

Building new clean energy will lower Hoosiers' bills & protect grid reliability.

MORE LOW-COST ENERGY NOW

PAID FOR BY ADVANCED ENERGY UNITED



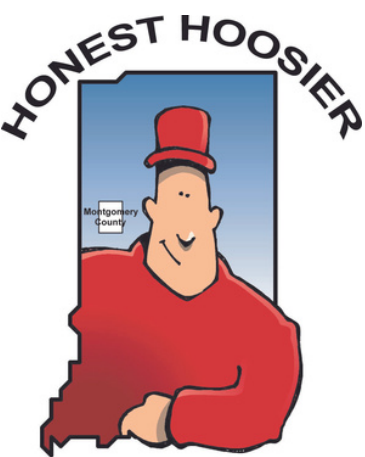
TODAY'S VERSE

Psalm 16:8 I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

Meet Clementine



Clementine is a 1 year old female mixed breed (maybe pointer/greyhound) available for adoption from The Animal Welfare League of Montgomery County (AWL) since 2/5/25. Clementine is LIGHTNING FAST with excellent SPEED & AGILITY! She'd make a great hunting dog! Clementine would thrive with an active family that provides her with plenty of exercise. She's a high-octane gal with energy to burn! Clementine is spayed, dewormed, and up to date on her shots. Clementine is looking for her best friend. Could that be you? Clementine's adoption fee is currently discounted to \$80 with approved adoption application. Come say hi Monday - Friday from 12:15p-5p or Saturday's from 9:30-3p!



Don't get caught foolin' tomorrow!

The Paper

OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Montgomery County's oldest locally owned independent newspaper

50¢

CRAWFORDSVILLE, INDIANA

WWW.THEPAPER24-7.COM

BTN

By The Numbers, a look at what's in the news . . . by the numbers. These are just numbers, not suggestions that they mean more or less than what they are. We do not suggest that one number is connected to another. These are simply facts with no extraneous details, bias or slanted reporting. To borrow (and perhaps mangle a bit) a quote from legendary fictional detective Joe Friday, it's just the numbers, ma'am!

Today is March 31 and traditionally, Major League Baseball would be getting ready for its first pitch, which usually took place the first week of April. That changed in 2023 when opening day switched to the last Thursday of March. Not so this year when the Chicago Cubs and L.A. Dodgers played a two-game series in Japan on March 18-19. Regardless, here's a look at America's pastime . . . by the numbers.



30 There are 30 Major League baseball teams. Think you can name all 30? Give it a try before reading any farther, and give yourself bonus points if you can place them correctly in either the National League or the American League.

They are the Arizona Diamondbacks, Atlanta Braves, Baltimore Orioles, Boston Red Sox, Chicago Cubs, Chicago White Sox, Cincinnati Reds, Cleveland Indians, Colorado Rockies, Detroit Tigers, Houston Astros, Kansas City Royals, L.A. Angels, L.A. Dodgers, Miami Marlins, Milwaukee Brewers, Minnesota Twins, New York Mets, New York Yankees, Oakland A's, Philadelphia Phillies, Pittsburgh Pirates, San Diego Padres, San Francisco Giants, Seattle Mariners, St. Louis Cardinals, Tampa Bay Rays, Texas Rangers, Toronto Blue Jays and Washington Nationals

206



There are 206 Minor League Baseball teams across the U.S., the Dominican Republic and Canada that are associated with Major League Baseball teams. And no, we are not going to name all 206. If you can name them, you are out of our league!

780

The number of active players in Major League Baseball. However, that number can be a bit tricky. MLB teams have what is called a 26-man active roster. But there is also a 40-man roster. That includes all the active players and others who are possibly injured or out on some sort of approved leave. It can also include some minor league players. The extra 14 can't play though . . . well, until September. Did we mention that baseball can be a confusing game?



COVID 19

Thanks to COVID, the active roster went from 25 to 26 for the 2020 season. We share that for those keeping score at home.

71,248,366

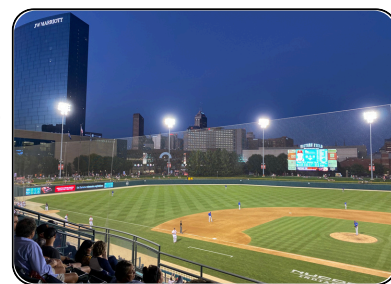
That's how many people attended a Major League Baseball game in 2024, up slightly from the 70.7 million in 2023. Back in 2007 was the high water mark when attendance almost hit 80 million. As far as per game, about 29,500 went to each game last year. That's down a bit from 2007 when it was almost 33,000.

3

Three MLB teams are pretty close to us – the Chicago Cubs, White Sox and Cincinnati Reds. For those inclined, the Cubs are home Friday. The White Sox are home tomorrow as are the Reds.



2 Closer to home, the Indianapolis Indians play at the AAA level in Minor League Baseball and there are two leagues – the International League and the Pacific Coast League. The Indians open the season tomorrow at Victory Field in downtown Indianapolis. First pitch is scheduled for 6:35 p.m. Bundle up! The weatherman says it'll be just above 50 when the game starts and in the 40s for the trip home.



2 Bridges On 136 Being Replaced

If you drive on U.S. 136 east of Crawfordsville, you should start planning on potential delays.

The Indiana Department of Transportation recently announced single-lane closures that will impact two bridges on U.S. 136 just east of Crawfordsville.

Beginning on or after Monday, April 7, crews will begin reducing traffic to single-lanes with temporary signals on the bridges over Walnut Fork on U.S. 136, located 2.8 and 4 miles east of State Road 32 respectively. This will allow them to safely complete superstructure replacements on the bridges.

Work is anticipated to last until mid-September but is weather-dependent and subject to change. INDOT encourages drivers to slow down, use caution, and travel distraction-free in and near work zones.

➔ See BRIDGE Page A5

Butch Thinks You Might Like the 'Back Road'

My folks made several trips to Crawfordsville through the years when I was a youngster . . . to shop, picnic at Milligan Park or visit Mom's family. Our house was 2 1/2 miles southeast of Darlington, and the trip down Old State Road 47 was a good 30-35 minute drive, winding through many curves along the way. Dad's top speed was about 35 mph, and my siblings and I looked out the windows at the houses and farms and people along the way.

After "new" State Road 47 was completed in the early 1960s, the trip was shortened considerably. At that time, there were virtually no houses along the new road, as the path cut through farmland. Most people drove the 55 speed limit, and could make it there in 10 minutes. But alas, a much more boring trip.

➔ See BUTCH Page A3

TODAY'S HEALTH TIP

If you want youthful skin, limit your exposure to the sun.

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



TODAY'S QUOTE

"Springtime is the land awakening. The March winds are the morning yawn."
Lewis Grizzard

TODAY'S JOKE

Why is everyone so tired on April 1? Because they just finished a 31-day march!

MONTGOMERY MINUTE

The Crawfordsville / Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce State Legislative Breakfast is scheduled for 9 a.m., April 12, on the third floor of Fusion 54 located in beautiful downtown Crawfordsville. The panel consists of State Senators Brian Buchanan (District 7) and Spencer Deery (District 23) along with State Representatives, Jeff Thompson (District 28), Matt Commons (District 13), Mark Genda (District 41) and Beau Baird (District 44). It is open to the public and costs \$10 for Chamber members and \$15 for non-members. Register before April 4 online at Crawfordsvillechamber.com.

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

THREE THINGS You Should Know

- Indiana State Comptroller Elise Nieshalla joined 26 state financial officers nationwide asking President Donald Trump to investigate the European Union's Corporate Sustainability Directives that subject American companies to comply with the environmental, social and governance disclosure rules in their domestic operations. The U.S. withdrew from the Paris Agreement earlier this year and Trump directed a review of international agreements and initiatives that unfairly regulate American companies. As part of this review, Nieshalla supports fiduciary-focused policies and has voted to remove investment funds, fund managers and proxy advisors that promote environmental and social agendas over financial factors, both as a board member of the Indiana Public Employees Retirement System and as chair of the Indiana Deferred Compensation Committee.
- The Indiana Commission on Judicial Qualifications has filed disciplinary charges against Howard Superior Court Judge Matthew J. Elkin. The commission charges nine counts of misconduct and alleges that did not treat all litigants fairly and with dignity, did not have order and decorum in proceedings before his court, and in one instance, failed to ensure that his court staff acted in a manner consistent with the judge's obligations under the Judicial Code. More information can be found at courts.in.gov/ojar/about/members. Elkin is represented by attorney Jennifer Lukemeyer.
- Gov. Mike Braun signed an executive order directing IDEM, the DNR and INDOT to publicly report permitting data to make this process more transparent, efficient, and to support growth. Under the order, these agencies will be required to post monthly permitting data to their official websites. This includes the number of permit applications received, average processing times, the percentage of permits issued within statutory timelines, and updates on pending applications. The executive order also mandates that agency leadership regularly review their permitting processes to ensure compliance with timelines, identify opportunities for improvement, and maintain high-quality standards for issued permits.

Public Invited to Share Opinions on Roads

The Indiana Department of Transportation announces an opportunity to learn more and provide comments regarding its draft 2026-2030 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.

p.m. to allow time to view displays and talk with INDOT and Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (IMPO) staff to ask questions about transportation projects and provide comments on the STIP.

The program is Indiana's five-year planning and construction document that lists all transportation projects expected to be funded within the next five years using federal funding in addition to regionally significant state funded projects.

Virtual open houses will be held on Thursday, April 3, at 1 p.m. and Thursday, April 24 at 5 p.m. Please click here or scan the QR code to register. A participation link will be shared ahead of the virtual meeting.



The current STIP (2024-2028) and draft 2026-2030 STIP are available on INDOT's STIP webpage. Learn more about the STIP with the STIP Public Primer, also available on INDOT's STIP webpage.

The public comment period for the draft 2026-2030 STIP will be open from Tuesday, April 1, to Friday, May 16, 2025. Comments may be submitted in-person at an open house, or via the STIP MapSurvey, INDOT4U (indot4u.com/855-463-6848), or by mail to:

Indiana Department of Transportation
 Attn: Cat Seely, Planning Public Outreach Manager
 100 N. Senate Ave., N758-TE
 Indianapolis, IN 46204

The open house will take place at the following location on Thursday, April 10, from 2:30 to 5 p.m. at the Indianapolis Public Library, Ft. Ben Branch, 9330 E. 56th St. in Indianapolis.

No RSVP or pre-registration is necessary for the in-person open house.

Doors will open at 2:30

Fountain County Flea Opens Saturday

The Fountain County Flea is scheduled to open Saturday at the Fountain County Fairgrounds in Veedersburg.

markets with the addition of trendy local and hand-made goods plus food trucks.

The Flea will remind shoppers of the days of finding great vintage and antique goods at old-school area flea

The Flea is owned by Scott & Holly Snelling of Veedersburg. Hours will be 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and admission is \$5 per vehicle.



Please visit us online:
thepaper24-7.com

Spot The Signs, Stop The Crime

As Hoosiers and visitors alike prepare for spring break travel and festivities, Attorney General Todd Rokita is calling on all Hoosiers to remain vigilant for signs of human trafficking. Spring break, a time often associated with relaxation and celebration, unfortunately provides opportunities for traffickers to exploit vulnerable individuals, particularly in areas with large crowds and tourist activity.

“Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery that thrives in the shadows, and spring break destinations can become prime targets for this evil enterprise,” Rokita said. “Whether you're traveling to a beach, a big city, or staying close to home, we need every Hoosier to be the eyes and ears in our fight to prevent human trafficking and bring perpetrators to justice.”

Large gatherings and travel hubs, such as those common during spring break, are known to create increased demand for trafficked individuals forced into manual labor, commercial sex acts, or other exploitative services. People in certain roles—such as hotel staff, restaurant workers, transportation providers, and medical professionals—are especially likely to encounter trafficking victims and should stay alert.

Signs of human trafficking to watch for include:

- Individuals who appear fearful, submissive, or unable to speak for themselves.
- People living in cramped or poor conditions, or with their employer.
- Signs of physical abuse, malnourishment, or lack of personal freedom.
- Answers that seem scripted or rehearsed when questioned.
- Minors engaging in commercial sex acts, with or without overt signs of coercion.

“Spring break should be a time of enjoyment, not exploitation,” Attorney General Rokita added. “Traffickers prey on the vulnerable, and it's up to all of us to stop them. If you see something suspicious, report to local law enforcement immediately.”

If you suspect someone is being trafficked, contact local law enforcement right away or call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888.

Hoosiers are also encouraged to visit the US Department of State's Safe Traveler's program and Travel Advisory website.

The Office of the Attorney General operates the Address Confidentiality Program, which helps protect victims of certain crimes — including those who have been trafficked — by concealing their residential address from the public and thereby their victimizers.

CASEY WILLIAMS



Nobody but noooooobody gives you a better inside scoop on new cars than Casey Williams. Each week Casey puts you behind the wheel and gives you the lowdown on the latest out of Detroit, or other places! If you drive a car, this is a must read!

Catch Casey every Monday,

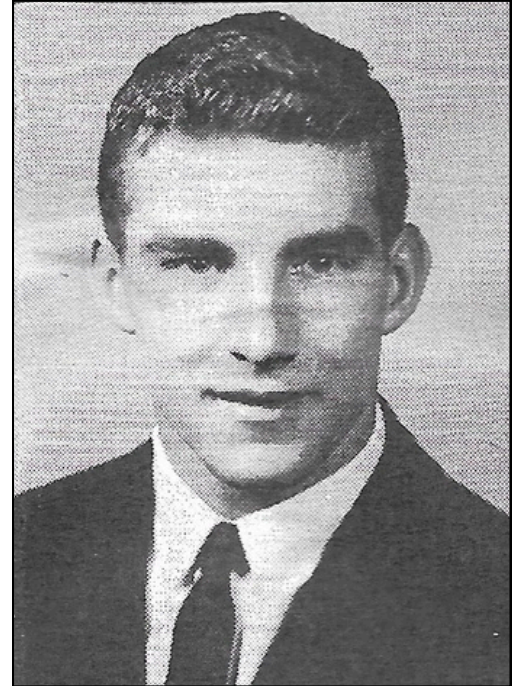


only in The Paper of Montgomery County!

Public Notices Deadline:
 11:00 a.m. 2 Business Days Prior to Publication:
legals@thepaper24-7.com

Private Party Notices Submitted After Deadline May Be Subject To \$25.00 Fee In Addition To The Cost Of The Advertisement

Butch Dale's Flashback Trivia



Do You Recognize this 1958 New Market Graduate?

HINT:
 He became a farmer and married a Darlington girl.

Answer on Page A3

NEED EXTRA CASH ?

CLARK TRADING POST
WILL BUY YOUR USED GUNS
 Most makes - Most models - Complete or parts guns

We pay the highest prices around!
 Premium paid for certain older guns

Call for free estimate

We also sell guns on consignment for a nominal fee
 Contact John "Butch" Dale (765) 404-1354

Pomp's
 TIRE SERVICE, INC.
 "The Tire Professionals"

\$15 OFF
 OIL CHANGE SPECIAL
Complete visual inspection & air pressure check • No other discounts apply. Not valid with any other offer. Expires 5/31/25

114 N. Water St. • Crawfordsville
 (765) 364-0584
 Weekdays 7:30 am - 5pm
 Saturday 8 am - Noon
pompstire.com

The Paper
 OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY
 An Independent Newspaper - Founded 2004

Vol. 21
 Sen. Phil Boots, President
 USPS Publication Number:
 022-679

Issue 36
 Tim Timmons, Publisher
 Report address changes to
circulation@thepaper24-7.com

Annual Print Subscription: \$89
 Annual Online Subscription: \$42

To subscribe: circulation@thepaper24-7.com
 To contact news: news@thepaper24-7.com
 To submit legal notices: legals@thepaper24-7.com
 For billing: business@thepaper24-7.com

All That Peter Does



What is the cat doing?" I asked my husband, Peter.

"He's levitating," Peter said. Or at least I thought that's what he said.

"The cat is levitating?"

"Meditating!"

"Oh."

We have a lot of conversations like this, and I suspect Peter and I are not alone. I was lying in bed later that evening, imagining our cat, Felix, floating over the nightstand, and the thing that struck me was that Peter would take it in stride.

Peter and I will celebrate our 10th anniversary this week, which doesn't seem possible for two reasons. First, because it cannot be possible that 10 years have passed since we got married, and second, because it cannot be possible there was ever a time I was not married to Peter.

In the past 10 years, I have learned that if the cat was to suddenly start to levitate, Peter would not fly off the handle. He would do some quick research and determine how frequent cat levitation was and if there was cause for concern. Will the cat return to normal gravity in time? Will we need to keep him on a harness?

I'd still be watching Felix floating 3 feet off the nightstand and Peter would already have a plan of action in place—in case we should need to fetch the cat off the ceiling or retrieve him as he started to float out the window. Peter would know what to do. This is what Peter does. It is not the only reason I love Peter, but it is one of the reasons.

It's called "learned helplessness," when the patient forgets how to make her own coffee (or buy it, for that matter), and everything required for her meal shows up, like magic, in the cupboard. That would be me. Peter occasionally expresses frustration if

we run out of something, because he has a secret inventory system that I am entirely oblivious to. If I start eating an inordinate amount of tuna or honey or potatoes, we will suddenly run low—and Peter does not allow us to run low on anything.

Peter plans our travel. Peter pays the bills. Peter knows how I am feeling before I do—which is handy because then I can just ask him.

"Why do I feel this way?" I'll ask.

"You've felt this way before," he'll remind me. "It will pass." And he is always right.

Peter does all these things because he cares for me. After 10 years, I know what Peter does and, because he does these things every day without saying a word, I could easily take what he does for granted.

But I don't.

Because we were not young when we married 10 years ago, and even then, I knew that coffee does not appear by magic and the bathroom is not automatically filled with toilet paper. I knew that problems have to be solved, that life would serve up an increasing number of problems as we aged, and that having someone beside me to help solve those problems was a precious gift.

Peter often reminds me that we don't know if we will be given another day together or another 30 years. "But either way," he says, "it will be too short." And he is right.

But as long as we are together, I know Peter will be there to help figure out whatever comes our way. And so, no, I was not overly worried about the cat levitating yesterday. It would certainly be unusual, but it would be nothing that Peter could not handle.

Till next time, Carrie

I Know It's Timeless - That's the Problem



"What time is it?" I asked my wife.

"It's exactly five o'clock," she replied as she glanced at the grandfather clock (Grandpa, from now on) in our living room.

"It can't be, Mary Ellen. It was precisely five o'clock 20 minutes ago. Come to think of it, it's been 5:00 all day. Isn't it only supposed to be five o'clock twice a day? I do like it, though, because whenever I look at the clock, it's time for an aperitif.

That's when we realized our favorite antique had ceased to function. It wasn't that we depended on it; we both have digital watches and a microwave that tells the time, but this was a fixture in our home with a long history in Mary Ellen's family. Just to annoy my wife, I suggested getting rid of Grandpa. Understandably, this made her angry...

"GET RID OF IT? GET RID OF IT? This is a family heirloom, over a hundred years old. It's timeless."

"I know it's timeless. That's the problem."

We finally found a repairman to come to our house. There are very few repairwomen who fix grandfather clocks. But there are also very few grandmother clocks. By the way, the big difference between a grandmother clock and a grandfather clock, according to Wikipedia, is that a grandfather clock is taller and has a much longer pendulum.

The repairman was very knowledgeable about the history of the antique, informing us it was over a hundred years old and of German origin. I wondered if I could fix it myself with a little intimidation. I tried my best German accent: "If you don't start verking, vee can make you tock."

The repair was

successful. We were delighted that Grandpa was back in working order. Not only was he keeping time, but his chiming ability had been restored. Recently, he hadn't celebrated each hour with a tuneful outburst but simply ticked away. Mary Ellen and I were eager to hear him and also see if his dinging and donging would awaken us at night.

The repairman left at 4:20 pm, so we had to wait until 5:00 to see if the old guy was really operating. It was like waiting for a pot to boil: 4:55, 4:56, 4:57, 4:58, 4:59, 5:00, 5:01, 5:02, 5:03...NOTHING. Mary Ellen wanted to wait a little longer. Grandpa was over 100 years old; he deserved a little time to get up to speed. Ironically, for most of his life, he was fast.

"I'm not sitting here another hour," I said.

But, of course, I did.

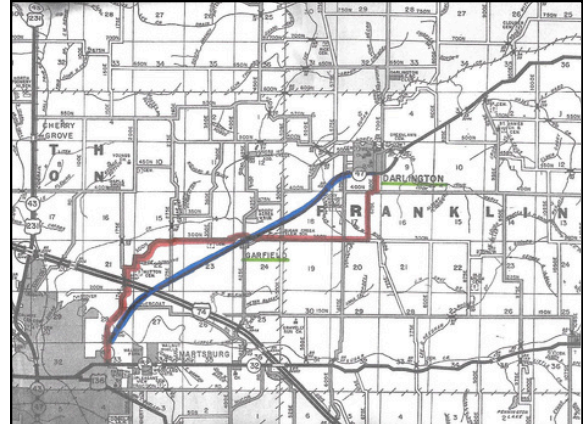
At 7:00 pm, he chimed, but he didn't at 8:00. At 9:00, he was right on target. Not at 10:00. So, we figured that he only chimed on odd hours, which seemed, well, very odd. The next day, he chimed at 9 pm again but only 8 times. Should we believe the clock or the number of chimes? The following day, he dinged whenever he wanted: 5:00, 5:50, 6:45, and 11:20. At noon, he chimed. We threw our hands up, just like Grandpa does at noon and midnight.

Now, a week later, for reasons we will never understand, Grandpa is functioning perfectly with a melodious sound right on the hour with the proper number of chimes. How long will this good fortune last?

Time will tell.

– 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.

↓ BUTCH From Page A1



Map showing St Rd. 47 (in blue) and Old St. Rd. 47 (in red).

Nowadays, a person can also arrive at far away destinations much faster thanks to the interstate highways that were built in the late 1950s and early 1960s. But they have the same problem ... straight ... no curves ... and boring. There are many instances of accidents occurring because drivers fall asleep. In addition, these super highways are sometimes so congested, with crazy, speeding cars and semi trucks ... that it is downright scary!

My wife and I go to Lafayette every weekend. After driving the county roads to Stockwell, we would cut east over to US 52 and take a straight shot in. But a few years ago, I decided to take another route, a left turn at the Stockwell post office, and then the country road that winds west and north ... by farms, older homes, a cemetery, along a creek and through hills and valleys, ending on the old Concord Road. Very little traffic. Of course, it takes longer, but why be in hurry anyway? This "back road" route is more relaxed, we can enjoy the scenery, and not worry about being run over on US 52, where virtually no one obeys the 60 mph speed limit.

I like the back roads. They fit my personality perfectly. During most of my working life, I was always in a hurry ... two full-time jobs, raising a family of four children, trying to make ends meet ...

constant stress. Now I am 76 years old, and although I still work full-time, there is very little stress. I am not in a hurry. I can take my time ... and like the country singer Rodney Atkins's song "Take a Back Road"...

"Sit in that six-lane backed up traffic, horns are honking, I've about had it. I'm looking for an exit sign, gotta get out of here, get it all off my mind ... Maybe it's the feeling or maybe it's the freedom ... Get lost and get right with my soul ... Makes me wanna take, makes me wanna take a back road."

One of the things that my Dad liked to do was drive around the countryside, look over the crops, and stop and visit other farmers. I tagged along, stood in the back of his old Dodge pickup, and enjoyed seeing all of the farms and people ... and this being Indiana, of course everyone always waved, whether they knew you or not. Many farmers and others still like to drive around the countryside today ... off the beaten path.

Try taking the back road yourself once in a while ... I think you'll like it. And guess what, if you wave to a stranger, even today they will still wave back!

John "Butch" Dale is a retired teacher and County Sheriff. He has also been the librarian at Darlington the past 36 years, and is a well-known artist and author of local history.

Butch Dale's Flashback Trivia

Answer: John Lytle

DR. JOHN ROBERTS

As we age, our health becomes more and more important. Dr. John Roberts, a well-respected physician, gives us great information on the things that matter to our well-being, as well as how to live healthier. Taking care of ourselves is vital and Dr. Roberts can give you the inside track on how to do exactly that.

Catch Dr. Roberts every Monday in The Paper!

Please visit us online:

thepaper24-7.com

Thank you for reading The Paper!

Trace Adkins, Attica's Badlands Honoring Troops

Badlands Off-Road Park in Attica, in partnership with Can-Am, is excited to announce the 5th Annual Tribute to the Troops, which will take place on Saturday, July 5.

"I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to honor those who protect us," said Kyle Knosp, owner of Badlands Off-Road Park. "2025 marks the 30th anniversary of Badlands Off-Road Park, so this is a special year for us. We're excited to host the event during the July 4th weekend to ramp up the patriotism!"

Country music superstar Trace Adkins will headline the event. Adkins has sold over 11 million albums, charted more than 20 singles, and earned numerous awards and Grammy nominations, accumulating over two billion streams. Opening for Adkins will be Cody Webb, who is currently enjoying over 29 million streams and is featured on more than 200,000 playlists.

While the music lineup is impressive, the Tribute to the Troops event is primarily a heartfelt tribute to the brave men and women who have served our country. It's designed for everyone who wishes to enjoy quality entertainment dedicated to celebrating and remembering military members. Badlands will be giving away 1,000 free tickets to military members as a gesture of thanks! To claim a promo code for a free ticket, simply complete the verification process on the event website via VerifyPass.

The fun doesn't stop at the show! Badlands Off-Road Park, in partnership with Can-Am, will host a charity raffle for a chance to win a side-by-side dream machine. The 72" Can-Am Maverick X3 RS Turbo, valued at over \$31,000, has been generously donated by Can-Am

for this annual event. One hundred percent of the ticket proceeds will go to the charitable organization Road Warriors.

Road Warriors provides "adventure therapy" to military veterans, empowering them through challenges that honor their service. Whether dealing with physical injuries or other types of trauma, the organization aims to provide adventurous experiences, such as off-roading, to help replace negative memories with positive ones. Road Warriors brought a group to Badlands in the fall of 2023 and looks forward to many more visits.

"It was truly amazing to welcome a group of soldiers to Badlands during a previous off-roading excursion. The joy that off-roading brought to these men and women was incredible. Our hats go off to the Road Warriors for providing these types of experiences to the courageous individuals who serve our nation," said Kyle.

Tickets for the charity raffle start at just \$10.00 and can soon be purchased at roadwarrior.org. The winner of the Can-Am Maverick X3 will be announced at the 2025 Tribute to the Troops event.

With Badlands' event field adjacent to the 1,500-acre park, off-roaders can enjoy a full day of riding before the evening entertainment begins and can stay for another day of exploration after the event! Next door, Off the Trail Vacation Rentals and Campground offers a wide variety of lodging and campsites for ultimate convenience. Be sure to check out their Maximizer package special for Tribute to the Troops weekend, which includes four bonus nights of camping or lodging with an event reservation!

Tickets are available at www.tributetothe-troops.com.

Back in the Day with Butch Dale



You don't see very many iron bridges around today, but back in the day there were several throughout Montgomery County. Most of them were one lane, so cars had to slow down to make sure an approaching car from the opposite end was not headed toward them.

Montgomery Medicine: Vaccines and Autism



JOHN R. ROBERTS, M.D.

Montgomery
Medicine

Vaccines are among the most significant advancements in public health, preventing diseases that previously devastated communities and caused widespread illness and death. Despite overwhelming evidence demonstrating vaccine safety, misinformation about vaccines persists—particularly the myth linking them to autism. As a family physician who practiced in rural west central Indiana, I regularly discussed vaccine concerns with parents. It is crucial to present reliable scientific evidence to help parents feel confident about vaccinating their kids.

I've mentioned this previously, but it's worth repeating. The mistaken belief linking vaccines to autism originated in 1998 with a study by Andrew Wakefield, published in a reputable medical journal. Wakefield claimed a connection between the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine and autism. However, subsequent investigations revealed that Wakefield falsified his data, leading the journal to retract the paper and Wakefield to lose his medical license. Sadly, the lies he spread continue to circulate, leading some families to avoid vaccination, causing outbreaks of preventable diseases such as measles.

Since Wakefield's fraudulent paper, numerous large-scale studies have conclusively shown no association between

vaccines and autism. A landmark 2019 Danish study involving over 650,000 children reaffirmed this finding, clearly demonstrating that receiving the MMR vaccine does not increase autism risk. Both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics affirm that vaccines are safe and are not related to autism.

Past concerns have also focused briefly on thimerosal, an ethyl mercury-containing preservative used in some vaccines. Although no credible scientific evidence suggested harm, thimerosal was voluntarily removed or significantly reduced from all routinely administered childhood vaccines by 2001. Even after removal, autism rates continued to rise, further disproving any supposed link between thimerosal and autism.

Scientists now understand autism as a complex neurodevelopmental disorder primarily influenced by genetic and environmental exposures prior to birth. Research published in highly respected journals such as JAMA Pediatrics emphasizes genetic causes and prenatal developmental influences. Autism typically becomes noticeable around the same age vaccines are administered, creating confusion among some parents. However, this timing is coincidental, not causal.

Given this settled scientific consensus, it is deeply troubling that David Geier was

recently appointed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to oversee a new National Institutes of Health (NIH) study revisiting the long debunked vaccine-autism link. Geier is not a medical doctor, has been disciplined for practicing medicine without a license, and has repeatedly been criticized for the poor quality of his research promoting vaccine skepticism. Together with his father, Mark Geier, he has persistently advocated discredited theories about vaccines causing autism, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

It is particularly concerning because Geier seems to have already arrived at his conclusion: that vaccines cause autism. This fundamentally conflicts with the scientific method, which requires researchers to objectively evaluate evidence without bias. Instead of neutrally investigating the question, I fear Geier will selectively look for data supporting his preconceived beliefs, ignoring the overwhelming evidence disproving any vaccine-autism link. Such an approach is not science – it is confirmation bias, which jeopardizes the credibility of the study from the outset.

Additionally, allocating taxpayer funding to re-investigate a disproven hypothesis is wasteful and irresponsible. Limited public health resources should be directed toward meaningful autism research, exploring genetics, early

developmental influences, and effective interventions. Redirecting these valuable resources toward a flawed, biased investigation undermines progress toward understanding autism's true causes and effective treatments.

Public confidence in vaccines is critical. Lower vaccination rates increase vulnerability, threatening community-wide protection (herd immunity) and placing individuals who cannot be vaccinated due to medical reasons at risk. Medical providers should always provide the most accurate, trustworthy vaccine information to parents so they can confidently protect their children's health.

We must collectively reject flawed science and biased research agendas. Families affected by autism deserve credible, objective research guided by scientific integrity. Vaccines have proven their safety and efficacy repeatedly, protecting countless lives. Misguided, predetermined conclusions like Geier is likely to produce, undermine public health and erode trust in medical science. Instead, we must ensure autism research is conducted ethically, objectively, and responsibly, truly advancing our understanding of this important condition.

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

Building new clean energy will lower Hoosiers' bills & protect grid reliability.

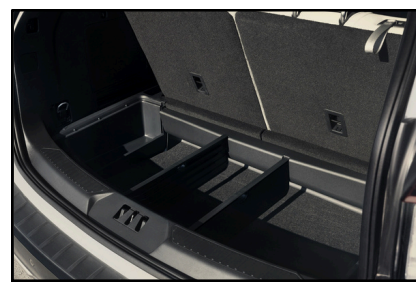
MORE LOW-COST ENERGY NOW

PAID FOR BY ADVANCED ENERGY UNITED

Don't forget to renew your subscription!

thepaper24-7.com/subscribe





2025 Ford Explorer Platinum is a Luxurious Performance-Oriented Crossover that Cruises Hands-Off

CASEY WILLIAMS
Auto Reviews

The Ford Explorer has been a lot of things to a lot of people. It started out as an extended Bronco II that was based on the Ford Ranger pickup. By the early 2000s, it grew and gained an independent rear suspension – a big deal at the time. Its next generation grew more and adopted the Volvo XC90’s architecture that gave families a big safety hug. None of those would be considered a performance-oriented luxury crossover like the 2025 Ford Explorer Platinum we have here.

Explorer is America’s all-time best-selling SUV brand, and despite all of the changes, you could park the current one next to the original and know they are evolutions of the same. Yet, designers finessed it for 2025 with a larger grille, sleeker headlamps, front skid plate, and LED taillamps

that extend across the hatch nameplate. Platinum editions wear a satin chrome and ebony face plus 21-inch dark alloy wheels. Deep body sculpting hints at the performance within.

Platinum interiors are more Lincoln than Ford with diamond-stitched leather, wrap-and-stitch soft-touch surfaces and sliver mesh accents. Luxuriate further with a heated steering wheel and heated seats front/rear. Front seats are also ventilated in summer. A power steering column, crisp B&O audio, and panoramic roof add a veneer of luxury. I really like the tweedy fabric on the dash and doors. Third-row seats power fold to expand cargo capacity, but they’re better suited for kids than adults. It’s all very lush, but also stocked with technology.

Previous Explorer owners might notice flatscreen gauges and a larger touchscreen this

year. Phones connect wirelessly via Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. Charge them wirelessly too. Google Assistant now serves as the default voice assistant if you require such a thing. Stream videos and play games via the web, YouTube, Prime Video, and Vivaldi. Owners can use their phone as a key, drive hands-off on highways with BlueCruise, and stay safe with lane keep assist, blind spot warning, automatic emergency braking, and reverse auto brake systems.

We’ve come a long way since the original Explorer debuted for 1991.

What you don’t immediately notice is the rear-drive based architecture underpinning this fashion show. Shifting power focus from fore to aft allows a significantly more athletic and crisp

driving experience. It’s still a big three-row crossover better suited for cross-country drives than track days, but it seems a better dance partner in the driver’s hands. But don’t worry about winter weather or light off-roading because our fly ride comes with all-wheel-drive that handled a recent snow storm with ease. Get in and go without worry.

Base models come with a 2.3-liter turbo-four engine producing 300 horsepower, and that’s plenty to move a three-row crossover with aplomb, but we didn’t go for that little wheezer. Instead, our Platinum edition stepped up with a 3.0-liter twin-turbo V6 delivering a vigorous 400 horsepower and 415 lb.-ft. of torque. It wasn’t long ago that world-class supercars barely enjoyed that much power. All of it gets to the road through a 10-speed automatic transmission and electronic all-wheel-

drive. Fuel economy rated 18/24-MPG city/highway isn’t bad, but having a hybrid option would be even better.

As you might expect, the Explorer Platinum comes with a luxury price, but maybe not as luxurious as you imagine. A base Explorer starts at a reasonable \$39,755, but our top-trim model with turbo V6 and hands-off driving comes to a loftier

\$61,155. That compares favorably with key rivals like the Chevy Traverse, Jeep Grand Cherokee, Mazda CX-90, Toyota Highlander, Kia Telluride and Hyundai Palisade.

Storm Forward!

Send comments to Casey at AutoCasey@aol.com; follow him on YouTube @AutoCasey.

Likes	Dislikes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legit luxury Hands-off cruising Driving dynamics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tight third row No hybrid option Luxury price

2025 Ford Explorer Platinum
Seven-passenger, AWD Crossover
Powertrain: 3.0-liter TTV6, 10-spd
Output: 400hp/415 lb.-ft. torque
Suspension f/r: Ind/Ind
Wheels f/r: 21"/21" alloy
Brakes f/r: disc/disc
Fuel economy: 18/24 mpg city/hwy
Assembly: Chicago, IL
Base/As-tested price: \$39,755/\$61,155

BRIDGE From Page A1

SINGLE-LANE CLOSURES TO IMPACT U.S. 136 EAST OF CRAWFORDSVILLE

- BEGINNING ON/AFTER MONDAY, APRIL 7
- ALTERNATING LANE CLOSURES WITH A TEMPORARY SIGNAL OVER TWIN WALNUT FORK BRIDGES
- WORK IS EXPECTED TO LAST UNTIL MID-SEPTEMBER

Motorists in west-central Indiana can monitor road closures, road conditions, and traffic alerts any time via:

- Facebook: facebook.com/INDOTWestCentral
- X (formerly Twitter): @INDOT_WCentral
- TrafficWise: 511in.org
- Mobile App: iTunes App Store and the Google Play store for Android

INDOT is responsible for planning, constructing, maintaining, and operating the State of Indiana’s more than 29,000 highway lane miles and 5,700 bridges, and providing support for 4,500 rail miles and 127 aviation facilities throughout the Hoosier State.

With six district offices and over 3,500 employees, INDOT works to ensure safe, efficient, and reliable transportation infrastructure while supporting the state’s economic vitality. The department is committed to fostering innovation, sustainability, and safety in transportation planning and development, in addition to collaborating with local governments and private sector partners to meet the state’s transportation needs.

For the eighth consecutive year, Indiana has placed in the top 10 in the nation for infrastructure in CNBC’s “America’s Top States for Business” rankings. Learn more at in.gov/indot.

And please consider joining INDOT and local first responders in Buckle Up Phone Down – a safety initiative adopted by the Indiana Department of Transportation in late 2023. Unrestrained motorists and passengers, as well as distracted driving continue to be contributing factors in fatal and serious injury crashes on Indiana roadways. Buckle Up Phone Down is one of many efforts to change driver behavior and improve roadway safety across Indiana. The actions are simple: when you get into a vehicle, buckle up. If you are the driver, put the phone down. Every trip. Every time. Learn more and accept the challenge at BUPDIN.com.

Thinking of BUYING or SELLING?

Shoot me a message for a free consultation! I'll get you to the finish line fast and hassle free!

Picture: Daughter, Ava Dale Barrel Racing

Clark Dale
765-918-1773

M.S., B.S., Army Veteran
email: william.dale@exprealty.com
web: williamdale@exprealty.com

Looking for a part-time job that does not involve the words:

Would You Like Fries With That?

The Paper of Montgomery County is looking for clerical help. This could be the perfect job for part-time students all the way up to Baby Boomers looking for something to do.

Basic data entry skills are required. Experience with QuickBooks is a bonus.

E-mail jobs@thepaper24-7.com

Montgomery Murder Mysteries

Molly's Manifesto: Chapter 1 -- Reflections

EDITOR'S NOTE: Karen Zach, a 50-year-local history writer, presents her Montgomery Murder Mysteries – historical fiction, based on fact – of the first 13 or so murders in our county. Karen has written a weekly column for The Paper of Montgomery County and was the editor of Montgomery Memories, a monthly publication from The Paper for many years. Now that she is retired, she is sharing these stories and The Paper is very pleased to continue working with Karen and her talented writings.



KAREN ZACH
Montgomery Murder Mysteries

I've feared it a long time, but what do I do? What do I do? Alfred's not always been this way. Oh, my, I remember what fun we had courting. Our favorite place to go was on the banks of Sugar Creek, dangling our feet from the low railroad trestle bridge, talking for hours on end. Several tried to warn me that Alfred was a bit odd, but I never saw it. Well, not until lately that is. Lately, Alfred is quiet, unlike his fun-loving self of old.

I suppose it was Alfred's eyes that really caught my attention. Actually, it's Alfred's eyes that catch anyone's attention. His eyes are the color of cornflowers. Very little of his whites show and there is a midnight blue circle surrounding them. They are piercing when he wants the truth out of you and gentle when he desires love. Back in our younger days, they were often laughing, too but I see mostly the piercing side of late. Alfred is very much to look at, indeed. He tallies 6'3" and is straight and narrow, even though he's of the ripe old age of 40. His moppy brown hair is beginning to gray and that seems to worry him. Doesn't bother me as my curly brown hair has touches of gray at the temples, too. I tell him it is just part of life, but he pooh-poohs me whenever I tell him anything is part of life. It is though. His countenance is of ruddy complexion and when he is embarrassed a blush highlights his face even more. I tell him his lips and nose are perfect, but he's always thought that his nose was too big and mouth too small. Maybe none of us think we are good looking when we really are. Alfred is. There's no doubt about it. Why, there were three Barker girls and a Myers vying for his attention while we were courting. I think my neighbor Ina may have even been interested at one time. Even today, when Alfred walks down the street women stare.

Me? I'm just so-so. Never figured why he even looked at me. My height is barely 5' and I'm almost as round now as I am tall. Even in my younger years, I turned toward pudginess. My face is just there. I suppose it was my hair if any of my looks attracted Alfred; I do covet my hair even with its edgings of age. Alfred admires my brown curly tresses that I flop on top my head when I'm working. Maybe sharing the same job of school teacher brought us

together? Perhaps, though, it was my personality that attracted him to me. I'm much like my Pop Pop, quiet yet with a sense of humor. For sure, Alfred and I have had many laughs, but not of late, no, not of late.

Just when did I fall in love with Alfred? Perhaps I have always been in love with him. We attended the same small Lutheran Church in our neighborhood from the time we were babes. In one of our Christmas Pageants, he was Joseph and I was Mary. My little brother Roland was baby Jesus. Sadly, Roland died the next February. I was just eleven and Alfred was twelve, but many said it was the best Christmas Pageant ever. At its end, Alfred knew we had done well. He bent his head toward me and gave me a little wink. I remember how proud I was of Alfred, how he stood so straight and tenderly looked into my eyes and even more lovingly picked up our baby child. He'd not been so affectionate toward our own four children of late, though. Lee James, Harry Cleveland, George Leroy, and William Alfred are wonderful lads. Will is my special little man. He rarely leaves my side, preferring to stay in to help Momma instead of farming with his Pa. Now, Lee is the one Alfred most dotes on. Lee will have his 12th birthday when the new century rolls around. His strength is unbelievable, being able to do as much farm work as his father. Only rarely will Lee play with the other boys, he just wants to be with his Pa. Theirs is a special bond.

The bond with my own mother is still special. Momma taught me all I needed to know to become a good wife. Of course, she never wanted me to become the wife of Alfred Wells; none the less, she is proud of her four grandsons who carry Alfred's name. Even with the strife of Alfred and his funny ways of late, my Momma is so proud of me, especially when we have school, church or community functions and my famous Angel Cake is the first dessert devoured. Momma brought that recipe with her from the old country, but I'm the one who has perfected it. Alfred says, "Molly, next time, just bake that cake and leave it home for me and the boys. You'd be a real sweet Angel for it!" Alfred could always make me laugh! Everyone is always asking me to share my cake recipe. I don't very often but for posterity sake, since Alfred loves it so, here it is.

Molly's Angel Cake – Use a wire beater and beat One cup (cake) flour with 1 Cup Confectioner's sugar. These should have been sifted or meshed several times to get them as fine as possible. Beat the whites of twelve large eggs, with a wire beater or perforated spoon, until stiff and flaky (they will hold their shape). Add 1 ¼ tsp. cream of tartar. Add one cup of fine granulated sugar one tablespoon at a time. Add the flour/sugar mixture one tablespoon at a time. Add one teaspoon of vanilla, lemon juice or almond. Line the bottom and funnel of a cake pan with paper not greased, pour in the mixture, and bake about forty minutes. When done, loosen the cake around the edge, and turn out at once. Some persons have been more successful with this cake by mixing the sugar with the flour and cream of tartar, and adding all at once to the beaten egg.

Icing: (Molly's specialty) –
1/3 Cup Butter, 1 ½ tsp. Vanilla, 1 Egg Yolk
1 Pound Confectioner's Sugar, 3 T. Milk
Mix butter, vanilla, and yolk until well blended. Add sugar alternately with the milk. Ice cooled cake.

Now, my Pop Pop and I had the bond of fishing. He and I would sit in the old row boat out in the middle of Sugar Creek or on its banks and fish for those crappy and catfish for hours. We didn't need to talk, but often Pop Pop would look at me and smile. My older sister Mattie would never go fishing with us, but my brother George often did. Although Pop Pop's farm had plenty of meat he enjoyed that fresh fish taste more than any chicken, hog or beef we could ever raise. Momma would never clean the fish but the two of us made quick work of that and she'd roll them in cornmeal before frying them. The crunch of that topping and the sweet taste of the fish still bring a smile to my face. Pop Pop left us when I was a little older than my Lee is now, but I remember the fun-loving man to this day. A prankster, he was the opposite of his so serious grandson Lee. Pop Pop had been 30 years older than my mother and my half brothers and sisters now seem more like my parents, yet we still have Momma and we spend a great deal of time reminiscing about silly 'ol Pop Pop!

My husband, Alfred Wells was born in Sugar Creek Township February 14, 1858 to a German father, William and his wife, Sarah Wyant. The Wyant family had lived in Montgomery County since it began in 1823 and were well-loved, prominent members of the Darlington area society. Sarah's parents had not wanted her to marry my father-in-law, Will, anymore than my own family had wanted me to wed his son, Alfred. Odd, because my mother was German-born as well. In fact, there were several German-borns living in the Sugar Creek area at the time of my birth February 14, 1859. Alfred and I always talked about fate bringing us together having been born with one German parent and

both on Valentine's Day one year apart. Fate. Was it fate that Alfred was losing his mind, then?

Here comes Alfred and the three boys. They'll be hungry. I best get their supper. Harry comes bounding in first. How I love that boy. He was the one of all four who almost didn't make it to be my sweetheart. I carried him 10 ½ months. The Dr. told me that he was probably dead but not Harry – he was all boy, kicking and punching me through the whole time at least up until the last couple of weeks when I suppose he was a bit crowded. His weight was of major concern to Dr. Martha Griffith and she even consulted with her husband, Dr. J.B, on what to do when the big 15 pounder arrived. Harry's head and shoulders must have been as big as a mule's as Dr. Martha's usual demeanor and perfect looks became blood, sweat and tears. She gave me some laudanum and before I knew it I was in dream land. When I woke up, Dr. Martha was all smiles, Harry was cleaned up, Alfred was jumping for joy at another boy and I was elated it was over. To this day, Harry is the biggest of my four even though he's 10 months younger than his older brother, Lee. George is just a year younger than Harry and then my little Will, five years younger yet.

Will is just getting up from a nap. I ask Alfred if he'd please to get Will from his crib, but Alfred just walks through our little four room house out to the back porch to sit a spell. He's been doing that a lot lately. George said he'd be glad to get little Will. We've always called our Will little Will as Alfred's father has always been known as Will Wells. That way, we don't mix 'em up. Little Will was the exact spitting image of Will Wells, and of course Opa was happy about that! Well, enough reflecting upon the here, now and afterwards. I need to get supper.

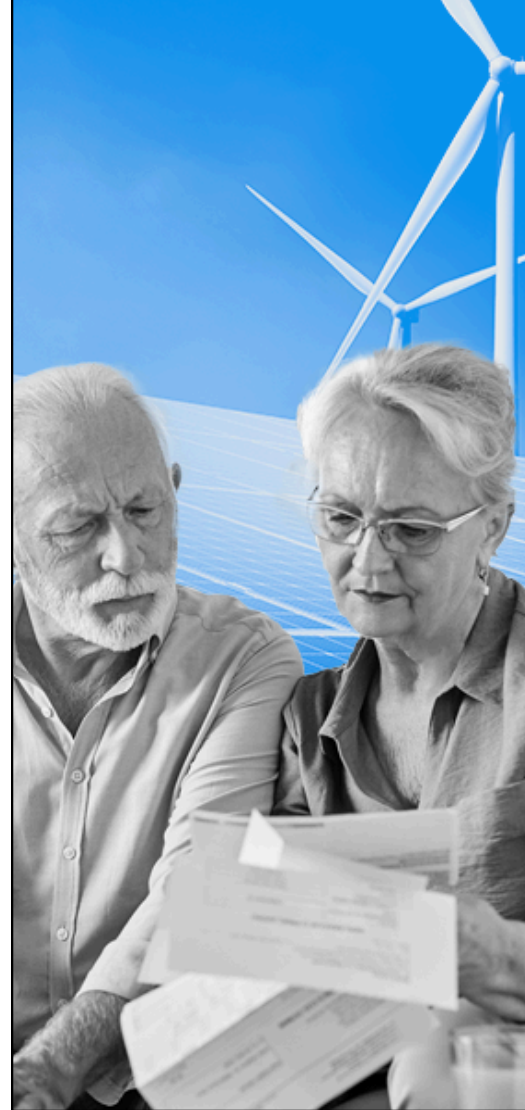
**Thank
You
For
Reading
The Paper**



**Building new
clean energy
will lower
Hoosiers' bills
& protect grid
reliability.**

**MORE
LOW-COST
ENERGY
NOW**

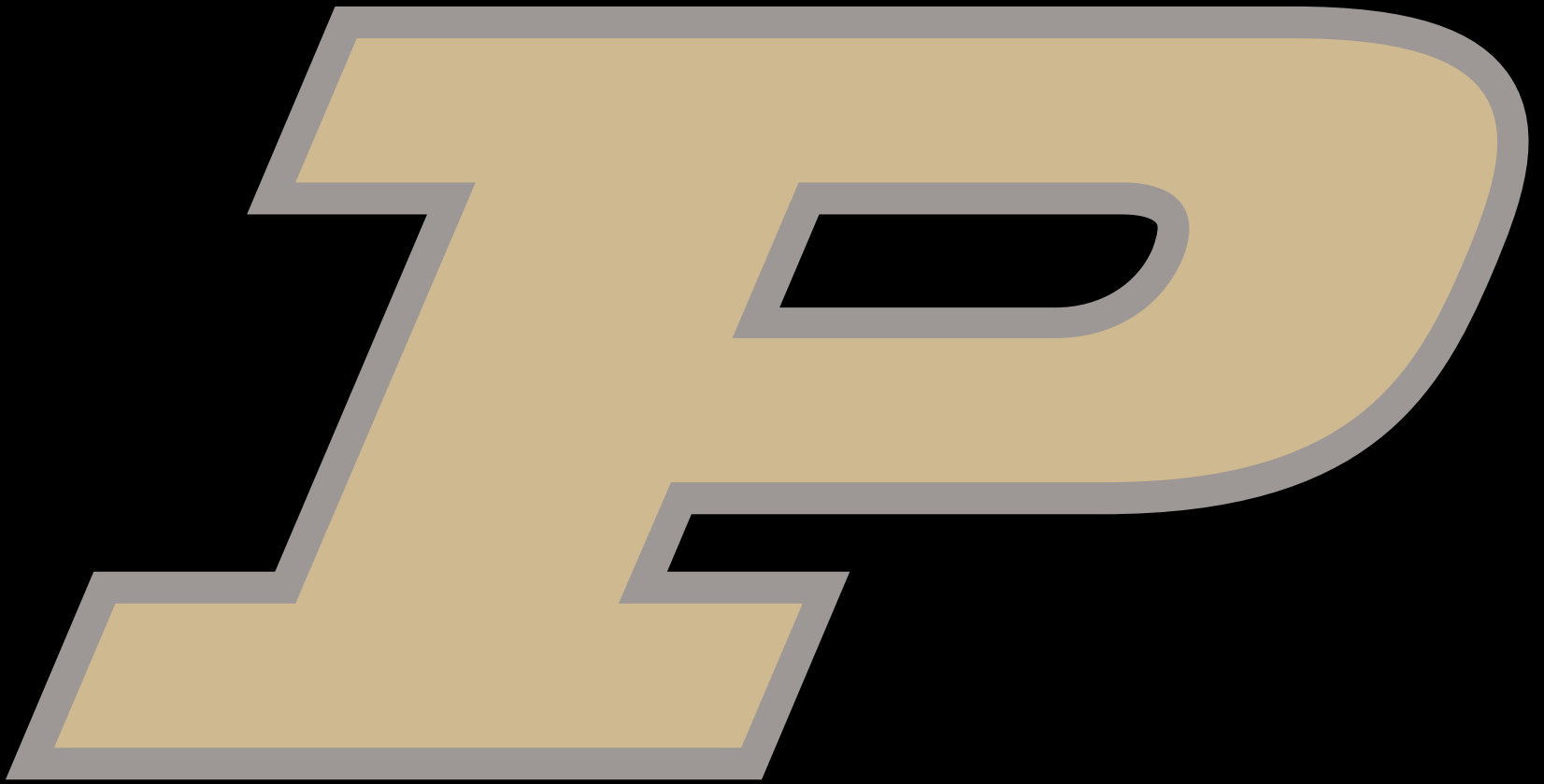
PAID FOR BY ADVANCED ENERGY UNITED



MSR: montgomerySPORTSreport

The Paper of Montgomery County

March 2025



Braden Smith Deserved Top Honors; Painter Shows Frustration



KENNY THOMPSON
Columnist

Sometimes it feels good to be wrong.

When the Purdue men's basketball team wilted down the stretch, falling from first place to a share of fourth, I figured Big Ten Player of the Year honors would go to someone whose team finished ahead of the Boilermakers and not preseason favorite Braden Smith.

Credit the league coaches and media for getting it right Tuesday, when it was announced that Smith was a unanimous choice. The award allows Purdue to become the first Big Ten school to have three consecutive Player of the Year winners as voted upon by the coaches and media.

It would not be surprising if that achievement is extended to four in a row when Smith is a senior in 2025-26. Don't underestimate the chances of teammate and fellow first-team All-Big Ten selection Trey Kaufman-Renn to push Smith for the honor.

A good week for Smith continued on Wednesday when he earned first-team All-America honors from The Sporting News. The publication is one-fourth of the entities that comprise consensus All-America recognition. The National Association of Basketball Coaches, Associated Press and United States Basketball Writers Association will announce their All-America teams later this month.

Only Kansas has had as many first-team All-Americans since the 2016-17 season. Smith joins Caleb Swanigan (2017), Jaden Ivey (2022) and Zach Edey (2023, 2024) on the list.

Smith's award gives Purdue its seventh Big Ten Player of the Year winner since the honor was first presented in 1984. Smith is the first non-big man Boilermaker to win, following the

footsteps of Stephen Scheffer in 1990, Glenn Robinson in 1994, JaJuan Johnson in 2011, Swanigan in 2017 and of course, two-time National Player of the Year Edey.

Junior guard Fletcher Loyer earned honorable mention status from the media. Senior center Caleb Furst was selected the team's Sportsmanship Award recipient.

A closer look at Smith's statistics reveals why this was an easy vote for the coaches and media. His scoring average increased from 12.0 as a sophomore to 16.3. Smith cruised past the previous Big Ten record for assists in conference play only with 175, 18 more than Michigan's Cassius Winston.

Smith also breezed past Bruce Parkinson's 48-year-old Purdue career assists record, handing out 717 in 105 career games.

Speaking of assists, only Big Ten legend Magic Johnson has also recorded 450 points, 250 assists, 125 rebounds and 60 steals in a season. Smith has now done it twice.

Not bad for a player ranked No. 198 out of Westfield High School whose only offers before Purdue came from Belmont, Appalachian State, Montana and Toledo according to 247 Sports.

Interviewed by the Big Ten Network's Rick Pizzo, Smith thanked coach Matt Painter for believing in him.

"I think having a coach that truly trusts in his players . . . he's never lied to me," Smith said. "He has always stuck with his word. Having somebody like that, it builds trust for me. He threw us in the fire at a very young age when a lot of people could have went other ways. He trusts us and we gained that trust. That's gotten me to

where I'm at today."

Smith also gives Painter the assist for being more aggressive offensively.

"I get yelled at by 'Paint' all the time for not shooting," Smith said. "I think that's the biggest thing. I always want to include everybody and get them the ball, put them in spots to be successful. I believe that's my job. I think (it's) understanding when to score and not score and when it's time to take over a game and when it's time not to."

Kaufman-Renn missed by four points of winning the Big Ten scoring title, averaging 20.5 points in league play and 19.7 for the season. His 246 two-point field goals made leads the nation. The 6-9 forward-center surpassed 1,000 career points (1,020) in the regular season finale at Illinois.

Kaufman-Renn is the 12th player in the Painter era to earn first-team All-Big Ten honors. The others are Carl Landry (2007), Robbie Hummel (2008, 2010, 2012), E'Twaun Moore (2010-11), JaJuan Johnson (2009, 2011), A.J. Hammons (2016), Caleb Swanigan (2017), Carsen Edwards (2018-19), Trevion Williams (2021), Jaden Ivey (2022), Zach Edey (2023-24) and Smith (2024-25).

The All-Big Ten honor probably felt satisfying to Kaufman-Renn after being left off the finalists list for the Karl Malone (power forward) and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (center) awards. To be fair, voters probably couldn't decide where to slot Kaufman-Renn.

A few weeks ago, Smith expressed his displeasure with the Malone and Abdul-Jabbar voters.

"We're back to this BS again, excuse my language," Smith

said. "You see what he's doing, the numbers he's putting up."

Loyer led the Big Ten in 3-point percentage, making 46.5 percent (46 of 99) behind the arc. Entering the postseason, Loyer has shot 59.2 percent from 3-point range during the past 11 games. He averaged 14.4 points and joined Smith and Kaufman-Renn as a member of the Purdue 1,000-point club this season.

Smith's Big Ten Player of the Year honor might also help him become Purdue's first winner of the Bob Cousy Award, presented annually to the nation's top point guard.

Smith's numbers (16.3 ppg, 8.8 assists, 4.7 rebounds, 39.7 shooting from 3-point range) compare favorably to the other four finalists.

Mark Sears of Alabama has the edge in scoring (19.2 ppg) but has handed out just five assists a game, averages 3.1 rebounds and is a 35.2 percent shooter from 3-point range. In Purdue's 87-78 victory against Alabama earlier this season, Sears had 15 points, six assists and four rebounds. Smith put up 17 points, 10 assists and six rebounds.

Kam Jones of Marquette earned unanimous first-team All-Big East honors with 18.9 points, 6.1 assists and 4.5 rebounds per game. Jones shot just 30.6 percent from 3-point range.

However, Jones was spectacular against visiting Purdue earlier this season. Jones' triple double of 17 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists paved the way for a 76-58 victory. Smith had 11 points, nine assists and four rebounds against the Golden Eagles. Zakai Ziegler of Tennessee is averaging 13.1 points, 7.5 assists and 3.0 rebounds while shooting 31.9 percent behind

the arc.

Walter Clayton Jr. of Florida averages 17.2 points, 4.3 assists and 3.8 rebounds per game. He's also a high volume 3-point shooter, making 36.4 percent on 231 attempts.

There's no doubt in Painter's mind who is the best point guard in college basketball. Painter, who is maturing into a major voice in the game, recently expressed his frustration at persuading others to see Smith's greatness.

"There were two different point guard camps last year where they invited 15-16 point guards – coming into college, in college – and I couldn't get Braden Smith in either one of those," Painter said. "I'm not saying he's a top 15 point guard in the country. I'm saying he's the best point guard in the country. "It makes no sense. You have non-basketball people making basketball decisions. They stereotypically look at somebody who's 5-11 like he's not a player. He's one of the best passers ever. He could end up being the best passer ever. "The same holds true for Trey. What's he supposed to do? You can't make up the numbers that he has. To each their own. That's on them. They are showing they don't understand the game and what matters."

Did you know?

When Purdue defeated UCLA 76-66 on Feb. 28 in Mackey Arena, it was the Boilermakers' first victory against the Bruins since Dec. 18, 1959. UCLA's eight-game winning streak in the series had been the longest active losing streak against a Purdue opponent. The victory also completed a sweep of the newest Big Ten members (Oregon, Washington, USC, UCLA), the four wins coming by a combined 46 points. Michigan was the only other Big Ten school to go 4-0 against the West Coast schools.

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.



**TOGETHER,
WE'RE BUILDING
A FOUNDATION.**

Nucor is proud to be an American manufacturer. Our steel goes into the infrastructure and products that form the foundation of our modern economy. Not only that, good paying manufacturing jobs are a solid foundation for families and communities.

POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS. POWERFUL RESULTS.

NUCOR[®]

www.nucor.com