

■ TODAY'S VERSE

1 Corinthians 13:13

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (ESV)



Speaking of UFOs, never seen one myself. Kinda wish I had.

■ HAMILTON HAPPENINGS

The annual Indoor Easter Egg Hunt and Bunny Visit will return to the Sheridan Public Library on Saturday, March 21 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Hunts will begin every 15 minutes. This event is for ages 10 and under. Children are encouraged to bring baskets or bags to carry eggs. For more information on upcoming events, please visit sheridan.lib.in.us.

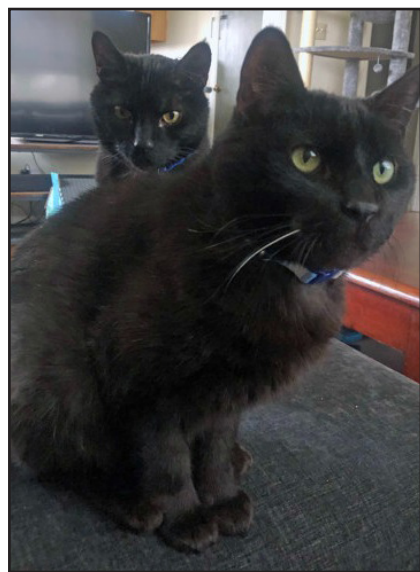
■ QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Happiness? The color of it must be spring green."
Frances Mayes

■ JOKE OF THE DAY

Did you hear about the sensitive burglar?
He takes things personally!

■ ADOPT A PET
FATBOY & RUDY



Fatboy and Rudy aren't just littermates; they're lifelong best friends who come as a two-for-one package deal. These 15-year-old male domestic shorthairs have been available for adoption at the Humane Society for Hamilton County (HSHC) since 11/30/24. As fellow champions in sunbathing and bird watching, the best way to tell these brothers apart is by experiencing Rudy's unique love for cuddles. Making their VIP Appearance this weekend, Fatboy and Rudy will only be visiting HSHC from 7/12 to 7/13 before they return to the HSHC foster program. To meet Fatboy and Rudy, please fill out an adoption application at hamiltonhumane.com/adopt.



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BOOMER BITS... Tips and Advice from Boomers to Boomers I'm Still Working; Why Didn't my Benefit Amount Increase?

Dear Rusty: I have been working somewhat consistently since commencing my Social Security benefit income. I've been collecting since my full benefit age of 66, approximately. I'm now 81, and customarily, in about October of each calendar year, Social Security notifies me of additional benefits from my additional work. Not this year.

I earned some \$18,000-\$19,000 in 2025. SS advised I did not meet some 35-year formula. I thought that formula just applied to the original benefit calculation. Otherwise, one seems cheated given the SS taxes paid on income received after applying for benefits without any consideration for that



ASK RUSTY

Social Security Advisor

income. Please advise me.
Signed: Feeling Cheated

Dear Feeling Cheated: FYI, your Social Security benefit is always based on the highest 35 years of your lifetime earnings (with your early years' earnings automatically adjusted for inflation). And that formula contin-

ues even after you start receiving benefits. Social Security will look at your earnings each year to see if your recent earnings are among your highest. If so, they will automatically recalculate your benefit to give you a higher amount (and pay you retroactive-

See Rusty Page 3

Empowering Seniors for Safer Online Experiences 6 Practical Safety Tips for Caregivers and Families

Family Features

Today's seniors aren't shying away from a world that has become increasingly reliant on technology. Quite the opposite, in fact, as recent survey findings suggest adults ages 65 and older are more digitally active and self-assured than ever before.

Nearly all seniors surveyed as part of the "Connecting the Digital Dots: Online Habits and Safety Concerns Across Three Generations" survey from Cox Mobile consider

themselves digitally literate, using devices for shopping, banking, social media and entertainment. With older adults spending a significant amount of time connected to the digital world – 41% of those surveyed reported spending five or more hours online daily – they're also more at-risk for scams, viruses like malware and data breaches.

Even though 61% of seniors who encountered digital threats were able to mitigate the issues

themselves, showing their growing digital capability, increased online engagement brings new challenges and responsibilities for caregivers, who often play a crucial role in supporting seniors' digital journeys.

To help support older loved ones' safety and confidence as they navigate an evolving digital landscape, Cox Mobile, in partnership with Common Sense Media, offers educational

See Safer Page 2

■ THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

1. Visitors to Indiana State Parks with limited mobility will soon have a free tool available to help them get outside and explore trails, with state-of-the-art track chairs coming to all Indiana State Parks throughout the state. A track chair is an all-terrain, electric-powered wheelchair that helps people with limited mobility safely explore rugged, off-road environments. Purchase of 45 track chairs was made possible by \$1 million in funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. The funds were part of a \$50 million grant the foundation made to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources in 2024 to support new development and upgrades across the Indiana State Park system. The track chairs will be distributed statewide for use at each Indiana State Park and Indiana State Park Inn. The new chairs supplement the 13 powered mobility chairs that are currently available at Indiana State Parks. More information about accessibility at DNR properties is at on.IN.gov/dnr-accessibility and information on Lilly Endowment's investment in Indiana state parks is available at <https://events.in.gov/event/lilly-endowment-awards-50-million-grant-for-indiana-state-parks>.

2. Governor Mike Braun formally announced a major investment in agricultural and life sciences with the goal of creating 100,000 high wage jobs over 10 years and making Indiana the premier U.S. destination where human therapeutics, animal health, agritech, biotechnology, and environmental innovation flow together along the vital, anchored pathway of private-sector excellence. Anchored by world-class U.S. companies and research institutions with substantial incentives and a USDA facility advancing the vision, Indiana is the re-shoring and expansion epicenter: the place where American private enterprise creates 100,000 jobs and establishes institutional stature among the nation's most recognized innovation corridors. Braun highlighted the depth of leadership concentrated in Indianapolis and across Indiana in human health, animal health, agriculture, advanced manufacturing, and research.

3. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology is now accepting grant applications for the fiscal year 2026 Historic Preservation Fund. Applications are only accepted through the State of Indiana's Grant Management System website and must be submitted by 5 p.m. on Friday, June 5. Applicants are encouraged to contact the DHPA grant staff: Malia Vanaman at mvanaman@dnr.IN.gov or 317-232-1648 or Steve Kennedy at skennedy@dnr.IN.gov or 317-232-6981 to discuss potential projects and confirm eligibility of the applicant, activity and property. For questions or guidance on using the state's grant management system, Euna Grants, support materials are available at: IN.gov/sba/grants/resources-for-subrecipients.



'Fine' Is New Fake: Emotional Honesty Is Key to Peace and Connection

"Fine" may be the most common and most dishonest word in the English language, and it's silently keeping people isolated from one another, explains Christian Life Coach Darla Nelson. She believes the antidote to that isolation begins with vulnerability.

"Fine" keeps people at arm's length; honesty invites connection," Nelson said. "Vulnerability is where true healing begins, and that's when peace starts to take root."

That message is at the heart of Nelson's new book, *I'm Fine. Really?: Moving From Stress and Anxiety to Peace and Calm*. Her book invites readers to drop the mask, embrace grace and rediscover the peace that comes from being real – with themselves, with others and with God.

Her book walks readers through simple, life-giving shifts to help them:

- Understand what's really behind those feelings of stress
- Release emotional weight that's been holding them back
- Build healthier thoughts, habits and relationships
- Embrace peace, even amid life's chaos

"The book is filled with honest, relatable stories – my own and those of people I've coached – that show life isn't always neat and tidy," Nelson said. "I don't pretend to have it all figured out. I'm just an ordinary woman who's learned (and is still learning) to trust God more deeply, let go of stress and build healthier habits one step at a time."

And that's what makes Nelson's narrative so refreshing: She doesn't speak from a place of perfection. She shares the trenches of real life with readers in a way that is candid and heartfelt. *I'm Fine. Really?* is an honest, faith-filled guide that can help readers let go of stress and live with more clarity, connectedness and purpose.

"Ultimately, my prayer is that readers feel seen, understood and inspired to let go of the pressure to be 'fine' and start creating a life that's truly fulfilling – spiritually, emotionally and physically," Nelson added.

I'm Fine. Really?: Moving from Stress and Anxiety to Peace and Calm
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Witham Opens Doors for Community Sponsorship

Witham Health Services has announced that the health system is now accepting applications from community organizations seeking sponsorship support for events and initiatives taking place during the second half of 2026.

“Through our community sponsorship program, Witham partners with nonprofit organizations that are working to improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve,” said Community Relations Manager Kim Heffner. “The program is part of Witham’s broader commitment to community outreach and supporting local initiatives that promote healthier lives.”

Sponsorship requests are reviewed twice each year, allowing Witham to strategically invest its

resources in initiatives that have a meaningful impact on community health. In the first half of the year, Witham distributed more than \$35,000 to support community programs and local initiatives.

“Witham values partnerships that help strengthen the health of our communities,” said Witham Health Services President and CEO Kelly Braverman. “Through our sponsorship program, we are proud to support organizations whose missions align with improving wellness and addressing important community health needs.”

Interested organizations can complete the online sponsorship application and learn more about eligibility requirements by visiting www.witham.org/sponsorships. The deadline to submit applications is May 1.

Harry Connick Coming Back to Carmel

Grammy and Emmy Award-winning singer, composer and actor Harry Connick, Jr. and his renowned band will return to Allied Solutions Center for the Performing Arts in July.

The performance is set for 7:30 p.m. Monday, July 20, at the Payne & Mencias Palladium, 1

Carter Green, Carmel. Tickets starting at \$165 go on sale at 10 a.m. Friday at TheCenterPresents.org, by phone at (317) 843-3800, or in person at the Payne & Mencias Palladium’s Fifth Third Bank Box Office.

The concert is the first to be announced from the 2026-2027 Center Presents Season sponsored by Allied Solutions, which

will be fully unveiled in May. Connick previously performed at Allied Solutions Center in 2015 and 2018.

A consummate performer, Connick has exemplified excellence in the entertainment world for decades – be it music, film, television or Broadway.

His prodigious talent has earned him Grammy, Emmy and Tony recognition, plus album sales in excess of 30 million and sold-out concerts around the world. Backed by his stellar band, this special concert will showcase the full breadth of Connick’s artistry – from jazz standards and New Orleans classics to his masterful originals



Harry Connick, Jr.

and career-defining hits.

Connick’s art is rooted in the music of his native New Orleans, where he began performing as a pianist and vocalist at age 5. Highlights of his music career include the multi-platinum albums *When Harry Met Sally*; *Blue Light, Red Light*; *When My Heart Finds Christmas*; *Come by Me*;

and *Only You*. He has appeared in 21 films and also earned Tony Award nominations as a lead actor in *The Pajama Game* and as a composer/lyricist for *Thou Shalt Not*. Connick’s national daytime television show *Harry* earned 11 Daytime Emmy nominations in its two seasons, including two nominations for best host.

County Music Maverick Gavin Adcock at Fishers

Country Music maverick Gavin Adcock announces his new headline tour, *The Day I Hang It Up Tour 2026*, making a stop at Fishers Event Center in Fishers, Ind., on Thursday, Oct. 22 with special guests Pecos & The Rooftops and Tyler Nance.

Tickets will be available starting with a Gavin Adcock fan club presale beginning Wednesday, March 18 at 10:00AM local time. Additional presales will run throughout the week ahead of the general on sale Friday at 10 a.m. local time at FishersEventCenter.com.

Today’s news marks the fourth extensive headline tour for Adcock since 2024. In addition to his own dates, Adcock will join megastar Morgan Wallen for the second time on 16 dates of Wallen’s *Still The Problem Tour 2026*. With a stage performance that has

been described as a “collision of extremes” [*Holler.*], or simply “high-octane” [*MusicRow*], Adcock has built a loyal, rabid, fanbase that arrives at each show ready to match the Georgia native’s energy.

Adcock, dubbed by *Billboard* as “one of country music’s most buzzed-about artists” is a Georgia native, born and raised in Watkinsville. Former Georgia Southern University football player, Gavin grew up working on his family’s cattle farm and dreamt of riding bulls in the PBR. He started writing songs in high school, but it wasn’t until the spring of 2021, when Adcock tore his knee playing football, that he used his healing time to record and release his first original single.

Since then, Gavin has collectively amassed more than 1.5 BILLION global

streams across singles including the fan-favorite, RIAA PLATINUM-certified, “A Cigarette,” GOLD-certified songs “Run Your Mouth,” “Deep End,” “Four Leaf Clover” and more. His album, *Actin’ Up Again*, was crowned the largest major-label country debut from a solo male artist released in 2024 and was the year’s top streaming major-label debut across the genre. Within less than a year, Adcock more than doubled his previous streaming record with over 25 MILLION first week US streams on new album *Own Worst Enemy*, released August 15, 2025. *Own Worst Enemy* debuted as the top new Country album on the *Billboard* 200 Country Chart (No. 4) and top streaming new album on the *Billboard* 200 All-Genre Chart (No. 14) week of release.

The *MusicRow*

Awards “Discovery Artist of the Year” nominee has won over the hearts of both Country music fans and music industry alike, leading to his *New Artist of the Year* nomination at the 60th ACM Awards. Taking his music to the fans, Adcock continues to sell out music venues from coast-to-coast via multiple headline tours including his *Actin’ Up Again (Again) Tour* – and recently wrapped 2025 *Need To Tour*. Gavin’s dedicated fanbase has quickly grown internationally, leading to Adcock selling out his 2025 Canadian Headline tour within one week. In addition to playing a plethora of new headline dates and major festival appearances, Adcock joins superstar Morgan Wallen for the second time as support on 16 dates of Wallen’s *Still The Problem Tour 2026*.

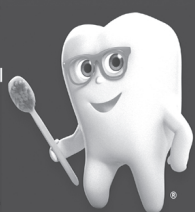
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SAFER

Continued from Page 1

materials on digital safety, smart device use and media literacy for all ages. In addition, these practical safety strategies can help empower seniors to make informed, safe choices online.

Encourage Strong Passwords: Simple passwords, like number sequences, keyboard patterns or personal information – such as variations of your name, birthdate, address or names of pets or loved ones – are easily guessable and may lead to issues. While the survey found 70% of seniors already create strong, unique passwords, encourage them to avoid reusing passwords across sites. Recommend a password manager app to safely store passwords and eliminate the need to write them all down, which could lead to a breach if not stored properly.

Promote Security Software: If devices aren’t protected, even the most careful users are susceptible to viruses. Though 63% of those surveyed have security software installed, it’s important to regularly make sure it’s up to date (or

that automatic updates are enabled) and covers all devices, including laptops, tablets and smartphones.

Enable Multi-Factor Authentication: A simple and effective way to stop most attempts at unauthorized account access, 60% of seniors are already using multi-factor authentication as an extra layer of protection. Some seniors, however, may need assistance setting up the safeguard, which typically sends a code to a phone number or email address as part of the login process, for online banking, email or social media accounts.

Review Apps and Channels: Over time, it can be easy to accumulate apps on smartphones and tablets. While 51% of surveyed seniors remove unsafe apps, make it a habit to regularly check loved ones’ devices for unfamiliar or suspicious applications and delete them. Also keep an eye out for unauthorized charges, data sharing or browser extensions.

Utilize Built-In Safety Features: Explore privacy controls on individual devices (and apps) and check with your

loved ones’ internet service provider to ensure security features are being utilized like the 43% of those surveyed who are already taking advantage of their devices’ safety settings. Included privacy protections may include limiting data sharing, disabling location tracking, blocking pop-ups and restricting other unwanted communication.

Discuss Online Safety Regularly: Because technology is ever-changing, it’s important for caregivers to talk with senior loved ones about online safety. Open, ongoing conversations, like those one-third of seniors are already having several times a week or even daily, can help build trust and awareness of current scams, suspicious texts or emails, commonly used apps and more.

By fostering open dialogue, sharing practical safety strategies and leveraging trusted resources, caregivers can help their loved ones thrive and stay safe. Visit your local Cox Mobile store or go to CoxMobileSafety.com to find more tips, guides and full survey results.

English Teacher Named Husky Hero

Libby Perry, the English Language Learner (ELL) Teacher who serves students across all three Hamilton Heights school buildings, has been named the February Husky Hero. Now in her fourth year at Heights, Perry began as an English teacher at the middle school before transitioning into her current role midway through her first year. Her nomination highlights the extraordinary impact she has on students and families, as shared by Hamilton Heights Middle School Art Teacher, Erin Goodman.

“Libby is an incredible educator who goes above and beyond every single day to support our English Language Learners. She creates a supportive classroom environment where every student feels seen, valued, and empowered to succeed. Her patience, creativity, and compassion help students build confidence in their English skills while also celebrating the richness of their cultural backgrounds. She works in all three buildings and manages the needs of many different students.

“In October, she organized a beautiful celebration for Hispanic Heritage Month, bringing our school community together to honor and learn about Hispanic culture, history, and traditions. She hosted a ‘pitch-in’ for families to share food they love, and students created posters about their countries of

origin. She gave our ELL students the opportunity to share their voices and take pride in who they are. I attended and it was a wonderful event.

“Her dedication not only helps students thrive academically but also strengthens our entire school community by promoting inclusivity and cultural appreciation. Libby truly embodies what it means to be a Husky Hero, leading with heart, empathy, and a deep commitment to her students.”

When asked what it means to be named the February Husky Hero, Perry shared that the recognition feels especially meaningful because it comes from her colleagues. “One of the greatest accolades in a person’s career is to be recognized by those around them as being good at what they do,” she said. “For a peer to recognize the work I and my team do with our students in each of the three buildings each day and to nominate me for this great award is quite an honor.”

Perry’s motivation is rooted deeply in the unique nature of her work and the students she serves. As the district’s Multi-Language Learner teacher of record, she supports students in



Photo Courtesy Hamilton Heights Schools

From left, Rebecca Nickless (Director of Special Education), Yatziry Zaleta (IA Multilingual Learner), Libby Perry, Laken Bowen, and Craig Bowen (FC Tucker).

grades K–12 whose first language is not English. “One of my favorite things is to see them make con-

diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds enrich her own learning every day, and she credits her collaborative team and fellow educators for creating an environment where students can thrive.

and her craft. “One of my favorite things about this award is reading about the people who receive it and how they have impacted those around them,” she said. “Now as a recipient, I will continue to encourage my students to learn and to be better than they were the day before, to encourage my team as they guide students in learning new skills, and to continue adding to my own education as a life-long learner.” She hopes to keep making a meaningful impact on the students she serves and emphasizes that the honor reflects the collective spirit of Hamilton Heights. “Everyone I have the pleasure of working with at Hamilton Heights is a Husky Hero.”

Do you know Husky Hero?

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

nections between their first language and the English language,” she explained. “When they learn the vocabulary and can have conversations, their eyes light up and they understand — it is magical.” She added that her students’

I say I love my job, I truly do love my job. Every day I am motivated to be a better teacher than I was the day before for my students. They are my ‘why.’”

Looking ahead, Perry says the Husky Hero recognition inspires her to continue pouring into her students

RUSTY

Continued from Page 1

ly to the first of that year). Apparently, in past years, your more recent earnings were among the highest over your lifetime, which is why you received those notifications in the fall of each previous year saying your benefit was adjusted based upon recent earnings. That you didn’t get a similar notification this year, means that your earnings in 2024 were not among the highest over your lifetime, so no adjustment to your monthly benefit was appropriate.

Now, to clarify, those annual notices you received in the past always referred to the preceding year — that is, if you received a notice in October 2024 of a higher SS benefit, that was a result of your 2023 earnings. If

you got no such notice in October of 2025, that means that your 2024 income was not among the highest over your lifetime. And your 2025 earnings of \$18,000 - \$19,000 will likely not be among your lifetime highest either, so you probably won’t get a notice next year either.

It’s important to understand that your contributions to Social Security (i.e., the SS payroll taxes you pay while working) are not put into a separate account for you - rather, they are used to help pay benefits to all beneficiaries. In other words, just contributing to SS with payroll tax from your work earnings doesn’t necessarily mean you get a higher benefit. Your SS benefit is always based upon the 35 years in

which you earned the most, including recent years if you continue to work. So, you weren’t “cheated” — that is simply how the program works - your SS benefit is always based on your highest 35 years of work earnings, including recent years, with earnings from the early years adjusted for inflation..

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.

County Still Shining in Finance Department

The Government Finance Officers Association has once again awarded Hamilton County the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. This marks the 37th consecutive year Hamilton County has received the prestigious national honor, widely considered the highest recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting.

“This award means the citizens of Hamilton County can be confident their local government is managing public funds with transparency, accountability, and professionalism,” said Todd Clevenger, Hamilton County Auditor.

The GFOA award recognizes governments whose financial reports go beyond basic reporting requirements to clearly communicate their financial condition in a way that is transparent and understandable to citizens, elected officials, and financial professionals. Independent reviewers evaluate the report

to ensure it meets the highest national standards and demonstrates a “constructive spirit of full disclosure.”

Producing the county’s Annual Comprehensive Financial Report is a major undertaking led by the Auditor’s Office and supported by every county department and elected office. The report compiles and verifies financial information from across county government to provide a complete picture of the county’s finances.

“This achievement reflects the dedication of our entire Auditor’s Office team as well as the cooperation of elected officials and department leaders throughout county government,” Clevenger said. “It truly is a countywide effort.”

Hamilton County also works with outside financial professionals, including advisors at Baker Tilly, to ensure reporting continues to meet evolving government accounting standards.

The county’s longstanding record of excellence was built

by former Hamilton County Auditors Robin Mills and Dawn Coverdale, whose leadership established the strong financial reporting standards the county continues today. Maintaining that tradition has become increasingly challenging as government accounting standards continue to evolve and expand. “Each year the reporting requirements become more complex,” Clevenger said. “Continuing this 37-year tradition requires an incredible level of professionalism, attention to detail, and commitment from our staff.”

For Hamilton County government, the Certificate of Achievement represents more than a financial document, it reflects a culture of accountability.

“Our responsibility is to ensure every taxpayer dollar is tracked, reported, and managed responsibly,” Clevenger said. “This award demonstrates that Hamilton County remains committed to openness, fiscal responsibility, and the highest level of public service.”

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Roller-Coaster Season for Purdue's Boilermakers Continues Into NCAA



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with Ken Thompson

The roller-coaster ride taken by the Purdue men's basketball team since the dawn of 2026 is once again on an upward trajectory.

Becoming the first No. 7 seed to win the Big Ten Tournament has renewed some faith in the eighth-ranked Boilermakers, who were viewed as a preseason national championship contender. Beating the Michigan all-star team while playing its fourth game in four days has regained some benefit of the doubt for a Purdue program that is best known for failure in the eyes of some national media members.

Keith Gill, the chairman of the NCAA Tournament Selection Committee, surprised many Big Ten observers with his statement that Purdue went from a No. 3 seed to the last No. 2 seed with its victory against the Wolverines. It has been believed by some that the tournament committee usually has its bracket finalized before the results of the Big Ten tournament, which typically concludes about 30 minutes before the bracket reveal on CBS.

Gill stated the tournament title game led to the committee's biggest debate in the final minutes.

"We had Michigan (as the No. 2 overall seed) and then when ... the Big Ten Tournament results came out, Arizona flipped to the 2 overall and Michigan to the 3 overall," Gill said. "Then when you look at Purdue, they started at the 11 (overall) line and with that result they scrubbed up to the 8 (overall) line and got them a 2 seed."

That jump allowed Purdue to go to St. Louis to start the tournament, likely bumping either Illinois or Michigan State from that slot behind West Regional No. 1 seed Arizona.

If someone had told me back in November that Purdue would have a better record away from Mackey Arena during the 2025-26 season, I'd have lost some money in my eagerness to place a friendly wager with that person.

But the facts are that the Boilermakers (27-8) went 8-3 on an opponent's court and are 7-0 at a neutral site. This statistic perhaps influenced the predictions by CBS college basketball analysts Clark Kellogg and Jon Rothstein that Purdue will win the national championship.

"Purdue has found its rhythm and mojo," Kellogg said during the CBS selection show. "They look like a team that can very well have a storybook ending getting to Indianapolis."

"I like Purdue and (reigning national champion) Florida to meet in Indianapolis. The storybook ending I'm talking about? The Purdue Boilermakers win the national championship 60 miles away from campus. They get it done."

Rothstein compared Purdue's momentum from winning an unexpected Big Ten Tournament championship to Connecticut's national championship run in 2004 and Florida's title surge in 2007.

"A large returning nucleus that truly knew that the season didn't maybe truly start until Championship Week," Rothstein first stated on his X (formerly Twitter) account.

"One of the hottest teams in the country right now," fellow CBS analyst Isis "Ice" Young stated before picking Purdue to reach the Elite Eight.

"They've got a point guard who is one of the most decorated in the history of college basketball," host Brent Stover stated, referring to Braden Smith, who needs two assists Friday night against Queens to break former Duke star Bobby Hurley's NCAA career record.

Over at ESPN, where positive news about the Big Ten is rare since the network lost the conference TV package, Rece Davis stated that Arizona "has a pretty tough draw" in the West Regional.

Analysts Jay Bilas, Jay Williams and Seth Greenberg all have Purdue reaching the Elite Eight before losing to Arizona.

"I think Purdue has a pretty decent draw," Bilas said. "The Miami-Missouri winner is not going to be an easy second round game."

"Purdue made a statement today," said Greenberg, who was impressed with the 80-72 victory against No. 2 Michigan. "People say how good is Purdue? They went through that stretch where they lost two or three in a row. But they got back to who they were. They grinded it out. They were physical. They were tough. They played through their interior. Braden Smith looked to score a little bit more."



Photo courtesy Purdue Athletics
Braden Smith was averaging 14 points, 9.1 assists and 3.6 rebounds a game entering the NCAA Tournament.

In a nightmare scenario, though, for Purdue Greenberg has Michigan and Michigan State reaching the national championship game. Greenberg joked about wanting to overhear the handshake line after picking the Wolverines.

Bilas and Williams have Arizona winning the national title. Bilas picked the Wildcats to beat Michigan State in the final.

NOTEWORTHY: Winning the Most Outstanding Player of the Big Ten Tournament was a major consolation prize for Smith after not repeating as an Associated Press first-team All-American last week.

Smith was chosen a second-team All-American guard, more than likely the result of Purdue's under-achieving month of February when the Boilermakers went 6-4 with losses to Michigan, Michigan State and Wisconsin inside Mackey Arena.

Smith did receive first-team All-America honors from the National Association of Basketball Coaches and the United States Basketball Writers Association. Those honors make Smith the fourth two-time consensus first-team All-American in Purdue history, joining Terry Dischinger, Rick Mount and Zach Edey.

Whether Purdue's dis-

appointing regular season finish will impact Smith's chance of being the first repeat winner of the Bob Cousy Award will be known in the next few weeks. Smith's fellow finalists are Michigan State's Jeremy Fears, Jaden Bradley of Arizona, Darius Acuff Jr. of Arkansas and Kingston Flemings of Houston.

Fears' chances may depend on whether voters take into consideration his less than sportsmanlike play at times this season. Smith is the nation's assists leader with a Purdue and Big Ten record 317, 23 more than runner-up Fears. Smith is averaging 14 points, 9.1 assists and 3.6 rebounds a game entering the NCAA Tournament opener against Queens.

PURDUE'S VICTORY against Michigan was the most watched conference championship game on any network in the last 30 years according to the Big Ten. In a statement, the Big Ten reported the broadcast peaked at 6.2 million viewers.

TWO VICTORIES in the NCAA tournament would give Purdue coach Matt Painter 500 at Purdue. The 55-year-old Painter has an overall record of 523-228, including a 25-5 record in his lone season at Southern Illinois.

Painter is on track to pass Naismith Hall of Famer Gene Keady's school record win total of 512 during the 2026-27 season.

THIS COLUMN was submitted Wednesday night before the Big Ten began play in the NCAA Tournament. With that in mind, I'm taking the league to go 6-0 Thursday night. The most noteworthy game could be fourth-seeded Nebraska earning its first NCAA Tournament victory against Troy in Oklahoma City.

I like No. 8 seed Ohio State over No. 9 TCU in Greenville, S.C.; No. 5 Wisconsin over No. 12 High Point at Portland; No. 3 Michigan State over No. 14 North Dakota State at Buffalo; No. 1 Michigan over No. 16 Howard, also in Buffalo; and No. 3 Illinois over No. 14 Penn and former Iowa coach Fran McCaffery in Greenville.

In addition to Purdue over Queens, I'll take No. 9 Iowa over No. 8 Clemson in Tampa, and No. 7 UCLA over No. 10 Central Florida in Philadelphia tonight.

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.

Utility Provides Customers with Leak-Saving Tips

Indiana American Water is recognizing the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Fix a Leak Week 2026 by sharing simple, practical tips customers can use to locate and address common household leaks that waste water, drive up bills, and strain home plumbing.

"Finding and fixing leaks can help customers protect their water, homes, businesses and monthly bills," said Kari Britto, Vice Pres-

ident of Operations, Indiana American Water. "At the same time, Indiana American Water is investing over \$200 million annually for the next several years to modernize water and wastewater infrastructure in our 75 communities across the Hoosier State."

Household leaks are more common than many people realize. According to the EPA, leaks affect about one in 10 homes and can waste more than 90

gallons of water each day.

Here are a few places where leaks are often found:

Toilets: A defective plunger ball or flapper valve can waste water by causing the tank to continually drain and refill. To test, drop a dye-tracing tablet or a small amount of food coloring in the tank and wait 5 minutes. If the dye-colored water seeps into the bowl, you may have a leak and need to replace

the defective part.

Faucets: A leaky faucet can waste nearly 3,200 gallons of water per year. If you notice one dripping, try closing it tightly. If it continues to drip, the washer may need to be replaced.

Washing Machines and Dishwashers: If you see water on the floor near your washing machine or dishwasher, that could indicate a leak. You may want to call your repair service.

Bathtubs and Showers: Check the spout and showerhead for dripping water. New washers may be needed on the faucet handles.

Boiler Systems: If the sound of running water is continuous and does not stop and start periodically, there may be a leak. Contact a professional to check it out and perform repairs.

Learn more by downloading Indiana American Wa-

ter's leak-detection kit and checking out the company's Fix a Leak Week blog post. Customers can also review water use for unexpected spikes and manage accounts through MyWater, Indiana American Water's online customer portal.

Additional tips on water conservation and the value of water are available through the company's Water Learning Center.

April Busy for Center for Performing Arts

April is set to be a busy time at Allied Solutions Center for the Performing Arts in Carmel. Following is a list of events on tap.

Illusionist Rick Thomas
8 p.m. Saturday, April 4
Payne & Mencias Palladium
 Family Series

In Mansion of Dreams, the crowning achievement of award-winning Master Illusionist Rick Thomas, stunning magic, extreme comedy, exquisite dancers and an inspiring story are woven into an amazing stage production. Thomas has been featured many times on national television, including NBC's The World's Greatest Magic, the CW's Masters of Illusion and his own special on ABC. His career honors have included the coveted "Magician of the Year" from the Academy of Magical Arts and magic's highest recognition, "Illusionist of the World" at the World Magic Awards. Now witness for yourself the most intriguing, innovative and mind-blowing grand illusions in the world with Mansion of Dreams.

Chris Thile
8 p.m. Friday, April 10
Payne & Mencias Palladium
 Pop/Rock Series

Grammy-winning mandolinist, singer, songwriter, composer and MacArthur "Genius Grant" Fellow Chris Thile is hailed by NPR as a "genre-defying musical genius." Thile is a founding member of the influential string bands Punch Brothers and Nickel Creek and has collaborated with countless luminaries from Yo-Yo Ma to Fiona Apple to Brad Mehldau. For four years, Thile hosted public radio favorite Live from Here with Chris Thile (formerly known as A Prairie Home Companion). This solo performance will feature selections from his acclaimed solo recordings of Bach's Sonatas and Partitas – including the new second volume released in November – alongside his signature post-genre blend of compositional rigor, folksy stagecraft and improvisational brilliance.

Michael Feinstein with special guest Sandi Patty
8 p.m. Friday, April 17
Payne & Mencias Palladium

BHI Senior Living Songbook Series
 The Ambassador of the Great American Songbook, Michael Feinstein, returns with an evening of timeless music. The multi-Platinum-selling, five-time Grammy and two-time Emmy award nominee is Artistic Director for Allied Solutions

Center and Founder of the affiliated Great American Songbook Foundation. His most recent album is Gershwin Country, which reimagines the classic songs of George and Ira Gershwin through duets with some of the biggest names in country music. Joining him as special guest will be Sandi Patty, an Indiana Living Legend and the most awarded female vocalist in contemporary Christian music, with 40 Dove Awards and five Grammy Awards.

Joshua Bell with pianist Shai Wosner
7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 23
Payne & Mencias Palladium
 Leo Brown Group Classical Series

With a career spanning almost four decades, Grammy Award-winning violinist Joshua Bell is one of the most celebrated artists of his era. The Bloomington native and Indiana University graduate has performed with virtually every major orchestra, and maintains engagements as a soloist, recitalist, chamber musician, conductor and as the Music Director of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields. Bell has earned six Grammy Award nominations, was named "Instrumentalist of the Year" by Musical America, received the Avery Fisher Prize, and was named an Indiana Living Legend in 2000. Accompanying him will be pianist and recording artist Shai Wosner.

Snarky Puppy: Somni Tour 2026
8 p.m. Saturday, April 25
Payne & Mencias Palladium
 Printing Partners Encore Series

Snarky Puppy is a Brooklyn-based instrumental ensemble founded in 2004 by bassist and composer Michael League. Considered one of contemporary music's most innovative collectives, the group defies genre boundaries by seamlessly blending funk, R&B, hard rock, classic soul, modern gospel, new tech, fusion and jazz. With a continually evolving roster, Snarky Puppy has captivated audiences worldwide with intricate arrangements and virtuosic performances, claiming five Grammy Awards, including four for Best Contemporary Instrumental Album. A new album due in November, Somni, was recorded live in collaboration with the Netherlands-based ensemble Metropole Orkest.

OTHER APRIL ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:
Local Mix Music Series: The Operators
7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 2
 The Tarkington and

online
 On-site tickets: \$10 (pay-what-you-can, \$10 minimum)
 Livestream: Free (pay-what-you-can, no minimum)

The Operators formed in 2018 from members of Indianapolis ska/punk bands the Circle City Deacons, Harley Poe, Lockstep and Indien, later joined by lead vocalist Brittany Brumfield.

The group delivers a mix of neo-traditional ska sounds with the energy of punk, marked by shifting tempos and rhythms and bright and tight horn arrangements. Recordings have included Leave the Light On (2021) and Self-Titled Second Album (2024) on Chicago's JumpUp Records.

Peanut Butter & Jam: Gregory Hancock Dance Theatre
10:30 a.m. Saturday, April 4
The Studio Theater

Tickets: \$10 per child, two free adult admissions included
 Gregory Hancock Dance Theatre is the resident professional dance company at Allied Solutions Center for the Performing Arts. After a brief performance, the dancers will lead the audience through an adventure of movement and music, exploring basic concepts of dance to encourage creativity in participants of all ages. PB&J sessions are designed to engage children ages 1-7 in the joy of live performance.

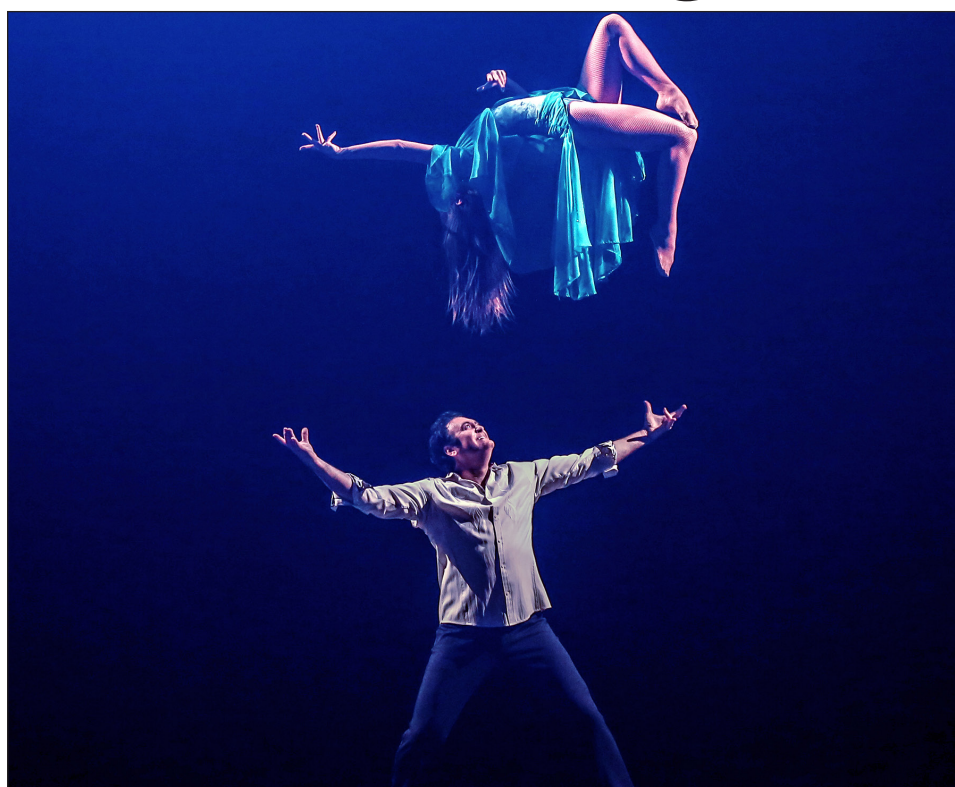
World Voice Day
3 p.m. Sunday, April 19
Payne & Mencias Palladium
Free

Singers of all ages and skill levels are invited to perform one song each during Allied Solutions Center's annual World Voice Day celebration, as the Payne & Mencias Palladium stage is transformed into a cabaret club. Doors open at 2:30 p.m. for sign-in, limited to the first 30 registrants. For accompaniment, singers can bring musical instruments, recorded tracks, or sheet music for the piano accompanist.

Songwriting: Melody & Lyrics
6 p.m. Tuesdays, April 21-May 19
Payne & Mencias Palladium
Cost: \$150

Local professionals lead sessions for seasoned and amateur writers to collaborate with other musicians. The five-week class culminates in a "songwriters in the round" performance on May 22.

FROM OUR RESIDENT COMPANIES:
 Indiana Wind Symphony
 Suite Dreams
 4 p.m. Sunday, April 12 – Payne & Mencias Palladium



Carmel Symphony Orchestra Symphonic Odyssey 7 p.m. Saturday, April 18 – Payne & Mencias	Palladium Civic Theatre Fiddler on the Roof April 24-May 9 – The Tarkington	Actors Theatre of Indiana Sunset Boulevard April 24-May 10 – The Studio Theater
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Photo courtesy Noblesville Lions Club

Lions Learn about Vote411

At their March 11 meeting, the Noblesville Lions Club heard from member Lisa Dick about her volunteer work with the League of Women Voters of Hamilton County and the Vote411 election guide. The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization, encouraging informed and active participation in government. The Hamilton County League is currently surveying the 147 candidates running for public office in the 2026 Indiana primary. Candidates have been mailed or emailed a survey asking general biographical questions as well as race specific questions. The League will be publishing candidates' responses to the Vote411 website later in March, ahead of early voting and the May 5 primary. The League does not support or endorse parties or candidates, but they do encourage all registered voters to make informed decisions. Voter registration closes on April 6 and early voting begins on April 7. Citizens can find additional information about early voting, election day polling locations and ballot information at Vote411.org. Vote411 is funded by the Education Fund of the League of Women Voters. To learn more about the League of Women Voters of Hamilton County, visit lwvhcn.org. In the photo, Lions President Walt Scheid gives Lion and League of Women Voters member Lisa Dick a certificate.



Photo courtesy Noblesville Lions Club

Lions in Service

The Noblesville and Westfield Lions Clubs, along with The Feeding Team, distributed food from Gleaner's to 500 people in 125 families on Saturday, March 14 at Hamilton Heights High School. Thanks go to Lion George Long for designing and creating the new Stop and Pull Forward paddles that help volunteers direct traffic. The next distribution will be Tuesday, March 24 at Harbour Shores Church in Cicero from 4-6 p.m.

The Ernie Pyle Museum is Now Open

The Ernie Pyle World War II Museum opened for the 2026 season on Thursday, March 19, and is welcoming visitors throughout the weekend with tours and special events each day.

The March 19 date marked an earlier spring opening for the museum, which in past years has opened in May.

"The earlier spring opening for the museum is a visible sign of the growth of the Friends of Ernie Pyle organization," said Steve Key, president of the FEP board. "These expanded hours are possible due to the support of the community and dedication of our volunteers and guides. We hope to see more visitors with the expanded hours and the chance to enjoy the recently installed bronze sculpture of Ernie Pyle."

The museum is located in Dana in Vermillion County,



Photo courtesy Andy Chandler

Visitors this year will see the new Ernie Pyle statue.

Indiana. It features the famed World War II correspondent's birthplace as well as a museum dedicated to his wartime activity as a journalist.

The opening weekend's hours will be 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

The site will then be open every Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m.

to 5 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m., through Veterans Day on Nov. 11.

The Ernie Pyle World War II Museum is owned and operated by the Friends of Pyle, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and advancing Pyle's legacy and honoring the service of all veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Easter Egg Hunt Monday, Thanks to Junior Leaders

Come join the fun at the annual Community Easter Egg Hunt on Monday!

The hunt will be held at the Hamilton County 4-H Fairgrounds, 2003 Pleasant St. in Noblesville. Youth ages 8 and under are invited to hunt for eggs filled with candy and prizes. But please

be sure to bring your own basket. Egg hunt for little ones up to age 2 will begin at 6:05 p.m. Five minutes later, at 6:10 p.m., the hunt takes off for ages 3-5. And the oldest group, ages 6-8, begins at 6:15 p.m. The Easter Egg Hunt is organized and sponsored

by the Hamilton County 4-H Junior Leaders. For more information about Junior Leaders or the 4-H Program in Hamilton County, contact Purdue Extension Hamilton County at (317) 776-0854 or visit them at <https://extension.purdue.edu/county/hamilton/>.

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