

If there are specific topics residents would like to see covered, please reach out to communications@westfield.in.gov.

Hello,
Hamilton
County!



Click to play this week's video

SHERIDAN

from Page 1

Mundy said. “This achievement is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our entire team, from teachers and support staff to board members and administrators, this is a tremendous recognition of

EVERYONE’S tremendous efforts.” SCS has long been known for its focus on employee well-being and professional development initiatives. The district offers a range of benefits and programs aimed at supporting staff members in both their personal and professional lives. From comprehensive healthcare coverage, day-care, and opportunities for ongoing training and advancement support, SCS works hard to provide everyone with the resources they need to thrive.

“We believe that creating a positive work environment is essential not only for the success of our employees but also for the overall success of our students and the entire community,” Mundy said. “When our staff feels valued and supported, they are better equipped to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students.”

In addition to competitive benefits and professional development opportunities, SCS fosters a culture of collaboration and innovation. Faculty and staff are encouraged to contribute their ideas and expertise to continuously improve the educational experience for students.

“Our district is committed to fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation,” Mundy said. “We believe that by empowering our employees and encouraging them to share their ideas, we can create an environment where everyone thrives.”

The recognition from the Indiana Chamber of Commerce serves as validation of SCS’s ongoing efforts to prioritize employee satisfaction and well-being. As the district continues to grow



Photos provided by Sheridan Community Schools
(ABOVE) The caring and close-knit culture is part of what makes SCS a great place to work. Here are elementary teachers (from left) Elizabeth Durr, Candy Hall, Steve Raper, and Chanie Mitchell having fun dressed as reindeer. (BELOW) Diane Anderson, Bobbie Jo Hiatt, Brenda Ransom, and Allison Waitt are proud SCS employees. (BOTTOM) Athletic Director Beth DeVinney and staff member Anita Leonard and Rhonda Favors celebrating SCS.



and evolve, while also maintaining a focus on its proud heritage it remains dedicated to maintaining its status as one of the best places to work in Indiana. For more information about Sheridan Community Schools, visit sheridan.k12.in.us.

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based on the short story
by Doris Betts.

Directed by Kathleen Horrigan
Vocal Directed by Markell Pipkins
Produced by Amy Jo Douglas

MARCH 1 - 10, 2024

FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 2024 - 7:30 PM
SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 2024 - 7:30 PM
SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 2024 - 2:30 PM
THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2024 - 7:30 PM
FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2024 - 7:30 PM
SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 2024 - 7:30 PM
SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 2024 - 2:30 PM

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HERO

from Page 1

"He has created such an awesome environment and has given us so many amazing opportunities – it has truly impacted my love for music. He has been so supportive and always encourages his students to be the best they can be. Without Mr. Snelson, I'm not sure that I would have ever been given the opportunities to one day become an amazing musician."

Enzo Cerroni said Mr. Snelson is a hero because he helped him grow and learn how to play his instrument.

"This has made me love to play in band. He makes the class fun, and I always am excited to be in his class," Cerroni said.

"Mr. Snelson has done a great job of expanding our band offerings and preparing our students for quality performances and experiences," HHMS Principal Bret Bailey said. "He's deeply committed to our students and their success and puts in the time and effort to make sure they are always ready to do their best."

"Mark has been instrumental (pun intended) in putting Hamilton Heights on the competitive map with our Marching Band and our Indoor Percussion Team," HHHS Principal Jarrod Mason said. "I appreciate his dedication to our students and our school community. These two student programs have been welcome additions to HHHS, and it has given our best and brightest musicians a way to showcase their talents while competing at a very high level."

Do you know a Husky Hero? Nomination forms and information about this special recognition program for Hamilton Heights employees are available at 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

**Thanks for reading
The Reporter!**

JOHN PRINE

from Page 1



Photos provided by Scott Saalman

A passage from "**Often Is A Word I Seldom Use**" delivers a perfect one-two-comic-tragic punch: "You must think my life's a circus / Watching me laughing / And slapping my thighs / How'd ya like to die / In the house of mirrors / With nobody around to close your eyes." I still cannot shake the imagery of those words. It's my favorite Prine lyric.

I saw four Prine concerts. I'm a lightweight compared to those whose accumulation of Prine shows are tallied in the dozens. Earlier this year, at the end of a symphonic pops show celebrating Linda Ronstadt (the last mass gathering I attended before COVID-19 isolated us), a stranger noticed my Prine sweatshirt and drew to me like a moth to lantern. "I've seen him more than 50 times," he said. We shook hands, as if we were long-lost cousins at a family reunion (my final handshake before isolation), a testament to the power and glory of John Prine.

My last Prine concert was June 2018. It marked the first time Brynne saw him live. She loved it, from the opening number, "**Paradise**," to the show's closer 24 songs later, again "Paradise."

"... where the air smelled like snakes / and we'd shoot with our pistols / but empty

pop bottles were all we would kill ..."

From the corner of my eye, I saw Brynne smile watching me smile watching Prine smile. A year later, at our wedding, a Prine song played as she beamed and walked down the aisle with her father: "I've been holding on for you / Dreams I've had have all come true / I've seen your picture and I knew you right away / I have met my love today."

Last Father's Day, Brynne and I visited the Ryman to see Ry Cooder and Rosanne Cash sing Johnny Cash songs. As the house lights dimmed, a familiar figure clad in Johnny Cash black passed mere inches from us en route to the balcony's front pew. It was Prine with wife Fiona. We awkwardly hung back after the show, hoping to say hello, but, ultimately, we decided not to infringe upon the couple's personal time. Today, I both regret and don't regret this.

Brynne and I had fifth-row tickets to our second Prine show scheduled for May, but it was canceled due to his death. Still, we are grateful to have shared at least one live Prine experience.

Sunday, March 29, I was taking a walk when my buddy Marc Steczyk texted a *Rolling Stone* headline: John Prine Hospi-

talized with COVID-19 Symptoms: 'His Situation Is Critical.' It was a gut kick. I sat on the street curb and absorbed the bad news. For several days, I played nothing but Prine, each song a separate prayer to spare his suffering, if not his life. Like hundreds of other fans, I'm sure.

Tuesday, April 7, another Steczyk text, another *Rolling Stone* headline: John Prine, One of America's Greatest Songwriters, Dead at 73. The rotation of Prine songs increased on my smart phone.

Several important musicians have died in the past few years, but Prine's passing, for me, is the one that is most profound. He shaped my writing. I try to keep it human, home in on the humor or heartache.

For most of us Prine fans, he was like a long-time buddy that we never actually met. We didn't know him, but we thought we knew him thanks to his studio recordings and amiable, down-home, stage presence. We weren't related, but we related.

We have our Prine memories; we have our Prine music.

John Prine died, but he is not going away.

Contact: scottsaalman@gmail.com
Buy Scott's latest column collection, *Quietly Making Noise*, on Amazon.

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CCPR Director Michael Klitzing receives Lawson Award for contributions to his profession

The REPORTER

Michael Klitzing, Director/CEO of **Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation** (CCPR), received the 2024 Richard Lawson Award for Professional Excellence from the **Great Lakes Park Training Institute** (GLPTI) Board of Advisors. Since 1953, the Lawson Award has been presented annually to individuals who exemplify continued and significant contributions to the parks and recreation profession in the Great Lakes region.

The GLPTI is an annual conference that brings together park professionals to explore trends, network, and recognize outstanding people and projects. It is operated by the GLPTI Board of Advisors and Indiana University faculty and

staff at the **Ep-pley Institute for Parks and Public Lands**.

“It is a tremendous honor to accept the Lawson Award,” Klitzing said. “I aspire to reach the incredible standards set by past recipients, many who served as my mentors in the field of parks and recreation.”

Klitzing is a seasoned park and recreation professional with more than 25 years of experience in the field. Under Klitzing’s leadership, CCPR has become recognized as one of the best and most innovative park and recreation agencies in the nation, receiving the **National Gold Medal**



Klitzing

for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management in 2014 and 2020, the highest honor for a municipal park and recreation agency. CCPR is nationally accredited, employs more than 650 people, and serves 17 million visitors annually.

CCPR has also received national, regional, and state awards for the design of its parks and facilities, outstanding programs, excellence in providing services to people with disabilities, and commitment to environmental stewardship.

Klitzing is an active member of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and served

as the Conference Program Committee Chair and Local Host Committee Co-Chair for the association’s 2018 conference hosted in Indianapolis. That same year, Klitzing received NRPA’s **National Distinguished Professional Award**, presented to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the parks and recreation field through leadership, research, advocacy, community outreach and program development.

In 2021, Klitzing was elected to the Board of Directors for the **American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration**.

In 2023, Klitzing was appointed to a three-year term on the Eppley Institute for Parks & Public Land’s National Advisory Board.



Support Sheridan youth at annual charity golf outing

The REPORTER

The fourth annual golf outing to raise funds for the youth and families of Sheridan Youth Assistance Program (SYAP) is only a bit more than three months away.

On Monday, June 10, SYAP will hold a Charity Golf Tournament at Plum Creek Golf Club with a 10 a.m. shotgun start. With your help, SYAP will be able to raise a generous amount of funds for the youth and their families in the Sheridan community. SYAP provided some amazing resources for local youth last year.

Register as an individual, a team or be a sponsor. Go to syaggolf-we-doauctions.com and buy your tickets today. You can

[click here](#) to view the flyer which contains details on sponsorships.

The event will be a full 18 holes of golf and will include box lunch, dinner, raffle prizes, and Hole in One Vacation Prizes. Funds generated from this summer event will be used to provide positive opportunities and experiences students will only have because of your support.

Save the date! Don’t forget SYAP’s annual Denim & Lace fundraiser, which will be held on Saturday, Sept. 21 at West Fork Distillery in Westfield.

[Click here](#) to check out SYAP’s annual report to learn how the organization served Sheridan’s youth in 2023.

Westfield Speech & Debate team sending 11 members to state meet

The RPEORTER

Congratulations to the Westfield High School Speech & Debate Team for having a record 11 students qualify for the state speech meet.

They also had two sectional champions: Asha Adhikari placing first in Original Oratory and Mayah Lopez placing first in Informative Speaking. The team won the third place sweepstakes trophy.

Here are the top six ribbon winners who are state qualifiers:

- Asha Adhikari, first in Original Oratory
- Katie Bolduc, sixth in Informative Speaking
- Talia Edwards, sixth in Original Oratory and sixth in Original Performance
- Olivia Foor-Lecea, third in Informative Speaking
- Arthur Goreham, sixth in Broadcasting
- Jetta Hayes, second in Original Oratory
- Mayah Lopez, second in Broadcasting and first in Informative Speaking
- Michael Poulter, sixth in U.S. Extemporaneous Speaking



Photo provided by Westfield Washington Schools

- Abhijay Salvi, sixth in Impromptu Speaking and forth in U.S. Extemporaneous Speaking
- Elizabeth Schuth, fifth

- in Informative Speaking and fifth in Broadcasting
- Abigail TerBush, second in Dramatic Interpretation

**Emmy Watson is an alternate in Original Oratory*
Good luck at the state meet at Hamilton Southeastern on March 9!

Fishers road construction updates, week of March 4

The REPORTER

Municipal Drive Concrete Work

Beginning on March 1, Mayer Najem is doing concrete work in front of the new city hall and adjacent to the road. During this time, a part of Municipal Drive will be one way and will remain so for one to two months. The section that is to be one way is from Fishers Center Drive to North Street. Outside of this section, traffic patterns will remain the same.

Beginning on March 1, Mayer Najem will do some concrete work in front of the new city hall and adjacent to the road. During this time, a part of Municipal Drive will be one way and will remain so for one to two months. The section that is to be one way is from Fishers Center

Drive to North Street. Outside of this section, traffic patterns will remain the same. View diagram [here](#).

Sanitary Sewer Cleaning – Allisonville Road

Water Quality will have a contractor doing sanitary sewer cleaning and televising next week, on Monday and Tuesday. They will be cleaning the three sewer segments highlighted in yellow on [this map](#). There will be a truck stationed at the manhole in the eastern northbound lane of Allisonville Road and will impact traffic, this is area is circled in red on the map. The contractor anticipates having to block this lane for two to three hours starting around 9 a.m. on Monday, March 4. Additionally, there will be

See Fishers . . . Page 5

The Picture Has Changed

For some time, each ad has included a picture of the building where we meet. However, that is not the church -the people are. With that in mind our ad will now include a picture of “the church” – the people. We invite you to come visit with the church at Stony Creek. You will be warmly greeted, treated with respect, and highly valued. We can benefit from you, and you can benefit from us. Let’s search the Scriptures together and come to understand God’s Word more completely.

We meet at 15530 Herriman Blvd. in Noblesville. Our building is behind the doctor’s office and at the stop sign.

At the **Stony Creek Church of Christ**, we assemble on Sundays and Wednesdays to seek a better understanding of Jesus and His ways. You are encouraged and invited to join us for those studies or call for a private study.



Stony Creek Church of Christ

“First Century Christianity in the Twenty First Century”

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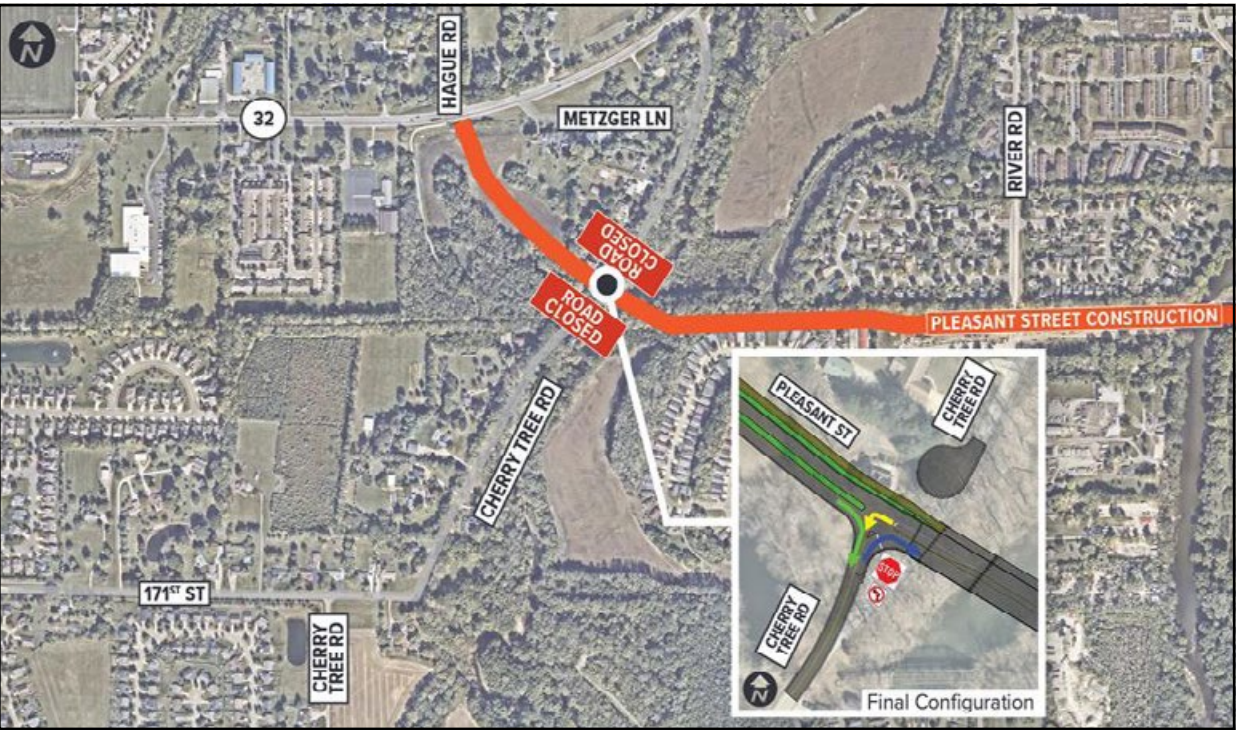
(317) 219-5852

Sunday Bible Study 10:00 am

Sunday Worship 11:00 am

Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 pm

Cherry Tree Road in Noblesville to close as part of Pleasant Street project



Cherry Tree Road in Noblesville will close beginning on or after Monday, March 4 as crews begin construction of the new Pleasant Street and bridge over Cicero Creek. During construction, residents who live on Cherry Tree Road will still have access to their homes. When construction is complete, Cherry Tree Road north of Pleasant Street will have a cul-de-sac. Cherry Tree Road south of Pleasant Street will have access to the new road with a “right-in/right-out/left-in” configuration as shown above. Crews are working with public safety officials and local school leaders to raise awareness about this change.

Leading the fight against hunger through a shared responsibility & commitment

By FRED GLASS & NEIL STEFFENS
Guest Columnists

The faces of hunger may surprise you. Many who need assistance are middle-class families, the working poor, children, and the elderly. No one should suffer from a lack of access to quality and nutritious food – but they do.

In fact, close to 1 million Hoosiers need food assistance. Food insecurity can dash the aspirations of children, and lead parents and other adults to make difficult compromises about what bills to pay and what other needs to meet. With one in 10 Hoosiers facing hunger in central Indiana alone, we must come together to optimize equitable access to nutritious food for those facing hunger and strive to overcome the conditions causing food insecurity.

In an era marked by a convergence of challenges, from economic disparities to health crises, the issue of food insecurity stands as a reminder of the inequalities that persist in our communities. Yet, amidst these challenges, there is hope as we enter National Nutrition Month this March. This hope emerges when we join forces, combine resources, expertise, and compassion to tackle complex issues head-on.

When two local organizations like Gleaners Food

Bank and Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield unite, we can make a profound impact in addressing the correlation between food insecurity and overall health in our region.

Our ongoing partnership in the community underscores a fundamental truth: the fight against hunger requires collective action and unwavering dedication. With the increasing and sustained need and the decline in government support, this partnership is more important than ever. The demand for food assistance across Gleaners 21-county service area, rural and urban alike, remains alarmingly high and now chronically exceeding pandemic levels.

Food insecurity, a pervasive issue affecting millions worldwide, refers to the lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life. It encompasses various dimensions, including the inability to afford nutritious food, limited access to grocery stores or markets, and inadequate information about healthy eating practices.

Food insecurity can lead to serious consequences,



Glass



Steffens

both immediate and long-term, impacting individuals, families, and communities. Immediate effects may include hunger, malnutrition, and compromised physical and mental health. Long-term consequences can range from developmental delays in children to chronic health conditions in adults, exacerbating inequalities and hindering economic and social progress.

However, when we collaborate to address the whole health of individuals, families, and communities, we can enact meaningful change and provide vital support to those in need. By pooling resources, expertise, and networks, we can amplify impact, reach underserved populations, and create sustainable solutions. From food banks and community organizations to government agencies and corporations, collective efforts play a crucial role in expanding access to nutritious food, an essential part of maintaining one’s health and improving overall health outcomes.

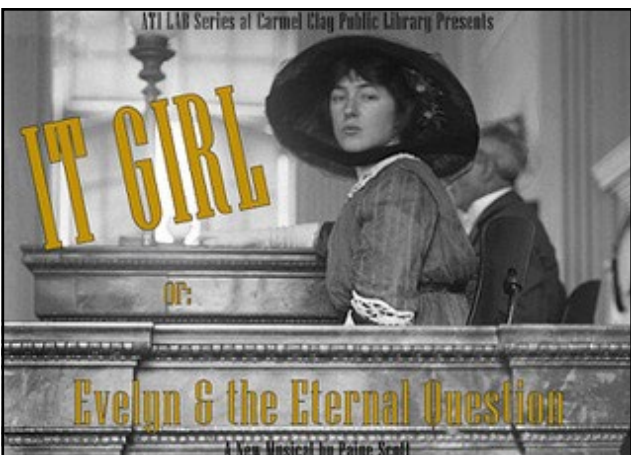
By fostering partnerships grounded in shared goals and values, we can

address the root causes of food insecurity, promote resilience, and empower individuals and communities to build healthier, happier futures.

Research has clearly shown a direct correlation between food insecurity and overall health. A Feeding America study found an additional \$1 billion in healthcare costs directly related to food insecurity and its effect on health in Indiana alone. We are not merely addressing immediate hunger needs; we are helping to alleviate poverty and investing in the long-term health and well-being of our communities. By promoting access to healthy, nutritious food, we continue to lay the foundation for more resilient communities.

It is crucial that we continue to harness this momentum, champion partnerships and programs that prioritize food insecurity and ensure everyone has equitable access to nourishing food. As we honor National Nutrition Month, let’s recommit ourselves to fortifying communities and ensuring that all individuals have the chance to flourish, regardless of their circumstances.

Fred Glass is President & CEO of Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana and Neil Steffens is Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield’s East Region Medicare President which includes Indiana.



Graphic provided

Actors Theatre of Indiana Lab Series returns with thought-provoking musical

The REPORTER
Actors Theatre of Indiana (ATI) announces the return of the Lab Series and *IT GIRL or: Evelyn & the Eternal Question* on Saturday, March 16, at the Carmel Clay Public Library, 425 E. Main St.

The play, written by Indianapolis-based actor, director, musician, and playwright Paige Scott, tells the true story of Evelyn Nesbit, a normal teenager who happened to be America’s first supermodel. Her beauty was her blessing when she rose to prominence in New York society at the turn of the 20th century. But as her star rose, that blessing became a curse with violent ends.

This new musical reimagines the true events behind “The Crime of the Century” while also analyzing how we protect ourselves in spaces of unchecked power.

The Cast and Creative Team (including several of ATI’s own) include:

- Evelyn Nesbit - Kallen Ruston*
- Flo – Judy Fitzgerald*
- Chorus Girls – Cynthia Collins*
- Stanford White – Clay Mabbitt

- Harry Thaw – Pete Scarbrough*
- John Barrymore – Christian Condra
- Director – Callie Hartz
- Music Director – Ginger Stoltz
- Stage Manager – Darin Murrell*

**Indicates member of Actors Equity Association, the professional union for Actors & Stage Managers*

The LAB Series program, in its ninth year, is designed to nurture new plays and playwrights. Chosen plays will have a reading and a talk-back session with ATI audiences, staff, cast and the playwright.

Playwrights, chosen through a cultivation process with the ATI Artistic Staff, enjoy an intensive weekend of workshoping, discussion, and development with a cast of professional actors and directors in a creative laboratory setting culminating in a free public reading and audience feedback session. The Lab Series is presented in partnership with the Carmel Clay Public Library Foundation.

The public reading event is free, but seats should be reserved at [this link](#).

FISHERS

from Page 4

large tanker trucks operating around the sewer segments during this cleaning and televising operation.

Windermere Neighborhood – Sidewalk Improvements
Howard Companies is continuing sidewalk improvements in the Windermere neighborhood. This work will only consist of removal and replacement of sidewalk panels which pose a toe kick trip hazard.

Heritage Park Bridge – Trail Closure
The City of Fishers has partnered with the City of Carmel, Clay Township, Carmel Clay Parks and Recreation, Hamilton County, and Delaware Township to connect Heritage Park at White River and Carmel’s Hazel Landing Park with a bridge over White River. This new amenity will provide enhanced connectivity

between the two communities, as well as new recreational opportunities for our residents.

To construct this bridge, the contractor will need to restrict access to a portion of Heritage Park’s loop trail that runs adjacent to the river through the woods beginning the week of March 4. [Click here](#) for an aerial view. During this time, you’ll notice temporary construction fencing going up as we prepare for construction.

Beginning the week of March 11, the contractor will work to clear the necessary trees between the park and river. Bridge construction will follow beginning in May. Construction is expected to occur Monday through Saturday beginning at 7 a.m. The bridge is expected to be complete in August 2025.



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Total Eclipse of the Art

Westfield man shares story of his out-of-this-world tattoo

By **SCOTT SANDER**
WISH-TV | wishtv.com

While some people wear their hearts on their sleeves, Connor Schoonveld of Westfield wears the sun and the moon.

His arm bears a single large tattoo that serves as a full-time reminder of a day that truly changed his perspective.

"I would think that someone in ancient times would absolutely think the world was ending," Schoonveld says, struggling to explain the impact of a total eclipse to someone who has never seen one. "It's like trying to describe a mountain or an ocean using only a picture."

Schoonveld saw the light because of the darkness of Aug. 21, 2017. The day delivered a partial eclipse to much of the Midwest, but Kentucky was in the "path of totality": the narrow sliver of earth that gets a much more spectacular sight as the moon fully blots out the sun.

Schoonveld's family wanted to experience it, so they traveled from Ohio to Hopkinsville, Ky. It was a long trip, and the others were quite excited. Connor admits he was not exactly "over the moon" about the event, so he tagged along happily but not especially fired up.

Schoonveld's crew set up in a field, surrounded by hun-



Photos provided by Connor Schoonveld
(Above left) Connor Schoonveld shows off his Total Eclipse tattoo. (Top right) Connor Schoonveld's sun and moon tattoo, created by tattoo artist Jason Bancroft at Sovereignty Tattoo LLC, is shown in this undated photo. (Above right) Connor Schoonveld with his wife, Amanda, his mother, Pam, and his brother, Daniel in Hopkinsville, Ky., on Aug. 21, 2017.

dreds of thousands of other visitors, by his estimate.

After an hour under gradually diminishing light as the moon slid in front of the sun, a split-second in the sky flipped a switch – both up in the sky and deep inside Schoonveld.

"The moon is eating away more and more of the sun, and then ... from 99 percent coverage to 100 percent is like someone turning off a light!" he recalls. "Birds were flying all over, confused. The bugs were going crazy!"

Schoonveld says the sharp shadow of totality hit one side of the field first, prompting a sweeping gasp that worked its way across the field like a wave. "It was loud," he said. "Suddenly, the sun is blacker than the rest of the sky."

As he recalls the eclipse, Schoonveld turns more than once to the phrase "once in a lifetime," but he has worked hard to make sure it will be at least "twice in a lifetime" for him.

When moving back

home to Indiana recently from Ohio, Schoonveld says he asked his new employer to guarantee him a day off on April 8. That's when his hometown will be in totality, saving him the trouble of traveling states away to add a new memory.

All he'll need to do is look up, be amazed again, and mark the latitude and longitude of the artwork on his arm.

"Pray for clear skies," he says in closing. "The Corona is crazy. And it's beautiful."

A mighty darkness is about to descend upon the land ...

Come learn about Total Solar Eclipse with Rotary Club of Westfield & Grand Universe

The REPORTER

Embark on a mesmerizing journey with Grand Universe's remarkable multimedia presentation titled "TOTALITY – Standing in the Shadow of the Moon." This exclusive 45-minute experience, expertly crafted with captivating music and NASA animations, explores the extraordinary phenomenon that lies ahead.

This free event will take

place at 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 14 at The Bridgewater Club, located at 161st Street and Carey Road. Reservations are not required, but seating is limited so arrive early to secure your spot.

Mark your calendars for April 8 when Earth, Sun, and Moon

will converge in a breathtaking display during a Total Solar Eclipse racing at Mach 3 across the vast expanse of Indiana. Termed The Great Indiana Eclipse by scientists and historians, this event promises to captivate millions as celestial bodies align to obscure the sun from view. It's slated to become the most widely observed astronomical occurrence of the century and a monumental tourist attraction for Indiana.

What's causing all the buzz? This rare Total Solar Eclipse over Indiana marks the first since the year 1205, when Genghis Khan ruled much of the known world. Millions live within an hour's drive of the 113-mile-wide shadow path, which will stretch the full length of the state of Indiana. As twilight hues paint the entire

360-degree horizon in sunset shades and temperatures plummet, observers anticipate a profound experience akin to a spiritual awakening. Described by some as the sky's most exquisite sight, the sun's corona, invisible throughout our lives, will unveil itself for a fleeting three and a half minutes, encircling what seems like a black void in the universe.

Led by a seasoned science communicator from Grand Universe, this presentation is a must-attend for anyone eager to delve deeper into this extraordinary forthcoming event.

Please plan to attend this exclusive multimedia experience, featuring captivating music and mesmerizing NASA animations and unravel the wonders awaiting as you stand in the shadow of the Moon.

Hamilton County to hold Total Solar Eclipse webinar

Public invited to learn more about plans & preparations

The REPORTER

Hamilton County will play host to an educational webinar about the Total Solar Eclipse at 6 p.m. on Monday, March 11. The hour-long discussion will highlight the major events being planned for the area, plans for emergency preparedness, the potential tourism impact, and important safety tips.

The webinar will feature a lineup of local experts including:

- William Turner, Carmel High School Planetarium: Providing educational perspectives and astronomical insights.

- Sarah Buckner, Hamilton County Tourism: Offering insights into prime viewing locations and tourism strategies.

- Shane Booker, Hamilton County Emergency

Management: Discussing emergency preparedness and public safety measures.

- Jim Ginder, Hamilton County Health Department: Addressing safety precautions during the eclipse.

- Emily Latty, Hamilton County Parks and Recreation: Sharing details on eclipse-related events and merchandise.

"Hamilton County agencies have been planning for this event for well over a year now," Hamilton County's Communications Director Tammy Sander said. "We're so excited about this rare astronomical event and we can't wait to share everything we have planned with the community."

Participation is free and open to all. Those interested in attending can register at bit.ly/49tC8MM.



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The Reporter



Photo provided

Last year, The Cooper House relocated to 444 Lafayette Road, Noblesville.

The NESST’s Whiskey & Wine event set to make The Cooper House the toast of the town

The REPORTER

The NESST, 917 Conner St., Noblesville, will hold a fundraiser called “Whiskey & Wine” to benefit The Cooper House, a local non-profit organization dedicated to providing support and resources to families in need.

This charitable tasting event is set to take place from 6 to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, March 12 at the NESST restaurant in the heart of Noblesville.

Attendees can look forward to a delightful evening filled with hors d’oeuvres and over 50 wines to taste,

as well as a bourbon tasting for those with a penchant for spirits. The event will also feature live music and a silent auction where guests can bid on a variety of exciting items, with all proceeds going towards supporting The Cooper House’s mission.

This event promises to be a delightful opportunity for members of the community to come together, enjoy some fantastic drinks,



and support a worthy cause. Tickets for “Whiskey & Wine” are available for purchase now at thenesstofnoblesville.com. Space is limited, so be sure to secure your spot early so that you don’t miss out on this great opportunity to support The Cooper House and the community.

Learn more about The Cooper House at TheCooperHouseIndiana.com.

Progress at the Statehouse

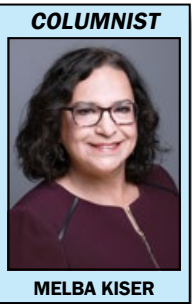
There is good and not-so-good news in this legislative session.

There are several bills headed for the governor’s signature. With a scheduled adjournment of March 14, 2024, there is little time left for bills still awaiting a hearing in one chamber. Unfortunately, there are bills with familiar themes that should have been taken up but have failed to get a hearing.

The first bill going forward is **SB 1**, reading skills. The bill requires certain schools, beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, to offer summer school courses for students who are not reading proficient or are at risk of not being reading proficient by third grade.

A similar reading proficiency bill, **SB 6**, requires the Department of Education to develop a method to identify students in grades 4 through grade 8 who are at risk of not being proficient in reading.

SB 185 addresses the use of wireless communication devices. This legislation requires each school corporation and charter school to adopt and implement a wireless communication device policy that prohibits a student from using a wireless communication device during instructional time. There is wording for a teacher to allow a student to use a



COLUMNIST

MELBA KISER

wireless communication device for educational purposes during instructional time, in the event of an emergency, or to manage the student’s health care.

Next are bills that have passed in one chamber and are awaiting a hearing in the second chamber.

A bill dealing with human sexuality instruction, **SB 128**, passed all three readings in the Senate. The bill would provide that, if a school instructs students on human sexuality, the school’s governing authority, the school board, must first approve and publish certain information concerning the instruction in a conspicuous place on the website of the school.

An Internet safety curricula bill, **SB 287**, requires the Department of Education to develop, or approve previously developed, age-appropriate curricula in Internet safety for use at multiple grade levels not later than July 1, 2025.

Last are bills that did not receive a hearing but should have.

Such is the case with **HB 1221**, material that is obscene or harmful to minors. This bill further defined the terms and would amend the education and criminal laws about material that is harmful to minors. The opportunity to put an end, or at least reduce, the

debate on what is considered obscene was lost when this bill was not heard.

Another lost opportunity was the failure to give **HB 1353** a hearing. This bill would require the Department of Education to prepare a report to the general assembly compiling certain data over 40 years from July 1, 1983, through July 1, 2023, concerning kindergarten through grade 12 students in Indiana. The Department of Education, in conjunction with the state board, would need to determine which surveyed year produced the highest scores and graduation rates and, no later than the 2025-2026 school year, realign current statewide academic standards to the standards in place during the year determined.

As taxpayers, parents, or grandparents, we would want to know that our legislators are budgeting our tax dollars wisely and that Hoosier children are getting the best education possible. The data comparison from HB 1353 would have helped to attain that result.

Undoubtedly, some groups and organizations would be opposed to having such a comparison and report.

Melba Kiser is an outspoken advocate for financial responsibility and transparency in government at all levels. Her column appears at least once each month in The Hamilton County Reporter Newspaper.



Photo provided by Noblesville Schools

Noblesville begins kindergarten open enrollment on Monday

The REPORTER

Noblesville Schools kindergarten enrollment for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year will be open March 4 to May 10.

Children must be at least five years of age on or before Aug. 1, 2024, to enroll for

kindergarten. Children who will be five after Aug. 1 but on or before Oct. 1 can be considered for early entrance.

Technology support and interpreter services are available by appointment for those who need assistance.

More information includ-

ing the enrollment process, school boundary maps and required documentation can be found on the Noblesville Schools website at noblesvilleschools.org or by calling the Noblesville Schools Educational Services Center at (317) 773-3171.

Noblesville Schools to hold two student hiring fairs



Photo provided by Noblesville Schools

Calling all local employers in need of staff! Noblesville High School and Noblesville West Middle School will both hold student hiring fairs this May. The hiring fair at NHS will take place from 1:30 to 3:15 p.m. on May 2, and the hiring fair at NWMS will take place from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. on May 15. Employers interested in participating can email the following contacts with questions or to register: Noblesville High School, hireamiller@nobl.k12.in.us; Noblesville West Middle School, john_cooper@nobl.k12.in.us. (Above) Nickel Plate Express Executive Director Emily Reynolds speaks with an interested student during a past hiring fair.



A farmer has misplaced some eggs and is pretty sure they are somewhere on the Nickel Plate Express!

Come share in a little rail adventure as you roll through Hamilton County’s northern countryside to see the trees in bloom while enjoying a snack and a springtime story.

March 23, 24 and 30

Tickets at NickelPlateExpress.com

Indiana becomes 31st state to authorize the use of campaign funds for childcare

Submitted

In February, Indiana State Rep. Victoria Garcia Wilburn (D-Fishers) and Indiana State Sen. Andrea Hunley (D-Indianapolis) partnered with Vote Mama Foundation to **request an advisory opinion** from the Indiana Election Commission to remove a significant financial barrier and make it easier for everyday parents and caregivers to run for office.

On Tuesday, the Indiana Election Commission issued an **advisory opinion** clarifying that childcare expenses incurred while running for office or holding public office are considered permissible campaign expenditures. With this decision, Indiana has become the latest state to allow the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare, bringing Indiana in line with federal guidelines and **30 other states** that have approved the measure.

It is no secret that the cost of childcare is a barrier that holds millions of parents back. It is also a hurdle

that severely impacts the representation of parents and caregivers, especially mothers, in office. In fact, according to 2022 data from Vote Mama Foundation **less than 1 percent** of Indiana state legislators were mothers with minor children.

This decision from the Indiana Election Commission removes a significant barrier that has historically kept parents and caregivers out of the political arena and comes at no expense to taxpayers or to the state. By authorizing the use of campaign funds to pay for childcare expenses directly related to campaign and official duties, Indiana will empower more caregivers to run for office and bring more advocates for American children and families to the decision-making table.

“Caregiving responsibilities should never be the reason someone cannot run for office or serve their community,” said Liuba Grechen Shirley, Founder and CEO of Vote Mama Foundation.

“Unfortunately, for many candidates the ability to run for office hinges on access to childcare, and the cost can keep them out of the political arena entirely. To get more parents and caregivers into every level of office, we must remove the structural barriers that prevent them from running in the first place. I launched Vote Mama Foundation because I envisioned a future in which no political candidate would have to consider the cost of care when weighing their decision to run for office. With this ruling from the Indiana Election Commission, we are now one step closer to making that vision a reality.”

“This advisory opinion is a win for all Hoosiers,” State Rep. Garcia Wilburn said. “More people being able to run for office and serve their communities means better government.



Garcia Wilburn

My hope is that this decision tells parents: ‘You belong in government. You belong in elected office.’ I want to extend a big thanks to the Indiana Election Commission for this decision and commend Vote Mama Foundation and Sen. Hunley for their partnership on this critical issue.”

“I am grateful to the Election Commission for their prompt issuing of this significant advisory opinion,” State Sen. Hunley said. “Childcare expenses present a barrier to access for families. Making it clear that these expenses are a necessary part of any campaign in which a parent is involved opens the door for Hoosiers who want to be more involved in their communities, but who may otherwise have struggled to afford time away from providing care to their children. Thank you to the Commissioners,

to the Vote Mama Foundation, and to Representative Garcia Wilburn for your partnership in securing this empowering victory.”

Background

In 2018, Liuba Grechen Shirley (Vote Mama Foundation Founder and CEO) ran for Congress and petitioned the Federal Election Commission (FEC) and became the first woman in history to receive federal approval to spend Campaign Funds for Childcare (CFCC). This unanimous, bipartisan decision paved the way for more parents to run for office – 68 federal candidates have since used CFCC, both moms and dads, Democrats and Republicans. The FEC ruling made it easier for parents to run at the federal level, but it does not apply to candidates campaigning for state and local office. Vote Mama Foundation is the only organization working to authorize the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare in all 50 states. To date,

31 states have approved the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare.

According to a **recent Vote Mama Foundation report**, spending on Campaign Funds for Childcare has increased by 662 percent for federal candidates and by 2,156 percent for state and local candidates since 2018.

Vote Mama Foundation is the leading source of research and analysis on the political participation of mothers in the United States. It works towards gender equity by normalizing mothers of minor children running for and serving in office, naming and dismantling the barriers that keep moms out of office and out of power, and enabling legislators to pass family-friendly policies. Vote Mama Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

To learn more about Vote Mama Foundation and Campaign Funds for Childcare, visit **votemamafoundation.org**.



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I can help you when dealing with federal agencies, including:

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US Flag Requests

Obtain commemorative flags flown over the US Capitol from my office.



Military Academy Nominations

High school students in our district may contact my office to request a nomination to attend one of our nation's service academies.



US Capitol and White House Tour Requests

My office can help arrange tours throughout our nation's capital.

West District Office: (317) 848-0201

East District Office: (765) 639-0671

www.spartz.house.gov

Primary care, your way

New direct primary care practice brings personalized care to Carmel community

Submitted by
Valor DPC

Dr. Phillip Burrer announces the opening of Valor Direct Primary Care (DPC) in Carmel, which open on Feb. 1.

Dr. Burrer is a family physician and the founder of Valor DPC, bringing personalized, patient-first primary care to the Carmel community. Dr. Burrer founded Valor DPC on the principle that patients always come first. Members of his practice have unparalleled access to Dr. Burrer for one affordable monthly fee.

Valor DPC will accept a limited number of patients to ensure Dr. Burrer provides the best possible experience for his patients.

Appointments with Dr. Burrer last as long as you need and are scheduled when and where you need them. He offers same or next-day appointments, calls or texts directly with



Burrer

him, and little to no wait time at his office. Having an independent practice allows Dr. Burrer to cater to your best interests instead of those of a corporation or insurance company.

Unlike traditional primary care practices, there are never co-pays, surprise costs, or hidden fees. As a member of his practice, you gain access to affordable services, extended visits, telehealth, urgent care, and even house calls. Instead of navigating insurance complexities and fee-for-service expenses, you form a direct partnership with a doctor who has your

best interests at heart.

“Direct Primary Care is not just a movement; it's a return to the heart of medicine, where patients, trust, and relationships take precedence over bureaucracy and business,” Dr. Burrer said. “It's the future we've been waiting for.”

“It’s important for me to form meaningful relationships with my patients to help them be as healthy as possible,” he continued. “At Valor DPC, I’m able to put patients’ needs above all else, something traditional healthcare often prevents. I’m thrilled to bring

this unique opportunity to the Carmel community.”

Valor Direct Primary Care is a member of the national Freedom Healthworks community. Freedom Healthworks helps doctors build independent primary care practices that prioritize patient-physician relationships and enhance patient health outcomes. Learn more at freedom-healthworks.com.

Valor Direct Primary Care is located at 131 N. Range Line Road, Carmel. For more information about the practice, please visit valordpc.com.

Paul L. Radcliff
February 16, 1950 – February 28, 2024



Paul L. Radcliff, 74, Noblesville, went home to be with the Lord surrounded by his loved ones on Wednesday, February 28, 2024. He was born on February 16, 1950, to Ford and Mary Lou (Patten) Radcliff in Marietta, Ohio.

Paul loved people, his church, and was great with kids. He worked at Heritage Christian School for 36 years in different positions and then went to owning his own businesses including Mower Care. He was an active member, elder, and AWANA leader at Harbour Shores Church. Paul enjoyed tracking weather systems, and agriculture, raising bees and chickens, and growing his own popcorn. Paul was well known for his “dad jokes” and loved spending time with his grandchildren.

He is survived by his wife, Nancy Radcliff; children, Dawn (Jeremy) Smith, Denise (Clay) McComas, Chad (Rebecca) Braham, James (Rebecca) Radcliff, and John Radcliff; grandchildren, Adam McComas, Jaegar (Kaitlin) McComas, Kade (Miriam) McComas, Alaster McComas, Miles Braham, Gillian Braham, Hunter Radcliff, Lincoln Radcliff, Ellie Radcliff, Isaac Smith, and Abigail Smith; great-grandchildren, Samantha McComas, Elizabeth McComas, and one on the way; and his siblings, Larry Radcliff, Don (Becky) Radcliff, Carol (Bill) Schneeberger, Charles Radcliff, Mary (George) Clark, Mark (Michele) Radcliff, Beth Radcliff, and Dale (Jennifer) Radcliff.

In addition to his parents, Paul was preceded in death by his sister-in-law, Joan Radcliff.

Visitation will be from 4 to 7 p.m. on Monday, March 4, 2024, at Harbour Shores Church, 8011 E. 216th St., Cicero. An additional visitation will be held from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. with service at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at the church, with Pastor Stephen Schultze officiating. Burial will be at Hamilton Memorial Park Cemetery in Westfield.

Memorial contributions may be made to Harbour Shores Church, 8011 E. 216th St., Cicero, IN 46034.

Condolences: randallroberts.com

Doyle Jacob Essig
May 2, 1942 – February 23, 2024

Doyle Jacob Essig, 81, Conover, N.C., formerly of Noblesville, passed away on Friday, February 23, 2024, at Cardinal Health Center in Lincoln, N.C. Born May 2, 1942, in Noblesville, he was the son of the late Fred and Mary L. (Smith) Essig.

Doyle was a 1961 graduate of Sheridan High School. Shortly after graduation he put in his application with Riverview Hospital in Noblesville, taking the first steps of what would become a wonderful 33-year adventure. Though much of his time at Riverview was spent as an orderly, he wasn’t defined by just his title. Whenever he saw a need, he was there to lend a hand. Doyle never had the “it’s not part of my job” mindset. Each day he went from department to department, doing what he did best – helping where he could, and making the workday a little easier for everybody on shift.

Doyle had many interests outside of work. This led him to become involved in various clubs throughout his life, including membership in the Good Sam Club, National Handyman Club, National Cooking Club, and National Gardening Club. He was also a dedicated member of the Moose Lodge #540 in Noblesville.

His gentle spirit and strong sense of faith helped him live a life dedicated to caring for others. He will be greatly missed by everyone who had the pleasure of working with him and having him be a part of their life.

Doyle is survived by his cousins, Charles Smith, Donna Dillow, Anna Belle Robertson, and Mary Mkiels (Jerry). Mary and her husband, Jerry, were Doyle’s devoted caregivers for many years.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Fred and Mary L. (Smith) Essig; brother, Royce M. Essig; and by his cousin, Phillip Smith.

Private family services will be held at Kercheval Funeral Home in Sheridan.

Doyle will be laid to rest at Boxley Cemetery in Boxley, Ind.

Condolences: kerchevalfuneralhome.com

New at Sheridan Public Library

The REPORTER

Here are some of the new items that can be found at the Sheridan Public Library.

Fiction

- End of Story – A.J. Finn
- House of Flame & Shadow – Sarah J. Maas
- House of Sky & Breath – Sarah J. Maas
- It Starts With Us – Colleen Hoover
- Lone Wolf – Gregg Hurwitz
- Look Closer – David Ellis
- Never Too Late – Danielle Steel
- New Couple in 5B – Lisa Unger
- Phoenix Crown – Kate Quinn
- Three-Inch Teeth – C.J. Box

Non-Fiction

- Sharing Too Much – Richard Paul Evans
- We’ve Got Issues – Phillip McGraw

Children’s

- Are You Big? – Mo Eillems

- Bad Kitty Does Not Like Easter – Nick Bruel
- Ballewiena – Rebecca Bender
- Bear Has a Belly – Jane Whittingham
- Cranky – Phuc Tran
- Crayons on Strike – Jennifer Jones
- Funny Bugs – Paul Mason
- Glue on Strike – Jennifer Jones
- Pete the Cat & the Three Bears – K. Dean
- Swings on Strike – Jennifer Jones

Inspirational Fiction

- Fragile Designs – Colleen Coble
- Invisible War – Michael Phillips

Young Adult

- Ghosts of Rose Hill – R.M. Romero
- Spells for Lost Things – Jenna Evans Welch
- Who We Were in the Dark – Jessica Taylor

Movies

- Hunger Games: Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes
- Moonrise

Attorney General Todd Rokita continues fight for patient privacy, files suit against Apria Healthcare

The REPORTER

Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita is [filing a lawsuit](#) on behalf of the people of Indiana against Apria Healthcare LLC for a massive data breach that impacted at least 42,000 Hoosiers and 1.8 million people nationwide.

Apria is a provider of home healthcare equipment and related services across the United States. Apria provides medical equipment to over 2 million patients across 270 locations, including Indiana.

“Patients should be able to trust their medical providers at all times,” Rokita said. “All Hoosier patients deserve their privacy, especially when it comes to medical care.”

On Sept. 1, 2021, the FBI notified Apria that an unauthorized third-party was likely able to access their system. The intruder accessed millions of documents containing protected health information and other personal information. Further, the intruder accessed several Apria employee email accounts, including Apria’s CEO.

Apria failed to notify patients about the 2019 and 2021 data breaches

until May 2023 – 629 days after the breaches were discovered. Apria’s delayed notification and actions resulted in alleged violations of HIPAA and Indiana law.

“Everyone should feel protected by their health care providers,” Rokita said. “When your private information is accessible or leaked to a stranger, you’re susceptible to life-altering threats, such as identity theft and financial ruin. Our office has adamantly fought back against careless companies who disregard major cybersecurity threats.”

Apria allegedly concealed the data breach from their consumers and failed to implement HIPAA policies and procedures. Due to a lack of security and technical safeguards, the unwelcome third party was able to access personal health information and personal identifiable information, such as Social Security Numbers, birth certificates, credit and debit card information, medical histories, addresses, and other identifiable informa-



Rokita

tion.

Apria’s notification to patients and consumers was extremely delayed and unreasonable. With this extreme delay, Apria greatly increased the chance of a Hoosier becoming the victim of identity deception, identity theft, or fraud.

Apria’s parent company, Owens and Minor, allegedly knew about the

breaches when it purchased Apria in March 2022.

The lawsuit consists of the following five counts against Apria:

- Violations of HIPAA’s Notification Rule
- Violations of HIPAA’s Security Rule
- Violations of HIPAA’s Privacy Rule
- Violations of the Disclosure of Security Breach Act
- Violations of Indiana Deceptive Consumer Sales Act

Who’s on my ballot for the May 7, 2024 Primary Election?

Note that * indicates the candidate is the incumbent for that office.

To view precinct and district maps, please visit hamiltoncounty.in.gov/221/Precinct-and-District-Maps.
NOTE: Candidates for precinct committeement and state delegates will appear in upcoming editions of The Reporter.

PRESIDENT

*Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D)
Nikki R. Haley (R)
Donald J. Trump (R)

U.S. SENATE

Jim Banks (R)
Marc Carmichael (D)
Valerie McCray (D)

U.S. HOUSE, 5th DISTRICT

Jonathan D. Brown (R)
Raju Chinthala (R)
Max Engling (R)
Chuck Goodrich (R)
Mark Hurt (R)
Scott A. King (R)
Patrick Malayter (R)
Matthew Peiffer (R)
Ryan Pfenninger (D)
Deborah A. Pickett (D)
LD Powell (R)
Larry L. Savage Jr. (R)
*Victoria Spartz (R)

GOVERNOR

Mike Braun (R)
Brad Chambers (R)
Suzanne Crouch (R)
Eric Doden (R)
Curtis Hill (R)
Jennifer G. McCormick (D)
Jamie Reitenour (R)
Tamie Dixon-Tatum (D)

STATE SENATOR

District 20

*Scott A. Baldwin (R)
Joel Levi (D)

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

District 24

Bill Gutrich (R)
Josh Lowry (D)
Hunter Smith (R)

District 29

Laura L. Aldering (R)
Christopher Hartig (D)
Alaina Shonkwiler (R)

District 32

Patricia Bratton (R)
Tom Havens (R)

*Victoria Garcia Wilburn (D)

District 37

*Todd Huston (R)

District 39

Daniel (Danny) Lopez (R)
Matt McNally (D)

District 88

Starr Joy Hairston (D)
*Chris Jeter (R)
Stephanie Jo Yocum (D)

JUDGE, CIRCUIT COURT

*Andrew R. Bloch (R)

JUDGE, SUPERIOR COURT 1

*Michael A. Casati (R)

JUDGE, SUPERIOR COURT 6

*Stephenie K. Gookins (R)

COUNTY AUDITOR

Todd Clevenger (R)

COUNTY SURVEYOR

Gary Duncan (R)

COUNTY TREASURER

*Susan Byer (R)
Robert (Bob) Bragg (R)

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

District 2

*Steven C. Dillinger (R)

District 3

*Mark E. Heirbrandt (R)

COUNTY COUNCIL

At Large

*Brandon (Brad) Beaver (R)
Elizabeth Fouch (R)
Keely J. Gladieux (D)
*Sue Maki (R)
*Steven R. Nation (R)

Meeting Notices

The Carmel Board of Public Works and Safety will meet at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, in the Council Chambers at Carmel City Hall, 1 Civic Square.

The Innovation Mile Review Committee will meet at 10 a.m. on Thursday, March 7, 2024, at 14013 E. 141st St., in the job trailer at the Noblesville Event Center site.

The Carmel Plan Commission Executive Committee will meet at 5:15 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5, 2024, in the second floor caucus room of Carmel City Hall, 1 Civic Square.

Send Meeting Notices to:
News@ReadTheReporter.com

TODAY’S BIBLE READING

THE RULERS OF EDM

These were the kings who reigned in Edom before any Israelite king reigned:

Bela son of Beor became king of Edom. His city was named Dinhabah.

When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah succeeded him as king.

When Jobab died, Husham from the land of the Temanites succeeded him as king.

When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the country of Moab, succeeded him as king. His city was named Avith.

When Hadad died, Samlah from Masrekah succeeded him as king.

When Samlah died, Shaul from Rehoboth on the river succeeded him as king.

When Shaul died, Baal-Hanan son of Akbor succeeded him as king.

When Baal-Hanan son of Akbor died, Hadad succeeded him as king. His city was named Pau, and his wife’s name was Mehetabel daughter of Matred, the daughter of Me-Zahab.

These were the chiefs descended from Esau, by name, according to their clans and regions:

Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, Magdiel and Iram. These were the chiefs of Edom, according to their settlements in the land they occupied.

This is the family line of Esau, the father of the Edomites.

Genesis 36:31-43 (NIV)

The Reporter’s policy on obituaries

The Hamilton County Reporter does not charge families for publishing obituary notices in our pages. Every obituary appearing in online editions Wednesday through Saturday also appears in our Monday print editions. In order to continue to offer this as a community service, we ask that obituaries not exceed 600 words. The limitations of space may not allow for longer ones to appear in print. Families and funeral homes are asked to send obituaries to obits@ReadTheReporter.com.

Bruce L. Chappell
October 25, 1950 – February 23, 2024

Bruce L. Chappell, 73, although he lived in many places, he would always come back home to Sheridan; he passed away on February 23, 2024.

He was born to the late Wayne Chappell and Doris (Baird) Stultz on October 25, 1950, in Noblesville. Bruce graduated from Sheridan High School, Class of 1969. Bruce was then called to serve in the United States Air Force during the Vietnam War. At the time he was honorably discharged, he proudly served for nine years.

When he returned home, he worked for the Indianapolis Airport for a while before moving to Florida. After living in Florida for a while, he decided he wanted to return home to Sheridan, and he worked as a general laborer.

Bruce liked to work with his hands, and he loved cars and motorcycles. He enjoyed building model cars, and he also quickly became a good mechanic. He would look forward to working on his vehicles. He also liked to work on motorcycles, and in his younger years, he and a group of friends would go to the track and race motorcycles.

Bruce never met a stranger and was friendly to anyone who crossed his path. He enjoyed having conversations with people.

Bruce was a member of the American Legion Post 67, where he would go to visit with friends and share stories of his military life.

Bruce leaves behind his children, Shauna Harker, Dustin (Tanya) Storms, Melissa (Gabriel) Chappell-Negron, and Nichole (EJ) Chappell. He was a proud grandfather to eight and a great-grandfather to four. He also leaves behind his sister, Roberta “Bobbi Jo” (Jeff) Stultz-Raines-Sowers; his brother, Jeffrey Scott Stultz; his aunt, Norma Hobson; along with his two uncles, Ralph “Jack” Baird and Don Baird; and several nieces, nephews, and cousins.

A calling will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at Fisher Family Funeral Services, 508 E. 6th St., Sheridan, with Military Honors at 12:30 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Legion Post 67, 406 E. 10th St., Sheridan, IN 46069.

Everyone is invited to sign the online guestbook, leave a condolence, or share a memory at fisherfunerals.com.

Fisher Family Funeral Services is honored to serve the Chappell Family.



Sandra Letitia Sherman Lees
April 5, 1936 – February 29, 2024

Sandra “Sandy” Lees went to her eternal home on February 29, 2024, in Midwest City, Okla.

Mrs. Lees was born on April 5, 1936, to Paul and Alice Sherman in Noblesville. She grew up on a farm, where she developed her love for nature and especially horses. It was while she attended high school in Noblesville that she began dating the love of her life, Julius “Jude” Lees. She graduated in 1954, and she and Jude were married on July 8, 1955, after which they left for the adventure of Jude’s career in the Air Force. They lived in Texas, Montana, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Utah during those years, raising three sons.

Upon Jude’s retirement from the service in 1973, they returned home to Noblesville. Once they were settled again, she began working for the Noblesville Public Library, and continued working there for 20 years until her retirement. She was an active member of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Noblesville, where she grew up and was married. She was a faithful Christian who was involved in a Disciples of Christ church wherever she lived. She was most recently a member of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Midwest City. She was a member of the Order of the Eastern Star Radiant Chapter in Noblesville, where she served as a Past Honored Queen of Job’s Daughters, Worthy Matron, District Deputy, and Grand Representative to Scotland. In 2009, Sandy and Jude moved to Midwest City, Okla.

Sandy was a talented soprano who sang solo and with choirs for many years. She was known by all as a loving and giving person. She loved giving gifts and celebrating those she knew and loved. She loved holidays and celebrations and worked to make them special. She was a loving mother and a wonderful sister, mother-in-law, aunt, grandmother, great-grandmother, and friend. She was a curious life-long learner. A visit with Sandy and Jude often included an interesting trip to a museum, and books and magazines were always present in their home. After raising three hungry boys, she never broke the habit of feeding people, and she always remembered a favorite dish.

She leaves behind her devoted husband Julius, sons Roderick (Cathleen) of Midwest City, Okla., Norman (Evelyn) of Noblesville, and Eric (Stephanie) of Plainfield, nine grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, her brother Ivan (Cathy) Sherman, two nieces and their families, and many other relatives and friends that she held close to her heart.

She was preceded in death by her parents and a sister-in-law, Delores Sherman.

Services will be held on Saturday, March 9 at Noblesville First Christian Church, 16377 Herriman Blvd., with visitation from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; an Eastern Star service at 12:30 p.m.; and a memorial service at 1 p.m. Interment will be at Highland Cemetery, 11171 Hoosier Road, Fishers.



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REPORTER SPORTS WEEKEND

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CARMEL, FISHERS, GUERIN CATHOLIC, HAMILTON HEIGHTS, HAMILTON SOUTHEASTERN, NOBLESVILLE, SHERIDAN, UNIVERSITY, WESTFIELD

Basketball

Millers go big in second quarter, take down 'Rocks, head to sectional final

By CRAIG ADKINS
For The Reporter

NOBLESVILLE – For a top three matchup between Noblesville and Westfield, the Millers and Shamrocks couldn't have asked for a better environment in a sold-out Class 4A Sectional 8 semifinal game at The Mill.

A huge second-quarter surge was exactly what Noblesville needed as it made a statement in last night's first semifinal with a dominating 71-43 home court win.

As is the rivalry, the first quarter was a quick back-and-forth before Westfield had two different five-point leads. Noblesville would then go on a 7-3 run to end the first, trailing 16-15.

"We played really, really well in the second quarter, allowing us to get a lead and kind of gain a lot of momentum," Noblesville head coach Scott McClelland said.

The Millers played a pretty flawless second quarter and seemed to leave the 'Rocks stymied heading into halftime.

After trailing late in the first 16-13, Noblesville scored 24 unanswered points. Before Westfield knew it, the Millers had built a 37-16 lead.

That lead would swell to 41-19 at halftime, leaving Westfield stunned through two quarters.

"We just never could recover from that second quarter. Give Noblesville credit. They're a very good basketball team. Obviously a very tough sectional. It's a shame only one of us gets out of here," stated Westfield head coach Shane Sumpter.

"I think once we started getting rolling, we just kept putting pressure on them," stated Noblesville senior guard Aaron Fine. "We have to dominate in practice against our JV. We have to get scores, stops, scores, stops. That's just what we did. We executed in the game and that's why we were able to do that," continued Fine.

Noblesville kept the momentum once they grabbed the lead early in the second and didn't let up. Their lead stayed at just about the same

length for most of the third and held to a 55-32 lead after three.

"We're just trying to chip away and our goal was to try to get it to under 10 going into the fourth quarter," said Sumpter. "We made a couple of runs, but we just couldn't get over that hump. Obviously, the second quarter makes a difference. They made a lot of shots and we made a lot of defensive errors," continued Sumpter.

Westfield got frazzled with Noblesville's defense creating havoc, which resulted in the Shamrocks just not being able to get into a normal rhythm offensively. Multiple turnovers turned into baskets in transition for the Millers, widening the gap even more.

Defensive pressure forced the 'Rocks to take shots they wouldn't normally take, allowing the Millers to crash the boards to stay in control of the game.

"We got multiple contributions, too. Hunter (Walston) was outstanding tonight. I thought Will Smits gave us great minutes. I



Photos by Joshua Herd

(ABOVE LEFT) Noblesville's Justin Curry scored 11 points, including this dunk during the Millers' sectional semifinal win over Westfield on Friday. Noblesville plays Fishers tonight for the Sectional 8 championship. (ABOVE RIGHT) Westfield's Charles Farrell scored 11 points for the Shamrocks.

thought Aaron (Fine) played a really good floor game. Justin (Curry) came up with a couple of big steals, got a dunk, got the crowd going into it," stated McClelland on key contributors.

There wasn't any let up in the fourth by the Millers.

Noblesville outscored Westfield 16-11 to win in convincing fashion, 71-43.

Charles Farrell led the Shamrocks with a team-high 16 and was joined in double-figures by Will Harvey (11). Trey Buchanan added nine.

Westfield ends a great season at 19-3.

Hunter Walston led all with a game-high 22 points. Walston also grabbed seven rebounds and blocked five shots. Fine wound up with

See Big . . . Page 12

Fishers outlasts HSE, moves on to sectional final

By CRAIG ADKINS
For The Reporter

NOBLESVILLE – Friday night's second semifinal at Class 4A Sectional 8 ended up a closer outcome than the first game. The No. 1 Fishers Tigers and Hamilton Southeastern Royals duked it out once again in the post-season.

The Tigers found ways late in the game to make moves to outlast the Royals to move on to tonight's title game, 54-44.

The top three ranked teams in Class 4A are in the Sectional 8 field and that becomes a motivational factor.

"We heard all week it was 1-2-3 and I think we were kind of an afterthought," said Hamilton Southeastern head coach John Ashworth. "Our kids were pretty motivated by that and wanted to make sure that people respect our program as well."

It would be HSE that jumped out first. After Keenan Garner tied it 2-2, the Royals got four straight

from Braeden Totton to make it 6-2.

The Tigers went on a 13-4 run to end the first to lead 15-10.

It would be a game of runs and Fishers knew that it would take everything the Tigers had to outlast HSE to get the win.

The first half was tight, which left little room for error. Fishers held a narrow lead at halftime of 26-23.

"This is how the game always is in a lot of sports," said Fishers head coach Garrett Winegar. "It was really about maintaining our composure through runs. We didn't expect it to be a big blowout or anything," Winegar continued.

The pace was patient and methodical for both teams in the third. Southeastern would tie it 33-33 for the second time of the game.

Justin Kirby dropped in a layup to account for the score at the end of the third, 35-34.

HSE was down early in the fourth 37-36, but that just fueled Fishers to get



Photos by Joshua Herd

(ABOVE LEFT) Fishers' Justin Kirby scored 12 points, including a layup at the end of the third quarter to give the Tigers the lead during their win over Hamilton Southeastern Friday in Sectional 8 play. (ABOVE RIGHT) Hamilton Southeastern's Donovan Hamilton had 15 points for the Royals.

more aggressive down the stretch.

"I thought we battled. It was an up-and-down game and we figured out ways to stay in it. They just made a few plays in the middle of the fourth quarter that extended their lead and that was the game," Ashworth stated.

"We knew it would be a close game. So, we just

maintained our composure throughout. When they made runs, we made runs. With a crowd like this, whoever can get back to level the fastest, we felt would have an advantage," continued Winegar.

Slowly, but surely, the Tigers were able to lengthen their lead and keep the Royals at enough of a distance.

In the final minutes, it

became a free throw game. Fishers would keep the lead above three, but wound up a double-digit victor, 54-44.

Rebounding became a big factor that helped Fishers secure the semifinal win.

"I think Keenan (Garner) had 15 rebounds. I thought he really dominated on the glass and that was a big focus," stated Winegar.

Hamilton Southeastern

finishes its season at 15-10. The Royals were led by Donovan Hamilton's 15 and 10 from Totton. Michael Griffith also added eight before fouling out.

The Tigers were paced by a balanced attack. Kirby led with 12 off of the bench. Garner had 10 to go with great defense and rebounding.

See Outlast . . . Page 12

Tickets for Noblesville sectional game sold out

The REPORTER

The Noblesville athletic department announced that tickets for tonight's Sectional 8 championship game have already sold out.

The Millers posted on X, formerly Twitter,

that the game had "sold out in 30 minutes."

Tonight's game will be broadcast on Hamilton County TV, along with the sectional championship games at Guerin Catholic and Sheridan. Visit hctv1.com to find the games.

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compared to this time last year

Sales Decreased
January pending home sales compared to this time last year
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55
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1/23 vs. 1/24

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Rental- 6
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Other- 0



Basketball



Photo by Julie Brown



Photo by Mike Navarro

(ABOVE LEFT) Guerin Catholic's Andy Caron scored nine points for the Golden Eagles during their sectional semifinal win over Bishop Chatard on Friday. Guerin Catholic hosts Brebeuf Jesuit tonight in the championship game. (ABOVE RIGHT) Jack Cherry dished out six assists and collected five rebounds for the Golden Eagles, also scoring five points.

Golden Eagles bounce back, now take on Brebeuf Jesuit for sectional title

The REPORTER

Guerin Catholic recovered from an early deficit to cruise into the Class 3A Sectional 27 championship game, beating Bishop Chatard 54-36 in the first Friday semifinal.

The 3A No. 6 and sectional host Golden Eagles trailed 14-9 after one quarter. But Guerin Catholic dominated the second quarter, outscoring the Trojans 18-3 for a 27-17 halftime lead. The Golden Eagles put up another 20 points in the third period to lead 47-24

and sustained that margin in the fourth quarter.

Robert Sorensen led the GC scoring with 21 points. Dylan Murans added 10 points while Andy Caron scored nine. Bryson Cardinal pulled nine rebounds. Jack Cherry dished out six assists and also collected five rebounds.

Guerin Catholic is 19-7 and plays 3A No. 1 Brebeuf Jesuit in tonight's sectional title game, which tips off at 7 p.m. The Braves beat Heritage Christian 55-39 in the other semifinal.

GUERIN CATHOLIC 54, BISHOP CHATARD 36				
Guerin Catholic	FG	FT	TP	PF
Jack Cherry	1-3	3-4	5	2
Robert Sorensen	6-12	3-3	21	1
Andy Caron	4-5	1-2	9	3
Dylan Murans	4-7	0-1	10	4
Bryson Cardinal	2-4	2-4	6	4
Malcolm Houze	1-1	0-0	3	1
Jake Grissom	0-0	0-0	0	1
Ben Grissom	0-1	0-0	0	0
Ryne Paris	0-1	0-0	0	0
Nik Balmuri	0-0	0-0	0	0
Hayden Rodgers	0-0	0-0	0	0
Totals	18-34	9-14	54	16
Score by Quarters				
Bishop Chatard	14	3	7	12 – 36
Guerin Catholic	9	18	20	7 – 54
Guerin Catholic 3-point shooting (9-16) Sorensen 6-8, Murans 2-3, Houze 1-1, Cherry 0-1, Caron 0-1, B. Grissom 0-1, Cardinal 0-1. Guerin Catholic rebounds (28) Cardinal 9, Cherry 5, Murans 4, Caron 3, Sorensen 2, J. Grissom 2, Houze 1, B. Grissom 1, team 1.				

Thanks for reading the Hamilton County Reporter!

Noblesville's Isabella Lingenfelter commits to Calvin University

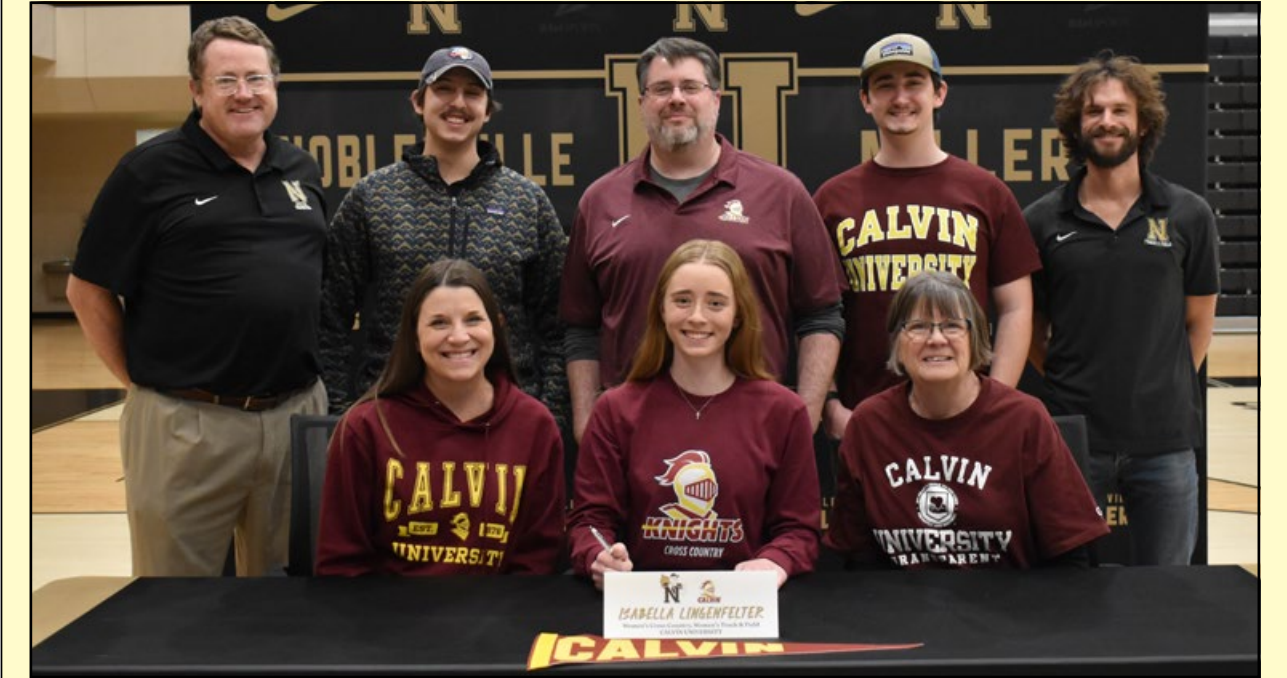


Photo courtesy Landon Denison, NHS Shadow Yearbook

Noblesville's Isabella Lingenfelter has committed to the Calvin University cross country and track and field teams. (Front row, from left) Kris Lingenfelter (mother), Isabella Lingenfelter, and Barbara Cunningham (grandmother). (Back row, from left) Jim Pearce (Noblesville Girls Track & Field Head Coach), A.J. Snyder (Noblesville Cross County/Track & Field Assistant), Scott Cunningham (uncle), Gabe Lingenfelter (brother), and Aaron Becker (Noblesville Girls Cross Country Head Coach).

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Heights falls to Yorktown, ending season at 10-14

The REPORTER

Hamilton Heights fell to Yorktown 64-53 Friday in the first semifinal game at Class 3A Sectional 24 at New Castle.

The Huskies led the Tigers 13-11 after one quarter. Dreydin Serna scored five points, with Tyler Champion and John Irion both adding four. Yorktown took over in the second period, outscoring Heights 21-8 for a 32-21 halftime lead.

The Huskies cut into that lead in the third quarter,

pouring in 19 points to get within 45-40. Tillman Etchison and Irion both had seven points in the period. Champion scored 10 points in the fourth quarter, but the Tigers outscored Heights 19-13 in that period to get the win.

Champion led with 19 points, followed by Irion with 18 and Etchison with 11. Champion also had five steals and four rebounds, while Dreydin Serna blocked three shots.

Heights finished its season with a 10-14 record.

YORKTOWN 64, HAMILTON HEIGHTS 53				
Heights	FG	FT	TP	PF
Tyler Champion	8-12	0-0	19	2
Dreydin Serna	2-6	0-0	5	4
Tillman Etchison	4-7	3-4	11	3
John Irion	6-13	4-6	18	2
Sam Dawson	0-3	0-0	0	2
Landen Scheiber	0-0	0-0	0	0
Rees Knapp	0-0	0-0	0	0
Isaiah Grimsey	0-0	0-0	0	1
Phoenix Vondersaar	0-0	0-0	0	2
Carson Felger	0-0	0-0	0	0
Aidan Unger	0-0	0-0	0	0
Totals	20-41	7-10	53	16
Score by Quarters				
Yorktown	11	21	13	19 – 64
Heights	13	8	19	13 – 53
Heights 3-point shooting (6-17) Champion 3-4, Irion 2-5, Serna 1-5, Dawson 0-3. Heights rebounds (12) Champion 4, Serna 3, Grimsey 2, Irion 2, Etchison 1.				

SPORTS SCHEDULE

Saturday, March 2

BOYS BASKETBALL

Sectional 8 at Noblesville

Championship: Noblesville vs. Fishers, 7 p.m.

Sectional 27 at Guerin Catholic

Championship: Guerin Catholic vs. Brebeuf Jesuit, 7 p.m.

Sectional 43 at Sheridan

Championship: University vs. Park Tudor, 7:30 p.m.

BOYS LACROSSE

Fishers at Guerin Catholic, 2:30 p.m.

GIRLS LACROSSE

Guerin Catholic at Evansville North, 11 a.m.

Kings (Ohio) at Hamilton Southeastern, noon

Carmel at Louisville Sacred Heart Academy, 1 p.m.

Guerin Catholic at Evansville Memorial, 2:15 p.m.

Brebeuf Jesuit at Hamilton Southeastern, 4 p.m.

GYMNASTICS

Guerin Catholic, Westfield at Valparaiso regional, 1 p.m.

TRACK AND FIELD

Carmel, Hamilton Heights, Noblesville, Westfield at Indiana Wesleyan HSR Qualifier, 10 a.m.

Guerin Catholic at Providence Cristo Rey HSR Qualifier, 10 a.m.

University at University of Indianapolis HSR Qualifier, 10 a.m.

Monday, March 4

GIRLS LACROSSE

Carmel at Westfield, 7:30 p.m.

TRACK AND FIELD

Noblesville at Zionsville Early Bird meet, 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 5

BOYS LACROSSE

Brebeuf Jesuit at Carmel, 7:30 p.m.

Heritage Christian at Westfield, 7:30 p.m.

GIRLS LACROSSE

Guerin Catholic at Heritage Christian, 7:30 p.m.

Please email schedule changes or corrections to sports@readthereporter.com.

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IN HAMILTON COUNTY

Fishers' Lauren Votaw named assistant coach for 2024 girls Indiana All-Stars

The REPORTER

Fishers girls basketball coach Lauren Votaw has been selected as one of the assistant coaches for the 2024 IndyStar girls' Indiana All-Stars, it was announced on Friday.

Votaw will join Zionsville's Andy Maguire, who was selected as the head coach, and Greensburg's Jason Simpson, who is the other assistant coach.

Players chosen for the 2024 girls' All-Stars will play three games in June -- one exhibition game against the Indiana Junior All-Stars as well as home-and-home contests against the Kentucky All-Stars.

Votaw led Fishers to a 17-7 mark in 2023-24, one season after guiding the Tigers to a 26-3 ledger and a Class 4A state runner-up finish. Her record in seven seasons at Fishers is 131-44, including sectional titles in 2020 and 2023. Her team added regional and semi-state crowns in 2023 as well. She was an IBCA District 2 Coach of the Year and a Junior All-Star assistant coach in 2020.

The former Lauren Vail is a 2004 graduate of Greenfield-Central, where she earned 11 letters as a high school athlete -- four in basketball, four in volleyball, two in softball and one in track & field. She went on to play four years of basketball at Anderson University, where she earned a bach-

elor's degree in health and physical education in 2008. She later received a master's degree from Ball State in 2013.

Votaw began her coaching career as the Noblesville girls' JV coach in 2008-09. She moved to Fishers as an assistant coach from 2009-17. She became the Tigers' varsity coach starting in 2017-18, and she teaches advanced physical conditioning and sports medicine at Fishers.

Maguire has compiled a 330-240 record in 26 seasons as a varsity girls' coach, including a Class 4A state runner-up finish in 2018. He is 256-209 in 21 seasons at Zionsville, including a 16-7 finish in 2023-24. He previously posted a 74-31 mark in five seasons at Western Boone. His teams have won five sectionals, one at Western Boone and four at Zionsville, as well as one regional and one semi-state.

A 1982 graduate of South Vermillion, Maguire played four seasons of basketball and baseball for the Wildcats. He went on to Purdue University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in education in 1987. He later earned a master's degree in secondary administration from IUPUI.

Maguire started his coaching career as a boys' basketball assistant at Leb-



Votaw

anon in 1987-88. He then was a boys' basketball assistant at Western Boone from 1988 through 1994 before becoming the Stars' head coach. He moved to Zionsville for the 1999-2000 season, coaching the Eagles for seven seasons. After a five-year break from coaching, he took over the Eagles a second time in 2010-11 and has guided the program to winning campaigns in eight of the past nine seasons.

He was an IBCA District 2 Coach of the Year and was a Junior All-Star assistant coach in 2016. He currently teaches health and physical education at Zionsville Middle School.

Simpson has compiled a 180-65 mark in 10 seasons as the girls' coach at Greensburg, including a 21-5 mark with a sectional title in 2023-24. During his tenure, the Pirates have won five sectionals, one regional, one semi-state and finished as Class 3A state runner-up in 2018.

He previously was a Greensburg boys' basketball assistant for 14 seasons, and he was part of the boys' staff that captured Class 3A state titles in 2013 and 2014. He was an IBCA girls' District 3 Coach of the Year and was a girls' Junior All-Star assistant coach in 2018.

A 1994 graduate of Greensburg, Simpson played four seasons of basketball in high school. He earned a bachelor's degree from Indiana University in 1998 and a master's degree from Ball State in 2005. He teaches physical education at Greensburg High School.

The Junior-Senior exhibition game is set for June 5 at Kokomo. The first game against Kentucky will be June 7 at a site to be announced. The final game against Kentucky will be June 8 at Gainbridge Fieldhouse in Indianapolis. All three dates will be doubleheaders with the IndyStar Indiana boys' All-Stars.

Rosters for the 2024 Indiana girls' All-Stars, Indiana boys' All-Stars, girls' Junior All-Stars and boys' Junior All-Stars will be announced later.

The Indiana Junior All-Stars will play two girl-boy doubleheaders this year -- June 2 against the Kentucky Junior All-Stars at site to be announced and June 5 against the Indiana seniors at Kokomo.

The 2024 IndyStar Indiana All-Star "Futures Games" doubleheader will be on June 3 at Hamilton Southeastern. This event, for girls and boys who are current sophomores or freshmen, will feature two Indiana teams in a North-South format. Rosters for the Futures Games will be announced later.

Motorsport kicks in high gear this weekend & next

COLUMNIST



ZECH YODER
Checkers to Wreckers

NASCAR enters its third race of the regular season in Las Vegas, Formula 1 kicks off its season at Bahrain, and the INDYCAR opener is just one week away. It is astounding just how quickly the off-season passed us this year. Motorsport is back and in full swing.

All eyes this weekend will be on the Bahrain Grand Prix and Formula 1's first race of the 2024 season. After, arguably, the most dominate Formula 1 season, Max Verstappen will defend his World Championship and attempt to make it four in a row, a feat accomplished by only three other drivers. All indications are Max Verstappen and Red Bull are the team to beat. Despite their incredible performance in 2023, Red Bull's 2024 has significant aerodynamic differences as Adrian Newey and the Red Bull technical team show no signs of letting up.

The major question: has any other team on the Formula 1 grid made any strides in catching the Verstappen and Red Bull?

Based on what was observed in the pre-season testing, Red Bull looks to be the strong favorite as Verstappen appears poised to take his fourth consecutive championship. Verstappen claimed the pole position for the Bahrain Grand Prix with a lap more than .2 second faster than runner-up, Charles Leclerc. That may be bad news for the competition. Verstappen has proven that he is difficult to pass and a clean start may be all he needs to cruise to his first victory of the season.

After one of the wildest finishes in NASCAR history at Atlanta Motor Speed-

way last weekend, NASCAR heads west to Las Vegas Motor Speedway. Las Vegas marks the first conventional track on the NASCAR schedule and should provide a good barometer on the strength of teams and drivers.

Las Vegas will be the first real test of Ford and Toyota's new aerodynamic packages. Both Ford and Toyota upgraded the noses on their cars. The manufacturers are hoping that the upgrades improve performance on the larger oval tracks. Ford's aerodynamic performance last year was problematic, putting Ford at a disadvantage for much of the year. It is quite surprising that Ryan Blaney, a Ford driver, captured the 2023 championship. Toyota, though not terrible last year, still did not perform at the level of the Chevrolets. Nevertheless, Toyota had speed on the 1.5-mile racetracks, especially during qualifying. Toyota will be looking for improved speed during the race and around other cars.

It is not a forgone conclusion that the changes Ford and Toyota made will increase performance. The results in the wind tunnel appear promising but good numbers in a wind tunnel does not necessarily mean better result on the race-track. The changes may be effective immediately, or it could take teams several races to find the set-up that best extracts the speed from new bodies. Regardless, it almost seems like the season begins all over again at Las Vegas.

Who is going to be good this weekend? I believe the Toyotas are the team to beat. Denny Hamlin and Christopher Bell will be strong. But don't sleep on Ty Gibbs. In his sophomore season in the Cup Series, I believe he is going to prove a lot this year. An early win could cement him as a serious title contender.

My pick for this weekend is Christopher Bell. He almost won at Las Vegas last fall. I think he improves his finishing position by one and wins the race.

Finally, INDYCAR is just one week away. It opens the season at Grand Prix of St. Petersburg. First practice begins on Friday, March 8 at 2:45 p.m. and the race is scheduled for Sunday, March 10 at noon.

Zech Yoder is a local resident, an attorney at Adler Attorneys in Noblesville, and a lifelong race fan.

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