with a special emphasis on rural health care access and the dwindling number of mental health professionals.

"It is not acceptable that moms need to get an ambulance and drive from Auburn to Fort Wayne to have their baby; it's not acceptable that in rural areas you don't have access to maternal health care," Chambers said. "(There are) lots of challenges in health care but lots of opportunities too."

"Let me be clear: the results that we put on the board over the last two years could not have happened without a great partnership not only with the governor but also the legislature. And I'm very proud of that," Chambers said. "I feel that that's a relationship that can be built upon and strengthened even further as we tackle other challenges."

Chambers characterized himself as a "conservative Republican ... with conservative Republican beliefs," but didn't have the same appetite for social issues — whether it's

"Don't Say Gay" bills, banning abortion or discussing marijuana legalization — as legislators.

"The legislature is going to lead on those issues. I'm going to lead on economic issues," Chambers said, emphasizing that conversations needed to be had with "empathy and understanding on both sides."

"... I would like to focus my four years on growing the economy and lifting people up economically and making sure that Indiana is perceived to be a great state with a great quality of life," Chambers continued. "I think it is or I wouldn't be running for governor."

On the road, he said he heard more from Hoosiers about the economy, struggles with inflation or property taxes than social issues.

"That's where I'm going to stay focused," Chambers said. "I also think that while social issues are important and they have a role in our conversation ... but I think there's a tone, a focus that I'm going to have around those issues. One of empathy and understanding."

Chambers said key issues included curating Indiana jobs to keep college graduates, addressing the educational system and prioritizing public safety.

## A preview of what's next

Chambers' campaign intends to continue releasing detailed policy proposals, with Tuesday's "Combating China" plan following up on online safety and public safety plans. Next on the docket would be education, though Chambers declined to share details ahead of its release.

"We'll have a full rollout of that educational plan," Chambers said. "I'm a business guy, business guys have plans and strategies and I think you can tell that's the way we want to approach this."

Having details, rather than broad statements, is a priority for Chambers.

"We're not just putting out sound bites; we're putting out actual material and detailed policy proposals," he continued. "Education is soon to come out and it'll address all of those questions."

But Chambers did emphasize the importance of tracking outcomes when it came to education and its role in building Indiana's economy for the years to come.

"Economic development starts in third grade and if we have an increasing number of kids that can't read, that's not good for the Indiana economy," he said. "I think we need to have a forward-looking educational system that's more focused on individualized education and not a backward-looking educational system."

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# Native Plants: The Heroes Of Firescaping

**EARTHTALK**

Dear EarthTalk: What is firescaping and what's the connection with native plants?

Firescaping involves designing a landscape to fireproof a property while maintaining aesthetic appeal. By thoughtfully choosing and arranging plants and construction materials, the likelihood of igniting a fire, along with its potential severity and the speed at which it spreads, can be significantly reduced.

A firescape design often involves multiple zones. Zone 0, also known as a 'noncombustible zone,' is the perimeter region zero to five feet away from the home. Anything within this region should be incombustible. This most frequently means putting pavement, bricks or rocks around the border of the home to prevent any groundfires from being able to make direct contact. In addition, avoid planting vegetation beneath decks or balconies as fire and heat tends to climb upward.

All vegetation should be kept at least 10 feet away from homes for optimal fireproofing, and trees should always be kept at least 15 feet away from chimneys and powerlines. When choosing the placement of trees, consider their size at maturity versus their size at the time of planting. Additionally, the crowns of trees should be kept at least 10 feet

apart via pruning. This helps avoid fire laddering, whereby flames ignite lower branches or shrubs, initiating upward movement before spreading to adjacent trees.

Zone 1 is the 'lean, clean, green' area within 30 feet of a home. Certain plants, such as junipers, conifers and other evergreens should not be planted in this region because they contain oils, resins and waxes that make them flammable. Other characteristics of incendiary plants include those containing dry or dead twigs and needles and those having strongly aromatic terpenoid leaves.

Instead, choose plants that are less 'woody', have higher moisture content, and are ground covers. Deciduous trees and shrubs, as well as succulents and some perennials, are better-suited options. Furthermore, many native plants possess evolutionary adaptations, such as deep root systems and fire-resistant bark, which make them resilient to wildfires. Incorporating a variety of native plants fosters biodiversity, which in turn promotes plant health. Diverse and healthy ecosystems create natural firebreaks and slow the spread of fires.

The organization of vegetation and structures also play a vital role in firescaping. Incorporating materials like concrete, stone and brick in the construction of driveways, walkways, patios

and fences establishes effective firebreaks while offering both functional and aesthetic value. Though bare dirt can also serve as a noncombustible fuel break, it is not recommended due to the potential of soil erosion. Buffering, or creating separation between distinct layers of ground covers, shrubs and trees, limits a fire's ability to climb and intensify. Adding water features in firescaping introduces a dynamic element that can act as a natural firebreak. Ponds, streams or other water sources can serve as barriers, hindering the progression of wildfires by creating a moisture-rich environment. Finally, removing dead vegetation is a critical component of firescaping as it eliminates potential fuel sources for fires, disrupting the continuity of combustible material.

-CONTACTS: Q&A with the Authors of Firescaping Your Home: A Manual for Readiness in Wildfire Country, <https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/qa/timber-press-post-firescaping-qa/?lens=timber-press>; Firescaping, <https://firesafemarin.org/create-a-fire-smart-yard/firescaping/>.

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).

# Operation Christmas Child Volunteers Send Christmas Joy To Children Overseas

Area volunteers are celebrating the collection of gift-filled shoeboxes that will send a message of joy to children around the world: God loves you, and you're not forgotten!

This year, tens of thousands of volunteers contributed to Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse, by packing shoeboxes filled with fun toys, school supplies, and personal care items. The global Christmas project will deliver these gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 100 countries, including many who are suffering from war, poverty, disease and disaster. Each shoebox

is an opportunity to share the message of the Gospel and bring hope to children in need around the world.

Although drop-off locations have closed, there is still time to share hope and love with children overseas by packing a gift-filled shoebox online. Shoeboxes built online go to some of the hardest-to-reach areas in the world. Those who prefer the convenience of online shopping can browse [samaritanspurse.org/buildonline](http://samaritanspurse.org/buildonline) to select gifts matched to a child's specific age and gender, then finish packing the virtual shoebox by adding a photo and personal note of encouragement.

For more information on how to participate in Operation Christmas Child visit [samaritanspurse.org/occ](http://samaritanspurse.org/occ).

Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse, seeks to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way to children in need around the world and, together with the local church worldwide, to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has collected and delivered more than 209 million gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 170 countries and territories. This year, Operation Christmas Child will celebrate its 30th year of ministry!

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# State Senator, Marine Veteran Scott Baldwin To Seek Re-Election To Serve Hoosiers In Senate District 20

Indiana State Senator Scott Baldwin announced today he will seek re-election to serve Hoosiers in Senate District 20, which encompasses parts of Hamilton County including Noblesville and Carmel.

A U.S. Marine Corps veteran, retired police officer and successful business owner, Baldwin was elected to his first Senate term in 2020. He is up for re-election in 2024.

In the Senate, Baldwin has championed fiscal responsibility, supported balanced budgets and cut taxes for Hoosiers. He's also worked to ensure Hamilton County families and students can access high quality education, and to strengthen public safety and support our military and first responders.

"As your State Senator, I'm focused on cutting taxes, growing our economy, improving public safety and fighting for families, residents and businesses in Hamilton County," Baldwin said. "We need leaders at the Statehouse who understand that it's people and businesses, not the government, that create jobs and keep our economy moving. I will continue to be a strong voice for lower taxes, less regulation and efforts that help Hamilton County thrive."

During the 2023 legislative session, Baldwin authored a Senate Republican priority bill to allow more small businesses to deduct all state tax payments on federal tax returns, resulting in up to \$100 million in federal tax savings for these small businesses over the next two years at no cost to the state.

Also this year, Baldwin

supported Indiana's two-year state budget that makes historic investments in education, public health and public safety while paying down debts and cutting hundreds of millions of dollars in state tax payments. The budget also expands School Choice, giving more Hoosier families and parents the ability to choose the school that is best for their child.

In recent years, Baldwin has led several efforts to support our military, law enforcement and first responders and to strengthen public safety in our Hoosier communities.

Baldwin is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran who served during Operation Desert Storm and returned to Afghanistan when Operation Enduring Freedom began to assist Marine Corps personnel. He also served with the Indiana Department of Corrections and as a patrol officer, field training supervisor and detective supervisor with the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) for more than a decade where he earned two Medals of Bravery and a Medal of Valor. He later volunteered his time as a reserve detective with the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office.

"Having served as a Marine and law enforcement officer for more than 25 years, I know the sacrifices that our military members, first responders and their families make every day to keep us safe," Baldwin said. "I will always support our military, veterans and public safety officers and ensure they have the tools and resources they

need to protect our communities."

In 2023, Baldwin authored legislation to help communities hire more firefighters and to eliminate the state income tax for veterans, active duty and reserve members of the Armed Forces.

In 2022 and 2021, he authored or sponsored bills to improve our 911 system, expand the Military Family Relief Fund, and create a regional partnership to track illegal crime guns and help reduce violent crime. He's also been a strong advocate for mental health support for veterans, police officers and other first responders.

A Noblesville native, Baldwin is an active member of the community. He is a member of the Noblesville Lions Club and served for more than 10 years on the Finance Council of Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church. Baldwin is also a member of the American Legion and a lifetime member of the VFW and the NRA. He recently created a non-profit Hunting and Fishing show called Darkhorse Expeditions supporting veterans with PTSD.

Baldwin lives in Noblesville with his wife Jaime and their three children, Grace, Luke and Elyse.

Baldwin is seeking re-election as State Senator representing Senate District 20 in the 2024 election. For more information about Scott Baldwin and his campaign for State Senate visit [www.Vote-Baldwin.com](http://www.Vote-Baldwin.com).



SCOTT BALDWIN

# Wow! Thanks For The Response!



TIM TIMMONS  
Two Cents

We asked and you delivered. Boy, did you deliver! To recap – a week ago in this very space your favorite Hamilton County daily took the opportunity to ask what you wanted this paper to look like in 2024. Do you still want five editions a week? One? Somewhere in between? Do you want more pages? Less? What do you want to pay?

A few of you also shared your thoughts on the state of the Colts – and like most of us said you are pleasantly surprised . . . so far. Yeah, me, too. Especially after last Sunday!

Anyways – the overwhelming majority who replied said that you did not need an Online Edition five days a week – and a few of you said you did not need a Print Edition at all. Suggestions offered ranged from one day to three or four.

So the purpose of this week is several things. First and foremost, many thanks to so many of you who responded. I expected eight or nine maybe and got dozens instead. Also, thanks so much for the thoughtfulness you exhibited. I've long said that our readers are several notches above most. You are not just smart and informed, you are classy, friendly and kind. I hope you also know you are appreciated!

And the last goal of this week is to delve a little deeper into the question of frequency. No, we have not made a decision to reduce the number of days we publish yet – but if we do, what's the magic number?

One seems a bit low. But is four too many? Is every other day better? Two times a week? I know we're all busy, so what sort of schedule fits best with you? What's your routine?

We send out our electronic carrier force – I like to think of it like a fleet of cute little electronic boys

and girls on bicycles – bright and early at 4 a.m. Statistics from our partners at Constant Contact show that a fair amount of you read it between that 4 a.m. and 5. And that most of you read it after 7:30.

Some days are more well-read than others – although that varies.

That said, before we make any decisions, here's one more request for your input – and one more thank you! Sincerely! To respond, just shoot me an e-mail ([ttimmons@thetimes24-7.com](mailto:ttimmons@thetimes24-7.com)) and let me know what you think. Frequency is the question, but like last time – I enjoy hearing any thoughts you have.

*-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 [ttimmons@thetimes24-7.com](mailto:ttimmons@thetimes24-7.com).*

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# Carmel Clay Park Board Seeks To Protect Impact Fees

The Carmel/Clay Board of Parks and Recreation has filed a Complaint for Declaratory Action and Temporary Injunction against the City of Carmel. The action seeks to prevent further diversion of park and recreation impact fees from a designated fund earmarked for capital improvement projects constructed by the Park Board to funds under the control of the Carmel Redevelopment Commission (CRC).

“The Board attempted to work through this issue amicably with the City and was unable to do so. After receiving two legal opinions that funds generated by the impact fee ordinance are required to be deposited with the Park Board, we believe the only recourse to prevent further diversion of millions of dollars of impact fees allocated to parks to other purposes was through judicial clarification,” stated Park Board President Rich Taylor.

Since 2018, the Board of Public Works and Safety (BPW) has authorized over \$6.6 million of impact fees for 15 CRC projects to be diverted to funds controlled by the CRC. Additionally, the BPW will consider at its December 6 meeting nine resolutions for CRC projects redirecting millions of additional impact fee dollars away from the Park Board in violation of Indiana law and city ordinance.

The following information is provided to help explain park and recreation impact fees and why the Carmel/Clay Board of Parks and Recreation decided to take legal action:

**What is an impact fee?**  
In 1991, the Indiana

General Assembly passed legislation creating an alternative funding mechanism for local infrastructure improvements in fast-growing areas. As established in IC 36-7-4-1300 et seq., the Impact Fees Law allows units of local government the option of passing onto new residents the costs of building new infrastructure expected by and required to support those same residents. This helps maintain quality of life as the community grows, while also ensuring existing residents do not bear the financial burden of the population growth. Impact fees may be assessed for park and recreation facilities, roads and bridges, drainage and flood control, and water and sanitary utilities.

**When was the impact fee first implemented in Carmel?**

The Carmel Common Council first authorized the Park and Recreation Impact Fee in 1996 through adoption of Ordinance D-1249-96. As required by state statute, the impact fee has been reauthorized five times since its original adoption, most recently on November 18, 2019, through Ordinance Z-644-19. Carmel has chosen to only charge impact fees to support new parks and recreation infrastructure for the community.

**What is the process for approving the impact fee?**

The impact fee is formally established through the zone improvement plan, which is prepared by Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation in coordination with the City of Carmel’s Department of Community Services (DOCS),

reviewed and approved by the Carmel Plan Commission, which also serves as the impact fee advisory committee, and adopted by the Council through an ordinance. Plans must be updated at least once every five years per state statute.

**Who pays the impact fee?**

The impact fee applies to all new residential development within the City of Carmel. The fee is assessed and collected by DOCS for every new residential dwelling unit at the time a construction permit is issued, with funds deposited into a designated fund for CCPR controlled by the Park Board. For multifamily housing, the impact fee is collected for each unit in the building. (For example, the total fee for a 100-unit apartment complex = 100 x impact fee rate.) Fees are not charged for residential remodels or commercial developments of any type. Since most single and multifamily residences are built as part of a larger development, this fee is typically paid by the developer and factored into the sale price or rental fee as one of the many costs of construction.

**What projects do impact fees fund?**

Indiana law limits the use of impact fees for new capital projects solely within the parks or designated areas specifically identified in the zone improvement plan, which currently includes:

- West Park: Continued implementation of the 2016 West Park Master Plan, including phase 2 development of the westernmost portion of the park referred to as The Groves

- Bear Creek Park: Acquisition and development of a new park in northwest Carmel
- White River Corridor: Acquisition and development of parkland along or near the White River, including the White River Greenway

These projects were identified as needs in the 2020-2024 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which was developed concurrently with the current zone improvement plan. This master plan incorporated significant public input, including a statistically valid community survey, and was formally adopted by the Park Board in 2019.

Throughout much of CCPR’s 30-year history, impact fees have been a critical funding source to help develop our award-winning park and recreation system. Recent projects have included the acquisition of Bear Creek Park, partial funding for phase 1 of The Groves in West Park, partial funding for the development of Founders Park, and a 40-acre acquisition expanding West Park. CCPR has received just over \$4.9 million in impact fees since 2020.

**What is an impact fee credit and who approves them?**

Both state statute and city ordinance permit the issuance of credits in lieu of impact fees, commonly referred to as an impact fee credit. A developer or individual may be granted the option of financing, constructing, and dedicating parks and recreation infrastructure instead of paying all or part of the park impact fee. The waiver must be approved

by the Park Board if the improvement is specified within the zone improvement plan. The Park Board granted its first and only impact fee credit on December 14, 2021, in the amount of \$75,560 in return for the donation of approximately 9 acres of new parkland adjacent to Bear Creek Park and \$158,025 in improvements to be provided by the developer. The property will serve as part of a new Bear Creek Greenway.

With the adoption of Ordinance Z-547-10 on December 20, 2010, the Council gave the Board of Public Works (BPW) authority to grant impact fee credits for infrastructure or other improvements not included in the zone improvement plan. IC 36-7-4-1335 authorizes such waivers for improvements that are beneficial to the community and not just the development and are either a useful addition to the current zone improvement plan or reasonably likely to be included in a future zone improvement plan. Since 2018, BPW has approved impact fee credits totaling over \$12.9 million.

**How are impact fees being improperly directed to the CRC?**

Over \$6.6 million of the impact fee “credits” approved by BPW for 15 Carmel Redevelopment Commission projects are truly credits in name only. In each of these cases, the developer is directly paying CRC the amount of the impact fee owed, instead of providing new recreation amenities as envisioned by the enabling legislation. Two law firms independently evaluated this practice and concluded it does not comply

with state statute or city ordinance, which requires all sums collected as a result of the impact fee ordinance to be deposited into a designated fund controlled by the Park Board.

At its meeting on December 6, 2023, BPW is considering three similar “credits” for almost \$6.2 million and six additional credits for undefined amounts, likely totaling multiple millions of dollars more.

\*\*\*

**Summary**

While the Board of Public Works began approving impact fee credits for CRC projects in 2013, the number and value of these credits have escalated greatly since 2020. In approximately four years, the BPW has approved over \$10.9 million in impact fee credits, redirecting these dollars away from the Park Board and to CRC projects. During this same timeframe, the Park Board has only received \$4.9 million.

Based on the impact fee credits scheduled to be considered by the Board of Public Works at its December 6 meeting, if approved, CRC projects will receive at least an additional \$12.3 million in credits, and in reality much more. Added to the credits already approved, this means the CRC and its projects will receive over 83% of all impact fees collected or approved as of 2020.

Park impact fees originally intended as a source of revenue to provide necessary capital funding to the Park Board and Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation is now primarily a source of funding for the CRC.



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## BETSY From Page A1

into their humble abodes, the homeowners are often overjoyed with compliments about their restorations, decorations and furnishings.”

Attending NPA's Holiday Home Tour and annual September Historic Home Tour are just about the only ways to get inside of some of Noblesville's most unique and historic homes.

Besides stepping inside of five historic structures, including four homes, NPA's Holiday Home Tour also includes a Driving Tour of 10 homes with exterior viewing only.

Organizers of the tour suggest starting the tour promptly at 5 p.m., allowing ample time to leisurely tour the homes. It will take close to three hours to complete both the indoor and driving tours before returning to Preservation Hall for a dessert reception, 8-9 p.m., open to all ticket holders, tour homeowners and tour volunteers.

The four homeowners are happy to open their homes for this tour.

Noblesville Schools Education Foundation executive director Adriann Young, who loves old houses and decorating for Christmas, is opening her "ole chalet." The beautiful Young/Haggan Home is on Indiana 37, just north of the city, overlooking the White River.

Longtime Noblesville residents might recall the Swiss chalet-style home that was built in 1965 by Noblesville native and local business owner Vin Haggan, the last owner (1953-1990) of Noblesville Furniture store that was in the 900 block on the north side of Logan Street, since 1904. He bought the waterfront property and started construction on his home in 1965.

Passionate about European-style design, furniture and antiques, he used his extensive travels to inspire his decor both for his home and the front window of his store.

Haggan salvaged for his own home many historic furnishings, including more than 100 doors, wood panels and brass furnishings, from the 1915 10-story Kahn building, designed by Vonnegut, Bohn and Mueller at Meridian and Washington

streets in downtown Indianapolis.

Haggan died in 2013 and the house is now owned by his great-nephew, Aaron Young and wife Adriann, and young sons, Bennett and Samuel. They have been carefully renovating and restoring the home's beauty since marrying in 2015.

I was fortunate several years ago, before the Youngs were residents, to attend a birthday party at the beautiful and historic Haggan house. Another house I have visited, on a previous NPA home tour, is of neighbors, William and Julie McCormick. Their lovely home was built between 1892 and 1898 in the 1300 block of Maple Avenue for original owners Gordy and Lida Booth, who had a son, Rolland, and two daughters, Marian and Helen. After Gordy died in 1907, Lida in 1910 married widower Willis Flanders, who had four sons, Earl, Max, Halford and Kenneth. Lida's mother, Indiana (Aldred) Passwater also lived in the home after the death of her second husband until her death, in 1924, at age 82. She and Esom M. Riggs, a Civil War veteran, are buried on the Booth lot in Crownland Cemetery in Noblesville.

The McCormicks have lived in the home for 35 years, and they decorate with extensive Christmas decor collected for more than 40 years, some from Julie McCormick's grandma and parents. Their more than 20-year-old silver snow tree is crafted from a real Christmas tree left on the curb for trash pickup.

The Schmidt home, owned by John and Michelle Schmidt, on the corner of 11th and Chestnut streets, is the third home on the tour. Three years ago, I was fortunate to meet Michelle Schmidt, who at the time was helping to spearhead her East Plum Prairie Neighborhood's Community Clean Up Day. This year, she's heading up NPA's Holiday Home Tour.

Schmidt, a wife and mother of two, has lived in her house since 2009. She and John have two kids, ages 12 and 11. "We weren't from Noblesville, but when we were house shopping, we loved the

historical homes. We love the features of our home, the things that you can find in the area and the community that Noblesville has, the things that happen on the Square, the fact that we can walk there, and we can raise our family here," she told me during our meeting.

Her love for decorating for the holiday season was inspired by the joy she sees in her own children.

Their home was built around 1900 and its early residents were Henry and Goldia Decker, married in 1900, and who had a daughter, Rosemary, born in 1915. History of the home finds that Rosemary loved Christmas and enjoyed when her mother and Aunt Bertha would get together with neighbors and sing Christmas carols up and down the street. Rosemary also enjoyed seeing the decorations at the store where her mother worked as a sales lady.

The Schmidts converted the former bed-and-breakfast back into a single-family home and have restored the home that contains many Victorian elements, including transoms, a fireplace and original woodwork.

Michelle Schmidt is even more thrilled her grandmother's organ will be played by a professional pianist during Saturday's home tour, adding a beautiful and sentimental touch to the holiday experience for all.

The Gathering House, owned by Faith Community Church since 2022, in the 1300 block of Cherry Street, is the fourth home in the Holiday Home Tour.

The first residents to live in this house, built in 1892, were Amos and Susan Traut, who were married in 1865. They had two sons, Bert and Arthur, and a daughter, Frances. Amos Traut served in the Civil War in the 76th Regiment, Pennsylvania Infantry.

The house was sold in 1909 to George and Pearl Gertler. George was co-owner of the drug store, Gertler, Wall & Gertler and purchased the A.W. Truitt drug store in 1908.

Beryl and Lillian Kincaid bought the house in 1920 and lived there until 1924 when the house was

bought by William E. Gifford, owner of Gifford's Pharmacy at 39 S. Ninth St., president of the school board in 1927 and Noblesville mayor 1930-34.

Faith Community Church renovated the home, updated the kitchen and enhanced the outdoor space and named it The Gathering House, a place to engage for arts and culture, spirituality, coaching, education, volunteerism and various programs.

NPA's Preservation Hall, at 1274 Logan St., where the tour will begin and end, and the fifth structure on the tour, began its life in Ohio as a U.S. Army barracks during World War I. After the war, the building became a school and later a church in Cleveland.

In 1938, the building was donated to a local congregation which transported the building to Noblesville to serve as its church, until purchased in 2013 by former Noblesville mailman for the U.S. Postal Service, local musician John Gilmore, who turned the church into a concert venue for singer-songwriters called Logan Street Sanctuary, which quickly developed a reputation as a "listening room," attracting musicians from many states and other countries. We visited the Sanctuary many times to hear live music and watch our daughter get up a dance to the music.

In 2016, the Sanctuary was incorporated as a 501(c)(3), adding writing workshops, Polk Street Review, theatrical performances, parties and lectures and a venue for art.

NPA purchased the Sanctuary in 2019 and renamed it Preservation Hall, which now serves as NPA's official office, community center and performing arts venue and is available to the public to rent for celebrations and more.

Reading about the wonderful history of these homes make it even more intriguing to want to visit them on Saturday night during NPA's Holiday Home Tour.

*-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).*

## PARKS From Page A1

serve as a key member of the county parks board of directors through her position as board treasurer.

As a physician, Dr. Campbell has utilized her talents and resources to bring awareness of the physical and mental benefits provided by nature and green spaces. She championed the development of the SOMA station adult playground, located in Cool Creek Park, understanding the need to address the challenging issues of loneliness and isolation in our society today - especially within the elderly community. What makes the adult playground unique is its equipment that requires more than one person to operate, encouraging interaction and socialization among its users, in an outdoor environment.

Her dedication to parks and nature led to her serving as one of the founding members of Friends of Hamilton County Parks, Inc., a 501(c)(3) foundation devoted to the advancement of parks within Hamilton County. She also maintains a passionate support of naturalists and their efforts to educate youth about nature and land stewardship.

When asked about her

future goals as a parks board member, Dr. Campbell states "I'm fully committed to the development of a world-class conservatory at Coxhall Gardens (in Carmel, Indiana) that would serve as a one-of-a-kind resource for the Hamilton County community, designed to attract the most respected individuals and organizations seeking to pioneer the latest advancements in botany, horticulture and related fields that lead to the advancement of sustainable practices, such as vertical gardening and other responsible gardening and growing practices."

The impact Dr. Campbell has had on efforts to ensure future generations will enjoy quality parks, programming and education is impossible to measure. And while her fellow board members, park professionals, family members and friends are keenly aware of her contributions, they readily admit that they believe she's just getting started!

To learn more about Hamilton County Parks and Recreation and the department's mission, visit [MyHamiltonCountyParks.com](http://MyHamiltonCountyParks.com), follow the park department on Facebook or call 317-770-4400.

## SCHOOLS From Page A1

- New dedicated space for multilingual family support.
- New adult education initiative coming in 2024.
- The NHS Class of 2023 earned over \$5 million in scholarships and 50% of the class graduated with an academic honors or technical diploma.

Hile also shared current designs and progress updates regarding two major construction projects at the high school. The first project to expand athletic facilities is currently underway, and a second will begin next month to add STEM classrooms and expand performing arts spaces. The high school is over capacity with more than 3,200 students and has experienced significant ongoing student demand for these programs. The expansions are being funded through bonds (loans) and will not raise the tax rate or use referendum or education dollars.

Regarding finances, Hile reported that the total property tax rate decreased for the fifth year in a row and that the district recently settled a new contract with teachers that will bring the largest teacher salary funding increase in the history of Noblesville Schools. This commitment to competitive compensation is just one measure Noblesville Schools is

taking to attract and retain strong staff amid a challenging labor shortage.

The address also touched on the district's commitments to community outreach, new communication and relationship-building tools, and their strong partnership with the Noblesville Police Department.

Hile reported that in addition to staffing, key challenges currently impacting public schools are state funding and a growing lack of respect for educators and education as a profession. He stated that he is committed to working closely with state and local elected officials, and members of the public, to ensure continued strong support for students, teachers and public schools.

Guests at the luncheon were treated to a holiday choir concert by the NHS Singers, including a surprise performance by Hile, a former choir director, joining in with the choir. The luncheon also featured holiday bell music performed by North Elementary students, a STEM exhibition hosted by students from White River Elementary, and a visit from NHS cheerleaders and the Miller Man mascot.

Visit [noblesvilleschools.org](http://noblesvilleschools.org) to watch the video of Hile's address.



The Times photo by Betsy Reason

Noblesville Preservation Alliance's Preservation Hall, at 1274 Logan St., will be the starting and ending location for NPA's Holiday Home Tour Saturday night.



The Times photo by Betsy Reason

William and Julie McCormick have enjoyed decorating their home, built between 1892 and 1898, in the 1300 block of Maple Avenue for original owners Gordy and Lida Booth.



The Times photo by Betsy Reason

The Gathering House, owned by Faith Community Church since 2022, in the 1300 block of Cherry Street, was built in 1892 and will be on NPA's Holiday Home Tour.

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# I ndiana

# Facts & Fun



# 11

Clay

## Number $\div$ Stumpers

1. How many years has it been since Clay County established it's first courthouse?  
 $\geq$
2. What is the population density of Brazil?  
 $\leq$
3. How many more square miles of land is there in the county than water?  
 $\geq$
4. What percentage of land in the County is made up of Brazil?  
 $\leq$

Answers: 1. 190 Years 2. About 2,192 people/sq mi 3. 354.76 square miles 4. 1.03%

## Did You Know?

- Clay County occupies 2.78 square miles of water and 357.54 square miles of land.
- The county contains six towns, one city and 43 unincorporated communities.
- Brazil, the county seat, has an estimated population of 8,110 and 3.7 square miles of land.
- Clay County was found in 1825 and named in honor of Henry Clay.
- The county has had four different courthouses since 1828.

## Got Words?

Since 1828 Clay County has built four courthouses in two different locations. The last time the courthouse was built it was relocated to a more central area in the county. Why do you think it is important that courthouses are in the center of the town?

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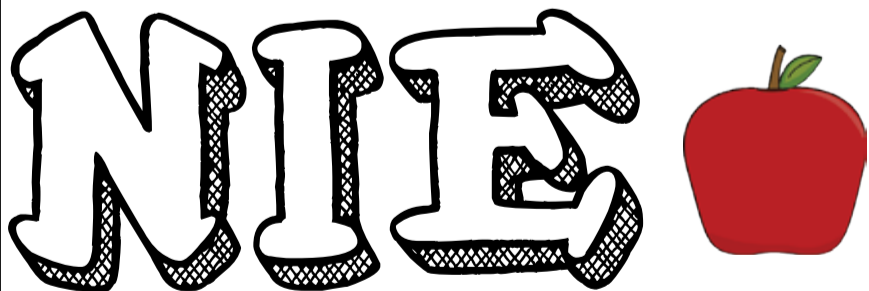
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Unscramble the words below!

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2. RABZLI
3. HEYRN YAQL
4. UCMTIEMNSO
5. ALCY CTUNOY

Answers: 1. Courthouse 2. Brazil 3. Henry Clay 4. Communities 5. Clay County

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