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TODAY'S VERSE

1 Corinthians 15:57-58 "But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." (NIV)

Hamilton Happenings

The Westfield-Washington Historical Society is presenting Professor Thomas Hamm from Earlham College on April 15 at 7 p.m. at Westfield City Hall (130 Penn St.) and a presentation on Quakers, the Anti-Slavery movement and the Underground Railroad, with an emphasis on Hamilton County. Hamm has spent decades researching and teaching this subject and it is going to be a very interesting talk! RSVP on the Westfield-Washington Historical Society Facebook event page - or just show up.

Three Things You Should Know

1 April is Financial Literacy Month, a nationwide initiative dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of financial education. The Indiana Securities Division, under Secretary of State Diego Morales, is proud to support this initiative, equipping Hoosiers with essential tools to make informed financial decisions and protect themselves from fraud. The Division invites all Hoosiers to take advantage of Financial Literacy Month by exploring the resources available to them; whether learning to budget effectively, planning for long-term financial goals, or spotting the signs of fraud.

2 Looking for Firewood? Spencer not too far a drive? Then you might want to know that McCormick's Creek State Park has extended the period the public can cut up and remove certain downed trees to May 2. Trees eligible for firewood have fallen as a result of natural causes or have been dropped by property staff for safety purposes. The cost of one pickup-truck load is \$10. A load is defined as an 8-foot standard pickup truck bed without any modifications. Firewood cut at McCormick's Creek State Park is for personal use only and cannot be sold.

3 Grammy-nominated country group Midland will headline the Firestone Legends Day Concert on Saturday, May 24 at the Everwise Amphitheater at White River State Park in Indianapolis. The celebration of "The Greatest Spectacle in Racing" expands into downtown Indianapolis with the concert the night before the 109th Indianapolis 500 presented by Gainbridge. Concert tickets will be available for purchase starting at 10 a.m. ET Friday, March 28, at LiveNation.com.

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Boomer Bits



Ask Rusty – Ask Rusty – Can Spouses Get Benefits From Each Other?



ASK Rusty
Social Security Advisor

Social Security Matters
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Dear Rusty:
My wife and I are currently collecting Social Security. We both started receiving SS at 62 years old. That said, we get by on a tight budget. A retired friend told us about an option which allows a spouse to collect half (1/2) of the other spouse's SS monthly income. My question has two parts: 1. Can we both collect on each other's SS? And 2. Are there any pitfalls?
Signed: Seeking an Increase

Dear Seeking: Well, I'm afraid spousal benefits aren't quite that simple. One spouse may be eligible for additional benefits from the other, but only if that spouse's personal Social Security retirement benefit at their full retirement age (FRA) is less than half (50%) of the other spouse's FRA entitlement. Note that for spouse benefits, FRA

amounts are used regardless of when you actually claim benefits. Full retirement age for both you and your wife is 66, so that means that if you both claimed at 62 your FRA entitlements were higher – about 25% more - than you are both currently receiving.

Since you applied for benefits some time ago at about the same age, one way to estimate if one of you may be entitled to an additional amount as a spouse is to evaluate your current monthly amounts. If either of you are getting a benefit which is less than half of the other's amount, it's possible that the one with the lower benefit may be entitled to more as a spouse. And note, only one spouse is eligible for benefits – you cannot both get spouse benefits from each other.

➔ See RUSTY Page A4

How to Choose the BEST Surgeon

By Dr. Mathias P. Bostrom

Each year, millions of Americans face a decision that's more consequential than buying a home or car: choosing where to have major surgery. For procedures like spinal fusions and hip and knee replacements -- among the most common operations in medicine -- the choice of hospital can mean the difference between a full recovery and months of avoidable setbacks, pain, and stress.

Yet while a car purchase comes with detailed safety ratings and prospective homebuyers can obtain inspection reports, patients preparing for surgery are left largely in the dark -- even though surgical complications can lead to extended hospital stays, additional procedures, and sometimes permanent disability.

Luckily, there is one telltale indicator of the risk associated with having surgery at a specific hospital - volume, or how many procedures a hospital performs annually. Studies show that high-volume hospitals consistently achieve

➔ See BEST Page A3

Riding The Storm Out: Scammers Want to Cash In

With severe storms hitting across Indiana recently, Attorney General Todd Rokita is alerting Hoosiers to stay vigilant against storm-related scams. As communities deal with storm damage, scammers are poised to exploit the situation, targeting residents with fraudulent repair offers and deceptive schemes.



Attorney General Todd Rokita

"Storms can be unpredictable and devastating, but the aftermath can be even worse, potentially leaving you vulnerable to financial ruin," Rokita added. "Our office stands ready to assist Hoosiers and hold scammers accountable. Together, we can work to prevent fraudsters from derailing recovery efforts."

Unfortunately, storms often bring out unscrupulous individuals who prey on homeowners by promising quick fixes, only to disappear with down payments or deliver inferior work. Rokita is committed to protecting Hoosiers and offers the following tips to avoid falling victim to storm-chasing scammers:

- Be skeptical of anyone offering immediate cleanup or repair services without proper vetting.
- Know the facts: FEMA does not charge application fees. If someone demands payment to help you access FEMA funds, it's likely a scam.
- Research contractors: Check reputations through references, online reviews, or the Better Business Bureau before hiring.
- Verify credentials: Ask for IDs, licenses, and proof that the contractor is bonded and insured.
- Get multiple estimates: Compare offers to ensure fair pricing and scope of work.
- Insist on written agreements: Don't trust verbal promises. Get everything in writing.

➔ See STORM Page A3

TODAY'S HEALTH TIP

Alcohol has almost twice the calories per unit weight than carbohydrates and almost as much as fat.



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

HONEST HOOSIER

Around this time of year I miss Gene Autry singing about Ol' Pete with his cottontail. (Google it millennials!)



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

TODAY'S QUOTE

"The income tax created more criminals than any other single act of government."
Barry Goldwater

TODAY'S JOKE

When will taxes get reduced? Next year is the answer. Next year is always the answer. (And if you don't understand, just ask Cubs fans.)

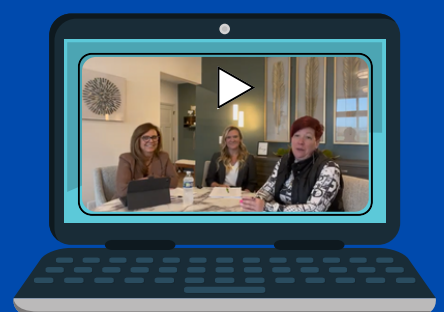


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County Parks Get Duke Grant for Koteewi Park

Hamilton County Parks and Recreation is excited to announce the receipt of a \$35,000 grant from Duke Energy to support a turf conversion project at Strawtown Koteewi Park. This generous grant will fund the transformation of 24.6 acres of mowed turf into vibrant prairie habitats, enhancing local biodiversity and providing essential resources for pollinators and wildlife.

The department has committed to reducing mowing at the park by 30 percent and transform those turf areas into natural habitat. The previously mowed turf will be replaced with prairie mix seeds, fostering biodiversity, improving wildlife habitats, enriching soil health, and reducing the environmental impact of regular mowing. In addition to the prairie mix, wetland seeds, trees, and shrubs will be planted, further enhancing the park's ecological diversity. With the grant, over 50 species of native wildflowers will be introduced to these areas, benefiting honeybees, Monarch butterflies, Swallowtail butterflies, bumblebees, and a variety of birds, including American Goldfinches, Eastern Bluebirds, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, and Northern Cardinals. These species rely on native plants for nectar, pollen, seeds, and shelter, and the project aims to restore habitats in areas that were once maintained as turf.

Additionally, the deep roots of prairie plants and wetland vegetation



will improve soil quality by capturing, filtering, and storing stormwater, reducing runoff and preventing water pollution. The trees and shrubs will also contribute to this effort, enhancing the park's ability to mitigate environmental impacts. This process not only enhances the park's natural environment but also helps protect local waterways.

"We're incredibly grateful to Duke Energy for supporting this important environmental initiative," said Hamilton County Parks and Recreation Director Chris Stice. "This grant enables us to reduce our environmental impact, increase biodiversity, and add to the beauty of our park with more prairie and wetland areas for visitors to enjoy."

The Strawtown Koteewi Park Turf Conversion Project will create a more vibrant and sustainable park, reduce emissions, protect natural resources, and support local wildlife. By successfully completing this project, Hamilton County Parks and Recreation hopes to set an example of how public spaces can contribute to a healthier, cleaner ecosystem. This project is dedicated to restoring vital habitats and enhancing the ecological health of the park.



Photo courtesy Indiana American Water

An Indiana American Water employee opens a fire hydrant to flush the water system.

About American Water

American Water (NYSE: AWK) is the largest regulated water and wastewater utility company in the United States. With a history dating back to 1886, We Keep Life Flowing® by providing safe, clean, reliable and affordable drinking water and wastewater services to more than 14 million people with regulated operations in 14 states and on 18 military installations. American Water's 6,700 talented professionals leverage their significant expertise and the company's national size and scale to achieve excellent outcomes for the benefit of customers, employees, investors and other stakeholders.

About Indiana American Water

Indiana American Water, a subsidiary of American Water, is the largest regulated water utility in the state, providing safe, clean, reliable and affordable water and wastewater services to approximately 1.5 million people. For more information, visit amwater.com/inaw and join Indiana American Water on LinkedIn, Facebook, X and Instagram.

Noblesville Water Main Annual Spring Cleaning Coming

Indiana American Water will start its annual water main flushing in its Noblesville District, beginning overnight on Sunday and continuing through Wednesday in the downtown area from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. Flushing of the remaining areas of Noblesville will start on Wednesday, April 16 and run through Friday, June 20 on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The company conducts the annual maintenance program of its water distribution system to continue to provide customers with high-quality, reliable water service. In addition, it provides the opportunity for the company to make sure its fire hydrants are operational. Indiana American Water is responsible for nearly 32,000 fire hydrants in its 50-plus communities across the state.

"Flushing our system helps to clean out any build-up of mineral deposits and sediment inside the pipes. These

deposits can occur when there is a reduced water demand," said Kari Britto, Vice President of Operations, Indiana American Water. "We also flush our hydrants to confirm they are operational and to check fire flows in our system."

Customers may experience a slight drop in water pressure or temporary water discoloration while this program is underway. Customers should refrain from doing laundry during the time the flushing program is taking place in or near their neighborhood.

If tap water is discolored, Indiana American Water recommends allowing several cold-water faucets to run for a short time until the water runs clear. Using more than one faucet allows the water to clear more quickly. Customers who have questions about hydrant flushing may call our Customer Service Center at (800) 492-8373.

Mid-Day Crash Turns Into Melee

Earlier this week, a mid-day crash involved multiple vehicles and turned into a physical altercation.

Shortly after noon Tuesday, Deputies from the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office responded to a 911 call which reportedly involved a physical altercation with multiple subjects in the area of 146th Street and Warner Trail. A Carmel Police Department officer also responded and arrived on scene prior to HCSO units.

The Carmel Officer requested additional units because of the continued disturbance.

However, while driving to the call with lights and sirens activated, one Sheriff's Deputy was

involved in a traffic crash at the intersection of 146th and Spring Mill Road. Four vehicles were involved in the crash. Multiple nonlife threatening injuries were reported as a result of the crash and two adults, including a Sheriff's Deputy, were transported to the hospital.

The Hamilton County Sheriff's Office was assisted on the crash and the initial physical altercation incident by the Carmel Police Department and Westfield Police Department. Two vehicles sustained disabling damage, including a Sheriff's Office vehicle, and were towed from the scene.

The incident remains under investigation.

Spartz: Only Trump Can Give the Ukrainian People a Chance Now



Congresswoman Victoria Spartz

The UK Telegraph wrote an article this week with a headline that Congresswoman Victoria Spartz said misrepresents her position on Ukraine. This headline was used by the Zelensky team to blame Spartz and President Trump and blamed the United States.

Spartz issued the following statement to clarify her current position on Ukraine.

"It's not surprising that the UK media is as dishonest as the US mainstream media, so let me set the record straight," Spartz said.

"I spent an enormous amount of energy trying to help the Ukrainian military to win their brutal fight against Russia. Unfortunately, if you have morons and crooks like Zelensky and his puppet parliament running your country, it's a lost cause. Putin might be evil, but he is not a moron. The current reality on the ground is that Ukraine is not in the position to retake its territories, nor could they agree to give them up permanently. Therefore, only a temporary solution with the help of the United States can be achieved, which will give each side some time to regroup. The end result of that war will have to be decided later and not just on a battlefield."

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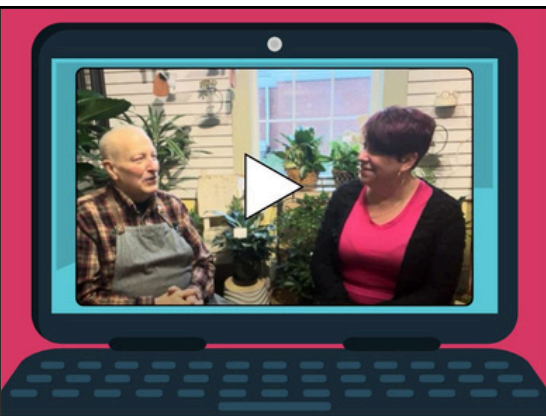
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Duke Presents 13th Annual Noblesville Creates Fairyville

The 13th Annual Noblesville Creates Fairyville, presented by Duke Energy, returns to Noblesville Creates and Downtown Noblesville April 23-26, with crafts and activities for all ages and most events free. Sponsors include Duke Energy, Mini Minds, Four Day Ray Brewing Fishers, Guardian Care, Playground Productions, Musicologie, Josiah White's, Bar Ellis, Renewal by Andersen, Martin & Martin, Indy's Child, SLS Group, LLC, and Noble Coffee.

This year's Fairyville theme, "Energizing the Earth," celebrates the vital connection between energy and nature. Inspired by this year's title sponsor, Duke Energy, the theme highlights the importance of caring for our planet, which remains a central focus of the event each year.

Fairyville will feature a variety of scheduled events, including the Fairy House Contest, Fairy Tea Parties, a special Earth Celebration Parade, and self-guided nature-themed activities. Fairyville After Dark, sponsored by Martin & Martin and hosted by Bar Ellis, returns this year with an exciting twist, offering a special VIP experience for adults.

Fairy House Contest registration is open through 5 p.m. on April 19. Fairy Tea Party tickets are also available for purchase.

Noblesville Creates' partners and other local businesses throughout downtown Noblesville will also offer various specials, events, and activities during Noblesville Creates Fairyville that are open to the public.

Noblesville Creates Fairyville Events

Winged Wednesday, April 23 and Troll Thursday, April 24: During the first two days of Fairyville, visitors can explore the Fairy Home Show and vote for their favorite at Noblesville Creates. Participants can also craft their own wand, crown, or small fairy house at the Noblesville Creates Fairy Emporium.

Fairy Friday, April 25: On Fairy Friday, the

fairy houses will be relocated from the Noblesville Creates campus to the Fairy Trail in the afternoon, where visitors can stroll through, meet live fairies, and vote for their favorite fairy house. Stop by Noblesville Creates to participate in fun fairy crafts and pick up a Fairy Trail Map to guide you! From 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., visitors can shop from Fairy Vendors, receive free face painting, enjoy live music, and participate in engaging activities. Thanks to the City of Noblesville's new Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA), guests can also enjoy a special sparkly fairy beer from Four Day Ray Brewery while exploring the trail.

Fairyville After Dark, April 25: Special this year, Fairyville After Dark, sponsored by Martin & Martin and hosted by Bar Ellis, will be a VIP experience for adults with live entertainment and music, free drink and food, and fun activities. This event also serves as a fundraiser for Noblesville Creates, supporting next year's Fairyville event. Click [here](#) to purchase tickets for this VIP event.

Sprite Saturday, April 26: Sprite Saturday is a day filled with family-friendly, fairy-themed fun. The Fairy Trail will remain open featuring live fairies and fairy homes. The day's festivities include the Fairy House Contest awards ceremony, fairy-themed crafts, a special Earth Celebration Parade, live glass blowing from Patty Kluzinger, and other interactive art demonstrations. Visitors can also explore Fairy Vendors, enjoy harp music by Sara Walthery, dulcimer music with Susan Kraeszig, and experience captivating entertainment in Downtown Noblesville and the Courthouse Square. Plus, Fairy Tea Parties will be held throughout the day, where guests can learn proper fairy etiquette and meet a special fairy guest.

Noblesville Creates Fairyville is free to attend; some special events have costs and requirements.

Carmel Parks Encourages Invasive Species Removal

Throughout April, Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation is offering an Invasive for Native Tree Swap program to promote invasive species awareness. Remove one or more invasive species from your property, and CCPR will reimburse you with one three-gallon native tree sapling. There are four species of native trees available: river birch, redbud, pagoda dogwood, and common witch-hazel.

To receive a sapling, please take a photo of the invasive plants you've removed and email it to naturalresources@carmelclayparks.com. Once your submission is received, you will be contacted with a time to pick up your sapling. Limit of one sapling per household, available while supplies last. You do not need to be a Carmel resident to

participate.

Unlike native species, invasive species are not native to Indiana and can cause long-lasting harm to the environment. Invasive species can be found in both rural and non-rural areas, growing and reproducing at an alarming rate and outcompeting native species for vital resources like water, sunlight and soil. This can lead to a decline in native populations over time, causing a loss of biodiversity, negatively impacting local wildlife, and reducing water quality and soil infrastructure.

To view a more extensive list of invasive species from the Indiana Invasive Species Council, visit their website. To learn more about the importance of planting native plants, read our recent blog.

KeyBank Has Grants Available

In celebration of KeyBank's (NYSE: KEY) Bicentennial, the KeyBank Foundation is proud to announce a special grant program designed to strengthen Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) that play a critical role in advancing affordable housing and small business development. This milestone initiative reflects KeyBank's enduring legacy of service, resilience, and commitment to fostering economic opportunity and strengthening communities.

Through this program, the KeyBank Foundation intends to award one \$200,000 grant to an exemplary CDFI in each of KeyBank's 27 markets. These grants will provide flexible funding to help CDFIs in achieving their broader mission – whether through expanding services, enhancing infrastructure, or deepening their community impact—ensuring long-term sustainability and continued support for underserved populations.

"CDFIs are at the heart of economic empowerment, creating pathways to homeownership, business growth, and financial stability in the communities that need it most," said Eric Fiala, Chief Corporate Responsibility Officer at KeyBank and CEO of KeyBank Foundation. "As we celebrate two centuries of service, we are proud to support investing in organizations that share our mission of creating lasting, positive change in the communities we serve."

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Be a certified CDFI in good standing.
- Operate as a nonprofit or for-profit CDFI headquartered in a KeyBank primary market.
- Have a strong track record of advancing affordable housing and/or small business development.
- Demonstrate the capacity to effectively manage and deploy grant funds in alignment with the Foundation's goals.

For-profit CDFIs applicants should note that additional reporting requirements related to expenditure responsibility will be required if selected. Operating grants will provide flexible and unrestricted funding to support the broader purposes of:

- Affordable housing: Expanding access to safe, affordable housing for underserved populations.
- Small business development: Supporting the growth and sustainability of small businesses, particularly those owned by low-income entrepreneurs.

By offering flexible operating support, this grant is intended to enable CDFIs to apply funds strategically where they are needed most, fostering long-term growth, resilience, and impact.

CDFIs interested in applying must submit applications by May 16.

↓ BEST From Page A1

better outcomes across multiple types of surgery.

This makes the current approach to choosing surgical care deeply concerning. Research shows that most patients select hospitals based on data-free factors like word-of-mouth recommendations or doctor referrals. These recommendations and referrals aren't always completely objective, especially as health systems increasingly pressure physicians to refer patients within their own systems.

Patients can become their own best advocates -- by examining the data in five critical areas.

First, look at success rates -- how well patients actually recover. The best hospitals track and share their patients' improvements in quality of life, pain levels, and function after surgery.

Second, examine patient experience scores. They contain a wealth of information about how well a hospital communicates, coordinates care, and supports patients through their journey.

Third, dig into complication rates. Find out how often things go wrong and how well the hospital handles the challenges that arise.

The fourth factor, readmission rates, is particularly telling. How often do patients end up back in the hospital unexpectedly? Low rates of readmission signal that a hospital excels at preventing complications and managing the overall process of recovery.

Fifth, consider procedure volume -- how many of the specified surgeries the

hospital performs. Experience matters, and high-volume centers tend to deliver better results.

Together, these five measures paint a clear picture of hospital quality -- and should be readily available to any patient considering surgery. Yet all too often this information is difficult or impossible to find.

Currently, there are few resources available to patients interested in comparison shopping. While the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services provides some hospital comparison tools, they're clunky and incomplete. Private insurers have detailed data on their providers' outcomes, but many choose not to share it.

Easier access to comparisons would be game-changing both for patients and the healthcare system as a whole. Just as vehicle safety ratings spurred car makers to compete on crash protection, surgical outcome transparency could drive providers to improve their results. Research suggests that simply publishing complication rates motivates hospitals to enhance their safety practices.

Patients scheduling surgery shouldn't settle for less information than they'd want when buying a car -- and our healthcare system shouldn't make finding it any harder than reading a window sticker.

Mathias P. Bostrom, MD, is Associate Surgeon-in-Chief & Director, Quality & Safety at the Hospital for Special Surgery. This was originally published by The Well News: <https://www.thewellnews.com/opinions/patients-should-know-about-the-surgery-quality-blind-spot/> .

↓ STORM From Page A1

- Avoid risky payments: Never pay with wire transfers, gift cards, cryptocurrency, or cash, and never pay the full amount upfront.

If you suspect a scam,

Rokita encourages you to file a complaint at indianaconsumer.com or call his office at 1-800-382-5516. The Consumer Protection Division is dedicated to safeguarding Hoosiers from fraudulent schemes year-round.

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Kroger Helping Fueled for School Saturday on Logan

Kroger invites shoppers to join an annual food drive to serve children in need. Volunteers from *Fueled for School* will return to Noblesville's Logan Street Kroger for Saturday's collection.

Colleen Juergensen, President of Kroger Central Division, says, "Hosting such a food drive is another example of our commitment to hunger relief, especially child nutrition. We don't want anyone going to bed hungry. Donating a canned good, a box of cereal or a jar of peanut butter is such an easy way for anyone to make a difference in young lives."

Fueled for School is an all volunteer non-profit that provides food each weekend during the school year and over school breaks to local children facing food insecurity. The organization says it "currently provides food every week to approximately 400 children in Noblesville."

Audra Shock, Director of Operations for Fueled for School, said, the volunteers strive "to eliminate childhood hunger in our community. We are always in awe of the generosity of the customers at the Noblesville Kroger!"



WHAT: Fueled for School Food Drive

WHEN: Saturday, April 12

TIME: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

WHERE: Kroger, 172 W. Logan Street

Carpenter Realtors Noblesville has partnered with Fueled for School to help collect the food donations.

About Kroger Central Division:

Kroger Central Division operates food stores, pharmacies and fuel centers in Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and Ohio. We are dedicated to Kroger's Purpose: to Feed the Human Spirit™ and to create #ZeroHungerZeroWaste communities.

↓ RUSTY From Page A1

Another way to explore this is for the spouse with the lowest monthly Social Security benefit to contact Social Security at 1.800.772.1213 to ask if spouse benefits are available. Noting that contacting SS these days can be a time-consuming process, yet another way is for you to provide us (the AMAC Foundation's SS Advisory Service) with both of your current monthly SS benefit amounts (before any deductions) and the exact ages when each of you claimed. Using that information, we can do the math to see if either of you might be entitled to more as a spouse. But, in the end, only the spouse with

the lower benefit may be eligible, and then, only if their FRA entitlement (not their actual current amount) is less than 50% of the other spouse's FRA entitlement.

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.

Despite ESPN Blunder, Purdue's Braden Smith Getting Deserved Attention



Today, the Bob Cousy Award. Tomorrow? Maybe the Wooden Award.

KENNY THOMPSON

Columnist

It's heady times for former Indiana Mr. Basketball Braden Smith, who took home the award as the nation's best point guard during Final Four Week in San Antonio.

Presuming Smith returns to Purdue for his senior season, some national media members think he could join former teammate Zach Edey as the national player of the year in 2025-26. More on that later.

Winning the Cousy Award marks the third player recruited by Matt Painter to win one of the five position awards. Carsen Edwards took home the Jerry West Award as the nation's top shooting guard in 2018. Edey won two consecutive Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Awards given to the nation's top center.

Purdue also should have had a Karl Malone Award winner in power forward Caleb Swanigan in 2017. Voters instead gave the honor to Baylor junior Johnathan Motley, even though Swanigan had better statistics. Swanigan averaged 18.5 points and 12.5 rebounds during his Big Ten Player of the Year season. Motley put up 17.3 points and 9.9 rebounds.

Maybe Trey Kaufman-Renn makes up for that slight in 2025-26.

Smith puts Purdue with Gonzaga, Duke and Kentucky as the only schools to have three different players win their respective positional trophy.

"To be included among the elite players that have won this award is very humbling and I am grateful to be selected to join that prestigious group," Smith said.

Smith will enter his senior season needing just 125 points and 242 assists to become the first player in NCAA history with 1,500 points, 1,000 assists and 500 rebounds for his career. Bobby Hurley's career assists record of 1,076 is within Smith's reach as well. Smith needs 318 assists, five more than his school record total this season.

Unfortunately for Smith and Purdue fans, ESPN managed to screw up the Cousy Award announcement.

The supposed "Worldwide Leader in Sports" ran a video package of Creighton center Ryan Kalkbrenner, who at 7-1 will never be mistaken for a point guard, instead of Smith's highlights.

Anchor Rece Davis immediately corrected the error. Later on social media, Davis said "a wrong tape rolled." The correct tape never aired, though. Not a surprise coming from a network that ignores

leagues whose rights it doesn't own.

Great expectations

Now that the college basketball nation outside of ESPN believes in Braden Smith, Purdue is a national championship favorite in 2025-26.

The most confident forecast comes from The Athletic, where writer C.J. Moore picks the Boilermakers No. 1 in his way-too-early Top 25.

"Talent plus roster continuity is a winning formula, and no team has a better combination of that at this moment than Purdue," Moore writes. "This will be the only team returning a first-team AP All-American in Braden Smith, not to mention an honorable mention in forward Trey Kaufman-Renn. When Houston prepped for Purdue in the Sweet 16, the Cougars' coaches took to calling Smith, Kaufman-Renn and Fletcher Loyer "Stockton, Malone and Hornacek."

John Stockton and Karl Malone of the Utah Jazz were members of the first Olympic Dream Team in 1992 and have been enshrined in the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. Jeff Hornacek was an NBA All-Star guard for Phoenix, Philadelphia and Utah and a two-time winner of the NBA Three-Point Contest. All three had their numbers retired by the

Jazz.

Smith heads a projected starting lineup of fellow seniors Trey Kaufman-Renn and Fletcher Loyer, transfer center Oscar Cluff and sophomore C.J. Cox.

Cluff, a 6-11 center from Sunshine Coast, Australia, signed with Purdue last week. Cluff was ranked the No. 1 transfer in the nation by On3.com. Cluff averaged 17.6 points, 12.3 rebounds (second place nationally) and 2.8 assists for South Dakota State. Notably, Cluff shot 63.4 percent from the field and 77.8 percent at the free throw line.

One of Cluff's best games last season saw him put up 21 points and 15 rebounds in a loss at Alabama. "Coach Matt Painter added a veteran big who is an elite rebounder in South Dakota State transfer Oscar Cluff," Moore writes. "Daniel Jacobsen could emerge as the next star Purdue big and could provide the rim protection this season's group missed without Zach Edey. It's also possible Purdue could add one perimeter player or more, which would strengthen the Boilers' preseason No. 1 case." Florida, Houston, Louisville and Michigan round out Moore's top five. Big Ten teams ranked by Moore are Michigan State (7th), UCLA (20th), Illinois (21st) and Ohio State (24th).

Jeff Borzello of ESPN.com has Houston ahead of Purdue based heavily on three freshmen rated in the top 20 by its recruiting rankings.

"There's a chance Purdue has the preseason Wooden Award favorite and two All-Americans on its roster next season," Borzello writes. "Braden Smith will be the best guard in the country after taking the next step in his development this past season, and Trey Kaufman-Renn is a dominant paint force. The addition of South Dakota State transfer Oscar Cluff should help inside, and a healthy Daniel Jacobsen could be poised for a breakout season."

Borzello's top five features Louisville at No. 3, followed by Connecticut and Michigan. Other Big Ten schools in the ESPN rankings are UCLA (10th), Wisconsin (14th), Michigan State (18th) and Ohio State (23rd).

Kevin Sweeney of SI.com also has Purdue second behind Houston.

"Purdue can essentially start on third base this offseason if it can retain its strong nucleus from 2024-25. Point guard Braden Smith and forward Trey Kaufman-Renn profile as likely All-Americans as seniors, while third option Fletcher Loyer is on track to score over 1,500 points as a Boilermaker. And while the Boilermakers have traditionally not been active in the portal, coach Matt Painter has already made one dynamite addition with double-double machine Oscar Cluff to help solidify a weak frontcourt. They could add another piece or two to boost their athleticism and size on the wings."

Duke, Connecticut and Louisville complete Sweeney's top five. Big Ten teams in Sweeney's Top 25 are UCLA (9th), Michigan (12th), Wisconsin (13th), Michigan State (15th) and Oregon (18th).

John Fanta of Fox Sports concurred with his ESPN and Sports



Braden Smith

Illustrated peers, noting Purdue "should have as much returning experience and perimeter firepower as anybody in the sport next season."

Fanta has UCLA ranked ninth, Michigan 15th, Michigan State 18th and Iowa 25th.

Did you know?

Since Memphis Grizzlies coach Taylor Jenkins was fired March 28, Purdue great Zach Edey has seen his playing time, and production, increase.

In a 124-100 victory against the Charlotte Hornets on Tuesday, Edey recorded his 12th double-double with 17 points and 19 rebounds in 31 minutes.

The previous game, a 109-103 victory against Detroit, saw Edey set the franchise rookie record with 21 rebounds. Edey is the first rookie since Shaquille O'Neal in 1993 to total 40 or more rebounds in a two-game span.

Over the last four games, during which Memphis went 3-1, Edey has averaged 10.3 points and 15.7 rebounds in 30 minutes a game.

This recent surge has increased Edey's scoring average to 9.3 and his team-leading rebounding average to 8.2. As of Wednesday, Memphis was in a four-way tie for fourth place in the Western Conference at 47-32.

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.

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Kindness in Crisis: How Generosity Shines in Today's World



MARK HALL
Guest Columnist

With kindness often in short supply in our polarized world, generosity shines brightly. Anonymous generosity shines even brighter. This month, the number of neighbor gifts has been nothing short of amazing, thank you. Our mission would be impossible without your volunteerism and continued pantry donations. Recently, a new corporate food donor, South Atlantic Packaging, connected with a Feeding Team volunteer offering a donation of popcorn, water, and pancake syrup. Two of our folks made an appointment to meet the donor at his business along with our friends from Gaylor Electric who graciously provide truck transportation and logistics support for the Feeding Team.

Setting the scene, they arrive to discover that this was not a normal donation. Upon arriving the team learned that this was 17 pallets of food. Yes, 17! Each pallet held 400 items for a total of 6800 individual food items. Thank goodness Gaylor brought a pallet jack, or we never would have been able to load and unload this much food. Fast forward a couple of hours and amazing volunteers had unpacked and moved ten pallets of food, 4000 items. There were large boxes of food in the box truck, in the shed, in the trailer and in the offices. Oh, and seven pallets still outside tarped up for overnight protection. The next day volunteers descended on the 2800 remaining items scurrying around to get the pallets cleared and the food stored as a storm approached. The good news is that they succeeded in managing the single largest donation and unpacking in our history, before the storm. Then to top it off they distributed 200 bags to volunteer pantry hosts as part of their normal food pick up. Talk about

sovereign timing! Talk about generosity shining!

In a day and age when many corporations only worry about their ROI, I am happy to write about companies that worry about neighbors too. They took extra products and put them into The Feeding Team model to serve hungry neighbors in central Indiana.

These are wonderful reports, and they offset an unfortunate truth, food charities sometimes have to get through people's greed in order to get to other people's need. We have learned to take the good with the bad. On the same day we celebrate the people who made the magic of the day happen, SUV lady showed up. That is what we call her, SUV lady. She and her partner come to our pantry once or twice a week and clean it out. We have spoken with her a few times when she engages with a volunteer. SUV lady knows that the pantries are there to provide a few meals for many people, not many meals just for her people. Yet, she proceeds to take and take, even giving the security camera at the offices the joy of a middle finger salute. These are the challenges of an honor system food pantry. There are some people to whom honor does not matter.

Undaunted we proceed celebrating the wins and people's generosity. We celebrate getting through greed to needs. We have learned over the years that for every SUV lady, there are many families that respect the model, take what they need, feed their families, and often return later to give back some of what they have. Generosity shines brightly here in our neck of the woods.

With over 44,000 food challenged neighbors in Hamilton County, www.Feedingteam.org is a registered 501C3 not for profit organization that provides outdoor 24x7x365 no questions asked free food pantries throughout the county. The

pantries exist, to meet the food insecurity needs of GAP families, neighbors that may not qualify for public assistance and could use a few meals before payday. The pantries serve as many food-challenged neighbors as possible, and our hearts are with those that, like my family, could not always make ends meet.

Thank you for supporting the pantries. We love serving with so many neighbors across Hamilton County. In future columns we will share more stories about how your generosity served neighbors in times of need. The face of hunger in Hamilton County is not what you may think.

In practical terms this straightforward way to help neighbors is having a real impact on lives, families, and our communities. Thank you. A few meals can change the course of a person's life. A can of green beans means so much more when you have nothing to feed your kids. Would you like to get involved? Volunteer opportunities are available. We are evaluating new pantry locations. If you think you have a potential area location, please contact us.

www.feedingteam.org facts – 77 pantries, 14,000 meals a month are provided, over thirty volunteer families. Mark & Lisa Hall are the Founders of The Feeding Team. They may be reached at lisa@feedingteam.org and mark@feedingteam.org or (317) 832-1123.

Mark Hall is a Hamilton County Councilman and the Founder and CEO of TLX, Talent Logistix. Feeding Families outdoor Free Food pantries is the corporate charity of his company. Mark and his wife Lisa founded the food charity program the team after living with food insecurity as a young married couple with kids.

Carmel Tops in Niche.com Rankings

Carmel has long been a source of pride for its residents, and now, Niche has recognized the city as the #1 Best Place to Live in Indiana for 2025, awarding an overall A+ grade. This recognition underscores the community's commitment to fostering a safe, supportive and enriching environment for all residents.

Carmel also received top honors in key categories, including:

- #1 Best Place to Raise a Family in Indiana
- #1 Place with the Best Public Schools in Indiana
- #2 Best Suburb to Live in America

These distinctions reflect Carmel's dedication to providing a high quality of life, characterized by strong public safety initiatives, excellent educational opportunities and a thriving community atmosphere.

"We are grateful for this recognition, which highlights the collective efforts of our residents, public servants and educators," said Mayor Sue Finkam. "Our focus remains on ensuring a safe and welcoming environment where families can thrive and kids can receive an exceptional education."

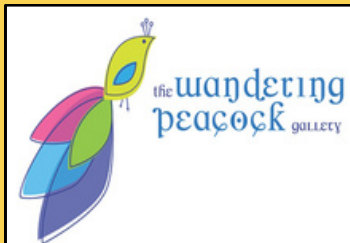
Niche, a leading online platform for school and neighborhood data, compiles its annual Best Places to Live rankings using rigorous analysis of data from sources like the U.S. Census, combined with valuable input from resident reviews. These rankings consider factors such as public safety, housing, diversity and public schools, offering a comprehensive view of community quality.

In addition to the statewide accolades, Niche.com recognized Carmel as the 7th Best Place to Live in America (of 18,100) and the 27th Best Place to Raise a Family in America (of 18,084).

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Carmel Announces Key Spending Projects

The City of Carmel is pleased to provide the following anticipated schedule for the 2025 construction season (see 2025 schedule below). These projects include traffic flow improvements, roadway enhancements and continued upgrades to pedestrian safety. Construction schedules are designed to minimize disruptions as best as possible while delivering long-term benefits.

"Prioritizing the safety and efficiency of our transportation network is paramount," said City Engineer Bradley Pease. "The current road and bridge projects are essential to meeting the evolving needs of Carmel. We appreciate the public's understanding during construction and are confident these improvements will create a safer, more efficient travel experience for everyone."

COLLEGE AVENUE RECONSTRUCTION

The first phase of the

College Avenue Reconstruction project is underway with a full closure at 96th Street and College Avenue planned for May. The series of College Avenue roundabouts at 96th Street, Carmel Gateway and Pennsylvania Parkway will greatly improve traffic flow as well as provide pedestrian access. The reconstruction on the section north of I-465 begins later this summer with alternating northbound and southbound phases going into 2026.

WEST 96TH STREET PATH

Walkers, runners and cyclists can look forward to a new path on the city's west side construction of the W. 96th Street path from Spring Mill Road to Ditch Road. Periodic closures will occur in May for crane operations with an anticipated completion time of October.

MAIN STREET RECONSTRUCTION

Beginning on or after May 27, Main Street

will undergo reconstruction from Old Meridian Street to Guilford Road. Brief closures will be necessary but local access will be maintained.

RAISED PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALKS

Raised crosswalks will be installed at multiple existing roundabouts along Towne Road, Gray Road and Hazel Dell Parkway. The addition of raised crosswalks at these intersections continues to enhance safety and accessibility throughout the city.

BRIDGES AND CULVERTS

Essential repairs and replacements of several bridges and culverts will require full closures, including Clay Center Road at Elliot Creek, E. 126th Street over Cool Creek and Westfield Boulevard near 109th Street. Detours will be in place while these projects are in process.

Westfield Marks Earth and Arbor Days April 26

The City of Westfield's Parks and Recreation Department will celebrate Earth Day and Arbor Day at its annual Green Day event on April 26, from noon to 2 p.m. at Grand Junction Plaza (225 S. Union Street).

This free, family-friendly event will showcase local organizations and vendors offering eco-friendly tips and practices that attendees can apply at home and in their community. The City will also give away free native tree saplings provided by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to all attendees, while supplies last.

"Protecting and preserving green spaces is fundamental to a healthy, sustainable community," said Chris McConnell, Director of Parks and

Recreation. "Green Day is one of the most important events of the year for our department because it plays a key role in our mission to educate residents about the importance of native trees, soil, and more."

Organizations participating in Green Day include:

- Westfield Green Together
- City of Westfield Storm Water Department
- Duke Energy
- Waste Management
- Hoosier Environmental Council
- Greenways Foundation
- Indiana Native Plant Society
- Huston Solar

In addition to educational booths, Westfield High School's National

Honor Society and Environmental Club will lead hands-on activities, including making solar ovens and pony bead bracelets.

Due to State Road 32 construction, there are two easy ways to access Grand Junction Plaza; if coming from US-31, exit the Poplar Street/Shamrock Boulevard roundabout to the south and park at the temporary parking lot near Poplar and Park Streets. If accessing heading north, take South Union Street to Mill Street. Attendees are encouraged to review traffic flow updates regarding the roadway project impacting travel on State Road 32 before planning their visit.

For more information about Westfield's Green Day, visit westfield.in.gov/green-day.

Sen. Walker Shares Update



KYLE WALKER
Guest Columnist

It's hard to believe that there's now less than a month remaining of the 2025 legislative session. Over the coming weeks, I'll continue to work to pass several pieces of legislation I authored and sponsored, among them Senate Bill 209 and House Bill 1441.

SB 209 would allow for the use of electronic pull tab systems for local veterans and fraternal organizations, modernizing charitable gaming while bolstering crucial funding for these groups. House Bill 1441 would allow a foster youth at least 16 years old or an emancipated minor under the age of 18 to open a savings or checking account without an adult cosigner and with the consent of a juvenile court with jurisdiction over the child.

I've been honored to work with several organizations throughout the session to move bills through the legislative process and want to thank them for their support. I look forward to working to get these bills and more across the finish line and to the governor's desk.

In other session news, I recently welcomed several District 31 students to the statehouse as a part of our Senate page program. It was great showing them around the statehouse and

answering their questions about how state government works. You can learn more about the program [here](#).

And congratulations to the Fishers High School boys basketball team on an incredible season!

HONORING OUR Vietnam War Veterans

This past Friday, the city of Fishers hosted a **National Vietnam War Veterans Day ceremony** to honor the bravery and sacrifice of those who served. I was honored to attend the ceremony and hand out lapel pins to our veterans.

CADILLAC FORMULA One to Call Fishers Home

With a \$200 million investment and 400,000-square-foot facility, Cadillac Formula One will soon have a headquarters in Fishers and employ nearly 300 people who will build cars for the newest F1 grid team.

Racing is nothing new for central Indiana, but this will be only the second F1 headquarters in the United States, truly putting Fishers on the map.

Congratulations to Mayor Scott Fadness and the entire team who worked to bring these high-tech jobs to the community!

CELEBRATING

Champions: Lawrence North Girls Basketball

As a proud graduate of Lawrence North High School, I was honored to recently present Senate Concurrent Resolution 28 on the floor of the state Senate to honor the Lawrence North High School girls basketball team for their 2025 Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) Class 4A championship. This was the second state title in program history and the first since 2020.

Congratulations, ladies!

Fishers Freight Win

Home Opener at Fishers Event Center

Fishers Freight improved to 2-0 this past Friday as they beat the Tulsa Oilers 49-20 at the Fishers Event Center. More than 5,600 fans came out to the team's first home game.

A member of the Indoor Football League, the highest level of professional indoor football in the United States, the Fishers Freight will play seven more home games and 16 in total in their inaugural season.

State Sen. Kyle Walker represents District 31 which includes portions of Hamilton and Marion counties.

IMCU Fighting Cancer

Indiana Members Credit Union, Central Indiana's largest credit union, is pleased to announce Strides for Sarcoma as the new member-nominated beneficiary for its Cancer Awareness Debit Card. The IMCU Cancer Awareness Debit Card provides members an opportunity to support a different cancer-related organization each year. A portion of each signature transaction made with this card from now through Feb. 28, 2026, up to \$10,000, will be donated to Strides for Sarcoma.

The card is available for issue to members at IMCU's 31 Indiana locations. The IMCU Cancer Awareness Debit Card is an option to members with a free checking account and can be issued immediately via IMCU's instant issue program, which allows members

to receive their debit card on the spot.

Strides for Sarcoma is a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization founded in 2022 by siblings Gabriella and Nicholas Conjelko after their cousin, Maia, was diagnosed with Ewing sarcoma, a subtype of sarcoma, a cancer of the bone and connective tissue. The goal of Strides for Sarcoma is to raise research funding and awareness for pediatric sarcoma patients and to one day find a cure. "We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to Indiana Members Credit Union and its members for this incredible opportunity. We are truly grateful and blessed to be able to support so many sarcoma warriors through the Cancer Awareness Debit Card Program," said Gabriella Conjelko, co-

founder, Strides for Sarcoma.

"IMCU is honored to support Strides for Sarcoma in their mission to raise awareness and funding for sarcoma research," said John Newett, president and chief executive officer of IMCU. "Through our Cancer Awareness Debit Card Program, we are committed to contributing to the fight against sarcoma and supporting the incredible work of Strides for Sarcoma. Together, we can take strides towards finding a cure and improving the lives of pediatric sarcoma patients."

For more information about the IMCU Cancer Awareness Debit Card, please visit IMCU online at, www.imcu.com, or visit an IMCU branch for details.

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Hamilton Town Center Adds Stores

Simon, the global leader in premier shopping, dining, entertainment and mixed-use destinations, recently announced the latest additions to Hamilton Town Center, including first-to-market, Shady Rays, cult-favorites J.Crew Factory and Sephora, along with new restaurant, Sunny Day Café.

Coming Soon:
• J.Crew Factory: Known for their classic, preppy style, J. Crew Factory offers shoppers their favorite styles at an unbeatable price. Whatever the occasion, J. Crew offers styles for the whole family and wardrobe staples that

will last for years to come. Shoppers can find this retail favorite next to Bath & Body Works.

• Sephora: Beauty fans rejoice, the Sephora, offering an extensive collection of carefully curated brands, featuring emerging favorites, trusted classics, and Sephora's own line, Sephora Collection is coming to Hamilton Town Center. Located across from Evereve, beauty-lovers can soon find their favorite brands in the coming weeks.

• Shady Rays: Offering premium polarized and prescription eyewear, Shady Rays offers high-quality sunglasses, gear and

goggles, along with signature Lost & Broken protection. Shady Rays' first Indiana location will be next to Sephora and across from Evereve and is set to open its doors, early Summer.

• Sunny Day Café: Charming breakfast restaurant, where every morning begins with a warm and inviting burst of sunshine. Sunny Day Café offers shoppers a cozy restaurant, dedicated to serving up a delicious array of breakfast classics and innovative twists on morning favorites, all crafted with the finest locally sourced ingredients. Sunny Day Café is set to

open Summer 2025 and will be located next to Qdoba at the Green Space.

Last year, Hamilton Town Center welcomed a slew of retailers including retail favorite, Nordstrom Rack, along with Lovesac, JD Sports, Buckle, Soap Factory and Hawaiian Fluid Art.

For more information on the latest updates and new additions to Hamilton Town Center, please visit <https://www.simon.com/mall/hamilton-town-center>.