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➔ TODAY'S VERSE

Isaiah 55:12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

➔ FACES OF MONTGOMERY

People who call our community their own.



Denise Wray has become the newest owner of The Parthenon Good-to-Go Express and smiles brightly with Jack Jacko. Thanks for the smiles!

➔ THREE THINGS You Should Know:

1 Franciscan Physician Network Primary Care & Sports Medicine Lafayette is now offering a walk-in clinic for middle and high school athletes with acute injuries occurring in the previous 72 hours. The clinic is offered on Mondays only thru Oct. 23, 2023 and check-in is from 7 to 830 a.m.

2 Please join The Farm At Prophetstown and help the promote their fundRAISE the Barn event at The Farm at Prophetstown. All proceeds from this event benefit the restoration and preservation of their historic Red Gambrel Barn. Event will take place at the Farm on September 23rd beginning at 6pm. Live music, Silent Auction, Square Dancing, Food and more! Flier attached! The barn restoration is currently underway, come out and see the progress!

3 The Ladoga-Clark Twp Public Library will hold a special meeting to approve the library budget on October 17th at 5:30 pm at the library, 128 E Main St. Ladoga IN. This meeting will replace the regular October meeting of October 31st.

The Paper

OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

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Biden Or Trump? Butch's Dog Will Vote!



BUTCH DALE
Columnist

A friend of mine recently commented that he just could not understand why people voted for Joe Biden. I replied that Democrats wonder

why people voted for Donald Trump. One would hope that people vote based on reliable sources of objective information. But according to extensive research, deciding how to vote is rarely based on factual knowledge. It is primarily based on your parents' political affiliation, groups ties, race, and socio-economic status... along with insecurities, fears, and dislike for the opposing candidate. Chances are you also practice "selective exposure," seeking out only the news sources and opinions in which you agree.

We have had some outstanding Presidents in our history, but American voters have also elected some real losers. Presidential elections today are influenced not only by big money, but also by big tech, the news media, corporations, lobbyists, and corrupt election officials. And let's face it, hundreds of thousands of citizens are too dumb to vote rationally. It's time for change. Let's elect our next President in fun ways! Here are some ideas....

(1) "THE PRESIDENTIAL GONG SHOW"...Remember when the "Gong Show" appeared on TV in the 70's? Chuck Barris was the host, with three celebrity comedians as judges. The show was a competition of amateur performers of dubious talent. Since most politicians today also have dubious talent, it will work out great! Our new hosts will be Pat Sajak and Vanna White. The judges will be Jerry Seinfeld, Chris Rock, and Tina Fey. Each candidate will be given one minute to present his ideas on how he will lead our country. The judges will score each one on a scale of 0 to 10...or if they are particularly bad, a judge could signal Vanna to strike the GONG, which results in instant elimination. The candidate with the highest score becomes our next President and wins a \$25 gift card to Wal-Mart and a \$5 discount coupon at Bath & Body Works.

(2) "ELECTION DAY DUEL"...Hey, if it was good enough for Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr, then it's good enough for Trump and Biden. They will be taken out to a desolate, God-forsaken area, such

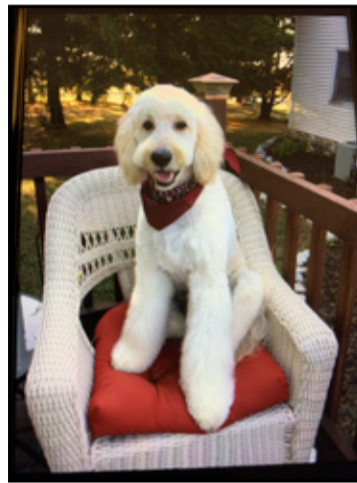


Photo courtesy of Butch Dale

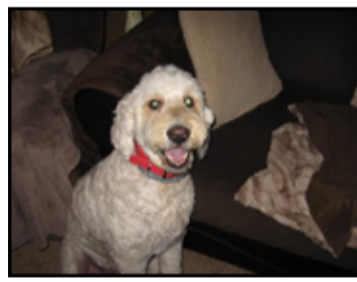


Photo courtesy of Butch Dale

as San Francisco, and be given black-powder pistols. Back to back, step 25 paces, turn around, and fire! The survivor is our new President. This could also be on pay-for-view to help pay off our \$33 trillion deficit. It will be the best drama show on TV...even better than "Yellowstone." We could even expand this to include Congressional elections. I'm lovin' it!

(3) "WWF PRESIDENTIAL CHALLENGE"...Sponsored by the World Wrestling Federation, the performers will be "Sniffin' Hair Biden," "Macho Man Trump," "Honky Tonk Haley," "Rowdy Ramaswamy," "Strike Force DeSantis," "Chris the Whopper Christie," "Pouncin' Kid Pence," and "Tim the Savage Scott." Championship wrestling is all fake acting, so these candidates will fit right in!

(4) "NEWS MEDIA GLADIATOR CONTEST"...This event will be held in the ancient Colosseum in Rome, Italy. No Presidential candidates... just the major news media people who always argue and disagree. Let them fight it out in the arena...Sean Hannity, Laura Ingraham, Mark Levin, Lester Holt, Harris Faulkner, Chris Cuomo, Don Lemon, Tucker Carlson, Anderson Cooper, Robin Roberts, Rachel Maddow, and George Stephanopolous. In fact, while we're at it, let's also include everyone on "The View." Each will be supplied with a sword, 3-pronged trident, and a metal net. For looks, we will also give each one a decorative helmet, adorned with feathers

➔ See BUTCH Page A5

Frances Wooden Park Dedication Set For September 30



A dedication of the newly-renovated Frances Wooden Park will be held on Saturday, September 30 by the Montgomery County Community Foundation and the City of Crawfordsville.

Through funding from MCCF and the City of Crawfordsville, the park underwent major renovations during the summer. New play equipment, a shelter, and interactive musical pieces are just a few of the many improvements. Located next to the Bethel AME Church at 310 N Grant Avenue, the park also features ties to local history, including the site's significance as a stop on the Underground Railroad.

The event will begin at 10:00 a.m. with a ribbon cutting. Neighbors and community members are invited to join the celebration, enjoy fall treats, and see the completed project.



The Paper file photo

Mayor Todd Barton speaking at an event.

Mayor Barton To Host His 124th Community Forum

Mayor Barton will be hosting his September Community Forum on Monday, September 25th from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Pike Place.

This will be the Mayor's 124th community forum. The event is open to the public to come ask questions, discuss concerns and learn more about anything regarding our beloved city.



Purdue Extension will be back next week.

The Daily Almanac

Sunrise/Sunset
RISE: 7:33 a.m.
SET: 7:46 p.m.

High/Low Temperatures
High: 78 °F
Low: 50 °F

Today is...
• Hobbit Day
• Native American Day
• National Bakery Day

What Happened On This Day

- 1979 The American-run Vela satellite detects a series of bright flashes over the Indian Ocean. The flashes were thought to be associated with atmospheric nuclear explosions. Some experts theorized that they were caused by joint Israeli and South African nuclear exercises. The governments of both countries denied this and to date it hasn't been confirmed whether the flashes were indeed nuclear explosions, and who was responsible for them.
- 1975 Assassination attempt on US President Gerald Ford is foiled. FBI informant Sara Jane Moore's attempt to assassinate the president in San Francisco failed due to a faulty gun and the efforts of ex-FBI agent Oliver Sipple who tackled her.
- 1869 Richard Wagner's opera Das Rheingold or The Rhine Gold is heard for the first time. The first of 4 musical works of art that constitute Wagner's Der Ring des Nibelungen, Das Rheingold was played at the National Theatre in Munich. The other three music dramas are Die Walküre or The Valkyrie, Siegfried, and Götterdämmerung or Twilight of the Gods.

Births On This Day

- 1958 Andrea Bocelli Italian tenor, songwriter, producer
- 1791 Michael Faraday English scientist

Deaths On This Day

- 2015 Yogi Berra American baseball player, manager
- 1961 Marion Davies American actress

➔ HONEST HOOSIER

We've got a quarter moon tonight. Is that a big deal? Nope. Just thought I'd give the little events some notoriety since we always seem to be talking about full moon worm this and full moon blood that.



➔ TODAY'S HEALTH TIP

If you must have a trampoline, only ONE person at a time! 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.



➔ INSIDE TODAY'S EDITION

Kenny Thompson.....A3
Classifieds.....A3
Dick Wolfsie.....A4

➔ THE MONTGOMERY MINUTE

Legislative Lunch TODAY:
The Crawfordsville / Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce is hosting a City / County Legislative Lunch at 11:30 a.m. TODAY on the 3rd floor of Fusion 54, 101 W. Main Street. The panel will consist of Mayor Todd Barton, City Council Andy Biddle, County Commissioner Dan Guard, and County Council Jake Bohlander. The sponsor for this event is Lakeside Book Company. Lunch will be catered by Maxine's on Green. This event is open to the public. The cost for the event is \$10 for Crawfordsville/Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce members and \$15 for non-chamber members. Space is limited so please register to attend online at crawfordsvillechamber.com by Friday. For more information regarding the breakfast or the chamber, please contact Stacy Sommer at ssommer@crawfordsvillechamber.com

➔ TODAY'S QUOTE

"Live your beliefs and you can turn the world around."
-Henry David Thoreau

➔ TODAY'S JOKE

What do you do if attacked by a mob of circus performers?
Go for the juggler.

➔ OBITUARIES

Mabel Evans-Eakle



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13 WTHR

7 DAY FORECAST

61/83 SHOWERS WEST, PT. SUNNY	62/85 MIST AND WARM	59/85 MAINLY SUNNY	59/83 STILL BALKY, SUN/CLLOUD MIX	64/80 SLIGHT CHANGE	64/80 CHANCE OF SHOWERS	63/75 CHANCE OF SHOWERS
THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED

OBITUARIES

Mabel Evans-Eakle

October 19, 1931, Tuesday, September 19, 2023

Mabel (Knox) Evans-Eakle, 91, of Crawfordsville, passed away at Lane House on September 19, 2023. She was born in Crawfordsville, Indiana on October 19, 1931 to Kenneth Doris Knox. She graduated from Crawfordsville High School in 1949.



During her lifetime, Mabel was a farm wife in New Ross (Married to Pete Evans) for 25 years, worked at GT Dillman Hardware, Town & Country Home Center, Montgomery County Voter Registration, and retired from the Indiana State Highway Department office in Crawfordsville. After retirement, she moved to Arizona, where she worked for the Roger Penske dealership in Scottsdale as a receptionist. While in Arizona, she reconnected and eventually married her high school classmate, Tom Eakle.

Her survivors include son, Gary Evans of New Ross; daughter, Sherry Evans of Brownsburg; grandchildren, Ginger Hart of Zionsville, Chris Yano of Arizona and Melissa Evans of Indianapolis; several great-grandchildren; and two brothers, Wayne Knox of Crawfordsville and Fred Knox of Indianapolis.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Tom Eakle; parents Kenneth and Doris Knox; and two sisters, Mary Scherber and Bobbie Glasby.

Cremation was chosen with Sanders Priebe Funeral Care entrusted with arrangements. Services will be private with inurnment in the Oak Hill North Cemetery Mausoleum to be held at a later date. Share memories and condolences at www.SandersFuneralCare.com.

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Players Of 1920s, Big Ten Basketball And Something To Prove



KENNY THOMPSON
Columnist

The dedication game of Ross-Ade Stadium on Nov. 22, 1924 was like a national holiday for those living anywhere close to the Purdue University campus.

More than 125 businesses and services - from car dealerships to grocery stores, banks to department stores - were closed between 1:30 and 4:30 p.m. according to the Journal and Courier, which must have made a small fortune from all the advertisers asking customers to visit before and after the football game against Indiana.

Purdue's 26-7 victory against Indiana was "a glorious success" according to the Journal and Courier. Caught up in the spirit of the occasion, sports editor T.A. Day declared "the Boilermakers could have trounced any Big Ten team on Saturday and that they could have given Knute K. Rockne's 'Four Horsemen' a great battle."

The team James Phelan fielded five years later would have lived up to that hyperbole.

There were three memorable games played at Ross-Ade Stadium in the 1920s: the dedication victory against Indiana and a pair of victories against Michigan and Iowa in 1929 that led to the only undisputed Big Ten Conference championship in Purdue football history.

Up until 1929, Purdue's other Big Ten title was a three-way share in 1918.

The Boilermakers left little doubt who was the Big Ten's king in 1929, giving up 16 points to conference rivals while going 5-0 in league play and 8-0 overall.

According to Tom Schott's "Purdue University Football Vault," the 1929 Boilermakers were led by three senior standouts - quarterback Glen Harmeson, tackle Elmer Sleight and halfback Ralph

"Pest" Welch. Talented sophomores Charles Miller at center and Alex Yunevich at fullback added to the expectations.

Michigan led 16-6 after three quarters on Oct. 12, but Yunevich ran for three touchdowns in the fourth quarter to lead a 30-16 comeback victory before 25,000 fans. Yunevich rushed for 127 yards on 21 carries in his first Big Ten game. Harmeson, forced to shift to halfback, picked up 126 on the ground.

Purdue was 6-0 when Iowa traveled to West Lafayette for Homecoming on Nov. 16. The Exponent student newspaper merely called it "the most crucial game ever played by a Boilermaker football team."

Harmeson's 17-yard touchdown pass to Bill Wornner was the game's only score before the largest crowd in Ross-Ade history, 26,000 fans. The 7-0 victory wrapped up the championship. The following week's 32-0 win at Indiana was anticlimactic.

"It's been a long, hard climb, but after more than thirty years of waiting, a Purdue football team is finally perched on the Big Ten gridiron throne, lording it over nine other inferior elevens who for weeks have been fighting to attain the same exalted position now held by Jimmy Phelan's courageous group of warriors," wrote Journal and Courier sports editor Gordon Graham.

Top players of 1920s Ross-Ade era

Sleight and Welch were selected the first All-Americans in school history. Miller would be selected an All-American in 1931 before blocking for Red Grange and Bronko Nagurski with the Chicago Bears.

"I don't think we should have ever lost a game the entire time I was in college," Miller told me in 2000, still quite sharp mentally at 90 years of age. "Red Sleight, Pest Welch, Glen Harmeson and Alex Yunevich were great players. Man for man we were as good as anybody in the

country."

Miller's class led Purdue to a 23-3 record from 1929 to 1931. The three losses were by a total of nine points.

Yunevich was posthumously elected to the Purdue Intercollegiate Athletics Hall of Fame earlier this year. Unfortunately for Yunevich, his path to All-Big Ten and All-America honors were blocked by Nagurski's feats at Minnesota.

Harmeson won nine letters at Purdue, adding a Big Ten title in basketball in 1930 alongside Naismith Hall of Famers John Wooden and Charles "Stretch" Murphy. Harmeson also lettered three times in baseball as a centerfielder.

"Glen was one of the most talented and graceful athletes I ever saw," Wooden said in 1983 shortly after Harmeson's death at age 75. "Glen was a big key in our success."

Harmeson's football coaching career included a stop at Wabash College from 1946 to 1951.

Big Ten basketball schedule released

Purdue and Indiana will headline Big Ten opening night games Dec. 1. The defending champion Boilermakers travel to Northwestern, while the Hoosiers host Maryland.

The other pre-Christmas league games will include Purdue hosting Iowa on Dec. 4 and Indiana traveling to Michigan on Dec. 5.

Similar to the 2022-23 season, Purdue will have the bulk of its home Big Ten games in February. The Boilermakers get just four home games in the first half of the 20-game league schedule.

Once again, Purdue will travel to Indiana (Jan. 16) before hosting the Hoosiers on Feb. 10.

Michigan State, mentioned along with Purdue as one of the Big Ten favorites, comes to Mackey Arena for its only matchup with the Boilermakers on March 2. Notably, Purdue will have six days to prepare for the Spartans

following a Feb. 25 trip to Michigan.

Purdue's Senior Day is March 10 against Wisconsin. Regrettably, the Big Ten Tournament will be held at the Target Center in Minneapolis from March 13 to 17.

Oddly enough, Michigan State also has to travel to Indiana for the lone game in the rivalry. Dramatically, perhaps, that matchup is set for March 10, the final day of the regular season.

Game times and TV will be announced at a later date.

Something to prove
CBS Sports recently asked a group of college basketball players, promising anonymity, whether Purdue star Zach Edey will repeat as national player of the year.

Since 1958, 12 men have repeated as national player of the year. Oscar Robertson, Jerry Lucas, Bill Bradley, Lew Alcindor, Pete Maravich, Bill Walton, David Thompson, Mark Aguirre, Ralph Sampson, Michael Jordan, Jay Williams and Luke Garza.

Note that Williams and Garza are the only repeat winners in the 21st century. Chalk that up to the millions of dollars awaiting in the NBA in most cases. Kentucky center Oscar Tshiebwé, the 2022 winner, fell victim to the struggles the Wildcats endured last season.

Edey ended up with 63 percent of the vote in the CBS coaches survey, with Michigan transfer Hunter Dickenson of Kansas, Kyle Filipowki of Duke, Armando Bacot of North Carolina, Donovan Clingan of Connecticut and Ryan Kalkbrenner of Creighton receiving multiple votes.

Here's a sample from Edey supporters.

"Guy puts up video game numbers."

"Edey is the most dominant force in the college game and the college rules allow him to remain dominant as a true low-post center. There is not a player in America that impacts the college game like he

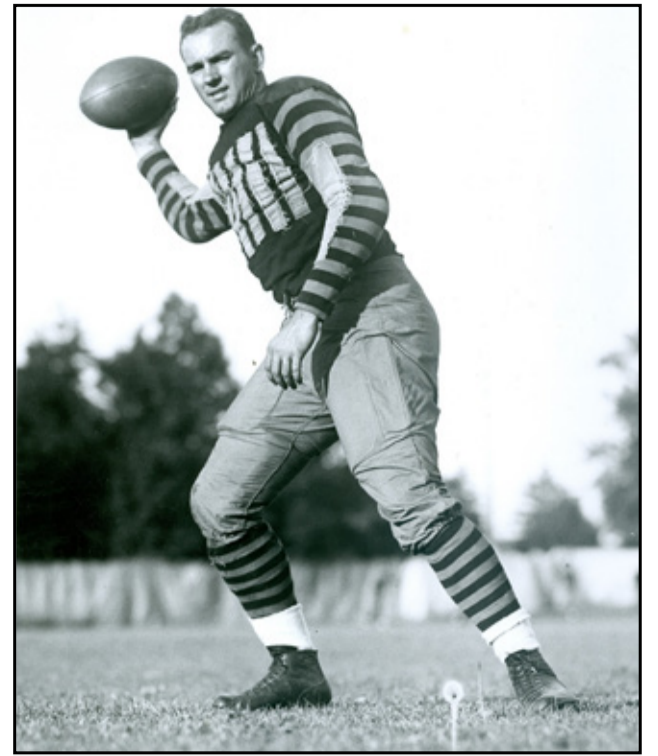


Photo courtesy of Purdue Athletics

Ralph "Pest" Welch

does night in and night out. He forces a double team on offense, is nearly impossible to block out and completely takes away the paint defensively."

"It's hard to think of someone else winning [player of the year] over Edey. He's the most dominant player in college basketball. Last year we played at Purdue, and everything they run goes through him. The underrated reason why I believe he has a chance to repeat is he is playing with great guards in Braden Smith and Fletcher Loyer. As freshmen they did a hell of a job playing with Edey. You'd have to imagine with another year of chemistry, Edey may be even more dominant, if that's possible."

Now some lazy reasons for choosing someone other than Edey:

"History tells us no, so I'll say no."

"Just like Edey last year, somebody not being discussed and off the radar will win it."

"No, only because it's very hard to win back-to-back. You have to be that much better than you were the year before."

CBS Sports' Matt Norlander casts his vote for Edey.

"The table is set for Edey

to repeat.

"The story of Purdue's push for March redemption will be one of the biggest in college hoops in '23-24. How Edey handles new defensive tactics tossed his way will be another. He could have gone to the NBA and, in my opinion, would have been drafted. It's better that he decided to return. In coming back, he's chasing college basketball immortality. I think he gets there."

"It's a wonderful thing for men's college basketball to have someone like Edey opt back in. For him, last season was special. This season could be legendary."

"His potential makes him, and his team, arguably the biggest story heading into the season. And when we get to the end of it, even if Purdue doesn't win a national championship or get Matt Painter to his first Final Four, I believe Edey will again be holding up his hardware, adding to his crowded trophy case and solidifying his name amongst the all-time legends of the game."

- Kenny Thompson is the former sports editor for the Lafayette Journal & Courier and an award-winning journalist. He has covered Purdue athletics for many years.

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Laments Of A Broken, But Not Beaten, Man



DICK WOLFSIE
Funny Bone

I am retired. So, I don't work. Neither did anything in our house on Thursday of last week.

The problem began about 2 am. One of the fire alarms started making a weird chirping sound. We assumed it was the batteries, but this is not an easy fix. It required one of us to get up on a high ladder and replace one of those nine-volt puppies. We needed a volunteer to take on this risky task, so I offered to hold Mary Ellen in case she fell. The next morning, the alarm was still chirping.

Our next-door neighbor is a former New York City fireman. I called him...

"Paul, it's Dick next door. Our fire alarms won't stop beeping."

"Well, Dick, it's one of two things. Either all the batteries need changing or..."

"Yes, yes, or what?"

"Or your house is on fire."

Paul thought that was pretty funny. He came over and replaced all the batteries.

Later, Mary Ellen and I went for a walk and when we returned the garage door wouldn't open. Mary Ellen asked me if I put in

the right code.

"Yes," I said, "it's the date of our anniversary, isn't it?"

"Oh dear, I wish you had used a number you could remember."

Paul came over and taught us how to reset the code, but now to open the door we have to remember Paul and Karen's anniversary.

All this made me realize that I needed additional keys to the front door. At one mega-hardware store they have an automatic key machine. No humans required, not that you can find one in a place like that.

Later, I realized two things. First, that company now had in their computer both a copy of our front door key as well as a copy of my credit card. But it didn't matter. None of the three keys worked. Paul later showed me his locksmith's key duplicator in his garage. Now I have all the keys I need.

That same afternoon, Mary Ellen wanted to edge the lawn. She hates mowing the grass, but she enjoys edging it. And then she wants me to come up from my basement office and tell her what a great job she's done. A woman shouldn't ask a married man to come up and see her edgings. But the weed whacker wasn't working. The string line kept breaking. Paul came over

and explained that the cord I was using was the wrong thickness. He had several types in his garage, where he has a complete workshop, so he made the necessary replacement. Someday, if you move, move next door to a retired New York City fireman.

Just after Mary Ellen finished manicuring our lawn, she informed me that the ice maker and the lights in the laundry room weren't working. I checked the circuit breakers and then made sure those little weird things in the garage and on the bathroom walls (whose name I don't know) hadn't popped out. Paul saw me in the garage and showed me I was not pushing down on the button long enough or hard enough. Suddenly the lights and the ice maker went to work. When the dryer finally started, I went out to buy Paul a case of beer.

Later, the cable went out and the water softener wasn't working. I knew both these things could be easily fixed, but this late at night, I didn't want to bother Paul.

- Dick Wolfsie spent his career sharing his humor, stories and video essays on television, radio and in newspapers. His columns appear weekly in The Paper of Montgomery County. E-mail Dick at Wolfsie@aol.com.

Indiana Homeowner Assistance Fund To Close Application Portal In October

Mortgage assistance program has provided \$112 million to 9,100 Hoosier households to prevent foreclosure.

Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch and the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCA) today announced the state's mortgage assistance program, the Indiana Homeowner Assistance Fund (IHAF) will close the application portal on Oct. 20, 2023.

IHAF was created with a grant from the American Rescue Plan under the direction of the US Department of the Treasury. The program began taking applications and distributing funds in February 2022. Since then, more than 9,100 Hoosier households have

received an average of more than \$13,000 in assistance in the form of mortgage reinstatement, ongoing mortgage payments, and the payment of delinquent property taxes, homeowner's insurance, and homeowner association fees for the homeowner's primary residence only.

With the amount of assistance that has already been disbursed, the funds that are currently obligated for upcoming payments, and the number of applications that are being processed, the program is very near to distributing the total amount of funds available for homeowner assistance. On Oct. 20, 2023, IHAF will close the portal to active applications and

begin maintaining a waiting list for those homeowners who would like to apply for new funds as they become available. All existing program eligibility requirements will remain in effect for future applicants and awards. The program is designed to assist Indiana homeowners with low to moderate incomes who have experienced a financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Awards are limited to one per household and are provided in the form of a 5-year forgivable, interest-free loan.

Visit [haf.877gethope.org]877GetHope.org for eligibility information or to register for the opportunity to apply for assistance.

Halloween Writing Contest

We're having our fun and frivolous Halloween Writing Contest and the entries are being accepted now.

Here's how it works:

Four winners will be selected and those stories will be published, along with the author's name and photo, in October. If the judges select any stories as honorable mentions, those will be published on our web site.

We'd suggest dusting off the cobwebs – unless cobwebs, creaky stairs and paintings with moving eyeballs are appropriate to your story – and getting busy. You know the first rule of writing, right? Butt in chair!

So get yourself situated in front of a keyboard and let those fingers fly!

Tell us a ghost story, a spooky tale, perhaps a fiction piece about the ghost of Gen. Lew or Henry Lane, or perhaps a tale spun up from one of the pre-consolidation high schools. That's the great thing – it's a Halloween writing contest, so the who, what, where, and when are all up to you!

Write your Halloween-themed story and e-mail it to news@thepaper24-7.com or drop it off at our office, 127 E. Main St. in Crawfordsville (If you e-mail, please copy and paste the story in the body of the e-mail and not as an attachment)

Do not exceed 750 words

Connect your story to Crawfordsville and / or Montgomery County somehow.

The writing must be your own and original. You must own the rights to it and sign a release stating as such and giving us permission to publish it.

Get it to us by noon, Sept. 29.

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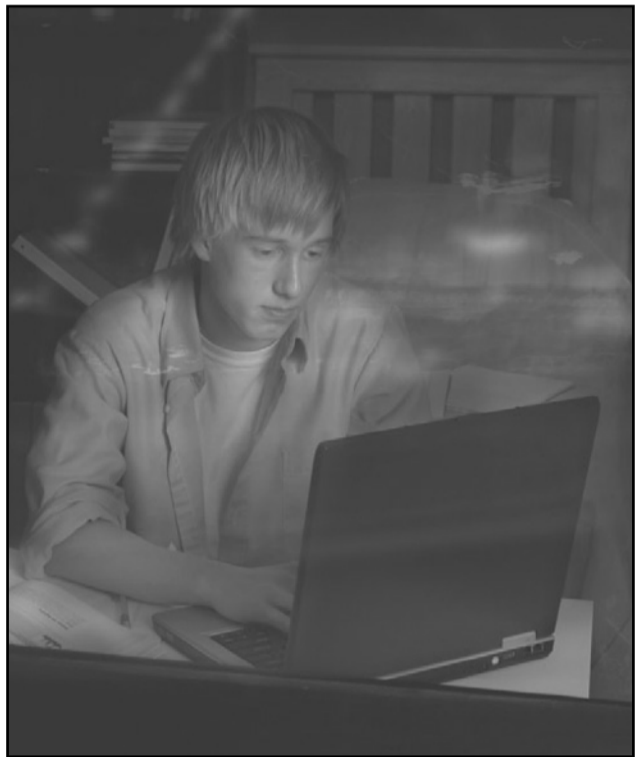
and their news media logo. We can sell hot dogs, pretzels, and beer to the crowd. Last one living wins...and he can select the next President!

(5) "OLLIE'S ELECTION" ...Since politics has gone to the dogs, it's time to let my dog Ollie choose our next President. Ollie is smart. He understands people and can read their minds. He knows who he can trust. Place each candidate in front of Ollie and let him give a 3-minute speech. If Ollie tilts his head and perks up his ears, then he likes what he is hearing. If he then opens his mouth with his tongue hanging out, and wags his tail, then he trusts the candidate. Now, if Ollie bares his teeth, stiffens up, and growls...with his tail curled up and the hair on back raised...then

he knows the candidate is a phony. Of course, it will also be necessary to let Ollie circle each person, and smell their hind quarters. If Ollie raises his leg and pees on the person, that candidate is out. If the candidate passes this "sniff test" and Ollie lets him rub his tummy, he wins. "Good boy, Ollie, here's your treat!"

Each of these new election methods would certainly be better than what we are doing now. And we can perhaps get shed of some nasty, irritating people along the way. It's a win-win!

-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.



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Lawmakers Aim For 'Sustainable Solution' In Pension Benefit Quandary

By Leslie Bonilla Muniz
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Indiana lawmakers enraged retiree advocates when they chose not to offer a pension benefit increase in the most recent budget cycle — for the first time in decades. Instead, they're taking the period between legislative sessions to hunt for a lasting fix. It's a decision worth millions of dollars, and that impacts thousands of retirees participating in the Indiana Public Retirement System (INPRS). "That's what we're focused on, is a long-term, sustainable solution," Sen. Brian Buchanan, chair of the pension-focused interim committee, said Wednesday. ***

A push for a plan
The Indiana General Assembly has typically given benefit increases on an impromptu basis, generally during the biennial budget session. Benefits often don't keep up with inflation. So they're often supplemented in two ways: with a 13th check, as in 2019 and 2020, or using a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), like in 2021. The strategies add to retiree income differently: the 13th check is an additional, one-time check on top of the year's 12 other monthly payments, while

the COLA is a percentage increase for all payments moving forward. It's natural to go for an ad hoc approach, INPRS Chief Actuary Andy Blough said. "I want to project out future benefit payments, I want to figure out what those cost and I want to fund them. (But) it's very difficult to take three data points that are all different and make a prediction," he said. "That uncertainty leads us to a preference for very short-term, very tactical funding," he said. But some key state leaders have soured on the status quo, with Senate President Pro Tem Rodric Bray noting in May that finding ways to support retirees every two years wasn't as efficient as having a long-term plan. Budget negotiations at one point offered a COLA of 0.4%, Bray said at the time, but everyone agreed that wasn't enough — sparking the interim committee's mandate. ***

How the options stack up
The Indiana Public Retirement System has nearly 530,000 members from more than 13,000 public employers across the state. It manages more than \$46.6 billion on their behalf. Small individual-level

changes, therefore, can have multi-million-dollar impacts in the aggregate. A 13th check, for example, sends just \$150 to retirees with 10 years of public service, \$275 to those with 10-20, \$375 to those with 20-30, and \$450 for those with 30 or more years, according to INPRS. But, in fiscal year 2024, that 13th check would add up to \$60 million across the four biggest plans with supplemental allowance reserve accounts. Still, as a one-time payment, the 13th check generally costs less than a COLA. For that, INPRS must keep enough money to pay the adjustment over the entire period a retiree is receiving benefits. A 0.4% COLA in fiscal year 2024 would cost \$85 million, according to INPRS. But 13th checks also mean retirees receive less in benefits over time than through a COLA. ***

Who's on the hook
State government, alongside numerous local entities, would foot the bill should lawmakers decide on an automatic COLA. A 0.5% COLA would cost the state an additional nearly \$60 million. But local units would save almost \$25 million. Under a 1% COLA, however, the numbers

balloon: to \$808 million for the state and \$1 billion for local units. INPRS also looked at 1.5% and 2% COLA options, each with costs well into the billions. Asked if he'd support the lower 0.5% COLA, Rep. Jeff Thompson — chair of the powerful Ways and Means committee — said the proposition required more consideration. "Obviously, the cost is pretty small compared to the state budget, but do you want to commit to that long term?" he told reporters. "I want to think, talk to some folks, and we'll see." He didn't rule out action in the upcoming session, given "more time, more data and more understanding." But lawmakers typically shy away from making expensive decisions in off-budget years, a sentiment Buchanan echoed when asked about next session. *- Indiana Capital Chronicle is part of States Newsroom, a network of news bureaus supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity. Indiana Capital Chronicle maintains editorial independence. Follow Indiana Capital Chronicle on facebook.com/IndianaCapitalChronicle and twitter.com/INCapChronicle*



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