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➤ TODAY'S VERSE

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

➤ 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 8:30 a.m.

2 Come join artist Ellie Dieckmeyer for a fun class and make your own mixed media art piece. Instruction and supplies needed for students will be provided. Class will be on Thursday, October 12th. Choose either an afternoon session (1-3 pm) or an evening session (6-8 pm). Class is open to anyone 12 years and older. Cost is \$35. Classes meet at Athens Arts, 216 E. Main Street, Crawfordsville.

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.

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Are All Ultra-Processed Foods Unhealthy?



MONICA NAGELE
Purdue Extension Office



In recent years, ultra-processed foods (UPFs) have gained notoriety in nutrition. Although the classification of UPFs dates back to 2009, their prominence has only recently surged, largely due to the influence of social media.

The critical question is whether all ultra-processed foods are inherently unhealthy.

To understand UPFs, we turn to the NOVA classification system, which categorizes foods based on the extent of industrial processing. This classification encompasses physical, biological, and chemical techniques applied post-harvest but pre-consumption.

NOVA classifies foods into four groups:

- Unprocessed and minimally processed foods (e.g., fruits, vegetables, meat, water)
- Processed culinary ingredients (e.g., oil, butter, sugar, salt)
- Processed foods (e.g., canned vegetables, canned fish, freshly baked bread)
- Ultra-processed foods (e.g., soft drinks, packaged snacks, candies, cereals, hot dogs, baby formula)

Critics argue that UPFs often elevate the intake of added sugar, saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, and energy density while reducing protein, dietary

fiber, potassium, and phytoestrogens. These foods have also been linked to increased calorie consumption, obesity, cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, cancer risk, and depression.

However, in a notable study published in August 2023 in the Journal of Nutrition, titled "Dietary Guidelines Meet NOVA: Developing a Menu for A Healthy Dietary Pattern Using Ultra-Processed Foods," researchers explored whether a high-UPF diet could align with US dietary guidelines. The menu consisted of 91% of calories from UPFs, with an average daily intake of 2025 kcal. Macronutrient distribution adhered to recommended ranges, with 22% protein, 54% carbohydrates, and 26% fat (with less than 10% from saturated fat and added sugar).

While the menu lacked some micronutrients (Vitamins D, E, and Choline), it met Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs) for most others. Despite its UPF content, the menu scored 86 out of 100 on the Healthy Eating Index (HEI), surpassing the average HEI for Americans (57). The only shortcomings were excess sodium and inadequate whole grains.

This study emphasized that healthy dietary patterns can incorporate a substantial UPF share while maintaining diet quality and providing essential nutrients. Notably, the NOVA scale neglects nutrient content and food groups, unlike the Healthy Eating Index, which considers these factors. This raises the question of whether UPFs, when consumed

thoughtfully, can be part of a healthy diet.

Although Americans are growing more cautious about processed foods, the overall Healthy Eating Index remains at 57, underscoring the importance of reading nutrition labels and making informed choices based on the content rather than catchy marketing terms. Perfection isn't the goal; balance is.

Surprisingly, many foods, including yogurt, baby formula, high-fiber breakfast cereals, plant-based burgers, protein bars, tortillas, liquid egg whites, canned beans, oatmeal, whole wheat toast, canned fish, gluten-free pasta, rotisserie chicken, peanut butter, lunch meat, tofu, and soy products, are classified as UPFs according to the NOVA Scale.

In conclusion, while it's crucial to be wary of high-fat, high-sugar, and high-salt foods like chips and Twinkies, snubbing UPFs may deprive us of nutritious and affordable options. The key is making informed dietary choices, considering nutrient content, and striving for balance. Rather than vilifying entire food groups, let's focus on thoughtful choices guided by the available evidence. If you are interested in learning more, tune in to Bite-by-Bite Nutrition for Life podcast this month as we dig deep into the world of Ultra Processed Foods.

- Monica Nagele is the County Extension Director and educator of health and human science for the Montgomery County Purdue Extension.

Trooper Gets His Revenge!



BUTCH DALE
Columnist

I was about ten years old, my brother Gary and I wanted a dog. We had no money, and we knew that our folks wouldn't want to spend much. But fortune came our way. A nearby couple, Boyd and Martha Price, raised and sold Boston Terriers. Boyd called Dad one afternoon and told him there was a male that he couldn't sell because it had a crooked tail...so he would let my brother and I have it for free! We drove over there and picked it up...the cutest little black and white dog I had ever seen, and we named it Trooper.

Did you ever do something really stupid when you were young? Come on now, admit it. Here's one from my youth...When

Trooper was an instant hit with the family. He followed us around wherever we went. He liked to fetch the ball, chase chickens and cows, and bark whenever someone drove up our lane. We tried to teach him tricks, but he was too excited just being with us. Trooper ate just about anything. He loved scraps from the dinner table, but his favorite food was bologna. Gary and I would throw him a slice, and he would jump in the air and grab it before it hit the ground. Sometimes we forgot to take off the bologna wrapper, and the next day Trooper could be seen scooting his rear end on the ground, trying to get shed of the wrapper!

One afternoon Gary and I walked down the lane to retrieve the mail. Trooper followed us, and as I opened the mailbox, a car was traveling west towards Darlington. It was Lew Bush in his 1949 Ford. He was quite old and drove about



Photo courtesy of Butch Dale

30 mph top speed. As I started back to the house, Trooper saw the car, ran to the road, and started barking. Bad timing. Lew's car tire hit Trooper and knocked him for a loop. Lew kept on going down the road. Gary ran across the road to tell Dad, who was at our aunt and uncle's house.

Trooper's face was swollen and covered in blood. One eye was completely bloodshot. He couldn't walk, so I carried him

➤ See BUTCH Page A4

➤ HONEST HOOSIER

Does anyone bob for apples anymore?



➤ TODAY'S HEALTH TIP

Not receiving enough sleep can lead to increased appetite and obesity. 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.



➤ OBITUARIES

None

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



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➤ THE MONTGOMERY MINUTE

Ghost Hunt: Tickets are available now for the Rotary Jail Museum Ghost Hunts. Please pay attention to the date and time you select, some events take place just before or just after midnight. The Fan Meet & Greet with the Fourman Brothers from Paranormal Nightmare is a FREE event - we are only selling pre-purchase tickets for the Ghost Hunts on October 28 & 29. Night Tours on October 27 are \$10 at the door.

➤ TODAY'S QUOTE

"On Hallowe'en the thing you must do is pretend that nothing can frighten you An' if somethin' scares you and you want to run Jus' let on like it's Hallowe'en fun." From an Early Nineteenth Century Halloween Postcard

➤ TODAY'S JOKE

What monster is the best dancer? The Boogie Man.

The Daily Almanac

Sunrise/Sunset
RISE: 7:47 a.m.
SET: 7:23 p.m.

High/Low Temperatures
High: 71 °F
Low: 56 °F

Today is...

- Garlic Lovers Day
- World Cerebral Palsy Day
- World Smile Day

What Happened On This Day

- 2007 First successful human powered attempt to circumnavigate the world. Englishman Jason Lewis set out on the journey, also called Expedition 360 on July 12, 1994, from Greenwich, London.
- 1995 First exoplanet orbiting a Sun-like star discovered. Swiss astronomers Didier Queloz and Michel Mayor announced the discovered the exoplanet called 51 Pegasi B or Bellerophon.
- 1981 Assassination of Anwar Sadat. The third president of Egypt, Sadat was killed by members of the terrorist group Takfir Wal-Hajira during a parade held to commemorate the 8th anniversary of Operation Badr.

Births On This Day

- 1955 Tony Dungy American football player, coach
- 1846 George Westinghouse American engineer, inventor

Deaths On This Day

- 1989 Bette Davis American actress
- 1542 Thomas Wyatt English poet

7 DAY FORECAST

64/70 RAIN LIKELY SOME THUNDER	56/71 MIST & DRIZZLE LATE SAT MORNING	44/59 A.M. RAIN CLOUDS BUILD 80% CHANCE	41/59 MAINLY CLOUDY W/ CHANCE	45/64 PARTLY SUNNY & COOL	47/66 MOSTLY SUNNY	40/69 SUNNY
THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED

Updates From Our Masonic Temple

Working Together, We Can Renovate This Building For The Whole Community.

Your support continues to inspire us to work harder to save this beautiful building. We recently prepared a presentation for granting agencies on our construction progress. This newsletter will give some of the highlights.

• Window Restoration Project Finished July 2023

Total Cost: \$101,502 Supported by: MCCF, City of Crawfordsville ARPA Funds, NAP funds, and Individual Donations

• Plaster Repair and Painting Project ongoing Cost to date: \$6,200, time and materials donated by BK

Painting, Nucor Steel, Michael Lowe, the Masons and Board Members

• Front Entry Door Restoration

Total Cost: \$840 and many donated hours of work by the Board, Masons and Family Members

• South Carriage Entry Door Repairs donated by a Board Member Family

• South Carriage Door Emergency Exit Hard-

ware and New Exit Landing Cost to date: \$12,980

Supported By: MCCF, the Masons and Individual Donations

• Upgraded Electrical Outlets Ongoing Cost to date: \$7,200

Supported by: City of Crawfordsville ARPA Funds and Individual Donations

How Can I Help?

CMTF continues to raise matching funds for grants. Did you know that most historic renovation grants require a 50-50 match? We can only apply for a grant if we can prove that we have matching funds in our possession.

Every dollar designated for building renovation goes into our matching funds account and doubles in value with each grant awarded—giving us double the funds to repair our building.

Contributions to CMTF, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, are tax deductible to the extent allowed by Law. Our Tax ID # is: 81-1445468.

• Roof Replacement

and Masonry Repairs at the Roof Level completed in September 2021

Total Cost: \$100,240

• Fly Space Insulated and Re-sided completed in Fall 2021

Material Cost: \$1800

All labor donated by the Masons

• New Wheelchair Ramp

All materials and labor donated by the Masons

• Ballroom Floor and Trim Repairs

All labor and materials donated by a Board family

• Kitchen Equipment items purchased to date \$9600

What Are We Currently Working On?

• East/Front Elevation Masonry Repairs with grant funds promised and matching funds in the bank, we are moving forward with our Exterior Masonry Repairs so the building will be around for our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren

• Kitchen Refurbishment—We have applied for a grant to help us continue replacing our failing Kitchen equipment. Did you know we are hosting

the Community Christmas Dinner this year? Quoted Equipment costs: New Commercial Dishwashing Line \$7300; Cooking Line Refrigerator \$3950 (need 2); Replacement Range, Chef's Base, and New Griddle \$5540; Serving Line Steam Table and Cold Prep Table plus Serving Tables \$4345; Under-counter Ice Machine \$1350; Commercial Refrigerator \$2720, etc. Any help with these needs would be greatly appreciated.

• Bathroom remodels—Our Main Floor Bathrooms are in need of more and newer fixtures to accommodate the increased use of our building. The Women's Bathroom will gain two stalls for four toilets and two lavatories total.

The Men's Bathroom will be relocated so we can open up access to the North Hall where our wheelchair entrance is located. This will end the need to walk through the Ball room or the Kitchen when an event is taking place. The new Men's Bathroom will have two toilets, two urinals and two lavatories total.

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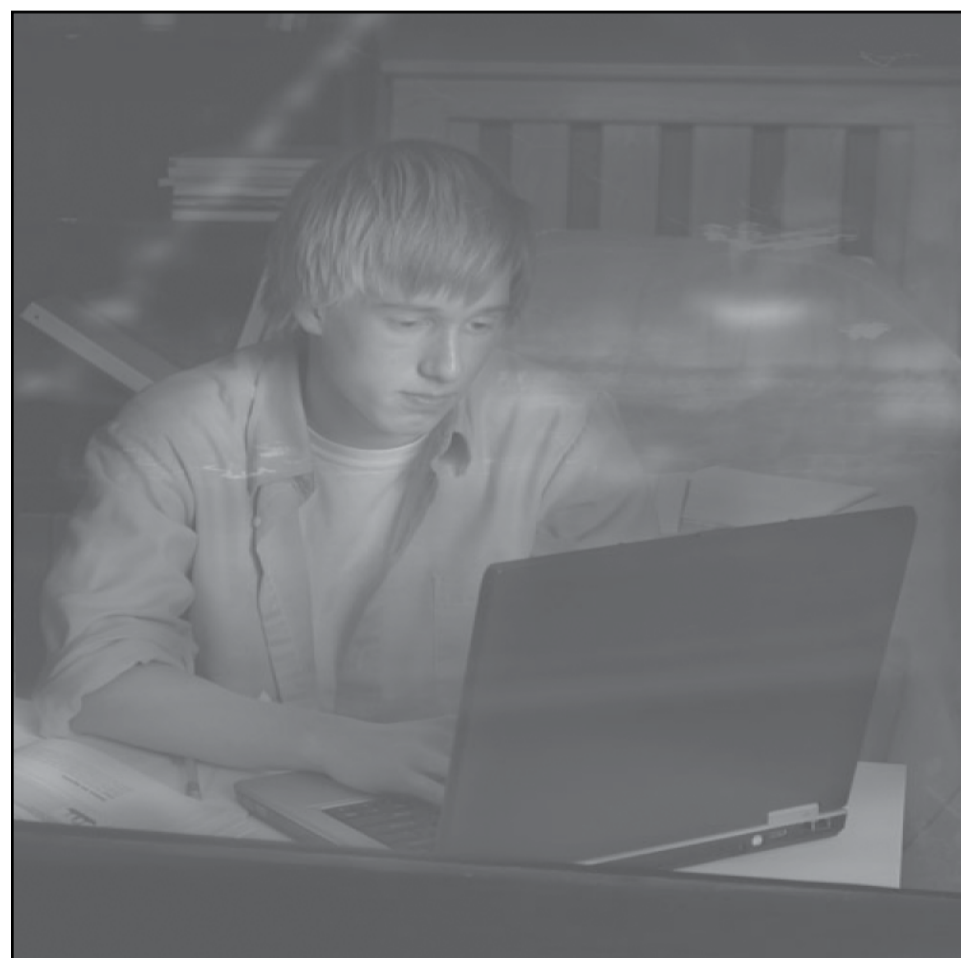
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Celebrating 100 Seasons Of Purdue Football At Ross-Ade Stadium Part 3



KENNY THOMPSON
Columnist

The 1940s for Purdue football was a roller-coaster ride that saw the Boiler-makers field one of their poorest teams, then 12 months later one of their greatest.

Coming off a 1-8 record in 1942, Purdue's fortunes changed dramatically when the Marine Corps and U.S. Navy sent some very talented football players to campus for training before going off to fight in World War II. Combined with a handful of civilians, the Boiler-makers went 9-0 and earned a share of the Big Ten championship with Michigan.

The decade also birthed Purdue's Cradle of Quarterbacks tradition with a teen-ager who shocked the nation in 1945.

Bob DeMoss led the Boiler-makers to a 4-0 start and a No. 9 national ranking entering a trip to No. 4 Ohio State. Purdue races to a 28-0 lead and goes on to a 35-13 victory.

Best Ross-Ade games of the 1940s

Oct. 2, 1943: Purdue 40, Illinois 21 - Tony Butkovich scores four touchdowns and rushes for 207 yards on just 12 carries against his former teammates.

Lafayette Journal and Courier sports editor Gordon Graham wrote that two of the former Fighting Illini, All-American guard Alex Agase and fellow co-captain John Genis were spotted on the Illinois bench visiting their friends when the score had grown to 34-7. When Illinois scored two quick touchdowns, Purdue coach Elmer Burnham had to summon Agase and Genis back into the game.

Oddly, each team fumbled 10 times. The Fighting Illini and Boiler-makers combined to lose 15 fumbles.

Purdue would go on to outscore its nine opponents 214-55 that season. To read more about the 1943 Boiler-makers, pick up a copy of Cory Palm's "Perfect Warriors."

Oct. 25, 1947: Purdue 14, Illinois 7 - DeMoss' 6-yard touchdown pass to Bob Heck in the third quarter stunned the reigning Big Ten and Rose Bowl champions, who had come in with a 10-game winning streak.

Graham compared this victory to three of the biggest in school history: the 30-16 win over Michigan in 1929, the 7-0 triumph over Northwestern at Soldier Field in 1931 and the 35-13 victory at No. 4 Ohio State in 1945.

Nov. 20, 1948: Purdue 39, Indiana 0 - Here's a lead paragraph from Graham that readers would never see today:

"The cattle were lowing contentedly in the barns of 'Cow College' today, but students were still emitting piercing shrieks of elation of Purdue's 39-0 rout of a futile Indiana eleven in a game which threatened records at Ross-Ade Stadium Saturday afternoon."

It not only was the most lopsided defeat in the Purdue-Indiana series since 1902, the victory also ended Indiana's four-year possession of the Old Oaken Bucket. Harry Szulborski rushed for 197 yards on 34 carries, while Norb Adams picked up 148 on 24 rushes.

As for Graham's reference to "Cow College?" Here's this from the Nov. 18 front page of the Journal and Courier:

"An airplane was flown over the campus several times Thursday noon, and thousands of handbills were dropped. The bills, about 5x8 inches and in varied colors, and with

'Courtesy Bloomington Herald' printed at the bottom, had the following to offer:

"What the hell can you expect with a kid prexy from deah old Oxford with a bunch of hick students with no spirit with an inexperienced high school coaching staff with eleven old men? IU 40, Cow College 0."

Top players of 1940s Ross-Ade

Alex Agase - An All-American both at Purdue and Illinois sandwiched between a two-year stint in the Marine Corps during World War II.

Agase won three league titles with the Cleveland Browns during a six-season pro career. He would return to Purdue as head coach in 1973. His biggest wins were 31-20 at defending national champion and No. 2 Notre Dame in 1974 and a 16-14 triumph over No. 1 Michigan in 1976.

He was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame as a player in 1963 and is a member of Purdue's all-time football team.

Tony Butkovich - Came to Purdue with Agase in 1943 and broke a 21-year-old Big Ten scoring record with 78 points (13 touchdowns) in nine games before heading off to the Marine Corps.

Butkovich rushed for 833 yards on 142 carries for amazing averages of 119 yards per game and 5.9 yards per carry. He earned first-team All-America and first-team All-Big Ten honors.

He was killed in action at Okinawa in 1945.

Dick Barwegen - The guard was voted MVP of the 1943 team and a two-time first-team All-Big Ten selection in 1943 and 1946.

In six of his eight NFL seasons, Barwegen was named first-team All-Pro

or chosen to play in the Pro Bowl. The Chicago Tribune ranked Barwegen 51st in its Top 100 Chicago Bears of all-time.

Bob DeMoss - The father of Purdue's Cradle of Quarterbacks was a four-year starter who threw for 2,759 yards and 23 touchdowns during an era when the passing game took a back seat to running the football.

With the exception of spending 1949 with the New York Bulldogs, DeMoss was at Purdue from 1945 to his retirement as an assistant athletic director in 1992. As an assistant and head football coaches, he tutored Dale Samuels, Len Dawson, Bob Griese, Mike Phipps and Gary Danielson.

Harry Szulborski - A four-year starter at half-back from 1949 to 1949, Szulborski set the career rushing record of 2,478 yards. Only Mike Alstott (16) and Otis Armstrong (13) had more 100-yard rushing games than Szulborski's 11.

He led the Big Ten in rushing as a sophomore (851 yards) and a junior (989).

Welcome to the NFL In between getting sacked seven times (six by Khalil Mack), former Purdue quarterback Aidan O'Connell had modest success in his first start with the Las Vegas Raiders.

As the 12th Boiler-maker to start an NFL game at quarterback, O'Connell was 24 of 39 passing for 238 yards with an interception. He also rushed for a touchdown in the Raiders' 24-17 road loss against the Los Angeles Chargers this past Sunday. The Raiders announced it was the second-most passing yards in his NFL debut with the team but did not state who holds the record.

"I think the magnitude of each play is what I'm

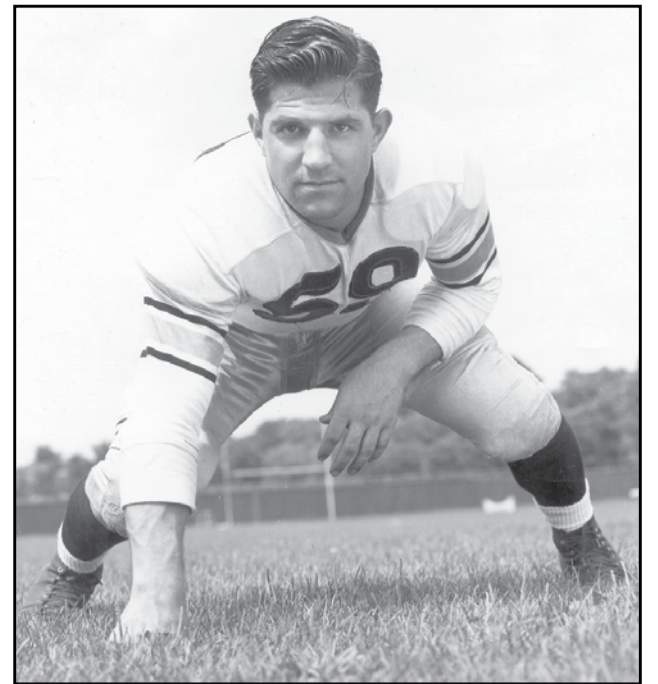


Photo courtesy of Purdue Athletics

Alex Agase

learning, and what I learned today is how important each play is, how important each drive is," O'Connell told raiders.com. "Just have to do my job on each play, even if it's a little bit harder one play versus another. Just got to focus, can't look ahead or can't look behind. Each play, one play at a time."

Here's how the other Purdue quarterbacks fared in their first NFL starts:

Len Dawson: 2 of 4 for 25 yards and 3 rushes for 31 yards in Pittsburgh's 7-6 loss at Philadelphia on Dec. 1, 1957.

Bob Griese: 11 of 22 for 101 yards, 2 INT in Miami's 24-0 loss to Kansas City and Dawson on Sept. 24, 1967.

Mike Phipps: 11 of 25 for 170 yards, 1 INT and 4 rushes for 57 yards in Cleveland's 14-10 loss at Cincinnati on Nov. 15, 1970.

Gary Danielson: 17 of 32 for 129 yards, 1 INT in Detroit's 13-10 win at Baltimore on Dec. 11, 1977.

Mark Herrmann: 18 of 32 for 188 yards, 1 INT in Denver's 13-11 loss at Seattle on Jan. 2,

1983.

Scott Campbell: 18 of 38 for 275 yards, 1 TD and 2 INT in Pittsburgh's 30-24 win over Buffalo on Dec. 15, 1985.

Jim Everett: 7 of 20 for 56 yards, 2 INT and four rushes for 13 yards and a TD in the Los Angeles Rams' 26-13 victory against New Orleans on Nov. 23, 1986.

Drew Brees: 15 of 19 for 160 yards, 2 TDs in San Diego's 34-6 victory at Cincinnati on Sept. 8, 2002.

Kyle Orton: 15 of 28 for 141 yards, 1 INT in Chicago's 9-7 loss at Washington on Sept. 11, 2005.

Curtis Painter: 13 of 30 for 281 yards, 2 TDs in Colts' 24-17 loss at Tampa Bay on Oct. 3, 2011.

David Blough: 22 of 38 for 280 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT in Detroit's 24-20 loss to Chicago on Nov. 28, 2019.

- 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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DICK WOLFSIE
Funny Bone

I love to walk up and down the bookstore aisles occasionally removing something from the shelves to sample, hoping it fits my tastes.

The people at Barnes and Noble are totally okay with this, but that habit has gotten me kicked out of Kroger about six times.

Recently, I decided to search the shelves for a book that might help me address a problem I am facing. My memory is not what it used to be. I tried Prevgagen but that was a total waste of money. They tout the product as made from jellyfish, one of the few animals in the world with no brain.

I did find one book: Keep Your Brain Alive: 83 Neurobic Exercises. For a fathead like me, this is the perfect read. The author contends that there is not enough unpredictability in our lives. We get into a rut because our brains take the easiest paths—the routes we are most accustomed to. Dr. Katz throws in some cerebral references to axons, dendrites and synapses to make it all sound very scientific, but it was lost on me. On a biology exam in college, I labeled the parts of the inner ear but it turned out it was a picture of a woman's reproductive system. I did get partial credit.

This book encourages you to use each of your senses in new and innovative ways. One of the author's suggestions is to brush your teeth with your non-dominant hand, thus creating new neural pathways. I tried it one night and found the experience instructive. I then used my other hand to clean the toothpaste out of my nose and inside my ear.

In order to enhance your appreciation of good food, says Katz, stick plugs in your ears. This

permits you to fully enjoy what is on your plate, focusing only on taste. I totally forgot to tell Mary Ellen I was doing this so I didn't hear a word she said during dinner for almost a week. Fortunately, she didn't notice the difference. The book also suggests that to fully experience the texture of food, you should hold your nose when you eat. My wife did notice this on that first night when she had prepared what I assume was a delicious dinner. She was not happy, but I got a nice note from Grub Hub thanking me for all my subsequent take-out orders 10 nights in a row.

There is also a chapter on sex. Dr. Katz encourages you to have a romantic dinner with your partner, and "to be sure to enjoy some flowers and candles." I choked down a few rose petals, but the candles made me gag. For another novel experience, Dr. Katz suggests you switch cars with a nearby friend for a day so you can have a new tactile experience behind the wheel. Of course, remember to tell your neighbor before you do this, or you can then look forward to really feeling something new: your hands cuffed behind your back.

My favorite suggestion is to eliminate the traditional grocery list. Instead of jotting down the name of each item, write a description instead so you can fully appreciate its qualities. I tried that. On my shopping list I wrote: "It's about the size and shape of a soccer ball, tannish, heavily veined and dimpled.

I was talking about a cantaloupe, but it sounded a lot like my rear end.

- 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.

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to the house. Dad arrived and laid Trooper down on a blanket on the back porch and gave him a drink of water. He just laid there and whimpered the rest of that afternoon and evening. The outlook for recovery was not good. However, a couple of days later, Trooper started to become his old self. He began eating again and gained his mobility back. And in a month or so, Trooper played and followed us around like the good ol' days...with one exception...he did not bark at cars anymore!

That winter, on a snowy afternoon, I decided to get revenge. I grabbed a couple of medium-sized rocks and walked through our field to a culvert that ran under the road. I made two snowballs, with the rocks in the center, hid by the side of the culvert, and waited for Mr. Bush to make his daily trip past our house. In just a few minutes I saw the bullet-nosed grill of the blue Ford headed my way at its usual slow pace. I was the pitcher on the Little League team, and I was determined to throw a strike. Just as Lew crossed over the culvert, I let loose with a fastball.... WHAM...right in the middle of the car's windshield. I hid inside the culvert tile and waited. Mr. Bush stopped his car in the middle of the road to look things over. I peeked over the concrete barrier. The windshield was shattered!

Lew got back in his car and drove back in the opposite direction. I ran like lightning through the field to my house.

I didn't know if Lew had seen me or not. My heart was pounding. I knew what Dad would do for punishment...two or three whacks with the belt. I never told my folks. I knew I had done a really dumb thing, especially since it wasn't really Mr. Bush's fault that Trooper had been injured that past summer day. I doubt that he even knew he had struck Trooper. People say revenge is sweet. It's not. I felt guilty for a long time after that. Attending Sunday School can do that to a kid.

Mr. Bush passed away a few years later. Trooper lived for another five or six years. He developed a growth on his leg, likely cancer, and became very ill. Dad finally had the vet put him to sleep. Trooper was the best dog we ever owned.

A few years ago, at a Darlington High School alumni banquet, I spoke to John Bush, who is slightly older than me and is Lew Bush's grandson. I told him the story of my ill-conceived, window-smashing revenge incident. Yep, I finally got that off my conscience. And Mr. Bush, if I am lucky enough to meet you up there in Heaven someday, and you are still driving that blue '49 Ford...I promise to buy you a new windshield. And Trooper, I promise to bring you a slice of bologna.

- 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.

Thousands Of Hoosier Kids Missed Between 10 And 18 Days Of School Last Year, Per New Data

By Casey Smith
Indiana Capital Chronicle

About 40% of Hoosier students missed 10 or more school days last year, and nearly one in five were absent for at least 18 days, according to new Indiana data.

A presentation before the Indiana State Board of Education (SBOE) on Wednesday highlighted the staggering statistics that state leaders said should warrant immediate action.

Student absences have been on the rise since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indiana and across the nation, data shows. Although Indiana's latest numbers show slight improvements, absentee rates during the 2022-23 school year were still 8% higher than before the pandemic.

"It's October — the first quarter is gone. We have to draw attention to this right now. And there's no time to wait," said Indiana Secretary of Education Katie Jenner. "I think this is really a rally cry for us to look at our parents, families, caregivers, and also our community leaders to come up with some solutions that might help."

Indiana fared better than most other states for chronic absenteeism — defined by the rate of students who missed at least 18 school days, either excused or unexcused. That's equal to 10% of the academic year.

But in the last three years, the rate of Hoosier students who have been chronically absent more than doubled compared to before the pandemic.

Education experts note that being absent as few as three days out of the school year affects test scores and overall academic performance. The student demographic groups with the largest gaps in state language arts and math testing since the pandemic are more likely to be chronically absent.

Jenner told the Indiana Capital Chronicle this summer that high rates of absenteeism are likely contributing to the state's dismal literacy rates, for example.

By the numbers
According to the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), roughly 221,000 Hoosier students were considered chronically absent during the 2022-23 academic year.

More than 400,000 students missed at least 10 days of school — which, per Indiana statute — made them "habitually absent."

A school day is considered missed if a student is there for less than half of the day.

To put those numbers into perspective, state leaders emphasized that 3,086 school buses could be filled with kids if all of Indiana's chronically absent students came to school on the same day.

"We're trying to help people understand that we're not talking about a small amount of people," said John Keller, IDOE's chief information officer. "When you think about it that way, that's a big number."

Keller added that Indiana is "far away" from chronic absentee rates in the 2018-19 school year, when just 11.2% met that definition.

The rate rose to 18.5% in 2020-21 — the first year after the pandemic — and topped out at 21.1% in the 2021-22 school year, according to state data.

The 2022-23 data indicates that 19.3% of students were chronically absent from school.

The issue is especially worsening among high schoolers, Keller noted.

State education department officials said the highest chronic absenteeism rates came from the most vulnerable students who were homeless or suffered from displacement, including children in foster care. Housing instability, in addition to mental health challenges, are also driving absentee numbers up, they noted.

Low-income status also increased a student's likelihood of being chronically absent. A lack of transportation is additionally thought to be contributing to missed days at some schools.

Black students saw the largest percentage of chronic absenteeism of any racial or ethnic group last year. Only White and Asian students had below the state average.

"I feel like what happened with COVID is that a lot of parents saw that their kids didn't have to actually come into the building, and then a lot of them passed. They felt that maybe they don't have to be there as often." — Board member Erika Dilosa

Still, chronic absenteeism was higher in some schools than in others. Jenner said in 84 schools, 50% of students were chronically absent. Another 270 schools recorded one out of every three students as chronically absent, while 547 schools had one in four students.

Statewide, 1,651 Hoosier schools had at least one out of every 10 students marked as chronically absent, according to state data.

Rates were typically highest in high-poverty urban school districts and charter schools, while suburban schools reported lower rates.

Gary Community Schools had the highest chronic absenteeism rate among the state's public school districts at about 66%.

Chronic absenteeism was higher than 40% in Muncie and South Bend schools and over 30% in Anderson, Richmond, Indianapolis Public Schools and at least two dozen other districts.

Multiple rural districts had high rates, too, including 43.2% in Cannelton, 37.5% in Madison and 32.1% in Medora.

Rates were mostly lower in suburban districts like Carmel Clay — at 8.4% — and in Zionsville, which recorded a 7.3% rate of chronic absenteeism.

How to get more kids in school?

SBOE officials doubled down on Wednesday that absenteeism is a problem without a single solution, though.

To start, Jenner said an "Early Warning Dashboard" is in the works to direct resources to at-risk students. The system will be piloted for some schools this academic year. She said the goal is for the dashboard to be ready for all schools by the start of the 2024-25 school year.

Included in the dashboard — which will be connected to Indiana's existing GPS dashboard — will be data on attendance, as well as information about which students at risk. Granular data could provide details about absences at the individual classroom and teacher levels, Jenner said.

"The reality is that culture eats policy for breakfast," Jenner said, adding that while illness and quarantines kept many students home during the pandemic, the slow rebound in attendance suggests missing school has become a new normal. "So, if we have a national culture of chronic absenteeism, we could sit as a board and pass a number of policies today, but the culture is not there."

Jenner said the state education department also plans to dive deeper into the academic performance statistics of students who are not chronically absent:

"I think there's more information that we need to know, and that will be helpful."

Board member Pat Mapes said IDOE additionally needs more information from schools to better understand local responses to absenteeism that might or might not already be in the works.

"When you're not there and present every day, you're not going to get the same quality of education," he said.

Another board member, Erika Dilosa, said the pandemic likely created a new — but dangerous — status quo for students and families.

"I feel like what happened with COVID is that a lot of parents saw that their kids didn't have to actually come into the building, and then a lot of them passed," Dilosa said. "They felt that maybe they don't have to be there as often."

Board member William Durham suggested that new penalties be put in place to compel students back into the classroom. It's currently up to each Indiana county prosecutor to decide how to enforce truancy laws.

"In my opinion, there has to be a way to hold parents of minors accountable for those students not coming to school — other than they're sick, or whatever the case may be. I don't know what can be done about that," Durham said. "But in my opinion, something has to be done, because in my household growing up, it was not an option."

Byron Ernest, also on the board, cautioned the state's education and political leaders to take a closer look at the issue and the various causes before codifying any responses, however.

"The thing that I want to implore us — and any legislators that are looking at this report — is let's not knee-jerk policy that we think could work, but it won't," Ernest said. "We need to make sure that we really study the root causes ... and we've got to figure this out and really look at it from the complexity that it is."

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