

# The Paper

OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Montgomery County's oldest locally owned independent newspaper

50¢

CRAWFORDSVILLE, INDIANA

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**TODAY'S VERSE**

Revelation 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

**FACES OF MONTGOMERY**

People who call our community their own.



Dylan Nevitt was taking a break from work when one of The Paper's roving photographers happened along. Thank you for your smile Dylan!

**THREE THINGS You Should Know:**

**1** Anew Hospice is looking for volunteers to provide companionship, a listening ear, and non-clinical assistance to patients both in facilities and their homes. Volunteers experience a rewarding connection and provide invaluable comfort and support to patients and their families. To volunteer, call 317-300-2292 or email volunteers@anewhosp.com.

**2** The Arts Federation (TAF) is currently seeking exhibition proposals from regional artists. TAF provides opportunities for regional artists to display their work at the Wells Community Cultural Center, which is located at 638 North Street in downtown Lafayette. Originally built as a memorial library in 1926, the facility has been renovated to feature three galleries that showcase a broad range of talents and media. All artists, groups of artists, organizations, and schools from north central Indiana can apply.

**3** Yesterday, Congresswoman Erin Houchin (R-Ind.-09) released the following statement after three new objects were shot down by our military over the weekend. "I'm proud of the actions of our military service members who safely shot down these three new objects over the weekend. With that said, four incursions into our airspace in a matter of days is beyond concerning, and the Biden administration owes the American people a full explanation of what these objects are and what their purpose is. We shouldn't have more questions than answers right now, as we did following the first incursion of the Chinese spy balloon that was allowed to invade our border and essentially complete its mission unimpeded. Even House Democrats have expressed concern that the administration is not being more forthcoming with information. It's clear what we need is transparency from the President and his administration," said Congresswoman Houchin.

**Butch Has Bats In His Belfry**



**BUTCH DALE**  
Columnist

Ok, I admit it. I hate bats. No, not baseball bats, but those winged creatures with ugly faces and teeth that look like fangs...and come out at night and fly around...swooping down and scaring the bejeebers out of just about everyone. Yes,

I know...they are supposedly beneficial critters that eat insects and are mostly harmless. Now I said "mostly," and I'll tell you why shortly.

As a youngster, there were lots of bats on our farm. I remember seeing them hanging by their tails in the rafters in the barn. Then as darkness came, they flew around the two security lights in the barnlot. I was not afraid of them, and was amazed at how fast they could fly, turn, and twist. After I became an expert shot at the age of 8 with my new Red Ryder B-B rifle (subsequently shooting out the glass lightning rod bulbs on both barns, along with the kitchen window), one evening at dusk I tried my aim at bats. Of course I had no luck, and

➔ See BUTCH Page A5

**New Service On The County's Web Site Offers Residents Timely Notice Of Road Closures**

Montgomery County has developed a new service on its web site that identifies road closures inside the County boundaries. The service includes a map that is regularly updated by County staff as road closures are reported to the County. Residents can sign up to get notified when a road is closed and when it reopens.

Some of the activities that may cause a road closure include construction, accidents or a weather-related event. CSX construction and repair that

causes a road closure will be included.

"This is a service that we currently use internally for our staff and we wanted to offer it to our residents, too," said County Mapping Director Mike Davis.

"This is a nice feature for our residents, so they can plan their travel routes accordingly," said County Commissioner President John Frey.

Residents can view the road closure map by visiting the County's web site at [www.montgomerycounty.in.gov](http://www.montgomerycounty.in.gov)

**Southmont Awarded \$400K Grant**

With the help of Equitable Education Solutions, Southmont Schools has been awarded the Indiana Department of Education's Comprehensive School Counseling Grant. This highly selective and innovative grant will provide more than \$400,000 dollars towards Southmont's efforts to develop comprehensive student support services and redesign the existing school counseling programs. Grant dollars will enable Southmont to address student needs through a graduation pathways director, elementary mental health counselor and Second Step Curriculum. Licensed social worker, Dr. Lori Goss-Reaves, will provide

direct mental health services to staff through the Listen and Lighten program, lend her expertise to improving Southmont's support services for both students and staff, and ensure optimal coordination of available mental health services for families. At a time when Indiana ranks lowest in the nation for counselor to student ratio, this grant will propel Southmont out of that category by bringing staffing in alignment with national recommendations of one counselor for every 200 students.

The Indiana Department of Education identified the impor-

➔ See GRANT Page A5

**1,000 Books Read Before Kindergarten**



Photo courtesy of CDPL

Nolan Benecke, age 22 months, has completed the Crawfordsville District Public Library program "1000 Books Before Kindergarten". He is the son of Mathew and Jillian Benecke. Nolan's favorite book is Hair by Leslie Patricelli. Mom said, "The program is a wonderful way to get kids interested in reading and expanding their world. I am grateful that the Crawfordsville Library participates in this program. The children's section of the library is amazing and Nolan enjoys it every time we visit, I love that it is inclusive for kids of all ages from books to toys to play with."

**The Daily Almanac**

**Sunrise/Sunset**  
RISE: 7:41 a.m.  
SET: 6:20 p.m.

**High/Low Temperatures**  
High: 56 °F  
Low: 33 °F

**Today is...**

- Valentine's Day
- Library Lovers Day
- League of Women Voters Day

**What Happened On This Day**

- 1849 In New York City, James K. Polk becomes the first serving President to have his photograph taken
- 1899 Voting machines are approved by Congress for use in federal elections

**Births On This Day**

- 1818 Frederick Douglass American author and activist
- 1942 Michael Bloomberg American businessman, politician and the 108th Mayor of New York City

**Deaths On This Day**

- 1779 James Cook English navy officer, explorer and cartographer
- 1975 Julian Huxley English biologist

**Kids Classes Being Held At Athens Arts**

Athens Arts Gallery is offering arts & crafts classes for children ages 5-10. The classes will be held the first Saturday of each month - March through November. Classes will be from 10:30 a.m. to noon and open to children 5 years to 10 years. Cost is \$5 for one child, \$10 max per family.

The gallery's new location is 216 E. Main Street in Crawfordsville (across from Little Mexico).

Each month's class will be unique. The children will work with a variety of arts and

crafts which help develop a child's motor skills and build his/her visual skills and art appreciation. We will have a short lesson about art & artists, and examples of different mediums. Then each child will choose his/her own activity.

To reserve a spot for any of the classes - call 765.362.7455 during business hours or stop by Athens Arts Thursdays and Fridays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. or on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. You may pay by cash, check, or credit card, or pay day of class.

**HONEST HOOSIER**

Happy Valentine's Day, Montgomery County! I love you all!



**INSIDE TODAY'S EDITION**

Obituaries.....A2  
Slim Randles.....A4  
Brian Howey.....A4

**TODAY'S HEALTH TIP**

The Institute of Medicine recommends 600 IU of vitamin D daily to age 70 and 800 IU after that. Today's health tip was brought to you by Dr. John Roberts. Be sure to catch his column each week in The Paper and online at [www.thepaper24-7.com](http://www.thepaper24-7.com).



**OBITUARIES**

See Page A2

The Paper appreciates all our customers. Today, we'd like to personally thank Aimee Malott for subscribing!



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**THE MONTGOMERY MINUTE**

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Sagamore News Media is looking for talented sales people. Whether you sell by phone or in person, we want to talk with you. Hourly rates begin at \$15 per hour and only go up from there. If you have good sales skills, this might be the job you have been looking for. Sagamore News Media owns newspapers in Noblesville and Crawfordsville and feature award-winning work every day. Come be part of our team! Apply today by e-mailing resume to [jobs@thepaper24-7.com](mailto:jobs@thepaper24-7.com).

**TODAY'S QUOTE**

"Yours is the light by which my spirit's born: - you are my sun, my moon, and all my stars."  
E.E. Cummings

**TODAY'S JOKE**

What do you call first love in an aquarium?  
Guppy love!





## OBITUARIES

### Piper Aspen Brooke Randolph

Feb. 8, 2023

Infant Piper Aspen Brooke Randolph was born a sleeping baby on Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2023 at Columbus Regional Hospital in Columbus, Ind. She was the daughter of Charles Randolph and Brooke Hughes.

She is survived by her parents; five siblings, Rhiyver, Laylah, Landon, Liam, and Leighton; paternal grandparents, Bill (Bonnie) Randolph and Rita (Todd) Hay; and maternal grandfather, Bill Hughes; maternal great-grandparents, Tom (Teresa) Kendrick and Les (Donna) Hughes; great uncle, Brian (Sam) Kendrick and Rob (Misty) Hughes; and aunts, Destiny Hay and Pamela Randolph.

She was preceded in death by her maternal grandmother, Vickie Kendrick; and paternal great-grandparents, Bob (Rita) Cotten and Fuzz (Sis) Randolph.

Visitation will be at Sanders Funeral Care, 203 S 1st Street, in Kingman on Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2023 from 12 p.m. till the time of the funeral service at 1 p.m., with Pastor Steve Crum officiating. Burial will follow at Centennial Cemetery. Share memories and condolences online at [www.SandersFuneralCare.com](http://www.SandersFuneralCare.com).

### Paul E. Bell

March 29, 1954 - Feb. 9, 2023

Paul E. Bell passed away at home surrounded by his loving family on Thursday, Feb. 9, 2023. He was born on March 29, 1954 to Lois Bell in Crawfordsville. Paul married Jayme Nile on July 7, 1990 in Montgomery County.

Paul graduated from North Montgomery High School, Class of 1972, and Ivy Tech with an associate degree in Business Service. He proudly served in the United States Army as a Sargent in Germany. Paul was a truck driver and mechanic, working at various local businesses. He was also a farmer, working with farming friends in the county. Paul and Jayme started P&J Repair, repairing motorcycles and automotives.

Paul was a member of the Jamestown American Legion. He loved riding his Harley Davidson Motorcycle and attended the 100th Anniversary Event for Harley Davidson in Wisconsin.

Paul is survived by his wife, Jayme Bell; 4 children, Katina Coutts, Gabriel Bell, Cassie Rice (Willie), Kimberly Farrell (Brad); 8 grandchildren; 1 great grandson; twin sister, Paula Willis; younger sister, Ruth Ann Bell; and several nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his mother, Lois Bell; father, William "Tennessee" Bell; infant brother, James Allen VanGilder; and brothers-in-law, Keith Willis and Mike Grenard.

Visitation will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2023 from 12 noon until the time of the service at 2 p.m. at Sanders Priebe Funeral Care, 315 S Washington Street in Crawfordsville with military honors presented by the Army Reserves and American Legion, Post 72. Burial will follow at New Ross Cemetery. Donations may be made in Paul's memory to the Muscular Dystrophy Association, 161 N. Clark, Suite 3550, Chicago, IL 60601 or [www.mda.org](http://www.mda.org). Share memories and condolences at [www.SandersFuneralCare.com](http://www.SandersFuneralCare.com).

### Peggy Joanne Scott

July 9, 1931 - Feb. 11, 2023

On the 9th of July, 1931 Peggy Joanne Scott was born in Tangier, Indiana, Parke County in the house where Bill & Mary Catherine Graves made their home for many years. The house was built by A.J. Marshall for this daughter Lula Grace and new husband, William Henry Hobson. Peggy was born to Dorothy & Jay Scott, their 4th of 6 children. Peggy lived her childhood years on 44 acres one mile south of Sylvania where the children played in the woods and stream in the summer months when not in school which she attended 12 years thru high school. Her siblings were: Orville Lee, Dorothy Jean, Kenneth Lowell, Myrna Louise, and Doris Marilyn "Toots".

She married John Edward Eppert on her 18th birthday, July 19, 1949. From this marriage there were 6 children, John Douglas and Cynthia Jane - both died as babies and the remaining living children, Brenda Lynn (Vic) Meagher of Mellott, Patricia Annette (Cass) Miller of Tangier, Emily Joanne (Chuck) Marshall of Tangier, and Darrell Clifford (Mitzi) Eppert of Tangier; grandchildren: Zach Scott Meagher (deceased), Israel Isaiah (Christy) Meagher, Caswell Lee (Amber) Miller, Lacassa Leone Norman, Cody Scott (Kayla) Miller, Johnathan Alexander (Hannah) Marshall, Tiffany Michelle Marshall, and Lyndsay Noel Marshall, Justin Michael Paxton, Curtis Darrell Eppert, Krista Michelle Paxton, and Trevor John Eppert; Great-grandchildren: Caden Zane, Lillian Grace, Caitlyn Elizabeth, Samuel Isaiah, and Jolene Adele Meagher; and Wyatt Michael, Jasmine Leone, Christian Blake, and Cassidy Jane Norman; and Ava Jane and Ezra Lane Miller, Lainey Jo Leslie, Piper Nova Marshall, Julian Charles Marshall, Baya Jo Crum, Marli Michelle Paxton, Knox Alexander Paxton, Sebastien David Phelps, and Izabella Renali and Atayven Jane Cotten. All of these descendants would make a very large picture.

Visitation will be at Sanders Funeral Care, 203 S 1st Street, in Kingman on Wednesday, February 15, 2023 from 5:00pm - 7:00pm. The funeral service will be at Tangier Friends Church on Thursday, February 16, 2023 at 1:00pm with Rev. Tom Norris officiating. The service will be recorded which can be viewed on her obituary page at [www.SandersFuneralCare.com](http://www.SandersFuneralCare.com). She will be laid to rest in Tangier Cemetery beside her husband John and two infant babies. Memorial donations may be given to Tangier Friends Church.

Share memories and condolences online at [www.SandersFuneralCare.com](http://www.SandersFuneralCare.com)



### Connie Jean (Spencer) Cleek

May 25, 1949 - Feb. 11, 2023

Connie Jean (Spencer) Cleek, age 73 of New Market, went to be with her Lord and Savior on Saturday, Feb. 11, 2023 at home while surrounded by her loving family. She was born in Greencastle, Ind. on May 25, 1949 to Cline Maynard & Margaret Jane (Murphy) Spencer.

Connie lived in Russellville through 5th grade, then moved to New Market and graduated from New Market High School in 1967. She attended Indiana State University before transferring to Ivy Tech and received an Accounting Degree.

During her childhood years she was a member of Putnam County 4-H Club showing both horses and sheep. She had a strong faith in the Lord, attending church in Russellville prior to joining New Market Christian Church at age 13. She not only joined the Christian Church but began playing the piano for the church at age 13. She was a member of the New Market Christian Church for 60 years.

On Sept. 27, 1969, she married her high school sweetheart, Glen Cleek, at the New Market Christian Church. Throughout her life she enjoyed memberships in the Wabash Valley Tractor Pullers Association and Night Owls with the New Market Christian Church. She became a member of Smiles Unlimited Clown Ministries on June 27, 1990. She enjoyed several years as "Buttons" the clown.

She enjoyed Country Music Line Dancing, vacations to Silver Lake Sand Dunes in Michigan, and "Jeeping" with family and friends, especially Pam & Carl Sacco, Todd & Lori DeFouw, Chris and Dave Hodges, and Milton & Mary Rice.

She worked in several office positions including a Data Entry Specialist at Farm Bureau Co-op, retired from Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation District on May 27, 2014 where she worked as the Officer Manager, and worked at CVS for a few years. She has recently been playing the piano at New Market Methodist Church. She was a people person and was always willing to help others which included being a Troop Leader/Den Mother for both Girl Scouts & Boy Scouts, when her kids were participating. She always helped with church activities, school activities, sports activities and assisted with planning the New Market Alumni Banquet.

She was a wonderful mom and wife, always putting her family first. She enjoyed watching her kids, grandkids, nephews, and niece's sports games, school activities and programs.

She is survived by her husband, Glen Cleek; a daughter, Tami (Jason) Hurt-Stumke; a son, Christopher "Chris" (Michelle) Cleek; three grandchildren, Riley Hurt, Brita Cleek, and Walker Cleek; her beloved canine companion, Toby; a brother, Kenny Spencer; nephews, Chuck Spencer, Ryan Cleek and David Cleek; nieces, Michelle (Ryan) O'Hollaren, Dr. Elizabeth Cleek; and a host of great nieces, nephews, friends, and extended family members.

She was preceded in death by her parents; a brother, Charles Spencer; and a nephew Tony Spencer.

Connie wanted to express a special thank-you to all of those that brought food and meals and all those that came to visit her. She truly enjoyed all her visits.

Visitation will be at New Market Christian Church, 302 S 3rd Street, in New Market on Thursday, Feb. 16, 2023 from 4 - 7 p.m. The funeral service will be at the church on Friday, Feb. 17, 2023 at 11 a.m., with Pastor Mike Whitacre officiating. Burial will follow at Hebron Cemetery in Russellville. Memorial donations may be given to the New Market Christian Church or the Montgomery County Animal Welfare League. Sanders Priebe Funeral Care entrusted with care.

Share memories and condolences online at [www.SandersFuneralCare.com](http://www.SandersFuneralCare.com).



## Rokita Invites Hoosiers To Search More Than Their Hearts This Valentine's Day

Attorney General Todd Rokita invites Hoosiers to visit [IndianaUnclaimed.gov](http://IndianaUnclaimed.gov) today as love fills the air. Valentine's Day is a perfect time to see what money awaits to sweep you and your loved ones off your feet.

"Returning unclaimed property to rightful owners is an important part of our mission," Rokita said. "This holiday of love is a great time for Hoosiers to be true to their hearts and start searching."

While all states administer unclaimed property programs, Indiana is the only one where the attorney general oversees this function.

Last year, Rokita's Unclaimed Property Division returned over \$62 million to Hoosiers, and you could be the next lucky person to join the list.

Some property owners in the Unclaimed Property Division's database include such holiday-appropriate first or last names as Love, Valentine, Rose, and Candy.

Here are the types of property that might go unclaimed this Valentine's Day that are even better than a box of chocolates:

- Unclaimed wages or commissions
- Money orders



Attorney General Todd Rokita

- Safety deposit box contents
- Savings and checking accounts
- Refunds
- Overpayments such as:
- Credit card balances
- Cell phone bills
- DMV payments

Once unclaimed property is in its custody, the Unclaimed Property Division conducts an aggressive outreach effort to locate the rightful owners or heirs.

Individuals and/or businesses have 25 years in which to claim money once it is reported to the Unclaimed Property Division.

So be sure to check [IndianaUnclaimed.gov](http://IndianaUnclaimed.gov) or text CLAIM to 46220 to search your name, family, or business.

You can also contact the Unclaimed Property Division at 1-866-462-5246 or [updmal@atg.in.gov](mailto:updmal@atg.in.gov).

## Update On My Legislation



SPENCER DEERY  
Guest Columnist

A bill I authored that would expand the rights of Hoosiers to access their academic transcripts and make it easier for

college dropouts to go back to school, unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Education and Career Development Wednesday.

An estimated 138,000 Hoosiers owe an average of \$2,800 to their former university, often because of the way the federal government treats loans and Pell Grants when a student withdraws.

Senate Bill 404 would require universities to give former students the transcripts they may need for a job or more education, as long as they are making progress paying down the debt.

The bill now moves to the full Senate for further consideration.

*Spencer Deery is the State Senator for District 23, serving portions of Montgomery, Fountain, Tippecanoe, Parke, Vermillion and Warren counties.*

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the paper



# I Can't Sleep, Doc- Part 2

I want to follow up on last week's column where I discussed the causes of insomnia and focus on basic prevention and treatments. If the cause of insomnia is not readily identifiable it's helpful to keep a sleep diary for 2-4 weeks to share with your doctor. It should include sleep and wake times, naps, and actual time spent sleeping. You can download a blank sleep diary at bit.ly/3DZjTRH.



**JOHN R. ROBERTS, M.D.**  
Montgomery Medicine

difficult for folks that work nights Monday through Friday and are off on the week-ends. They need to try and maintain the same schedule as closely as possible and get the same total number of hours of sleep that they get while working nights.

A tip for night workers is to put on dark wrap-around sunglasses before leaving the workplace and wear them until you get in a dark room at home. This helps to keep the brain's, "it's light out, time to wake up" switch from being turned on, allowing you to get to sleep more easily.

I touched on medications last week, but I want to briefly mention drugs that frequently cause insomnia. Caffeine can stay in the system for up to eight hours so don't consume it within eight hours of bedtime if you're having trouble sleeping. Cold medications containing pseudoephedrine (Sudafed®) keep the brain awake. Nicotine is also a stimulant, so if you're a smoker, you should discuss quitting with your health provider. Alcohol is the last thing you want to consume if you're having trouble with insomnia; it can prevent entering the deep stages of sleep.

Natural products, particularly melatonin, may can help some people. It's important to start at a low dose, perhaps 1/2 to 1 mg, and to take it at least two hours before

bedtime. Large doses are rarely effective and are more likely to cause side effects.

Prescription sleep medications should be the absolute last resort for treating insomnia. These medications only provide a few extra minutes of sleep on average. They are all highly addictive and may cause unwanted or dangerous side effects in some people, particularly the elderly.

An excellent resource for more information on insomnia can be found at bit.ly/39XAkPC. I also recommend two books you can find at Amazon: *The Sleep Solution: Why Your Sleep is Broken and How to Fix It* by Dr. Chris Winter, and *How to Sleep: The New Science-Based Solutions for Sleeping Through the Night* by Dr. Rafael Pelayo.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-i) is very effective for treatment of chronic insomnia. Finding a therapist in your area that performs CBT-I can sometimes be challenging. Some of my patients received good results using CBT-i Coach, an app for smart phones. You can also check out Somryst, a popular and effective online course for CBT-I, at [www.somryst.com](http://www.somryst.com)

*Dr. John Roberts is a retired member of the Franciscan Physician Network specializing in Family Medicine.*

The most common problem identified when taking a sleep history or reviewing a sleep diary is poor sleep hygiene. Sleep hygiene is defined as "daily activities and habits that are consistent with or promote the maintenance of good quality sleep and full daytime alertness."

When I ask patients what they do when they can't fall asleep most answer that they continue to lie in bed and watch the clock. A key sleep hygiene concept is that one's bedroom should be reserved for sleep and sex. It should not be used for watching TV, surfing the Internet, doing work, exercising, etc. You need to train your brain that when it's in that room it should be shutting off and recharging.

If you are unable to sleep you should get out of bed and go to another room. Engage in a low-energy activity such as reading or perhaps doing a crossword puzzle. Do this until you

become drowsy and then go back to bed. If you find you can't sleep after 15-20 minutes, get out of bed again and repeat the process. You may have to do this numerous times. However, don't be tempted to sleep in the following day – the total hours you spend in bed should remain about the same each day.

It's important to have a ritual before going to bed. This should include quiet "wind down" time for at least 30 minutes before retiring. Some say a warm bath or shower two hours before bedtime can be helpful. A light, non-fatty snack may also promote drowsiness. Meditation can be very effective. Many of my patients were successful using the free Oak app on their smartphones.

While it is also very important to try and maintain a consistent bedtime, it appears that a consistent wake time is even more important. This is usually extremely

## Meeting Notes

### Crawfordsville Council Meeting

The City of Crawfordsville, Indiana  
Feb. 13 at 6 p.m. EDT  
City Building, 300 E. Pike Street, Crawfordsville, Indiana 47933  
Council Chambers  
I. Pledge Presenter: Jeff Lucas  
II. Prayer Presenter: Mike Reidy  
III. Roll Call  
IV. Approval of Minutes – Jan. 9, 2023.  
V. Acknowledgment of receipt of the monthly Financial Reports  
VI. Roll Call for additions to the Agenda  
VII. Fiscal Affairs  
A. First reading of an Ordinance to Establish Fund 2215—Emergency Medical Services (Nonreverting)  
B. A Resolution Acknowledging Receipt of the 2022 Crawfordsville Main Street Annual Report  
C. A Resolution Authorizing an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement between the

City of Crawfordsville and Montgomery County, Indiana regarding Combined Dispatch and 911 Public Safety Answering Point Services  
D. First reading of an Ordinance Re-Establishing the Cumulative Capital Development Fund under Indiana Code § 36-9-15.5  
E. First reading of an Ordinance Re-Establishing a Cumulative Fire Fund under Indiana Code § 36-8-14  
F. First reading of an Ordinance Amending the Green Power Rider for Services Rendered by Crawfordsville Electric Light & Power  
VIII. Ordinances & Petitions  
IX. Traffic, Parking & Safety  
A. First reading of an Ordinance Designating Stop Intersections in the North Ridge Neighborhood  
B. First reading of an Ordinance Repealing Handicapped Parking Designation at 312 South Water Street

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# Lack Of Competitive Politics Now Hitting City Halls

Indiana's political scene is in distinct decline. Our congressional races are no longer competitive in General Elections, whereas in past decades there would be half a dozen or so of seat changes between Republicans and Democrats. Since the 2011 reapportionment, not a single congressional incumbent has been upset.



**BRIAN HOWEY**  
Howey Political Report

Our General Assembly has become lop-sided. For the first time since the Democrat/Republican two-party system took root in 1856, one party (the Republicans) have had super majorities in both the House and Senate since the 2014 election. That's an unprecedented five election cycles, and counting. The districts are so unbalanced that I will be amazed if this doesn't continue until the 2031 maps.

We've seen the constitutional Statehouse races become dominated by Republicans, with the last Democrat victory there coming in 2012. We've watched the GOP dominate at the county level, with Indiana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer telling me that his party controls about 90% of county courthouse offices.

Now we are watching this lack of a robust election races coming to city halls across the state.

What jumps out after the Feb. 4 filing deadline is how many uncontested mayoral races there are during this 2023 cycle, including cities like Kokomo and Elkhart that have had competitive races in recent cycles. There are at least 35 cities where only Republican candidates have filed, including Jeffersonville, Noblesville, Bedford and Columbus. There are 10 cities where

Republican Mayor John Dennis is not seeking reelection and has endorsed Democrat Erin Easter. She is the only mayoral candidate filed.

According to independent journalist Dave Bangert, who published at the Based in Lafayette substack site, Mayor Dennis pushed Easter to run and introduced her at her campaign announcement. There are rumblings about Republicans slating someone after the primary. West Lafayette has been "hard blue" since 2016, outside of Dennis, who is Republican in name only.

When Gov. Eric Holcomb gave Mayor Dennis a Sagamore of the Wabash honor, Dennis dead-panned, "Leave us alone," before launching into a discussion about cooperation and faith in each other in ways that didn't lean on party affiliation. Dennis later said he didn't "understand that horse and elephant thing very much."

Lafayette Mayor Tony Roswarski, a Democrat, reminded him it was donkey for Democrats, not a horse. "Really? It is an elephant, though, right?" Dennis said.

The irony is that while Indiana is losing its competitive political dynamic at the federal, state and local levels, there is a move afoot to politicize school board races.

According to the Associated Press, Indiana Republicans forged ahead Wednesday with a proposal that would upend the current nonpartisan school board elections across the state despite opponents arguing the change would further inject politics into local schools. The Indiana House Elections Committee voted 6-4 along party lines to endorse a bill to establish a system

allowing a decision by each of the state's nearly 300 school districts on whether to require candidates to declare a political party. Each district's decision would be made through either a voter referendum or school board vote. It would be up to those votes whether candidates would be required to win a party's May primary in order to appear on the November general election ballot.

During testimony, State Rep. Alan Morrison (R-Brazil) said it's about local control. "There are some communities that want this and there are some communities that don't," Morrison said, according to Indiana Public Media. "Through this amendment, they will be able to make that choice."

State Rep. Tonya Pfaff (D-Terre Haute) said the entire concept is unnecessary. "I've not had any constituent come up and say that they thought this was a good idea, either local control or period," Indiana Public Media quoted Pfaff as saying.

What we are witnessing here in this era is a one-party dominance is the loss of political discourse. This comes while there is push by General Assembly lawmakers to begin the instruction of civics into our high schools. In the old days, that meant participating in dynamic General Election races between two major parties in three out of every four Novembers.

We're losing that. I'm not sure where all of this will lead us.

*The columnist is managing editor of Howey Politics Indiana/State Affairs at StateAffairs.com/pro/Indiana. Find Howey on Facebook and Twitter @hwypol.*

# The Love Story Of Coalie And Wilma

It's St. Valentine's Day, so I thought I should share the love story of Coalie and Wilma, and every word is true.

Coalie was one of Sequoia-Kings Pack Trains' mules. Coal black of course, and if he should get a good shot, you could be kicked. Pack mule, not riding mule. Wilma was a little brown mule belonging to Rock Creek Pack Station out of Bishop, some 40 miles north of us.

Well, my boss, Gene Burkhart, and Rock Creek's boss, Herb London, pastured their pack stock together each winter just outside Independence. Come June, we'd go catch our stock out of this 110,000-acre mostly desert ranch, and string them together and lead them straight up about 10 miles to a little meadow called Onion Valley, where our headquarters were. It took days to get them all up there.

Herb's packers would truck his stock more than 40 miles north, through three towns and lots of rough country, to their pack station.

It was about three days after I'd led a string of mules overnight to the pack station, including Coalie, and got ready for our season. I went out in the morning and found a little brown mare mule giving muzzle snuggles to Coalie. From the brand on her, we knew she was one of Herb's, so Gene called him and Herb drove all the way to get her.

Four days later, she was back in the mule corral making mulie smooches with her boy-



**SLIM RANGLES**  
Columnist

friend. She had tracked Coalie from the winter pasture down 40 miles of highway 395, across five miles of desert and up nine miles of mountains. Twice.

Mules have gender, but are sterile hybrids and don't "mate" physically. They are a combination of a horse mother and a donkey dad.

Gene and Herb decided love was stronger than anything else we had around there, so Gene gave Herb a mule, and Wilma became ours. Well, Coalie's.

After that, for as long as they lived, if you took one, you had to take the other.

A few of the old packers said they'd heard about mules occasionally getting "married" but this was the first time seeing it, and it was the first for me, too.

So Happy Valentine's Day, Coalie and Wilma, wherever you roam these days. Thanks for setting a good example for the rest of us. The world loves lovers.

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# Rural Hospitals Worry As Lawmakers Move To Lower Costs For Patients

By Leslie Bonilla Muñiz

Indiana lawmakers have seized on high health care costs as a priority problem to tackle this legislative session, but rural hospitals with thin profit margins are worried — and want more help from the state.

Nearly 20% of the state's 92 counties don't have a single hospital; another 50% have just one, according to Indiana Department of Health data.

Nationally, over 150 rural hospitals across the country closed between 2005 and 2019. For many of these communities, the closest hospital is now more than a half hour away. An additional 19 rural hospitals closed their doors in 2020.

And more counties could join them. At least seven more Indiana hospitals are at risk of closing within the next six years, according to a January report from the Center for Healthcare Quality & Payment Reform. Six could close within three years.

The report doesn't name specific hospitals, but Woodlawn Hospital CEO Alan Fischer worries his is among them. The independent critical access hospital, located in Fulton County, has three clinics in the area.

"Unfortunately, my facility is likely one of those at the greatest risk," Fischer said during an Indiana Hospital Association news conference this month.

Woodlawn lost \$4.5 million in 2021, \$6.3 million in 2022 and hopes to limit losses to \$1.5 million this year, Fischer said. That's after \$2.5 million in cost-saving measures, which he said included employee health insurance changes, lease renegotiations and physician layoffs.

Some lawmakers take aim at high costs for patients

Hoosiers pay some of the stiffest hospital prices in the country — the 7th highest, according to a May 2022 report from the RAND Corporation — despite the state's low overall cost of living and below-average salaries.

Just before last year's legislative session, House Speaker Todd Huston and Senate President Pro Tempore Rodric Bray sent letters to health insurance companies and healthcare systems warning that if the corporations didn't reduce their prices, the General Assembly would.

Lawmakers appear to be carrying through with that threat this year.

Moving through the legislative process are bills that would fine overly expensive hospitals and lower prices for care delivered at hospital-owned outpatient clinics.

Another bill would ban non-compete agreements, in which hospitals limit when and where former employees practice medicine, leading some to leave their communities or the industry.

Opponents say hospitals are struggling as-is. But hospitals have protested that while they're operating in the red, insurers are raking in cash.

One in four rural Hoosier hospitals listed in a Center for Healthcare Quality & Payment Reform database had negative profit margins in an average of 2019, 2020 and 2021 financial data.

Some lawmakers representing rural areas have pushed back against price-lowering efforts by colleagues.

"I don't know what's good or bad, to be honest," Sen. Jean Leising, R-Oldenburg, said Tuesday, ahead of her vote against the chamber's non-compete bill.

"But I know one thing: if my small hospitals have a hard time staffing good physicians, they're already struggling financially, they're not the hospitals [with] large assets on hand," Leising said, those hospitals could close.

"We've already lost one in my district a couple of years ago to bankruptcy," she added. "... What happens if we don't have any rural hospitals anymore? That's pretty serious."

Hospitals seek more Indiana Hospital Association President Brian Tabor told reporters during the press conference that not only do hospitals want potentially "punitive or harmful" proposals dropped, they

want more help from lawmakers.

Tabor suggested raising Medicaid base reimbursement rates — current rates cover just over half the cost of providing care — or streamlining prior authorization and other administrative duties.

Multiple executives of struggling hospitals said their facilities consistently lost money on their obstetrics units, which deal with childbirth.

"We typically deliver about 12 babies per month, which does not make for a profitable service," Woodlawn's Fischer told the Capital Chronicle. "But if we closed our OB, we would just create what they call a 'maternity desert.'"

Fischer instead envisioned dedicated state funding for what he dubbed "maternity oases."

"Without a hospital in a community, that community eventually dies," he said. With a hospital, a fire department and a school, he added, "you have a viable community — our goal is to be part of that solution."

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## Indiana Donor Network Hits New Heights In 2022

Indiana Donor Network, the federally designated organ recovery organization that coordinates organ, tissue and cornea donation in Indiana and transplantation throughout the U.S., hit new heights in 2022, transplanting an all-time high of 1,116 lifesaving organs.

The milestone is an 18% increase in annual transplants compared to 2021, when 949 organs were transplanted.

"I'm proud to say we're on the right trajectory and the future is bright for Indiana Donor Network," said Indiana Donor Network President and CEO Kellie Tremain. "We are dedicated to investing in cutting-edge technology, new and innovative processes and highly skilled professionals across all disciplines for those in need of lifesaving transplants."

Also, the selfless gifts of 1,267 tissue and cornea donor heroes resulted in 14,392 tissues recovered in 2022, including 141 hearts for valve transplant, 3,701 skin grafts and 382 corneas.

New liver perfusion technology deployed: Indiana Donor Network took an industry leading step in 2022 by training in advanced perfusion technology that has the potential to keep donated livers functioning outside the human body for up to 24 hours with the use of a liver transporter.

Last year, Indiana Donor Network partici-

pated in a trial study in partnership with four Midwest transplant centers, including University of Cincinnati Medical Center, University of Chicago, Northwestern University and Rutgers' University Hospital.

Once approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Indiana Donor Network intends to deploy the device for use in liver transplants at all transplant centers the organization serves.

When packed in a traditional cold storage device, donated livers can remain outside the body for only 12 hours. Keeping a donated liver functioning longer after recovery with a liver transporter will create more time for medical teams to assess a liver's viability for transplant, improve a liver's function, and ultimately make more livers available for transplantation.

Kidney perfusion technology saving more lives: Indiana Donor Network's team of surgical recovery specialists is also specially trained in the use of kidney perfusion pumps, which are utilized in operating rooms during organ recovery and for transport to a transplant center.

Pumps keep donated kidneys functioning outside the body, allowing the organ's temperature and vascular performance to be constantly monitored and increasing its viability for successful transplant. Donated kidneys on perfusion

pumps can be transported up to 250 nautical miles from Indiana Donor Network's Organ and Tissue Recover Center, reaching patients at 40 transplant centers throughout the Midwest.

In 2022, Indiana Donor Network utilized 10 kidney perfusion pumps for 622 successful transplant surgeries.

Other major milestones achieved by Indiana Donor Network in 2022:

- Provided programs, grief and counseling services and support to 2,253 donor family members.

- Registered 960,000 Indiana residents to become organ and tissue donors, an all-time high number of new registrants in a single year; today, more than 4.3 million Hoosiers are registered donors.

- Relied on passionate donation advocates who volunteered nearly 14,000 hours, equivalent to more than six full-time employees.

- Led nearly 950 school and community presentations and activations, reaching more than 200,000 Hoosiers.

- Generated nearly \$180,000 in net proceeds for Indiana Donor Network Foundation and its mission to provide financial assistance and support for organ transplant recipients and donor families.

- Hired 45 new team members for a total of 284, creating its largest staff since the organization was founded in

1987.

Nationally, in 2022 the U.S. surpassed 1 million lifesaving organ transplants since the first was performed in 1954, according to United Network for Organ Sharing. A new annual high of 42,887 organs were successfully transplanted in 2022.

More than 105,000 Americans are currently awaiting a lifesaving organ transplant, including 1,200 Hoosiers.

"The need for more people to make the selfless decision to one day become a donor hero remains incredibly important," Tremain said. "Working with our hospital and transplant center partners throughout Indiana and beyond, we remain laser focused on saving more lives each year through donation and transplantation, educating more Hoosiers about how important donation is, and encouraging Indiana residents to say 'yes' to donation."

Indiana Donor Network's mission is to save and enhance the quality of life through organ, tissue and eye donation and transplantation. Its vision is to be a leader in organ and tissue recovery. Founded in 1987, the organization coordinates donation in 85 of the state's 92 counties and serves transplant hospitals throughout the U.S.

Despite age or medical history, anyone can sign up to be a donor at DonateLifeIndiana.org.

## ➤ BUTCH

From Page A1

that was a good thing... since later on I was informed that they are a protected species.

However, my indifferent attitude toward bats changed in the summer of 1958, when I was 9 years old. My folks were playing cards with another couple in Darlington one evening, and they dropped me off at the Sunshine Theater, handing me a quarter for a ticket and a dime for popcorn. It was vampire movie... one of those 1950s B-rated flicks. What fun! One of my cousins was sitting in the front row, and I sat right behind him. I wasn't afraid... until a vampire-bat-evil-Dracula-like character opened a casket with a dead woman inside, and then drove a wooden stake through her heart. She opened her eyes and screamed. Blood oozed from her mouth. That did it. I hightailed it down the aisle and ran five blocks at lightning speed to the home where my parents were visiting. Then a few weeks later I woke up one morning to find a bat clinging to the wall of my bedroom. Oh Lord! Thankfully, Dad took care of it. And then to top it off, my parents told me that my cousin, Becky Cohee, was awakened one night with a bat fluttering near her head, and ran down the stairs...screaming in utter terror...waking her entire family, until her father managed to trap it.

Well, bats can't really hurt you...or so I thought. In the late 1970s, my father-in-law was feeding his pigs late one evening when a bat kept swooping down near him. As he headed to his pickup, the bat nicked him on the forehead, drawing blood. On the next swoop, he knocked the bat to the ground and killed it. His wife suggested he take the dead bat to a veterinarian to be examined. Two days later, while in Clarks Hill, a state trooper located him... and told him to get in the patrol car...now. The bat had been infected with rabies. My father-in-law then had to go to the hospital several times for almost two weeks to receive shots in the abdomen...to prevent him from contracting

the deadly disease. He said the shots were very painful, but there was no alternative back then.

Fast forward to 1991. I was a deputy sheriff at night, and the Darlington librarian by day. One evening, while on-duty, the library alarm went off. When I arrived and turned on the lights, a bat swooped down right past my face. It had set off the motion alarms. OK...I'm outta there! The next day I found the bat...dead. However, a few years later, I went downstairs one afternoon to empty the restroom waste basket. As I was bending down, I heard a squeaking sound, turned my head toward the window sill...and was face-to-face with a bat, not more than six inches away...wings spread out, fangs showing...staring me right in the eyes. I just know that bat wanted to suck blood from my jugular vein! Now what?

I found an old dust rag and slowly approached the bat, hoping to cover it and entrap it. My heart was pounding. Luckily it just sat there on the window sill. I jumped at it and covered it with the rag, but then it started squeaking. Fortunately it did not escape and I hurried back upstairs where a lady was waiting to check out a book. She opened the front door, and I let the bat loose... off it flew out over Main street...likely smiling a big bat grin, knowing that it could sneak back into the library attic through the tile roof that same afternoon.

Snakes, spiders, rats, vicious dogs...none of those bother me. And as a police officer I faced off against people with knives or guns, crazy people, drunks, psychopaths, killers...no problem. Just keep the bats away, and I'm happy. And if I wake up some night with a bat fluttering near my head, like what happened to cousin Becky, please call 911 and report a possible heart attack victim. It will be me.

*John "Butch" Dale is a retired teacher and County Sheriff. He has also been the librarian at Darlington the past 32 years, and is a well-known artist and author of local history.*

## ➤ GRANT

From Page A1

tance of the grant as "developing a framework for school counseling programs in the state of Indiana that keeps access to pathways and opportunities top of mind and will help ensure more Hoosier students are prepared for a dynamic future, whether they choose employment, enrollment, or enlistment leading to service." This grant purpose aligns with the Southmont Schools' vision of providing a challenging, dynamic learning experience which empowers students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to succeed in the future. Dr. Chad Cripe, Superintendent of Southmont Schools, says "Southmont Schools is laser-focused on increasing student outcomes

and opportunities for success. This grant gives our staff more tools in their toolbox to best meet the unique needs of our students."

Southmont Schools appreciates the ongoing partnership with Equitable Education Solutions for its significant assistance in securing this grant to benefit our students. Equitable Education Solutions is an Indiana-based, Indiana-focused company which helps school districts build sustainable systems and the collective capacity of the education field to actualize an increase in student growth and overall achievement. EES is located at 223 N. Green St., Crawfordsville, Indiana and is owned and operated by Dr. Michael Langevin.



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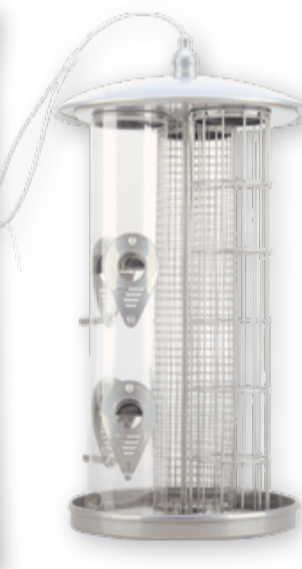
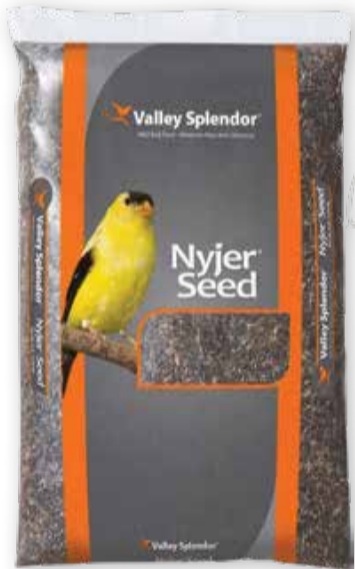
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