

■ TODAY'S VERSE

Romans 12:14

Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.



Sunday marks what would have been the 95th birthday of Hoosier Hollywood legend James Dean – our very own Rebel.

■ HAMILTON HAPPENINGS

Whether the Red Cross or Versiti, officials are explaining that blood supplies are critical. Did you know that collecting blood has become increasingly challenging. According to our friends at Versiti, only about 3 percent of the population donates blood, yet nearly 70 percent of people will need blood in their lifetime. Every successful blood drive matters more than ever, and your efforts truly make a difference for patients and families in our community. Versiti is currently booking the 2026 schedule and are in urgent need of additional blood drives during the winter months, when donations are traditionally lowest. If you are interested in having a blood drive, please reach out Jennie Bean at jbean@versiti.org

■ QUOTE OF THE DAY

“It is not a lack of love, but a lack of friendship that makes unhappy marriages.”
Fredrich Nietzsche

■ JOKE OF THE DAY

You should ask someone to meet you for coffee on Valentine's Day only if you like them a latte.

■ ADOPT A PET PRIA



Pria is an athlete who loves to play with any tennis, fabric, jingly, or bouncy ball in sight. This 9-year-old female Domestic Mediumhair has been available for adoption at the Humane Society for Hamilton County (HSHC) since 11/29/25. She has a bit of a shy side, but with the right amount of time to acclimate, she will quickly turn into a purring machine when you give her head rubs and chin scratches. If you think Pria might be the cat for you, please come visit her soon. To meet her, please fill out an adoption application at hamiltonhumane.com/adopt, then stop by HSHC anytime 12-5 PM daily (closed Wednesday).

The TIMES

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BOOMER BITS... Tips and Advice from Boomers to Boomers Why Won't Social Security Give me my Benefits?

Dear Rusty: I called the Social Security office, as well as went with my husband when he went to collect his Social Security. Because I work full-time (at about \$800/week), they said I could not file for my Social Security. Yet I seem to read articles all the time about people doing so.

My husband just filed for his benefits and is now collecting them. Out of the two of us, his Social Security will be larger. Please advise me.

Signed: Wanting my Benefits

Dear Wanting my Benefits:

If you have not yet reached your SS full retirement age (FRA) and you are working full time, you are likely being affected by Social Security's Annual Earnings Test, which



ASK RUSTY

Social Security Advisor

limits how much you can earn while collecting Social Security prior to your FRA. Your FRA is somewhere between 66 and 67, depending on when you were born. The annual earnings limit for those collecting SS benefits prior to FRA in 2025 is \$23,400 (changes yearly) and, if that is exceeded, Social Security will take away benefits equal to \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit. If you applied for your ben-

efits and are still working, and were denied, it's likely because Social Security determined that your current annual earnings considerably exceed the earnings limit and, thus, you cannot collect benefits. That's because the penalty for exceeding the limit would be more than your benefit amount. FYI, the earnings limit will go away when you reach your full

See Rusty Page 3

AARP Indiana Accepting 2026 Grant Applications

AARP Indiana invites local eligible nonprofit organizations and governments to apply for the 2026 AARP Community Challenge grant program **through March 4, 2026, at 5 p.m.** AARP Community Challenge grants fund quick-action projects that help communities become more livable by improving public places, transportation, housing, digital connections, and more.

Now in its 10 year, AARP will double its investment, awarding over \$8 million in grants as part of its nationwide Livable Communities initiative, which supports the efforts of cities,



towns, neighborhoods and rural areas to become great places to live for all residents, especially those age 50 and older.

“Since the Community Challenge grant program began, we have seen leaders across the state step up to make their community more livable for people of all ages, especially Hoosiers 50 and older,” said AARP Indiana state director Sarah Waddle. “We look forward to the opportunity

this year to again work closely with local residents, advocates, and policymakers to provide support across the state.”

This year, the AARP Community Challenge is accepting applications across three different grant opportunities. All projects must be consistent with AARP's mission to serve the needs of people 50 and older along with other eligibility criteria.

See Grants Page 5

■ THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

1. Sports reporters estimated that 75 percent of the fans in the stands at the College Football Playoff National Championship were cheering for the Hoosiers. And data from the Indianapolis Airport Authority helps support that estimate. Airline tallies show that specialty flights to the championship game were packed with cream and crimson. Frontier Airlines added two flights for the IU/Miami game. Southwest Airlines reported that its 12 additional flights added specifically for the big game flew more than 1,800 fans to Miami. Delta Air Lines said its four specialty flights for the game were “booked to very strong levels,” and attributed the loaded flights to “strong demand from IU fans.”

2. Indiana Gov. Mike Braun recently highlighted the transformative impact of Power Up Indiana's workforce development initiative, showcasing a wide range of success stories from employers and Hoosiers across the state who have leveraged training, upskilling, and career development to strengthen Indiana's economy. Power Up Indiana continues to empower businesses large and small to invest in their current workforce, grow wages, and build a stronger, more competitive talent pipeline. Through Power Up, companies such as Gaylor Electric, Hoosier Crane, Evonik, and Cook Group are leading the charge by creating pathways for employees to access industry-recognized credentials, expand skill sets, and transition into high-demand careers with sustainable wages. Other employers like Arcamed, Twin Springs Counseling, Endress+Hauser, and Dot Transportation have embraced upskilling as a core part of their growth strategy, strengthening their teams and enhancing opportunities for workers at every stage of their career.

3. On the other hand . . . Indiana is among the least prepared states for tariff-driven price shocks. At least that's the conclusion of a study conducted by demand planning software Algo <<https://www.algo.com/>>. It shows that Indiana has the 10th lowest trade surplus per capita, leaving the state in a more vulnerable state as trade tensions rise. The study examined average annual import and export data across all states from the International Trade Administration. The states with the highest export surplus per capita between 2019 and 2023 were named the best for exporting goods, with Louisiana leading the way. New Jersey was the worst state for exporting goods.

Clock Ticks on Social Security

*By Russell Gloor
Association of Mature American Citizens*

In 1971, the iconic song writer John Lennon penned the lyrics to his famous song “Imagine,” asking us to picture a world in total peace and harmony. Although it was a call to imagine what life would be like in a utopian world, it was also, perhaps, overly optimistic given the realities of that time – realities which are largely similar today, over 5 decades later.

Nevertheless, it is always good to imagine life as it might be. And that goes both ways – we can and should always picture life in a better world, but we might also take pause, at times, to picture how life might be worse. How often have we lamented that “things could be much worse?” when confronting adversity in our daily lives? So, today I'd like to suggest that you picture what life would be like without Social Security.

First Some Statistics

First, some statistics: Social Security provides benefits to about 70 million Americans, senior citizens as well as those not yet old enough to be so designated. That's about 20% of the entire U.S. population. The benefits offered are financial, providing usually crucial money to those fortunate enough to be eligible. That includes those who have earned benefits by working and are old enough to claim, and others – such as minor or disabled adult children – who have not personally earned a benefit but are dependent on a parent who has. Benefits are also available for dependent spouses, ex-spouses and, sometimes, dependent parents. And let's not forget that even working Americans who become disabled often find financial relief at a younger age with the Social Security disability insurance program. Fact is, Social Security provides a “major” source of income for a majority of senior Americans and, in most cases, those collecting say it is critical to their ability to make their financial ends meet. In a nutshell, a large majority of Social Security recipients say Social Security is critically important to their financial well-being. But what if Social Security were to go away?

What If Social Security Went Away?

Well, that's not something we like to think about because it would negatively impact so many millions of people. Senior citizens

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The TIMES

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CenterPoint Reminds Customers Bigger Energy Bills Coming

As CenterPoint Energy customers continue receiving current bills reflecting January's extreme weather, the company is encouraging those who may need help managing their energy costs to explore available resources now to manage potential bill assistance needs.

January 2026 brought the region's heaviest snowfall in over a decade during Winter Storm Fern, with wind chills plunging below zero. The National Weather Service reported the longest streak of consecutive days below freezing since 2017-18. It marks only the sixth time since 1871 the region has experienced an extended freeze of this magnitude. When temperatures fall this dramatically, heating systems work harder to maintain indoor comfort, resulting in increased energy usage reflected in monthly bills.

Natural gas commodity prices also rose sharply during the storm as severe weather disrupted production in key supply regions nationwide. These costs, set by national markets, are passed through to customers dollar-for-dollar without markup. Every year, the company procures gas on behalf of customers using tools to mitigate most of the exposure to large, demand-based market swings. CenterPoint does not control or

profit from the price of natural gas.

"We understand the colder weather drove more heating use which is generating challenging higher bills," said Mike Roeder, President of CenterPoint Energy Indiana. "We want customers to know that help is available. Our Resource Hub brings together assistance programs, payment options and energy-saving tools, all in one place."

The company also offers Budget Billing, which spreads energy costs evenly across the year for more predictable monthly bills.

Customers can sign up for Budget Billing and explore other resources by visiting CenterPoint's improved Resource Hub at CenterPointEnergy.com/ResourceHub or call 800-227-1376.

As cold weather continues, CenterPoint also reminds customers to be aware of the warning signs of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Early symptoms such as headache and fatigue are similar to the flu, but without a fever. Continued CO exposure can lead to more severe headaches, dizziness, nausea, difficulty thinking clearly and fainting. If everyone in a household is experiencing these symptoms, it could be CO poisoning. If CO poisoning is suspected, leave the area immediately, get fresh air and call 911.



Photo courtesy Rep. Victoria Spartz's office

Spartz Praises Medal of Honor Nominee

"I want to thank my House colleagues for their unanimous support of the legislation to award the Medal of Honor to Major Nicholas Dockery, a true American hero who grew up in Indiana's 5th District," Congresswoman Victoria Spartz said. "I am very proud of Nick and honored to represent him." Dockery served as a platoon leader in Afghanistan. During a patrol, his platoon was ambushed by enemy forces using machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades. Under intense fire, Dockery repeatedly crossed open ground to rally his soldiers, fought his way to those trapped, and engaged enemy forces to rescue an unconscious soldier while providing lifesaving care. More than a decade later, the soldiers who served beside him remain united in their belief that his actions that day merit the Medal of Honor. This legislation now heads to the Senate for consideration.

The Perfect Date Night with Carmel Symphony Love Letters

Continue your Valentine's Day celebration as the Carmel Symphony Orchestra and United Fidelity Bank present "Love Letters from Paris: Music from the Heart" on Saturday, Feb. 21 at 7 p.m. in the Payne & Mencias Palladium. Hear romantic heartfelt works including Mozart's "Paris" Symphony, alongside "The Lover" by Jean Sibelius and "Love's Greeting" by Edward Elgar.

Through a stirring performance of Mozart's "Paris," the audience will experience moments of playful surprise and buoyant sophisticated spirit. Closing the evening, Mozart's unique double concerto features a special combination of harp and flute that is sure to set an elegant and romantic mood for your date night.

Repertoire: Featuring Conductor Kelly Corcoran

Jean Sibelius – Rakastava, op.14, "The Lover"

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Symphony No. 31, K. 297, "Paris"

Edward Elgar – Salut d'amour, op. 12, "Love's Greeting"

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Concerto for Flute and Harp, K. 299 featuring soloists Tamara Thweatt, flute and Melanie Mashner, harp

ABOUT THE CSO SOLOISTS

Flutist Tamara Thweatt has performed across the US and in Europe as a soloist, chamber, and orchestral musician. She serves as Principal Flute with the Carmel Symphony Orchestra and the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra. Previously, she was Piccolo and 3rd Flute of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and has served as guest musician in subscription concerts of the



Kelly Corcoran

Chicago Symphony, National Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, and Indianapolis Symphony. As a Fulbright Scholar to England, Thweatt spent a year of intensive study in the studio of Trevor Wye and performed in Fulbright-sponsored recitals in London and Berlin. She recently performed in Jelgava, Latvia as a musical ambassador for the city of Carmel, Indiana. Dr. Thweatt earned her DMA from the University of Michigan, a Master's degree from Northwestern University and a Bachelor's degree from Florida State University. Dr. Thweatt is an active contemporary music flutist and has premiered numerous new works. Learn more about Dr. Tamara Thweatt here.

Harpist Melanie Mashner is Principal Harpist of the Carmel Symphony Orchestra, as well as the Terre Haute Symphony Orchestra. Additionally, Mashner serves as Personnel Manager for the CSO and maintains a private harp, cello, and piano studio in northern Indianapolis. As a passionate orchestral musician, Mashner has performed with the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Evansville Philharmonic, Virginia Symphony, and Indianapolis Symphony Orchestras, and as a frequent soloist with the Terre Haute



Tamara Thweatt

Symphony Orchestra and Endless Mountain Music Festival in Mansfield, PA. Mashner served as Graduate Assistant Instructor in Harp for the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music from 2018-2020, where she worked and studied with renowned international concert artists including Florence Sitruk, Susann McDonald, Elizabeth Hainen, and Emile Naumouff. Melanie lived in Vienna, Austria for six months where she worked with Vienna Philharmonic Harpist, Anneleen Lenaerts, as the Global Leader Award recipient from the National Society of Leadership and Success, and was also a scholarship recipient at the 2018 Bowdoin International Music Festival with renowned harpist June Han. Mashner was selected as a featured performer in the Orchestral Audition Showcase of the 2022 World Harp Congress in Cardiff, Wales, and holds her MM, BM, and Performer's Certificate from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. Learn more about Melanie Mashner here.

ABOUT CONDUCTOR KELLY CORCORAN
Kelly Corcoran, celebrated for her insightful and energetic approach to the podium, will guide the orchestra through an exhilarating journey highlighting the timeless relevance and raw passion of these masterworks. Guests will



Melanie Mashner

experience the boldness and beauty that define Beethoven and Brahms, as well as the exceptional artistry of the CSO musicians. Internationally recognized conductor Corcoran returns to the Palladium to inspire both musicians and audience alike. Known for her expressive interpretations and deep commitment to artistic excellence, Corcoran has led orchestras across North America and Europe. Her passion for connecting audiences with classical music's emotional core will be on full display, promising an evening of unforgettable artistry.

ABOUT THE CSO
The Carmel Symphony Orchestra (CSO) is a company of musicians with roots in the Carmel community dating back to the mid-1920s and fully incorporated as a non-profit in 1976. In 2022, the CSO transitioned from a primarily volunteer ensemble to a fully professional orchestra. The CSO is proud to be a Resident Company of the Allied Solutions Center for the Performing Arts in Carmel, Indiana. The 65-member orchestra of professional musicians performs at the Payne & Mencias Palladium, a 1,500-seat concert hall at the Center. The CSO performs concerts featuring an eclectic repertoire of some of the world's greatest symphonic music and is committed to enhancing our community's quality of life through creative, artistically excellent performances and educational experiences for diverse audiences of all ages. Visit CarmelSymphony.org to learn more.

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Noblesville Schools Facing Big Financial Challenge

Noblesville Schools announced this week that it is facing significant financial challenges and will be making targeted staffing reductions in the coming weeks in an effort to save over \$3 million in annual expenses.

Reductions will be made with an eye toward minimizing any impacts on students and where possible will take advantage of not backfilling some positions when employees leave on their own.

The district is reporting a multi-million dollar budget deficit for 2026, which has been driven by a combination of factors including:

- New state property tax legislation that will reduce funding to Noblesville Schools by millions of dollars a year.

- A large decline in student enrollment funding driven by lower birth rates, fewer school-age families in Noblesville, the high cost of hous-

- ing, and more students graduating than kindergarteners starting school.

- Increasing inflation. Additionally, the district's referendum, which provides approximately \$25 million a year for staff and operating expenses, is set to expire at the end of 2026.

- "Thanks to sound financial management and savings we are not in crisis mode right now," Dr. Dan Hile, superintendent of Noblesville Schools, said. "But this direction is not sustainable, and changes must be made to balance the budget so that we can ensure strong financial stability into the future."

- Already over the past year the district has:

- Provided only modest salary increases for teachers and staff

- Frozen salary increases for administrative leaders and school board members

- Reduced several positions
- Renegotiated contracts
- Shifted equipment purchases
- Implemented technology efficiencies
- Maximized revenue generation

"These efforts have been helpful, but they are not enough to address the gap we're facing," Hile said. "Staffing is our highest ongoing cost and we must make adjustments there to realign with our current revenue."

The district's recent construction projects, including their expansion of the high school, have not impacted these financial challenges because schools have strict rules they must follow about how and where they can use funding.

"The construction projects were funded by bonds (loans) with no use of classroom or referendum dollars, while current financial challenges are related to ongoing

operating expenses for staffing and education," explained Hile. "The district is not legally allowed to use funds from one area to cover the other."

Regarding the referendum, the additional \$25 million in annual support approved by the community in 2018 has provided competitive teacher salaries, school safety initiatives, mental health support for students, manageable class sizes, and many of the academic, career technical, and enrichment programs the district offers.

"We will be carefully studying budget projections and needs for the future and will communicate more about the referendum this summer," said Hile. "The community ultimately decides whether or not to pass a referendum."

For more information on Noblesville Schools finances, visit noblesvilleschools.org/dollarsandsense

RUSTY

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retirement age so, after FRA, you can claim your benefits even if you are still working. Or if you stop working before your FRA you can collect your SS benefits at that time.

None of this means you are losing money, because your monthly SS payment will continue to grow until you later claim (e.g., after you stop working, or only work part-time), or until you reach 70 years of age. When you later claim, your monthly benefit will be higher and, depending on your longevity, you may recover what you didn't get now because you are working. And that includes both your own SS retirement benefit and any spousal boost you may be entitled to from your husband.

So, my suggestion is this: as long as you are working full time and exceeding Social Security's annual earnings limit, continue to wait to claim your Social Security. Then, when you reach your full retirement age (again, between 66 and 67, depending on the

year you were born), or if you stop working before that, go ahead and apply for Social Security again. At that time, your application will be approved, and you will be awarded your own earned SS retirement amount plus any additional amount you may be due as your husband's spouse. To be entitled to a spousal boost from your husband, your own FRA entitlement must be less than 50% of your husband's FRA entitlement. But the amount you get will be reduced if you claim before 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.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Continued from Page 1

would suffer harshly because the poverty rate for those aged 65 and over would jump from around 10% to nearly 40%. That means another 22 million people would be added to the total 36 million who already live below the U.S. poverty line. And statistically, the ones most affected would be older women, people of color, and children (about 4 million of whom receive Social Security benefits). Another 9 million or so Americans who collect Social Security Disability Insurance benefits would also be seriously affected.

What would American life be like without Social Security? As a student of U.S. history, I can imagine what it was like in the 1930s – the decade of the so-called "Great Depression." The years immediately preceding the advent of FDR's Social Security program were a time of abject poverty in the United States. Many Americans had very little money and scant resources, with men wandering from town to town to find work to provide food for their kitchen table. Many wore tattered clothing, often the only clothes they had, and minor children had to work (if they could) to help the family survive. That

was the environment which gave birth to the U.S. Social Security program. And the program, funded by taxes on workers and their employers, worked well. Starting when monthly SS benefits began flowing in 1940, Social Security has continued to sustain America's seniors and their dependents for about 90 years. In other words, Social Security is an extremely effective anti-poverty program which would devastate millions if the program went away. But what are the chances that Social Security will actually go away?

Will Social Security Ever Go Away?

You might have heard that Social Security is now having some financial difficulties – and that is true. But is it in danger of every going away completely? The answer to that is a resounding "No." Despite its current financial dilemma, Social Security will never go away completely. As long as Americans are working and contributing to the program, it will always be here to provide some benefits. But the more important question is, will Social Security be able to pay for all of its benefit obligations

in the future? And the answer to that is "No, unless Congress acts soon to reform the program." You see, right now Social Security revenue (mainly income from working Americans) is less than needed to pay all benefit obligations. Social Security revenue in 2024 was about \$1.418 trillion, but SS expenses were about \$1.485 trillion – a deficit of about \$67 billion. And that shortfall has been taken from Social Security's Trust Fund reserves in order for full benefits to be paid to everyone.

The Social Security Trust Funds have supplemented the money needed to pay full benefits since 2021, which means the reserves in the Trust Funds have gone from about \$2.9 trillion in 2020 to about \$2.7 trillion today – a trend that will result in the reserves being completely depleted in about the year 2033 (this according to the Trustees of the Social Security program). If the Trust Fund reserves are fully depleted, Social Security can only pay out in benefits what it receives in revenue, which would mean about a 23% cut in benefits for every Social Security recipient.

Since so many Americans rely on Social Security as a major contributor to their financial well-being, the result of a 23% cut to everyone's Social Security income would be devastating. It likely wouldn't make things as bad as they were in the 1930s preceding Social Security's birth, but it would nevertheless present a very serious problem which would thrust many more Americans into poverty. And that is the crux of the Social Security dilemma – cutting everyone's SS benefit to only 77% of what is now received would mean a return to high levels of American poverty.

But it doesn't need to happen.

Fixing Social Security

Congress has been aware of this looming Social Security issue for several decades

but has chosen to "kick the can down the road." Now, there is little time remaining to fix the problem. We are only a short 7 years away from when the SS Trust Funds will no longer have money to supplement Social Security benefit payments. Therefore, Congress must act soon to restore this crucial program to financial solvency. And the longer it waits, the more difficult the problem will be to solve. Indeed, Congress, instead, recently exacerbated Social Security's financial dilemma by passing legislation which provided additional benefits to a segment of beneficiaries (see H.R. 82 – The Social Security Fairness Act). Regardless of the merits of that recent legislation, it added about \$200 billion to Social Security's expenses over the coming decade, at a time when Congress should be seeking ways to reduce Social Security's costs.

For its part, the Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC) recognized this looming Social Security issue years ago and developed a potential Social Security reform proposal. AMAC has promoted (and continues to promote) its Social Security Guarantee to Congress and, in fact, also to the new Commissioner of Social Security. AMAC's proposal provides common sense adjustments to the Social Security program – program adjustments which retain the poverty-reduction aspects of Social Security while still providing the full benefits all have earned from a lifetime of working.

In any event, now is the time to mobilize by contacting your Congressional Representatives to demand that Congress take action to reform the Social Security program and restore it to financial solvency. The year 2033, when everyone's Social Security benefit will be cut by almost 25%, is just around the corner. Just imagine the consequences of that!



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Ken Thompson Takes Point With Best of Boilermaker Hoopsters



SPORTS, SPORTS, & MORE SPORTS with Ken Thompson

Today begins a five-week series where I rank the best point guards, shooting guards, small forwards, power forwards and centers in Purdue men's basketball history.

I don't want to pretend that I'm an expert on Boilermaker basketball before 1970, when I first saw Rick Mount play in Mackey Arena thanks to WLFI. But since I want to include a handful of former Purdue greats on my list, we'll expand the list to the past 65 years. So no John Wooden or "Stretch" Murphy.

Readers may end up as surprised as I was when I researched these lists that the deepest position, in my opinion, is not center but power forward.

Today's Top 10 list, point guards, was also deep enough that the man who directed three consecutive Big Ten outright championship teams – Porter Roberts – didn't make my cut.

Let's get started at No. 1, which should be no surprise.

Braden Smith – After Sunday's victory at Maryland, the Indiana Mr. Basketball from Westfield became the fifth player in NCAA history with 1,700 points (1,711) and 950 assists (954) in his career. The others are Bobby Hurley of Duke, Keith Jennings of East Tennessee State, Greg Anthony of UNLV and Sherman Douglas of Syracuse. Smith is the only one of the five with at least 500 rebounds, and he has 615.

With a minimum of 11 games left in his Purdue career, Smith seems assured to surpass 1,000 assists. Deep runs in the Big Ten and NCAA tournament could put him within reach of 2,000 career points. That's a threshold only six Purdue players have reached: Zach Edey, Rick Mount, Joe Barry Carroll, E'Twaun Moore, Dave Schellhase and Troy Lewis.

Bruce Parkinson – A member of the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame (2004) and the Leroy Keyes Purdue Athletics Hall of Fame (2019), Parkinson was a four-year starter.

His accomplishments include leading Purdue to the 1974 National Invitation Tournament championship and its first NCAA tournament berth in eight years in 1977. Until Braden Smith came along, Parkinson held virtually every assists record.

For now, Parkinson remains the single-game assists record holder with 18 against Minnesota on March 8, 1975. He scored 1,224 points and recorded 14 double-doubles. Parkinson earned second-team All-Big Ten honors as a sophomore and was a first-team pick as a junior after averaging 12.9 points, 4.7 rebounds and 7.4 assists per game.

Billy Keller – Like Braden Smith, the 5-9 Keller was described as "too slow and too short." All Keller did was lead Indianapolis Washington to the 1965 state championship, win Indiana Mr. Basketball honors and help Purdue reach the 1969 NCAA championship game.

"I used the criticism as motivation to prove I could do the things people said

I couldn't do," Keller said after he was inducted into the Leroy Keyes Purdue Hall of Fame in 2008.

With Keller directing an offense that had Rick Mount and Herman Gilliam, the Boilermakers went 53-23 in his three seasons. Keller could score too, finishing with 1,056 points. His 85.9 career free throw percentage is among the best in school history.

4. Everette Stephens – Easily the most athletic point guard in Purdue history, the 6-3 Stephens was a terrific defensive player who blossomed into a 3-point shooter and third scoring option alongside fellow "Amigos" Troy Lewis and Todd Mitchell. He was inducted into the Leroy Keyes Purdue Athletics Hall of Fame alongside Lewis and Mitchell in 2010.

Stephens helped Purdue go 96-28 during his four seasons, including back-to-back Big Ten championships in 1987 and 1988. He was the second Boilermaker to record at least 1,000 points, 300 assists and 150 steals. Stephens played briefly in the NBA for Indiana and Milwaukee.

Brian Walker – The former Indiana All-Star from Lebanon began his college career at North Carolina State but transferred in time to help Purdue reach the 1979 NIT championship game and the 1980 Final Four.

He left Purdue as its career leader in steals and second to Bruce Parkinson in assists. He was elected to the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame in 2010.

Eugene Parker – The Fort Wayne native started all four seasons at Purdue from 1974-78. He scored 1,430 points and earned second-team All-Big Ten honors in 1976.

Parker was elected to the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame in 2001. He was a prominent sports agent whose clients included Rod Woodson and Deion Sand-

ers. Parker passed away on March 31, 2016 at age 60.

7. Lewis Jackson – A four-year starter, his Purdue teams went 104-37 from 2008-12. At the time, Jackson was the winningest starting point guard in Boilermaker history.

8. Ricky Hall – The Fort Wayne native was Purdue's first Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year, winning in 1984 after helping the Boilermakers win an unexpected conference title.

9. PJ Thompson – A three-year starter for Matt Painter, Thompson ranks second in career assist/turnover ratio (2.94), 10th in career 3-point percentage (.404) and 15th in career 3-pointers made (161).

During his career, Thompson helped Purdue go 104-37 with the 2017 Big Ten championship. He currently is an assistant under Painter.

10. Carson Cunningham – The Andean graduate started his collegiate career at Oregon State before returning home to help Purdue reach the Sweet 16 in 1999 and the Elite Eight in 2000.

Cunningham averaged 11 points and 4.1 assists a game for the 2000 Boilermakers. Including his freshman season at Oregon State, Cunningham scored 1,289 points.

Noteworthy
Former Purdue quarterback David Blough has been promoted to offensive coordinator of the Washington Commanders.

Blough has had a fast rise up the ranks, having spent the 2024 season as assistant quarterbacks coach and taking on increased responsibilities in 2025 following the departure of Washington's QB coach Tavita Pritchard to Stanford.

Blough has been praised for his efforts in developing Jayden Daniels, who accounted for 4,459 yards and 31 touchdowns during his rookie season in 2024.

Blough played quarterback for four seasons with the Detroit Lions and one with the Arizona Cardinals. His coaching mentors include Chicago Bears coach Ben Johnson and Lions head coach Dan Campbell. ...

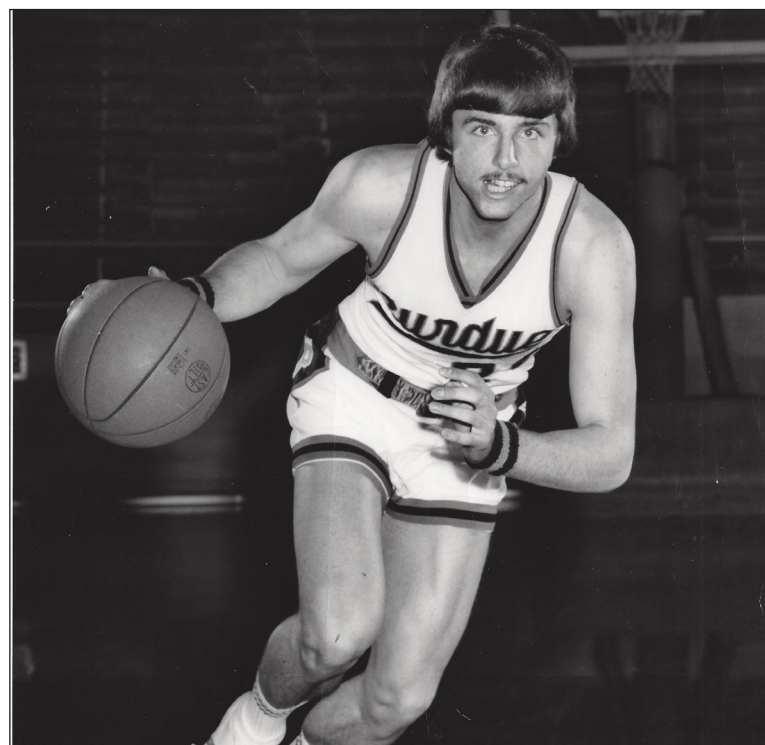
Former Purdue All-American guard Jaden Ivey was traded to the Chicago Bulls on Tuesday as part of a three-team deal with the Detroit Pistons and Minnesota Timberwolves.

In the midst of his fourth



Photos courtesy Purdue Athletics

Braden Smith



Bruce Parkinson



Billy Keller

NBA season, Ivey is averaging 14.9 points, 3.5 rebounds and 4.0 assists after being taken fifth overall by Detroit in the 2002 NBA Draft.

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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Photos Courtesy Hamilton Heights Schools

From left, by HHHS Assistant Principal Mitch Street, Lawrence “Sonny” Beck and HHHS Principal Whitney Gray.

Sonny Beck as First Distinguished Alumni

Hamilton Heights proudly hosted its first Distinguished Alumni ceremony, recognizing Mr. Lawrence “Sonny” Beck, CEO of Beck’s Hybrids in Atlanta Indiana. A 1958 graduate of Jackson Central High School, he has spent a lifetime shaping agriculture, education, and the Hamilton Heights community through his leadership and service.

Family, friends, alumni, and community members gathered in the high school media center to recognize Beck’s remarkable legacy, including his visionary leadership at Beck’s Hybrids, his 20 years of service on the Hamilton Heights School Board, and his continued impact as a Purdue University



Lawrence “Sonny” Beck and his wife, Glendia.

Trustee. The evening featured reflections, tributes, and heartfelt appreciation for a man whose influence reaches far beyond the classroom and the farm. Beck was also honored as part

of Heights’ Winter Homecoming festivities later that evening, marking a memorable launch of the Distinguished Alumni Program and setting a high standard for future honorees.

GRANTS

Continued from Page 1

- Flagship grants support projects that improve public places; transportation; housing; digital connections; and disaster resilience. Awards range from a few hundred dollars to \$15,000.

- Capacity-building microgrants are paired with expert support, webinars, and cohort learning for projects to improve walkability and bikeability; implement safe, accessible home modifications; and disaster preparedness training. Awards are \$2,500.

Demonstration grants fund projects that encourage replication of exemplary local efforts. This year’s focus is on improving pedestrian safety, with funding support from Toyota Motor North America; expanding high-speed internet access and adoption, with funding support from Microsoft; and housing choice design competitions. Awards typically range from \$10,000-\$20,000, not to exceed \$25,000.

“Over the last

decade, AARP has invested in communities to help people of all ages and abilities to thrive,” said Nancy LeaMond, AARP Executive Vice President and Chief Advocacy & Engagement Officer. “The impact that our Community Challenge grants have had in cities, towns and counties nationwide is significant, supporting everything from crosswalks and home improvements to increased community engagement while also serving as a catalyst for further action. We look forward to expanding the program and its cumulative results over the next ten years.”

Since 2017, AARP has invested \$24.3 million toward 2,100 livability projects – including 40 in Indiana – across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands through the Community Challenge. The program aims to provide support to all community types, including rural,

suburban and urban communities with a special focus on the needs of those 50 and older.

AARP Indiana works in collaboration with communities across the state, bringing people together, and providing resources and expertise to help make the state’s counties, towns and cities great places to live for people of all ages.

The Community Challenge is open to eligible 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), and 501(c)(6) nonprofit organizations and government entities. Other types of organizations are considered on a case-by-case basis. Grants can range from several hundred dollars for small, short-term activities to tens of thousands for larger projects.

The application deadline is 5 p.m. March 4. All projects must be completed by Dec. 15. To submit an application and view past grantees, visit www.AARP.org/CommunityChallenge.

County Councilman Shares Report on January Work

Welcome to the Timesheet. This column is a report of work done on behalf of the people of Hamilton County. It’s to be informative too, a place to learn about projects and how our county government works.

As your employee, it is important that you know what is being worked on as transparently as is possible in county government. You hired me as your County Councilman, and my hope is that you will choose to be informed by regularly reading this column, getting involved, consider volunteering, and by asking questions. Council meetings are at 7 p.m. the first Wednesday of every month at the Hamilton County Government and Judicial Center in downtown Noblesville. Meetings are also available to watch online for those unable to attend in person. Here is where my time this past month has been spent.

In addition to the County Council public meetings, January work included: watching Board of Commissioners public meetings, a Regional Development Commission meeting, attending and watching Noblesville and Cicero Town Council meetings, meeting with the government affairs team from Parkview Health, attending a Cicero Jackson Township Planning meeting, attending the IMMI Culture Amplifier: Faith Forward Collaboration meeting with several local business leaders, and a Council Executive session.

The in-person January personnel committee meeting was canceled in lieu of a poll of the voting committee members. The poll addressed one request for reclassification of three part-time law clerk positions from Judicial Services, two requests from the Sheriff’s Department to reclassify two existing positions, and one request to hire above basic level one from the Prosecutor’s Office.

All requests were approved after committee members reviewed the supporting documentation. The requests were moved on to the full council for a final approval vote. The finance committee did not meet this past month. The insurance committee did not meet this past month.

During January I received two constituent service requests and communications. A local not-for-profit organization, Rapha Road, works with reentry and recovering individuals helping them with beating addiction, housing, employment and recovery. They asked for assistance in finding a place in Hamilton County that could be used as a working farm and to create affordable housing for those whom they

serve. After researching their organization and potential available solutions I connected their leadership team with Commissioner Altman as she champions so many of the initiatives in County Government that address these issues.

The second request focused on where in Hamilton County, acreage could be found to build affordable housing. The constituent, frustrated with many of the local planning and zoning authorities, had already met with two Hamilton County Commissioners and was asking me about the possibility of securing county assistance in locating ground for development of affordable housing within the county. After meeting and reviewing his plans for development I offered my thoughts and suggestions on potential locations for this type of development. I reminded him that the council is merely the financial oversight body for County Government and that the Commissioners were the Executive branch, any action from the County on this topic would come from the Commissioners. If it had financial implications to the taxpayers then, it would require Council’s involvement.

Lastly, it was an honor to represent you this month at the Hamilton County Sherriff’s annual awards. It is always a special event to honor the men and women who serve the residents of Hamilton County in such an important way.

Of special note this month, was a study of Hamilton County’s Real Time Information Center. It was quite a learning experience working with Lt. Brian Niec to get an in-depth understanding of the capabilities of this unit within the Sherriff’s department. The Hamilton County Real Time Information Center (HCRTIC or RTIC) is a centralized intelligence hub launched in November 2024 by the Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office in partnership with the Carmel Police Department, Noblesville Police Department, and Hamilton County Public Safety Communica-



Mark Hall
Hamilton County Councilman

tions Center. Located in Noblesville, it integrates real-time data from 911 dispatches, license plate readers, traffic/video surveillance cameras, and deployable drones to assist law enforcement and first responders. This enables faster suspect tracking, missing person location, efficient dispatching, and quicker emergency responses—such as during winter weather incidents—enhancing public safety across the county. As one example, recently, the location of a fire within a home was determined after the resident called 911 and before fire apparatus even arrived on scene. Images were available for first responders as they arrived. I am pleased to report that Hamilton County is leading the way with state-of-the-art technology, information, and collaboration with first responders and other agencies. This use of technology is truly revolutionary and can serve the citizens well.

This is my time sheet. This is where my time went during January 2025. While my job is primarily the financial oversight of the county budget, it is important that I understand the Board of Commissioners’ priorities and balance them with the stewardship of taxpayer dollars. That is the job, and I am excited to do the people’s business.

As a taxpayer myself, and listening to so many of you, our employers, it is important for the taxpayers to have access to all the information you want. I work for you and although you may not choose to do a deep dive into what your County Council does, it is important that you can always do so. Feel free to contact me at (317) 832-1104 or mark.hall@hamiltoncounty.in.gov with questions, feedback or if you would like to talk about county business.

Mark Hall is a Hamilton County Councilman and the Founder and CEO of TLX, Talent Logistix. He writes a monthly column in The Times detailing his work as a county councilman.

PUBLIC NOTICES

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Photo courtesy Andy Chandler

Lt. Gov. Micah Beckwith serves as the Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development and helps OCRA work with local, state and national partners.

Two Community Grants Open for Applications

The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs' Community Development Block Grant Owner Occupied Rehabilitation program and Planning Grant program are now open for applications.

First cycle applications for both grant programs will be accepted until 11:59 p.m. ET, on Sunday, March 1, via the Indiana electronic Grants Management System, found here. Applicants are encouraged to submit their applications prior to 3 p.m. ET on Friday, Feb. 27, as technical assistance will not be available after that time.

Owner Occupied Rehabilitation program

The OOR program aims to help low-income homeowners to age in place, have greater mobility and make necessary repairs for their comfort and safety. Additionally, the OOR program supports communities in improving their existing housing stock and empowers them to establish local home repair programs.

Eligible OOR applicants are legally recognized non-entitlement local units of government with the legal capacity to implement the OOR program. Applicants may partner with a non-profit to conduct eligible project activities.

Awarded communities will administer

programs that directly fund repairs on owner-occupied residential properties, such as:

Roof replacements or repairs

Heating, cooling and water heater replacement

Select lighting and electrical upgrades

ADA accessibility modifications up to the threshold of the home

Applicants are required to use the Homeowner Application Packet provided by OCRA for the implementation of local home repair programs. Submissions that contain forms from any other agency will not be accepted. The forms are available on the CDBG Resources page.

Planning Grants

The following plan types will be open as part of the first cycle:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Water Utility Study
- Broadband Readiness Plan
- Economic Development Plan
- Downtown Revitalization Plan
- Environmental Assessment Plan
- Historic Preservation Plan
- COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan
- Public Facilities Feasibility Study

Three cycles of planning grants are expected per year until funds have been exhausted. This is a change to the prior format of grants being awarded quarterly.

Important Notes:

The deadline for bonus points submission has changed to the application due date. Requests for bonus points should be uploaded with the application on eGMS no later than Sunday, March 1, at 11:59 p.m. ET.

A new form, MSR-006-Disaster Designation Bonus Points Form, is now available and must be used to request disaster designation bonus points.

The In-Kind Contribution Policy went into effect Jan. 12, 2026. All in-kind requests must now be submitted using the In-Kind Contribution Request Form.

All income survey documentation should be submitted for final approval in eGMS by Feb. 13 to ensure OCRA has 10 days to complete a review. Final income survey results must be approved by OCRA in eGMS ahead of the application due date on March 1.

Funding for all CDBG programs, such as OOR and Planning Grants, comes from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and is administered by OCRA. For further information on these programs, contact the assigned regional OCRA community liaison.

Cooper House Gets Grant from Lilly

The Lilly Scholars Network (LSN) has awarded 28 organizations around the state a total of more than \$100,000 in grant funding through the LSN Lead Forward Community Grants (LFCG) program and a Hamilton County organization is included. These grants will support a wide range of community-driven projects led by Lilly Endowment Community Scholars in partnership with local organizations throughout Indiana.

The Cooper House, got a \$5,000 grant to renovate an upstairs visitation and playroom area. The Cooper House is a place, a space, a home where the lives of all who are involved in foster care are welcomed, loved, seen, heard and



LILLY SCHOLARS NETWORK

Indiana's future. Our focus.

chosen. This project aims to better support foster care families and will help transform the third-floor space of The Cooper House into a more comfortable and welcoming environment for family visitations.

The Lilly Scholars Network, with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. and guidance from Indiana Humanities, empowers Lilly Endowment Community Scholars to actively engage with their Indiana communities and address various needs to make a positive impact across the state.

"Lead Forward

Community Grants show how meaningful change starts locally. Through the Lilly Scholars Network, we're excited to empower Lilly Scholars to lead alongside community partners bringing their ideas to life, fueling vital on-the-ground work, and creating lasting, positive impact across Indiana," said Beau Jackson, a 2001 Ohio County Lilly Scholar who serves as a member of the LSN Advisory Council and LFCG committee.

The grant projects will be completed between now and July 31.

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

The 2026 Noblesville Babe Ruth Baseball Season begins **April 13, 2026** and ends on **June 17, 2026**.
(You do not need to be a Noblesville resident as we welcome ball players from surrounding communities).

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 13, 2026. A double-elimination tournament will be played June 7-17, 2026.
*Note: Dates subject to change due to weather or unforeseen circumstances.

Registration Fee: 2026 Noblesville Babe Ruth Baseball registration fee is \$199 (plus processing fee applied at checkout) and includes team jersey and hat.

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 14, 2026 from 2 pm-4 pm at Noblesville High School. *More details to be provided at a later date.

Register today at:
noblesvillebaberuthbaseball.sportsengine-prelive.com

Interested in supporting our young men and helping with continued upgrades to our facility? Sponsor opportunities are still available!
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