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TODAY'S VERSE

Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Hamilton Happenings

The Human Society of Hamilton County wants you to celebrate Valentine's Day with some furry sweethearts! Are you looking for the pawfect gift for your Valentine? Or how about a purrsonalized PawGram or Valentine?! Then please consider ordering a PawGram for \$75 or an email Valentine for \$35. The PawGram means that a loved one of your choosing will receive a mailed PawGram, pawprint, and your choice of a photo of an adoptable cat or dog. The Valentine will find a loved one of your choosing getting an email that includes a photo of your Valentine hanging on your choice of a cat or dog's kennel/cage dedicated in honor or memory of a loved one - furry or human. Orders must be placed by Feb. 14 at 4 p.m. Please allow ample time for post office delivery. For more info, go to www. HamiltonHumane.com

Three Things You Should Know

1 Churches and other historic houses of worship stand among the most architecturally distinguished structures in a community, and when congregations shrink, maintenance suffers and landmarks become threatened. That's why Indiana Landmarks created the Sacred Places Indiana Fund supported by funding from Eli Lilly. The fund awards matching grants and applications are open through June 15. Congregations can learn more during a free online informational webinar on Feb. 25. To RSVP go to www.indianalandmarks.org/sacred-places-indiana-webinar/, or call (317) 639-4534.

2 The Indiana Alcohol and Tobacco Commission issued notice this week to over 8,200 tobacco sellers throughout Indiana, warning them about the illegal sale of nitrous oxide. Pursuant to Indiana Code § 35-46-6-3, a person who knowingly or intentionally uses or distributes nitrous oxide with the intent to cause a condition of intoxication, euphoria, excitement, exhilaration, stupefaction, or dulling of the senses of another person commits a Class B misdemeanor (unless used for medical purposes). However, the offense is a Class A misdemeanor if the person has a prior unrelated conviction. To date, 18 Indiana tobacco certificate holders have been cited for this illegal activity and some of their employees have been referred for criminal prosecution.

3 Spring Mill State Park will offer an event that explores the hardships winter presented for soldiers of the Civil War on Feb. 22-23. The Pioneer Village will be open from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. each day with "Abraham Lincoln" (a reenactor provided by Lawrence County Tourism) giving a speech at 12:45 p.m. in the Gristmill each day. A winter tactical battle reenactment will be presented at 2 p.m. on each day. At 1:45 p.m. on each day, guests will be directed to the viewing areas from where they can safely view the battle for possession of the village. Both before and after the reenactment, visitors can tour the village and visit with Lincoln, talk to soldiers, and get warmed by the fires.

The TIMES



NOBLESVILLE, INDIANA

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Boomer Bits

Ask Rusty – About When to Claim Social Security and Taxation of Benefits



Social Security Matters

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

Dear Rusty: I am 65 and currently working full-time. Can I apply for and start receiving my Social Security benefit? I'd expect to have to pay income tax on it if/when I do.

Signed: Curious Worker

Dear Curious Worker: If you are working full time, you should likely delay claiming Social Security at this time. At age 65, you haven't yet reached your SS full retirement age (FRA), so you will be subject to Social Security's "annual earnings test" which limits how much you can earn from work while collecting early benefits. The earnings limit for 2025 is \$23,400 and if you earn more than the annual limit, SS will take away \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit. If you earn significantly over the limit, you may even be temporarily ineligible to

collect SS benefits. FYI, the annual earnings limit goes away when you reach your full retirement age, which for you is 66 years and 10 months, or March 2026.

As you obviously already know, a portion of your Social Security may be subject to income tax after you start collecting. The threshold for taxation of SS benefits depends on your IRS filing status – if you file your taxes as a single and your combined income from all sources (including half of the SS benefit you received during the tax year) exceeds \$25,000 then 50% of your received SS benefits are taxable. But if you file taxes as "married/jointly" and your combined income is over \$32,000, then up to 85% of your received SS benefits are taxable. Thus, whenever you claim

See RUSTY Page A3

Indiana 16th Best for Elderly

- A new study reveals the best states for elderly care – and the great Hoosier State ranked 16th in the U.S.
- Montana is top, ranking furthest from overcapacity with 174.16 beds per 100 residents.
- Oklahoma follows in second with 172.03 beds per 100 residents, followed by Oregon in third with 169.81 beds per 100 residents.

See BEST Page A3

How to Plan for Retirement

(Family Features) Being financially secure in retirement starts while you're still working. Because you likely don't want to remain in the workforce forever, creating a plan can help ensure you're confident in living comfortably in retirement when the time comes.

Retirement plans and

See PLAN Page A3

Embrace Downtown Noblesville



File photo

Jensen has led revitalization efforts throughout Noblesville.

The City of Noblesville announced it is beginning final design of a project called Embrace Downtown, which will substantially benefit downtown businesses, their customers and residents.

The project team received a substantial amount of input and feedback when the project was initiated beginning in 2020, and has a head start in the design phase for Embrace Downtown, which will include critical infrastructure and beautification upgrades to the downtown area. At this time, project phasing is under review and will be determined later this year. The design of the project's first phase will be completed in 2025, and construction on the first phase is expected to be completed in 2026.

"Noblesville has experienced positive growth over the past 30 years since the last significant downtown infrastructure improvements were made," Noblesville Mayor Chris Jensen said. "We are excited to address these needs, while adding beautification elements. We have seen several revitalization efforts throughout Noblesville, and Embrace Downtown will add elements to promote an environment that supports a vibrant and healthy downtown economy."

Improvements as part of the project will enhance pedestrian safety and mobility. Beautification elements will keep downtown Noblesville as an attractive and welcoming

See EMBRACE Page A3

TODAY'S HEALTH TIP

Low doses of antidepressant medications can help hot flashes in some women.

Today's health tip was brought to you by Dr. John Roberts.



TODAY'S QUOTE

"The time is always right to do what's right." Dr. Martin Luther King

HONEST HOOSIER

Can't say I'm ever sorry to see January go. Even though February can be colder, I look at it as a step closer to spring.



TODAY'S JOKE

How do you know if a pool is safe for diving? It deep ends!

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



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➔ **OBITUARY**

Gary Merrill

March 21, 1960 - January 23, 2025

Gary Joe Merrill, age 64, of Sheridan, Indiana, passed away peacefully at home on January 23, 2025, surrounded by his loving family. Born on March 21, 1960, to Montie and Dorothy (Wiles) Merrill, Gary led a simple yet profoundly meaningful life filled with love, hard work, and community.



He was a 1978 graduate of Marion-Adams High School (now Sheridan Community Schools). Gary married his high school sweetheart, Cheryl (Haughey) Merrill, on March 28, 1980. During their nearly 45 years together, they built a life centered on family and the values of honesty and kindness.

Gary was a man of many passions. He had a deep appreciation for farming, antique tractors and old cars, often spending countless hours restoring these relics of the past. His barn was more than a workshop, it was a place where stories were told, skills were shared, memories were made and many learned the value of hard work. When he wasn't working on his latest project, he could often be found supporting local community causes, a reflection of his generous spirit and commitment to helping others. He worked hard and cherished the camaraderie of those he worked with, valuing the relationships he built over the years.

When he wasn't working or tinkering with something in the barn, Gary found his greatest joy in spending time with his family. Family was at the heart of everything Gary did. He adored his grandchildren, who loved their "Papaw". He found great joy in watching them play sports, cheering them on from the sidelines with a smile and words of encouragement. He was a pillar of strength and a source of wisdom to his children and grandchildren, always leading by example with his honesty, kindness, and unwavering work ethic.

Gary leaves behind his beloved wife, Cheryl (Haughey) Merrill of Sheridan; his daughters, Erin Merrill-Macy and her husband, Travis Macy of Sheridan, and Lindsey Martin and her husband Ryan Martin of Sheridan; his grandchildren, Auburn Macy, Ralston Macy, Ayers Macy and Alyssa Martin, who will carry forward his legacy of love and integrity. He leaves behind his brothers, Mike Merrill of Cole Cape, MO, David Merrill of Warsaw, MO, and Scott Merrill and his wife Teresa of Westfield, IN. He is also survived by brother-in-law, Michael McKinney; sister-in-law, Cathy Rudd; brother/sister in Law, Eddie and Connie Mossburg; and several nieces, nephews and great-nieces and great-nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Montie and Dorothy Merrill; parents-in-law, Jim and Hilda Haughey; sisters-in-law, Mary Merrill, and Carolyn McKinney; and brother-in-law, Jimmy Haughey.

Gary's life will be casually celebrated at 11:00 am on Thursday, January 30, 2025, at Kercheval Funeral Home, 306 E. 10th Street, Sheridan, Indiana. Burial will follow at Crown View Cemetery in Sheridan, Indiana. Rev. Mike Srbljan will be officiating. Visitation will take place from 4:00-8:00 pm on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, at Kercheval Funeral Home in Sheridan.

Gary will be remembered for his friendly demeanor, his warm conversations with everyone he met, and his ability to make people feel valued. He was a simple man with a heart full of love and quiet generosity. Though his hands were often calloused from hard work, they were always ready to help others. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him but never forgotten. His legacy lives on in the lives he touched and the memories he created.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to Sheridan Kids Coats, c/o First Farmers Bank and Trust in Sheridan, Indiana, an organization very close to his heart.

Serving at The Coalition for the Homeless



BONNIE ZICKGRAF
Learning the Journey

Journal entry from May 31, 2019: I visited the Orlando Coalition for the Homeless today. We prepared and served hot meals to many shelter residents, homeless individuals, and a few families, too.

All except two individuals chose prayer cards when offered during the meal. One man told me I worship a different God than his, because his God is a monster. He was angry. We chatted for a minute and he understood that my God...our God, is a God of love much stronger than his monster-god.

Another individual declined any prayer cards telling me he doesn't believe "in that stuff" and that he didn't believe in AA either, or in a higher power, but he was polite. I asked him what he did believe in, but he didn't answer.

Several gentlemen approached me two or three times or called me over to where they were sitting to ask for more prayer cards or just to be recognized or heard. One gentleman carried his well-used Bible and a journal and laid them open in front of him as he tried to eat. He spoke in many disconnected thoughts (he really struggled to keep them together) and approached me several times later,

telling me he was better tonight because we spoke positively about God.

Another gentleman was staring into space much of the meal time and ate extremely slowly, but accepted prayer cards. He waved to call me over two more times to get additional cards and he finally whispered a few (mostly inaudible) words at the third encounter.

There was only one gentleman who got out of hand, highly agitated and argumentative with Team Leader Calvin who gave chase outside the dining hall along with security personnel.

There was a single mother and her (angry) grandmother with two small children. (I wished I would have brought the Jesus Activity books and crayons for kids, but they liked the prayer cards, too, just to look at and hold onto).

I asked a woman emptying her trash if she was traveling alone. She explained she was traveling with her husband and she smiled as he approached before they departed for the streets.

Another woman with trembling hands started picking at the trash, but she stopped and turned away when she saw me approaching.

One gentleman asked

if I would marry him. I told him as much as I appreciated his proposal, I would probably not be marrying him today.

Two gentlemen wearing lots of gold and durags had blank eyes. Empty eyes, scary eyes, but they (very cautiously) took prayer cards. (The prayer cards are actually quite a big hit here.)

"They are homeless, but don't let them leave without hope." This was my prayer before the night started. Calvin, the Kitchen Director, said a prayer at the start of the meal for each of the two meal shifts. He says he likes to pray, so I yielded to him. But due to the volume of people coming and going throughout the allotted time span to eat, many did not pray for their meal. I think many of them would have been receptive with guidance. (Forgive me, Lord, I should have offered individually; it is difficult to keep track and keep up.) Maybe we should have considered setting up a prayer table, too (?), but time and people moved so quickly, it may not be practical in this setting. This organization has their routine and it works to help feed the many who are hungry. Before leaving, I gave Calvin a Bible and we reviewed the Concordance together,

but I could see he struggled to read the small print. This particular faithful servant will receive a larger print Bible, I shall see to that.

[Lord, please protect all of them wherever they travel and pour your mercy, comfort, and love over them. Bless them all and all those who came to help. They are all your children and you are their hope for better days. Amen.]

[Thought for today, January 26, 2025]- I wonder how many people I met that day are still in Orlando; still hungry, still homeless, still alive. It's almost six years ago and still, I pray.

And there, but by the grace of God, go I. And I am humbly thankful. (And, yes, Calvin did receive his large-print Bible).

Psalm 23:5 (NLT) "You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You honor me by anointing my head with oil.

My cup overflows with blessings."

(Our enemies are not your children, Lord, but that which works against us).

Bonnie Zickgraf is a retired pastor, author, columnist for The Times, an RN in mental health nursing and health plan accreditations. Send comments and prayer requests to bonnie_zickgraf@gmail.com.

State Champs!



Photo courtesy NHS

Noblesville High School Theatre brought home state titles from the 2025 Indiana Thespians State Conference, which was held Jan. 24-26 at Avon High School. NHS finished as the Competition Show State Champs, scoring 272 out of 280. Individually, junior Blake Valentine won Best Actor, senior Branden Holmes won Best Supporting Actor, junior Devin Ruse won Best Cameo, Jack Rachels and Andrew Rivera earned the State Champ title for their Duet Acting piece from True West by Sam Shepard. The good news didn't stop there though. Senior Ehren Knerr was offered multiple scholarships for Musical Theatre. Juniors Kate Boice and Ellie Seago were made State Thespian Officers, accounting for two of the 10 State Thespian Officers for the next school year. And NHS earned Gold Honor Troupe for the ninth year in a row.

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↓ RUSTY From Page A1

SS, you may wish to consider having income tax withheld from your SS benefit. This is optional, and you can do this by submitting IRS Form W-4V to your local Social Security office, or you could choose to increase your income tax withholding at work or, alternatively, pay estimated income taxes quarterly.

So, whether you can claim Social Security now depends entirely on how much you will earn from working full time prior to your FRA. If you exceed the annual earnings limit before your FRA, SS will take away some of your benefits or, if you greatly exceed the earnings limit, you may even be temporarily ineligible to get benefits (until you

either reach your FRA or earn less). But note, if you decide to claim early and any SS benefits are withheld because you exceeded the earnings limit, you will get credit for that (in the form of a slightly increased benefit) after you reach your full retirement age.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. Russell Gloor is the, National Social Security Advisor at the AMAC Foundation, the non-profit arm of the Association of Mature American Citizens. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

↓ PLAN From Page A1

financial aspirations are deeply personal and often tied to family life, ambitions and values, meaning it's entirely up to you when to start planning and saving for your post-work years. However, the worrying reality is that many households across the U.S. don't feel in control of their finances. According to a study from World Financial Group, 11% of households have "forfeited contributions to their retirement accounts," a decision that will have an impact later in life.

To ensure you're prepared, consider these steps to plan for retirement.

Understand When You Can Retire and How Much Money You Will Need

Because nearly everyone has different goals for retirement, there's no one-size-fits-all approach to when and how much money you'll need to stop working. Assess your unique situation – including all your forms of income, assets and savings – and calculate what you'll need to maintain your standard of living and cover expenses, including any discretionary spending, in retirement.

Choose an Appropriate Retirement Plan for Your Needs

In addition to figuring out how much you should save, having the right savings vehicle is an important consideration. A good place to start is an employer-sponsored retirement plan with fund-matching, such as a 401(k). If a workplace retirement plan is not available, consider setting aside money for retirement through an IRA that provides access to a range of investments, including stocks, bonds and mutual funds. Some insurance products may also provide benefits during retirement, such as life insurance coverage, supplemental income and tax advantages.

Take Stock of Your Current Assets

Your current assets include more than just what's in your bank account. Beyond your paycheck, factor in real estate, investment accounts and any insurance policies you may have. If you need help understanding your finances, take a financial literacy quiz to test your knowledge and then consider meeting with a financial services expert.

Create a Retirement Budget and Look at Ways to Reduce Expenses

Your retirement budget should look similar to yours while still part of the workforce. Start by accounting for how much money is coming in and how much is going out toward fixed expenses like utilities, cellphone bills, insurance premiums, rent or mortgage and vehicle payments then track other expenses like groceries, gasoline and other spending toward non-essentials like entertainment and clothing. From there, look for ways to cut expenses to stretch your funds further, such as canceling a streaming service, dining out less or skipping a new movie release.

Account for Unexpected Expenses

Before retirement, consider how you'd handle unexpected expenses such as a medical emergency, home or vehicle repair or moving into an assisted living facility. Suppose you don't have the appropriate health and homeowner's insurance coverage. In that case, you may be covering those costs out-of-pocket, which could limit or hinder your financial flexibility on a fixed income.

Test your literacy and find additional resources to plan for retirement at WorldFinancialGroup.com.

↓ BEST From Page A1

- Alaska was reported as the worst state for elderly care, ranking closest to overcapacity with 114.56 beds per 100 residents, followed by West Virginia with 115.93 beds per 100 residents.

As people live longer, the demand for elderly care has reached an all-time high, and widespread concerns about the capacity to care for the growing senior population have arisen. These anxieties are only compounded by the increase in health issues among the elderly during the winter.

That's why personal injury lawyers Triumph Law, P.C. examined data from KFF.org to identify the states with the best and worst capacity levels for elderly care.

The research calculated the number of certified beds in care homes per state based on the number of facilities in each state and the average number of beds per facility. This was then compared to the number of residents per state in nursing and care facilities to identify their capacity rates.

Montana was deemed the best state for elderly care with 174.16 beds per 100 nursing home residents. Montana reported 5,580 beds for 3,204 residents.

The second-best state was Oklahoma, which had 172.03 beds per 100 residents. This equated to 28,207 certified beds for 16,397 residents in the state.

Ranking as the third best state was Oregon, with 169.81 beds per 100 residents. In the state, there was a total of 10,681 beds for 6,290 residents.

Texas followed in fourth, with 155.55 beds per 100 residents. Overall, this figure correlated to 132,765 beds for 85,351 care facility residents.

Completing the top five best states for elderly care was Missouri, which reported 155.35 beds per 100 residents. There were a total of 53,142 beds for 34,209 residents in the state.

Other states that had a high-capacity rate for elderly care were Idaho (152.65), Utah (151.36), Arkansas (150.66), Wisconsin (148.99), and Wyoming (147.15).

At the other end of the spectrum, Alaska was found to be the worst state for elderly care, with its nursing and care facilities nearing overcapacity. There were 114.56 beds per 100 residents, which corresponded to 834 beds for 728 care home residents in total.

Following in second was West Virginia, with 115.93 beds per 100 residents. West Virginia reported 10,726 certified beds for 9,252 care home residents.

In third was New York, with 116.30 beds per 100 residents. This figure represented 112,655 certified beds for 96,866 residents overall.

Ranking fourth was North Dakota, which reported 116.47 beds per 100 residents. This amounted to 5,244 beds for 4,502 nursing and care facility residents.

Rounding out the top five was Florida, which had 117.41 beds per 100 residents. In total, this corresponded to 84,476 beds for 71,948 residents.

Other states that were among the worst for elderly care, with beds nearing overcapacity, were California (117.66), Virginia (119.30), South Dakota (19.78), Rhode Island (122.08), and Maine (123.13).

Commenting on the findings, Robert Carichoff, Personal Injury Lawyer for Triumph Law, P.C. said, "Life expectancy has extended significantly in recent decades, with individuals living well into their 80s, 90s, and beyond. However, while the longevity of Americans is undoubtedly something to celebrate, there has been an understandable increase in age-related diseases and deterioration, meaning that the need for quality elder care has never been so high.

"The elder care sector is facing a significant challenge, and many states are not fully equipped to deal with it. While some states have plenty of capacity for the booming numbers of elderly residents, many states are reaching overcapacity, and this will be a severe problem in the future if it isn't one already.

"Economic, healthcare, and staffing challenges may be factors affecting the states struggling the most with elderly care, alongside disparities in the demographics. Many states ranking among the worst for elderly care have some of the largest elderly populations, so resources are stretched thinner as demand is more intense. Additionally, some of the most populated states such as New York, California, and Florida have higher costs of living which can complicate operational expenses or hinder the expansion of care facilities. Consequently, while these states are home to large elderly populations, the high demand and cost pressures can lead to limited per-capita capacity. "Going forward, funding for elder care is paramount, as this can ensure that the care is to the best possible standard, resources are fully replenished, and employees are paid well. Hopefully, we will only discover more ways in which we can help people of advanced age be happy, comfortable, and live their best lives way beyond retirement."

↓ EMBRACE From Page A1

place to eat, shop and live, providing more opportunities for visitors to remain downtown for longer periods.

The project design team, with extensive experience in phasing construction to minimize disruptions, will actively communicate with downtown businesses to reduce construction impact. The City of Noblesville is implementing a communications plan that includes multiple opportunities for stakeholders to share their opinions, from regular office hours to digital communications

and a social media effort.

In the coming months, we'll share more from local business owners on the importance of Embrace Downtown and the benefits it will provide to our historic core.

People interested in Embrace Downtown are encouraged to visit www.EmbraceDowntownNoblesville.com to learn more about the project. To learn more about the project, you can also follow the project on X and Facebook. A video featuring Mayor Jensen announcing the project is also available.

Westfield Council on Disabilities Launches Art Program

The Westfield Mayor's Council on Disabilities

has launched the Community Art Exhibition program in partnership with the City of Westfield. This new initiative, sponsored by Colt Moving, gives individuals in our community who have varying disabilities an opportunity to showcase their unique talents, stories, and creative expressions. To qualify, you must also be a Westfield or Westfield Washington Township resident and can be of any age.

"Art is a powerful vehicle for self-expression for everyone, and for people with disabilities, it can be even more significant," said Nicole Southerland, Westfield Mayor's Council on Disabilities Chairperson. "This exhibition offers a wonderful opportunity for artists to showcase their personal experiences and creativity, and we're thrilled the City of Westfield shared our vision."

All artistic medium submissions are accepted for review starting Monday, February 3, including painting, photography, digital art, sculptures, and more. To submit your artwork, please bring it to Westfield City Services, 2728 E. 171st Street, or Westfield Washington Township, 17400

Westfield Boulevard.

Please also include your name, age, contact information, and the name of your piece with your submission. For virtual submissions, please submit your art to communications@westfield.in.gov in a .jpeg, .png, and/or a .pdf file. Submissions are accepted throughout the year and will be reviewed on a monthly basis.

"Creativity, innovation, and celebrating diverse talents are values that make Westfield such a vibrant community," said Mayor Scott Willis. "This exhibition provides a much-needed platform for these local artists."

The exhibition display will kick off on Saturday, March 1, at the Westfield Washington Public Library during the Westfield Sensory Day event. The event runs from 1 – 4 p.m. Following the opening, pieces submitted will be on display year-round at participating local businesses and then will be returned to the artist after one year, unless requested back sooner. If you are interested in having art displayed in your business, please reach out to communications@westfield.in.gov.

PUBLIC NOTICE

HAMILTON COUNTY REGIONAL UTILITY DISTRICT MEETING NOTICE

Pursuant to IC 5-14-1.5-5 (a) The Hamilton County Regional Utility District will meet on Monday, February 10, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in the Commissioners Courtroom located in the Hamilton County Government and Judicial Center, One Hamilton County Square, Noblesville, Indiana 46060. Meeting will begin with Executive Session from 10:00 a.m.-10:10 a.m. for discussion of the Implementation of Security Systems IC 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(C), Purchase or Lease of Real Estate IC 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(2)(D), Discussion of Pending Litigation IC 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(2)(B), and Discussion of Personnel IC 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(7). Public session to discuss the utility district business will immediately follow the Executive Session.

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Catching Up On Purdue Boilermaker Alums in NFL



KENNY THOMPSON
Columnist

Former Purdue star George Karlaftis and the Kansas City Chiefs can make NFL history Feb. 9 with a victory against the Philadelphia Eagles in Super Bowl LIX in New Orleans.

No team has won three consecutive Super Bowl championships. Only three other franchises have played in at least three consecutive Super Bowls: the 1971-73 Miami Dolphins, the 1990-93 Buffalo Bills and the 2016-18 New England Patriots.

The Bob Griese-led Dolphins lost Super Bowl VI to the Dallas Cowboys but won the following two Super Bowl titles against Washington and Minnesota. Buffalo is still trying to shed the stigma of four consecutive Super Bowl losses. The Patriots were denied back-to-back titles by the Eagles in Super Bowl LII, 41-33.

In an NFL season that saw several Purdue alumni sidelined with injuries, Karlaftis recorded eight sacks to go along with 32 tackles in his third season. He's added three sacks and nine tackles in playoff victories against Houston and Buffalo.

Aidan O'Connell battled thumb and knee injuries to still make seven starts at quarterback for the Las Vegas Raiders. His 1,612 passing yards and eight touchdown passes moved O'Connell up the list of Purdue alumni NFL quarterbacks. At 3,080 career passing yards, O'Connell moved past Scott Campbell (2,983) and is now just 185 yards away from catching Mark Herrmann.

But the Raiders' coaching change to 73-year-old Pete Carroll could spell the end of O'Connell's days in Las Vegas. With minority owner Tom Brady and handpicked new general manager John Spytek (an ironic last name considering Brady's connections to the cheating Patriots), O'Connell's career statistics of 3,830 passing yards, 20 TDs and 17 starts may not increase in 2025.

(A bit of trivia: Purdue quarterback alumni have amassed 252,963 passing yards, 1,664 TD passes and 1,191 starts according to the Elias Sports Bureau. Notre Dame QBs have 178,454 NFL passing yards, 1,144 TDs and 768 starts. Southern Cal is third at 178,167 yards along with 1,015 TDs and 788 starts.)

Tyrone Tracy Jr. was voted to the 2024 All-Rookie Team by the Pro Football Writers Association. Tracy became a starter in Week 5 for the New York Giants and finished with 839 rushing yards and five touchdowns. He also caught 38 passes for

284 yards and a score.

Running back Raheem Mostert was limited to 85 carries, 124 fewer than in 2023, and finished with 278 yards and two TDs for the Miami Dolphins.

Tight end Payne Durham scored the first two touchdowns of his NFL career and completed his second pro season at Tampa Bay with 11 receptions for 115 yards.

Oft-injured defensive back Cory Trice Jr. earned his first NFL start for the Pittsburgh Steelers in the season finale against Cincinnati. His team-high 11 tackles padded his season total to 21 to go along with an interception.

Safety Sanoussi Kane completed his rookie season with the Baltimore Ravens with nine tackles in 15 games. Linebacker Jalen Graham made four tackles while mostly on special teams with San Francisco.

Although he missed nine games with an injury, Charlie Jones returned a kickoff for a touchdown and averaged 40 yards over five kickoff returns for the Cincinnati Bengals. Jones also brought back 14 punts for 99 yards.

Five Boilermaker alumni finished the 2024 season on injured reserve. Linebacker Derrick Barnes was one of several losses on the Detroit Lions defense, starting the first three games of the season before going down.

New England linebacker Ja'Whaun Bentley saw his season end after two games. A dislocated hip put Cleveland wide receiver David Bell out of action during his only game of the season. Wide receiver Rondale Moore never suited up for Atlanta after a trade from the Arizona Cardinals, suffering a leg injury during a preseason practice.

Veteran cornerback Anthony Brown's comeback attempt with Carolina ended with a preseason thumb injury.

Where are they now? One of the beneficiaries of Jayden Daniels' outstanding rookie season in Washington could be assistant quarterbacks coach David Blough.

The former Purdue and NFL quarterback picked the right time and place to go after retiring from a playing career with Detroit and Arizona. The Commanders' staff also includes second-year assistant defensive line coach Ryan Kerrigan, the franchise's all-time sacks leader with 95.5.

Two former Purdue assistant coaches found new homes shortly after season's end. Lou Anarumo is the new defensive coordinator for the Indianapolis Colts

following his dismissal in Cincinnati. He was defensive backs coach at Purdue from 2004 to 2011, and his pupils included Bernard Pollard and Ricardo Allen.

Terrell Williams was hired in Detroit as run game coordinator/defensive line coach. Williams' prize pupils at Purdue from 2006-09 include first-round picks Anthony Spencer and Ryan Kerrigan. Williams previously was employed at Oakland, Miami and Tennessee.

Tyron Tracy is the latest to benefit from the coaching of Joel Thomas, Giants running backs coach whose star pupils include Alvin Kamara and Mark Ingram II in New Orleans. Thomas coached at Purdue under Joe Tiller from 2006-08, during which Kory Sheets became Purdue's first 1,000-yard rusher in six seasons.

Robert Turner Jr., running backs coach for the San Francisco 49ers, has been in the NFL 27 seasons. While assistant head coach / offensive coordinator / running backs coach at Purdue from 1991 to 1994, Turner tutored all-time rushing leader Mike Alstott and 1991 Big Ten Freshman of the Year Corey Rogers.

Former players on NFL staffs include Jeff Zgonina (Dallas), Steve Jackson (Tennessee) and Nick Hardwick (Los Angeles Chargers).

Noteworthy

Zach Edey is among the selections to play in the NBA Rising Stars series on Feb. 14 as part of All-Star Weekend in San Francisco.

The Memphis Grizzlies rookie center is averaging 9.6 points, 7.5 rebounds and 1.2 blocked shots in just under 21 minutes a game. His rebound average ranks second among rookies, his blocks are fourth and Edey is fifth in scoring average for rookies.

Starting 26 of the Grizzlies' 33 games so far, Edey is shooting 58 percent from the field and nearly 39 percent from 3-point range.

THE ATHLETIC hangs another loss on the Purdue football program, placing the Boilermakers at the top of its transfer portal losers list.

How can a 1-11 team be criticized for bidding farewell to 32 players off one of the worst Purdue teams in my lifetime? Author Manny Navarro cites the 287 combined starts lost leads all Power 4 programs. Lost in that argument is that someone had to fill the 11-man starting lineups on offense and defense. That doesn't mean every player was competent at their job.

THE ATHLETIC was much more positive

about Purdue junior point guard Braden Smith, selecting him to the Midseason All-America first team.

Author Brendan Marks credits the former Westfield star with Purdue's ability to win in the post-Zach Edey era.

"The spotlight in West Lafayette is firmly on Smith, and thus far he's proven more than capable of keeping the Boilermakers in contention," Marks writes. "Obviously much of that stems from his ballhandling and passing – Smith is tops nationally in assist rate, per KenPom – but Smith has also grown as a scorer."

Smith is second behind Trey Kaufman-Renn in scoring at 15.4 points per game. That is more than three points better than his sophomore year average. Smith's 8.9 assists per game is well ahead of his Big Ten record pace a year ago.

"Look no further than the 24 points he had in a 27-point blowout over Michigan on Friday – his sixth 20-point effort this season, or more than he had in his first two seasons combined," Marks writes. "Between that and his pesky on-ball defense – Smith has more games (9) with three-plus steals than games with one or no steals (6) – the 6-footer has been arguably the best point guard in the nation."

Maybe it's just coincidence but when Smith has recorded a double-double, as he did against Michigan, Purdue is 17-0. Joining Smith on The Athletic's All-America first team is Duke freshman forward Cooper Flagg, Auburn center Johni Broome, Marquette guard Kam Jones and Memphis guard PJ Haggerty.

Kenny Thompson is the former sports editor for the Lafayette Journal & Courier and an award-winning journalist. He has covered Purdue athletics for many years.

Father-Son Receive Lifesaving Citizen Award



From left, Mayor Scott Willis, David Fisher, Felix Fisher and Westfield Fire Chief Rob Gaylor.

Mayor Scott Willis and the Westfield City Council honored honor David Fisher and his son, Felix, with the Lifesaving Citizen Award at the Monday, January 27 City Council meeting. The Fishers were honored for their courageous actions in rescuing a 19-year-old man and a dog who had fallen into icy waters on December 14, 2024.

The rescue began when Felix heard a man yelling for help and alerted his father. The two rushed into action by pulling the man and the dog to safety with ropes. After the rescue, the Fishers took the man and the dog into their home to warm themselves and wait for first responders to arrive.

"I've always known that Westfield is filled with brave, kind-hearted people, but what David and Felix did is absolutely remarkable," said Mayor Willis. "Their courageous actions are the definition of what it looks like to care for your neighbor. We are proud to honor them with this well-deserved award."

"Stories like these don't always have a positive outcome," said Westfield Fire Chief Rob Gaylor. "My department and I are extremely grateful to David and Felix for their quick-thinking and selfless actions that day."

IDI's Tom Merrell on IMA Board

The Indiana Manufacturers Association (IMA) announced its 2025 chair, vice chair, executive committee and board of directors recently and the board includes Noblesville's Tom Merrell of IDI Composites International.

The 44-member board of directors will be led for a second year by Chair Angie Holt, president of Rathburn Precision Machining, and for the first year, Vice Chair Paul Perkins, president and co-founder of Amatrol, Inc.

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DEI, MEI, Silliness and More



TIM TIMMONS
Two Cents

Scatter-shooting while wondering whatever happened to Fred Allen.

DIVERSITY. Equity. Inclusion. Who can argue with the value and importance of those three words. Indeed, many of our country's principles and notions are based on exactly those.

But ever since Gov. Mike Braun and President Donald Trump took office and began fixing the glaring issues with DEI programs, too many folks have lost their minds. Indiana ACLU director Chris Daley said that one proposed law would "prohibit state agencies and public universities from funding any meaningful efforts to prevent discrimination and harassment in state employment. This will leave tens of thousands of employees without effective protection from unlawful employment practices."

Really? All the other laws that ban discrimination are going away?

On Braun's second day in office, he signed an executive order dumping DEI from the state government. That included closing the office of the Chief Equity, Inclusion and Opportunity Officer. Braun said instead of DEI, he wants MEI – merit, excellence and innovation.

How refreshing.

Look, the simple truth is that as a government – we surely ought to be above the ridiculous behaviors that reflect bigotry and stupidity. Does that mean that's true of all people? Of course not. Stupidity is hard to outlaw. But having a system that rewards people simply for the color of their skin, their differences, leads to a denigration of society.

No, no, no. That is not to say that society goes downhill when minorities or gays or

others who benefitted from DEI are involved. Not at all. Everyone from all walks of life have the opportunity to step to the front of the line through their hard work and achievement – regardless of who they are, what they look like, where they came from or how they choose to live.

And that's the way it should be. C'mon, can't we agree on that?

Oh, the other thing that has the left up in arms? Braun telling state employees they have to return to their jobs by July 1. Or in other words, no more remote working.

Let's think about that for a second. A lot of folks were allowed to work from home during COVID. Made sense then. But COVID is no longer what it was and the state has more than 10,000 workers who are still not reporting in person. Braun, that heartless tyrant, is now demanding they return to work! And he gave them a ticking clock to do so! Almost six months!

The audacity!

This, dear friends, illustrates one of the problems we have in our world today. The rules in government – and let's be clear, the government that would have no money without our taxes – have been very different from what us chumps in the private sector have. From less than 40 hour work weeks to very, very attractive benefit plans, a government job is often a lot cushier than the clock you and I are punching.

Braun, with his executive order, is at least adding some accountability and more common-sense standards to taxpayer-supported jobs.

It's way too early to say what kind of governor the man from Jasper will be. But this is not a bad start.

WHILE ON the subject, have you noticed how some Democrats and much of the national (and state) media

haven't got the memo that more than 77 million Americans voted for Donald Trump?

I'm not smart enough to know if that number qualifies as a mandate, but I do know that when almost all the swing states went red instead of blue it signaled loud and clear that a lot of this country had had enough.

Yet listen to the TV news, or the hired hands in Congress and a lot of them are still singing the same song. A U.S. president and vice president lost their jobs over this. So have some of the members of the media. You would think others would learn . . . but apparently not.

DID YOU know that every Indiana county (except Marion) is preparing to conduct an annual count of the homeless tonight and tomorrow? According to the Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority, the purpose is to provide an easy-to understand data point that helps state and local leaders measure progress toward ending homelessness and helps plan services and programs to appropriately address local needs.

Basically, volunteers begin tonight and wrap up tomorrow. They check with shelters, warming centers and then, sadly, will check tomorrow at places homeless might be found. The info is then compiled and passed to the IHCA and is used in various things like HUD vouchers and such.

As our pal Honest Hoosier might say, here's a big tip of the seed corn cap to all involved. It's important, and it's heartbreaking.

THANKS ALSO TO many of you who

reached out via email and texts on Biden's last day in office. Most were outraged with his last-second pardons and asked if I was going to write something. One that made me laugh out loud said there was enough material there to give me three months' worth of columns. It'd be even funnier if it wasn't so true.

LAST NOTE: Today is Jan. 29, which means in 48 hours the calendar flips to February – truly a month that can be as cold as a witch's heart. However, it also is one more step toward spring. For those who hate the cold as much as me, take heart. T-minus 50 days until the vernal equinox!

OK, BE honest. How many of you knew that Fred Allen was the host of Texaco Star Theater? What started as the most popular radio show in the country, turned into a hugely popular TV show. It actually was where Milton Berle got the nickname Mr. Television. Texaco Star Theater was on the radio from 1938-49 and on TV from 1948-56.

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@thetimes 24-7.com.

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Library Celebrates National Take Your Child To Library Day

On Saturday, Hamilton East Public Library will join other libraries across the country in celebrating national Take Your Child to the Library Day. As essential connectors in their communities, this day encourages parents and caregivers to visit their local library and check out all they have to offer!

At both HEPL locations, there will be activities available for families to do together. Special scavenger hunts, photo ops, themed book bundles, and giveaways will be available on this special Saturday during normal business hours.

"When caregivers come to the library we hope that they leave with something they need, either in their heart, their hands or their heads," says HEPL's Children's Program Coordinator, Allison Kartman. "A wonderful program that they can bond with their child over, a new book or another material, or some knowledge that they gained while exploring our many resources. We exist to serve the community in which we were created, we hope everyone has a bit of a discovery during their visit."

The library is a great

place to find books to help boost your child's early literacy skills and set them up for success in all aspects of learning. Here are some tips from Reading Rockets for reading aloud:

- Choose books that are appropriate for your child's age and interests
- Allow your child to choose books that interest them – especially as they get older
- Make your read-alouds interactive and fun
- Talk about the pictures as you read
- Build vocabulary by focusing on and talking about new words
- Connect the story to your child's world
- Ask questions about the story and encourage your child to ask what they are wondering about
- Make reading aloud a regular part of your routine – just 15 minutes each day can make a big difference in raising a reader

For more information about Hamilton East Public Library programs and services, please visit hamiltoneastpl.org.

Big Donation



Photo courtesy The Feeding Team

Go & Do Apparel and Goods is a philanthropically driven retail shop located in Downtown Noblesville. Owner Lindsey Rinehart recently completed a \$5,000 gift to The Feeding Team. Go and Do Apparel and Goods (Granting Opportunities and Dedicated Outreach) takes philanthropy to a new level by donating all their profits to local charitable causes. Their donation to Feedingteam.org will provide hundreds of meals to hungry neighbors here in Hamilton County. Pictured are Mark and Lisa Hall, Co-Founders of The Feeding Team, along with Lindsey Rinehart, owner of Go & Do Apparel and Goods.

Providing an affordable and positive baseball experience for all young men ages 13-18

The 2025 Noblesville Babe Ruth Baseball Season begins April 14, 2025 and ends on June 17, 2025.

There will be two Leagues: 13-15 year old Competitive League and 16-18 year old Competitive League.

Both 13-15 League and 16-18 League will begin play on April 14, 2025. A double-elimination tournament will be played June 8-17, 2025.
* Note: Dates subject to change due to weather or unforeseen circumstances.

Registration Fee: 2025 Noblesville Babe Ruth Baseball registration fee is \$199 (plus processing fee applied at checkout) and includes team jersey, hat, and 2 tickets to the Noblesville Babe Ruth Baseball League Pancake Breakfast/Picture Day scheduled for April 26, 2025 from 8 am-11 am at the Forest Park Inn.

Team/Player photos will be taken at the Pancake Breakfast. Additional tickets for the League Pancake Breakfast will be available at the door for \$5 each.

Player Evaluations: 13-15 year old players new to Noblesville Babe Ruth Baseball or 13-15 year old players wishing to re-enter the team draft need to attend the player evaluation session scheduled for March 16, 2025 from 2 pm-4 pm at Noblesville High School.

Register today at:
noblesvillebaberuthbaseball.sportengine-prelive.com

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Perfect Day



Photo courtesy Hamilton Heights Schools

The Hamilton Heights Middle School wrestling team traveled to Lebanon recently and returned home as the Tiger Invite Champions. The Huskys finished with a 5-0 record, beating Lutheran (105-9), Taylor (106-10), Guion Greek (108-10), Lebanon (98-15) and Carmel Clay (78-26). Wrestlers who were undefeated included Colton Millikan, Landon Sisson, Greyson Cain, Zeke Rice, Kase Powell, Lucas Powers, Braxtyn Baber, Seth Van Hook, Sam Van Hook and Thiago Zuniga. Those with one loss included Branson Collins, Luke Nichols, Lucas Case, Jameson Mullins and Cooper Canada. "All varsity wrestlers ended the day with a winning record," Coach Rodney Case said. "We were also able to get in over 30 JV matches throughout the tournament! It was a great day to be a part of Husky wrestling!"

Carmel Installs Braille Signage at Park



Photo courtesy Carmel Parks

In June 2001, River Heritage Park was dedicated as "Everyone's Playground," where individuals of all abilities could play and explore.

Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation has installed interpretative signage that includes braille and tactile graphics at River Heritage Park, 11813 River Rd. The 10 new interpretative signs have been installed along the White Tail Loop trail and will help enhance the park experience for all community members.

which ensures spaces are intentionally designed for accessibility. When River Heritage Park was reimaged in 2022, CCPR outfitted the park with a new inclusive playground that is wheelchair accessible and a looping 1.23-mile immersive nature trail that overlooks the White River and is wheelchair friendly.

Braille is a system of raised dots representing numbers and letters. Tactile graphics refer to 3D shapes, textures, and symbols that provide a tactile representation of visual information. Including both braille and tactile graphics on interpretative signage will help deepen park-goers' understanding and appreciation of their natural surroundings.

In August of 2024, CCPR installed a communication board at River Heritage Park, a device that displays symbols and illustrations to help those with limited language skills express and share their emotions and needs non-verbally.

In June 2001, River Heritage Park was dedicated as "Everyone's Playground," where individuals of all abilities could play and explore. This park sparked CCPR's focus on making accessibility the standard for all parks utilizing Universal Design,

"Bringing this tactile approach to interpretive displays will allow all community members to learn about and enjoy the rich natural resources in our community," said Michael Allen, PNR Director. "We hope to continue adding more inclusive elements to River Heritage Park and other CCPR properties in the future."

Baldwin Authors Fiscal Integrity Bill



State Sen. Scott Baldwin

State Sen. Scott Baldwin (R-Noblesville) has filed a bill that would improve government efficiency and accountability.

Senate Bill 5 has three working components -- state contract accountability, oversight of new federal funds and programs, and efficiency in government staffing.

"Indiana is known as one of the most fiscally responsible states in the nation, but SB 5 would ensure that our state continues to responsibly invest taxpayer dollars," Baldwin said. "The General Assembly creates a state budget that reasonably and responsibly allocates funds, but we can improve or track and manage how that money is spent."

State Contract Accountability The first section of SB 5 requires that state agencies to provide updates when an agency awards a

contract worth \$500,000 or more. This includes, but is not limited to, agencies providing quarterly updates on the contract to the State Budget Committee and a review process from the State Budget Committee if an agency wants to make amendments to a contract.

Furthermore, if vendors do not adequately execute contracts, they can be placed on a "no-bid" list from the state. This list would prohibit vendors from bidding on state government contracts for five years maximum.

"When the state awards a contract, Hoosier taxpayers expect results," Baldwin said. "This added transparency will help hold our government accountable."

Oversight of New Federal Funds and Programs The second section of SB 5 states that if agencies would like to be granted funds or membership of a new federal program, they must submit a report to the State Budget Committee first to get

approval. Additionally, if the program or fund requires the state to match the amount of money requested, the State Budget Committee would have to review the proposal before an agency could apply.

Efficiency in Government Staffing SB 5 also proposes that the State Budget Director review any vacant position that has been open for at least 90 days to see if the position is no longer needed. The bill also authorizes the State Personal Director to reallocate or eliminate a fulltime position that has been open for at least 90 days.

"I believe SB 5 will offer more transparency between state agencies and taxpayers," Baldwin said. "This is not a bill to point fingers at anyone, and we are fortunate to have many dedicated public servants who work hard to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. I have been in regular contact with Gov. Mike Braun and his team, and have provided helpful feedback that is reflected in this bill."

SB 5 was amended in the Senate Committee on Appropriations to eliminate the use of nonpublic contracts beginning in 2026 and require that all new contracts must be competitively procured. Additionally, the amendment added language providing for the creation of a workgroup to review Medicaid spending and program utilization as well as the submission of quarterly reports to the State Budget Committee.

As the 2025 session gets underway, Baldwin encourages residents of Senate District 20 to contact him with any questions or comments they may have. Baldwin can be reached by filling out a "Contact Me" form online at www.IndianaSenateRepublishans.com/Baldwin or by phone at 800-382-9467.

Baldwin represents Senate District 20, which includes Noblesville, Carmel, Cicero and unincorporated areas of Hamilton County.

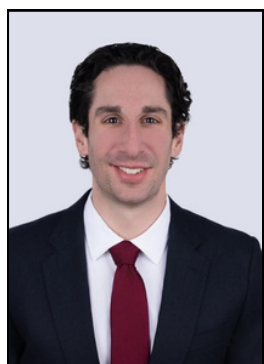
CCHA Law Adds Attorney

Church Church Hittle and Antrim is pleased to announce that Ian Goodman has joined the firm, contributing his extensive expertise to the firm's Business Services and Litigation practice groups.

Ian brings a wealth of experience advising businesses on corporate and commercial matters, including business creation, mergers and acquisitions, and day-to-day legal counseling. His practice also extends to technology law, where he provides guidance on vendor contracts, software as a service (SaaS), data privacy, and artificial intelligence.

In addition to his business acumen, Ian is a seasoned litigator and trial attorney. He has represented clients in complex business and insurance disputes, as well as civil rights and criminal matters. His diverse legal experience adds tremendous value to the clients and communities CCHA Law serves.

Ian is admitted to practice in Indiana, as well as the Southern and Northern Districts of Indiana. He is an active member of the Indianapolis Bar Association, where he has served as Secretary of the Board of Directors and participated in numerous sections and committees. A Distinguished Fellow and graduate of the Bar



Ian Goodman

Leader Series, Ian also provides pro bono services through Indiana Legal Services, the District Court for the Southern District of Indiana, and various political organizations.

"Ian's diverse experience and dedication to client service make him an exceptional addition to our team," said Alex Pinegar, Managing Partner at CCHA Law. "We are thrilled to have him on board as we continue to expand and enhance our services."

Ian earned his Bachelor of Science degree and Juris Doctor from Indiana University and the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law, respectively.

CCHA Law is proud to welcome Ian Goodman to the firm and looks forward to the contributions he will make to the firm's legacy of legal excellence and community service.

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