

■ TODAY'S VERSE

Isaiah 40:31

But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

■ AWL BUGSY



Bugsy is a 9 month old male buff tabby domestic shorthair kitten available for adoption since 12/31/2025. Bugsy is friendly with his kitty pals in the community cat room, but he's ready for a place of his own! Bugsy is available to foster and/or adopt. AWL is open Monday-Friday from 12:15-5p and Saturday's from 12-3p. Come snuggle cats in a community cat room, walk dogs, or lend a helping hand!

- ADOPT <https://mcawl.com/adopt>
- FOSTER <https://mcawl.com/foster>
- DONATE <https://mcawl.com/donate>
- VOLUNTEER <https://mcawl.com/volunteer>

■ MONTGOMERY MINUTE

The annual Crawfordsville Strawberry Festival will be celebrating its 52nd year and is preparing to return to the Lane Place in downtown Crawfordsville. Organizers are calling on local businesses to contribute, thus ensuring this long-running tradition will continue for generations to come. Scheduled for June 12-14, this weekend-long festival will feature free entertainment, a variety of food vendors, artisanal crafts, a children's area and much more. It is the largest festival to be held in Montgomery County each year. With the annual average cost of the festival a little over \$100,000, organizers are looking for sponsors. Already committed are: CEL&P, Lakeside Book Company, Airy Time, Byron Cox Post American Legion, Benchmark Family Services Therapeutic Foster Care, The Tee Shirt Shoppe and Oremus Accounting. Others interested in sponsoring this year's festival can contact Ethan Grant at ethan.strawberryfestival@gmail.com. To learn more about the festival, visit <https://crawfordsvillestrawberryfest.com/> and to stay up to date on social media, please follow "Crawfordsville Strawberry Festival" on Facebook and "cvillestrawberryfest" on Instagram.



Hey, I'm a big space fan. Have been since I was a kid and watched Gus and John and Buzz and the Right Stuff boys. But I honestly don't understand the hoopla over us doing something now that we did six decades ago.

■ QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Never allow a person to tell you no who doesn't have the power to say yes."

Eleanor Roosevelt

■ JOKE OF THE DAY

Why is April so clean?
Because April showers.

The Paper

OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

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BOOMER BITS... Tips and Advice from Boomers to Boomers

If Either Die, Will Other Get a Survivor Benefit?

Dear Rusty: I am 79. My husband is also 79 and we both receive Social Security benefits. We were both married before, and we married each other at the age of 58. Am I to understand correctly that when either of us dies, the surviving spouse is not eligible to collect the deceased spouse's Social Security benefits? Please correct me if I am wrong.

Signed: Curious Spouse



ASK RUSTY

Social Security Advisor

Dear Curious Spouse: A surviving spouse only gets one benefit - either their own SS retirement amount, or their deceased spouse's amount, whichever is more. So, the Social Security benefit that the deceased was receiving at death will be paid to the surviving spouse, replacing any smaller SS payment the survivor was already

collecting. To be sure you are aware, the surviving spouse will also be eligible for a one-time lump sum death benefit of \$255 (I know it isn't much, but it should be claimed anyway).

Also, unless the surviving spouse was already receiving a spousal benefit while both partners were living, the surviving spouse will need to contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213

(or at the local SS field office) to make an appointment to apply for their survivor benefit.

One other thing to be aware of since you were both married before: if either of you die, and your first marriage lasted at least 10 years and your ex-spouse has also died, the surviving spouse will have a choice to collect a survi-

See Rusty Page 3

How to Protect Brain Health

(StatePoint) Americans overwhelmingly say brain health matters deeply as they age, ranking it on par with — or even above — physical health. Yet despite this concern, most adults acknowledge they do not know how to protect or maintain their cognitive health, according to the 2026 "Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures" report and a new nationwide survey released by the Alzheimer's Association.

Eighty-eight percent of U.S. adults say maintaining brain health is very important, and almost all adults ages 40 and older surveyed (99%) say it is at least as important as physical health. However, only 9% say they know "a lot" about how to maintain their brain health. More than two-thirds say they worry about their brain

health and about developing Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia.

"Americans care deeply about their brain health and say that midlife is the key time to start taking steps to support it," said Heather M. Snyder, Ph.D., senior vice president of Medical and Scientific Relations for the Alzheimer's Association. "But many don't know where to start and are looking for clear guidance on actions they can take."

The report comes as the impact of Alzheimer's disease continues to expand nationwide. An estimated 7.4 million Americans age 65 and older are currently living with clinical Alzheimer's dementia. Total annual costs of caring for people living with dementia nationwide — excluding unpaid care —

are projected to reach \$409 billion this year, an increase of \$25 billion from 2025. Since 2000, deaths from Alzheimer's disease in the United States have increased 134%.

Despite broad awareness that lifestyle behaviors influence brain health, the survey reveals a significant disconnect between belief and action — and between brain health and dementia risk. While 75% of respondents say lifestyle behaviors such as diet, physical activity and sleep are very important for maintaining brain health, only 46% say those same behaviors are very important for reducing the risk of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

Only 50% report

See Brain Health Page 4

■ THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

1. The state of Indiana is accepting nominations for the Governor's 2026 Century and Half Century Business Awards, which honor Hoosier businesses that have remained in operation for at least 100 or 50 years, respectively, and have demonstrated a commitment to serving the community. Indiana businesses receiving the Governor's 2026 Century and Half Century Business award will be honored at a ceremony at the Indiana Statehouse later this year. Eligible companies are encouraged to complete the online application by May 30, 2026. Please visit iedc.in.gov/program/century-and-half-century-awards for additional details..

2. The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs released its strategic plans for the agency as well as the Indiana Main Street program. OCRA's strategic plan creates a roadmap for the agency through 2028, while the Indiana Main Street strategic plan, created in partnership with Main Street America, outlines the program's goals through 2030. Ahead of the development of OCRA's strategic plan for rural Indiana, OCRA Executive Director Fred Glynn toured the state's 92 counties where he met with local officials and leaders to learn more about what is directly impacting Hoosier cities and towns. Both strategic plans can be found on OCRA's website at in.gov/ocra/about/strategic-plan/. For further information on the Indiana Main Street program, visit in.gov/ocra/mainstreet.

3. Indiana Governor Mike Braun highlighted his signing of HEA1200: a bill to take on the dangerous upsurge of illegal aliens with Commercial Drivers' Licenses driving large commercial trucks on Hoosier roads and highways. Braun was joined by bill author Rep. Jim Pressel, Secretary of Public Safety Anthony Scott, and representatives from Attorney General Rokita's Office. Recent cases of illegal aliens driving commercial vehicles involved in fatal crashes has brought attention to this issue. Indiana experienced multiple fatal crashes caused by illegal immigrants with CDLs driving massive commercial trucks. This is not the first enforcement measure Governor Braun has taken to remove illegal alien commercial truck drivers from Indiana's roadways. Last fall, Gov. Braun teamed up with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on Operation Midway Blitz, a successful 287(g) operation with Indiana State Police that resulted in the arrest of 223 illegal aliens on Indiana highways near the Illinois state line — including 146 truck drivers.

Indiana Seniors Lost \$36M to Fraud

New research from SEO agency MADX Digital, which looked at Federal Trade Commission data, reveals Indiana's older residents lost over \$36 million to fraud in 2025, with typical losses reaching \$883 per victim. The agency said FTC data shows that elderly Americans aged 60 and over have lost a staggering \$2.73 billion to fraud across the U.S. in 2025.

Indiana ranked 39th for senior fraud losses, with lower losses helping offset steady levels of fraud activity. The state recorded 7,904 reports and \$36 million in losses, with 23.5 percent resulting in financial loss. The loss-per-victim amount of \$883 was lower than neighbors Illinois (\$1,005) and Ohio (\$998), Indiana sits at the lower end of the regional spectrum in terms of financial damage.

Nationally, there were 442,536 reports of fraud among those aged 60 or more, with 24.5 percent of these resulting in a financial loss. MADX Digital (<https://madx.digital/>) said that the total stolen runs into the billions, with losses per case varying widely depending on where victims live.

The "typical loss" figure reflects the average of median losses across age groups, rather than a simple average of total losses divided by reports.

Nebraska had the highest median fraud loss in the nation with 2,079 reports in 2025 with total losses of roughly \$14.7 million. About 24 percent of those reports involved a financial loss, right at the national average, but when victims in this state do lose money they lose far more of it than anywhere else in the country, with a typical loss of \$3,825 per victim, based on median losses across age groups.

That means a typical fraud victim in Nebraska loses roughly nine times more than one in Maine, which ranks last for financial impact with a typical loss of just \$430.

Not far behind is Utah, where the typical loss of \$3,271 came from 3,284 reports, with total losses topping \$29.7 million. About one in four reports involved a financial loss, the same as the national average. Fraud in Utah succeeds at about the average rate. The difference is the cost per victim.

In third place, with a typical loss of \$2,561, is South Dakota. The state filed just 935 fraud reports, one of the lowest totals in the country, but 28% of those involved a

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The Paper

OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

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RECOGNIZE ME?

Flashback Trivia with Butch Dale



Do You Recognize This 1970 Ladoga H.S. Graduate?

HINT:
She was active in many clubs, was a Homecoming Queen candidate for every sport and was an outstanding cheerleader.

Answer on Page 4

Thompson, Committee Expand Child Care

State Rep. Jeff Thompson (R-Lizton) joined fellow members of the State Budget Committee in approving an additional \$200 million to expand access to child care for low-income families.

The State Budget Committee approved the proposal at its meeting Thursday to allocate additional funding for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) voucher program. During the 2026 legislative session, the General Assembly passed Senate Enrolled Act 4, which Thompson co-sponsored, allowing the state to augment funds from the Financial Responsibility and Opportunity Growth (FROG) Fund for the CCDF program. This funding could help the state resume enrollment for CCDF vouchers by an estimated 14,000 children.

"Many parents rely on child care so they can work, further their education and financially support their families," Thompson said. "Having access to reliable and affordable child care is essential to building our workforce and communities. This additional

funding will give more Hoosiers who need it most the ability to pursue their goals."

Indiana's CCDF is a federally supported program that currently assists about 43,000 children statewide, with eligibility based on household income and employment criteria. Additional enrollment would prioritize siblings of current voucher holders, infants and children between 3-5 years old. A set of exemptions will be created for children of foster and kinship families, children with special needs, homeless children, children of child care workers and children of Ivy Tech students.

Thompson also supported House Enrolled Act 1177 this session to expand the state's employer child care tax credit, encouraging more employers to offer child care options to employees.

According to the most recent state data, capacity at regulated child care facilities has increased over the past year, with capacity currently at 174,400 children.

Thompson represents House District 28, which includes portions of Boone, Hendricks and Montgomery counties.

Wabash Avenue Presbyterian to hold Flute Concert this Sunday

Concerts on the Corner welcomes the Lafayette Flute Choir to Crawfordsville this Sunday afternoon at 4 at Wabash Avenue Presbyterian Church.

Organizers of Concerts are excited to present this group of more than 30 flutists with their unique musical offerings that appeal to listeners of all ages. Choir director, Ellie Berg, said the LFC, which recently celebrated 50 years serving Lafayette and the surrounding communities, provides an opportunity to entertain and for flutists to experience performing together a variety of musical styles.

Sunday's one hour program features popular tunes including selections from The Sound of Music, Simple Gifts, Bohemian Rhapsody, Hallelujah, Bridge Over Troubled Water and Pirates of the Caribbean.

The concert is free, open to the public, and a free will offering will be donated to the Indiana Youth Group. The continued mission of Concerts on the Corner is to spread the love of God through the joy of music.

Wabash Avenue Presbyterian Church is located at 307 S. Washington.



Photo courtesy Wabash Avenue Presbyterian Church
The Lafayette Flute Chir will perform in concert Sunday at 4 p.m. at Wabash Avenue Presbyterian.

Play Has 2 Nights Left at Wabash

Rory Willats '17 wants you to take your jackets and programs with you when you go.

He also hopes the audience will leave "And You Will Stand on Windswept Beaches" with conversations that interrogate what it means to be a man, to be in relationship with others, and to be vulnerable both in body and in soul.

"The play talks quite a bit about being a father, but it totally overlooks having parents," he said. "It's an invisible voice that speaks throughout the story. For some men, in particular, these narratives serve to separate men from their dads. So my project in the theater was making the invisible visible."

The play has been on stage at Wabash this week. It has two nights left, tonight and Saturday. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. each night. Admission is free but tickets are required and may be reserved by visiting <https://www.wabash.edu/boxoffice/>. This event may involve material that may not be

appropriate for young children.

Willats is directing the play, based on Owen Booth's short story of the same name, as new type of show-one that is less rehearsed and more raw, one where the choreography, sound, and lighting are often in conflict and commentary with the action on the stage.

"The father figures read this text, line by line, so that the sons can perform it," Willats explained. "The sons are told what to say and do during the show. So it's more like an athletic event where they rehearse the strategies but not the show. Then they are playing the show on stage for the first time when they're in front of the audience."

The show stars student actors Ben Donaldson, Trezdin Hair, Alex Kindig, Hunter McArthur, and Alex Schmidt as The Sons. Willats said he was looking for intellectually curious actors who were also willing to be vulnerable in public and exhaust themselves physically for

the sake of the play.

"This is staging the vulnerability of going, 'Well, actually, I haven't rehearsed this ever,'" he said. "I think that is a little bit scary."

Willats wants the audience to be involved in making meaning along with the play.

"The narrative makes men kind of strange and insular," he said. "And now, if you've seen this show, you can still be insular, but you can't pretend that you're the only person that is feeling this feeling. You'll know that a couple hundred people were sat in the room with you, and you'll recognize the feeling because you saw it in front of you."

Willats travels as a freelance director and is often involved in community theater, but directing this show at Wabash is special for him. He directed Aeschylus' The Furies as a senior at Wabash, and is working with many familiar faces on this production nearly ten years later.

Willats said, "I actually get to make

this with Wabash, for Wabash, and not as a kind of thesis, but as a kind of offer that goes, 'How are we relating to these things now? Why is the conversation around this?'

And so can we make a show that opens space rather than closes it down?"

Other members of the cast include Zachary Anderson, David Vogel, Ethan Hollander, Eric Olofson, and Dan Rogers as The Fathers. Members of the crew include Precious Ainabor, Aidan Amick, Sean Bledsoe, Brighton Boggess, Asher Bolen, Jax Bower, Javier Cabrera, Boston Cahoon, Xavier Cienfuegos, Jeremiah Clayton, Chessa Duval, Carson Foxen, Jessie Franklin, Ryan Frazier, Chris Harshbarger, Mike Kopecky, Nicholas Kvachkoff, Grayson McCallum, Hieu Nguyen, Thomas Price, Bailey L. Rosa, Cooper Rudolph, Daniel Shaw, Nick Sommers, Cameron Spaulding, RJ Sturgill, Misael Talavera, Brandon Thompson, David BW Vogel and Heidi Winters Vogel.

Montgomery County Retired Teachers Meet

President Steve Frees welcomed members to the April 13th Montgomery County Retired Teachers Association meeting held in the Crawfordsville Public Library. Following the pledge, the invocation was given by Barb Foster. Table decorations were provided by Sheila Hodges and Barb Foster. The donation basket money will go to the Achauis Ranch.

President Steve introduced Allison Frees-Williams who spoke about Disability Services on the University Level. She gave a very informative talk about the program at University of Illinois. She works to help students with registered disabilities. These students are expected to participate in the regular college curriculum and must make the request for help. They are given help developing skills such as job interview techniques. The goal is for these students to be

confident, competent, and job ready.

President Steve called the business meeting to order. The minutes, which were sent to members, were approved. Barb Foster gave the treasurer's report. A motion to accept the treasurer's report was made and seconded. The motion passed.

Charley and Diane German gave the legislative update. Charley encouraged the members to vote in the primary as well as the November general election. He also encouraged us to call our legislators and voice our opinions. They work for us!!

Nancy Buckles told the members that the member concern committee sent out over 120 cards to members this year.

Kathy Steele announced the slate of officers for the 2026-2027 year. The slate will be: President-Steve Frees

Vice-President- Kathy Steele
Secretary- Jerilyn Yerkes
Treasurer- Sheryl Starnes
Colleen from AMBA told members that there have been many changes to Medicare supplement plans and that we all need to check our plans. There have also been many advantage plan changes as well. She suggested that we should contact Governor Braun and ask him to repeal the new birthday rule. It is not helpful for anyone.

The next meeting will be held on May 11, 2026 at the library. The table decorations will be provided by Sheryl Starnes, Jerilyn Yerkes, and Kim Nixon. Kim Nixon will give the invocation. The program will be our Teacher Memorial and Installation of 2026-2027 Officers. The basket donations will go to Camp Milligan.

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

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City Expands Cat Program With AWL

The City of Crawfordsville is increasing its efforts to humanely address the community's feral and stray cat population through an expanded Shelter-Neuter-Release program in partnership with the Animal Welfare League of Montgomery County.

As part of this initiative, the City has committed an additional \$25,000 in dedicated funding to support the SNR program in 2026. This investment reflects the City's focus on proactive, long-term solutions for managing free-roaming cat populations.

Mayor Todd Barton emphasized that community participation is essential to the program's success.

"We are excited to partner with the Animal Welfare League to move this program forward and are optimistic it will result in a positive impact for Crawfordsville residents by addressing the growing population of cats in a humane and caring manner," Barton said.

AWL Shelter Manager Abbie Horn agreed. "The Animal Welfare League of Montgomery County and the City of Crawfordsville are working together in taking a compassionate, proactive step towards improving the lives of community cats while reducing the growing population and creating a healthier and happier future for both the animals and people in our community," she said. The SNR program is a widely recognized



Photo courtesy City of Crawfordsville / Animal Welfare League

Six were part of piloting the SNR Program.

approach that involves live-trapping stray and feral cats, having them spayed or neutered, and returning them to their original location. This process helps stabilize populations over time, reduces nuisance behaviors such as fighting and spraying and improves overall animal health.

Through this program, the AWL will: Respond to community concerns regarding stray and feral cats; Assess situations and recommend appropriate solutions; Implement SNR efforts in targeted areas where they are most needed; Provide guidance to residents on addressing community cat issues; To support community involvement,

AWL will also loan live traps and carriers to residents for use in safely capturing stray or feral cats. A fully refundable \$50 deposit is required for this equipment. To participate in this program, please make an appointment with the AWL prior to bringing a cat in.

Residents who experience concerns with feral or stray cats are encouraged to contact the Animal Welfare League. Reporting issues and working collaboratively with AWL helps ensure resources are directed where they are needed most. For more information or to report concerns about stray or feral cats, please contact the AWL at (765) 362-8846.



Photo courtesy Andy Chandler

Marie Canine Plaza Plaque Unveiling

Members of the community gathered recently at Marie Canine Plaza at Crawford Place in beautiful downtown Crawfordsville for the dedication of a plaque recognizing the story of the plaza and fountain. Notable attendees included Dr. Les Hearson, who was the original Crawfordsville Main Street board president and organizer for Crawfordsville Main Street, former Main Street President Sue Lucas, current president Jami Harrington, former board members Brad and Becky Hurt and board member Casey Hockersmith. According to Lucas, the organization saw a need for greenspace and converted the former parking lot into the plaza it is today. The new fountain was added in 2024 to replace one that had fallen into disrepair.

Foundation Annual Meeting May 21

The Montgomery County Community Foundation will hold its annual meeting on Thursday, May 21, at 4:30 p.m. at the Hoosier Heartland State Bank Success Center at 1623 South US-231 in Crawfordsville. This year marks

another major milestone for us as MCCCF celebrates 35 years in Montgomery County. The Foundation will also be celebrating its achievements, welcoming new board members and conducting necessary business. The Volunteer of

the Year Award and the Peggy Herzog Youth Volunteer of the Year Award will be presented and the recipients honored at the meeting. The meeting is open to all residents of Montgomery County.

FRAUD

Continued from Page 1

financial loss, well above the national average. Total losses came to about \$6.9 million.

In Arizona, fully 32% of reports resulted in a financial loss, nearly eight percentage points above the national average. Across 14,116 reports the state's victims lost a combined \$128 million, with the typical loss per victim sitting at \$2,467.

New Hampshire rounds out the top five. With a total of 3,495 filed reports, fewer than one in five complaints involved a monetary loss. That 19% rate is the second lowest of any state. Those who did lose money lost a typical \$1,572, with total losses of about \$11.4 million.

Texas had more complaints than any state except California and Florida (31,458 in all, with total losses of roughly \$238 million) and about one in four ended with money changing hands. The typical loss per victim there was \$1,571.

Maine ranks last for financial impact, with a typical loss of just \$430 per victim, a fraction of what Nebraska's victims hand over. It is, by that measure, the safest state in the country for older consumers who do fall victim. The state filed 2,250 reports with about \$10.9 million in total losses. About 22% of reports involved a financial loss.

Investment fraud dwarfs every other category when it comes to the money older Americans lose. Categorized by the FTC as miscellaneous investments and advice, the category drew

only 14,028 reports from older consumers, a small fraction of the total, but no other fraud type costs its victims anything close to as much. Total losses surpassed \$1 billion, which is more than 38% of all fraud losses among older consumers, and the median victim handed over \$23,418.

Romance scams are the second costliest per victim, with a median loss of \$8,048. Romance victims collectively filed roughly 10,500 reports and lost \$384.1 million between them. Fake check scams are a smaller category altogether, just 577 reports, but the median victim still lost \$5,959 and total losses came to \$8.4 million.

The sheer number of complaints looks quite different. Business impersonators generated the most complaints by far, with nearly 123,000 reports and \$421.6 million in total losses; the typical victim, though, lost just \$1,119. Government impersonators were the second most reported category (99,855 complaints) and the second costliest in total dollars at \$447.4 million, but at a median of \$4,116 per victim they were nearly four times more expensive per case. Tech support scams cost \$126 million (21,735 reports, median \$3,747) and prizes, sweepstakes and lottery scams \$143.1 million (20,145 reports).

Online shopping fraud (41,309 complaints, \$59.4 million in losses) had the lowest median loss of any category at just \$107. Job scams (9,203 reports, \$55.9 million)

and family and friend impersonators (8,884 reports, \$37.5 million) filled out the rest of the table.

"What stands out in states like Nebraska and Utah isn't necessarily a higher volume of scams, but the scale of the damage when they do land," Toni Koraza, founder of MADX Digital, said. "These are typically higher-value fraud types – often investment-related or long-running schemes where trust is built gradually. By the time money changes hands, the amounts involved are much larger. The variation between states is particularly telling. In some areas, scams are more frequent but involve relatively small sums, while in others they are less common but far more financially severe. That points to very different fraud ecosystems at play, which matters when it comes to prevention and awareness strategies. In a state like Indiana, where typical losses are below the national average, the risk often comes from the volume of lower-value scams rather than headline-grabbing investment fraud. Investment scams are a clear outlier. They are designed to feel legitimate over time, often involving repeated contact and convincing narratives that build credibility. That's why the eventual losses are so high. On the other hand, things like online shopping scams are far more frequent but tend to involve smaller amounts. Individually they may seem less damaging, but at scale they still contribute to tens of millions in losses."

RUSTY

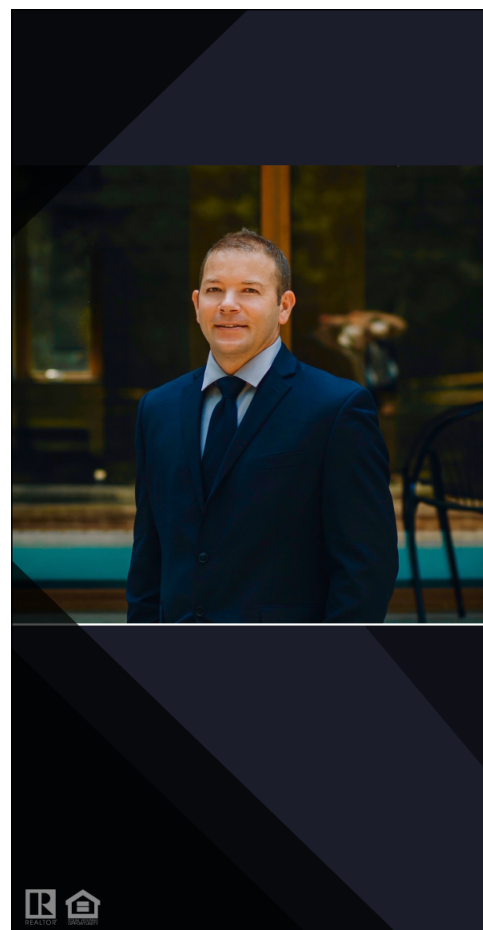
Continued from Page 1

vor benefit from either the ex-spouse, or the most recently deceased spouse, whichever amount is more. But, again, you can only collect one benefit payment as a surviving spouse – either from your ex-spouse or from your recently deceased spouse, whichever benefit is higher.

FYI, survivor benefits are a confusing area of Social Security, so you might also find informative this article I recently published, as it goes more deeply into

surviving spouse benefits (including benefits for surviving minor children and surviving adult disabled children). Read the article titled "Demystifying Social Security Survivor Benefits" at www.amacfoundation.org/demystifying-social-security-survivor-benefits/. Of course, if you have any further questions, please contact us at 1.888.750.2622, or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. There is never a

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Every Eligible Scholarship Player Returns to Purdue, Painter



**SPORTS,
SPORTS, &
MORE SPORTS**
with Ken Thompson



Photos courtesy Purdue Athletics
Omer Mayer



Gicarrri Harris



C.J. Cox

For many years, the sign “Defense Lives Here” has been displayed in Mackey Arena. Maybe there also should be a placard declaring “Loyalty Lives Here.”

Do not underestimate the fact that every eligible scholarship player is returning to Purdue for the 2026-27 season.

Whether or not Purdue adds a player or two from the transfer portal, the Boilermakers will be a young team entering the 2026-27 season. As of now, Princeton graduate transfer Caden Pierce is the lone scholarship senior.

Who will coach Matt Painter write into the official scorebook as his starting lineup come November? Here’s my best guess.

C.J. Cox
The 6-3 guard has started 62 consecutive games. Is he ready for a leadership role after playing alongside Braden Smith and Fletcher Loyer?

Cox played well in Purdue’s Elite Eight run, averaging just under 10 points a game while shooting nearly 47 percent from 3-point range and 61 percent overall from the field. Cox protects the ball, turning it over just 12 times in 39 games this past season. He’s also a solid defender like fellow junior Gicarrri Harris.

Purdue will need more games like Cox’s performance at Northwestern, when he matched his career high of 27 points on 10 of 13 shooting.

Omer Mayer
The 6-4 sophomore was recruited from Israel specifically to take over Braden Smith’s point guard duties in 2026-27. Mayer flashed his offensive potential in a home victory against Indiana, putting up 18 points on 6 of 8 shooting (4 of 5 from 3-point range).

In Big Ten play, Mayer led all conference freshmen with

44.2 percent shooting (23 of 52) from 3-point range. If Mayer develops into the NBA prospect some foresee, he could be the difference in Purdue contending again for a league title.

Gicarrri Harris
The 6-3 guard’s season almost mirrored that of the Boilermakers. At home, Harris shot below 20 percent from 3-point range. But on a neutral court or on an opponent’s home floor, he was a 45.6 percent (26 of 57) shooter behind the arc.

Consistency will be the key to Harris’ playing time. He has an edge of being one of Purdue’s best perimeter defenders.

Caden Pierce
It seems obvious that the 6-7 Pierce was brought in to step into Trey Kaufman-Renn’s large shoes at forward.

The 2024 Ivy League Player of the Year at Princeton visited Connecticut, Duke, Louisville and Gonzaga before choosing to play his final season at Purdue. Torn ligaments in an ankle spoiled his junior season. It’s presumed the year off to earn his bachelor’s degree helped Pierce heal completely.

Daniel Jacobsen
The 7-4 center is still trying to catch up in his development after a freak broken leg during the second game of his freshman season in 2024-25.

He needs to bulk up from his listed weight of 250 pounds. But with big man whisperer Brandon Brantley and the recent hire of Kenneth Lowe to upgrade the defense, it is hoped Jacobsen will break out in 2026-27.

Top reserves
Jack Benter
I considered the 6-6 Benter for the starting lineup, stepping into Fletcher Loyer’s role as an outside shooting threat. Benter shot nearly 41

percent from 3-point range as a redshirt freshman.

Benter was possibly miscast this past season as the backup power forward to Trey Kaufman-Renn. With Caden Pierce recruited specifically to take on that role, Benter could be more effective at small forward.

Antoine West Jr.
Strictly a guess. The 6-3 guard from Toledo, Ohio, was a four-star recruit who chose Purdue over Nebraska, Dayton, Michigan and Ohio State.

There’s an opening for a guard coming off the bench who can score and provide defensive energy. This could be West’s role as a redshirt freshman.

Luke Ertel
Hopefully, fans won’t compare Ertel’s rapid rise in high school to Braden Smith. Smith is a pure point guard, while the 6-2 Ertel is more of a scorer. Although, these quotes from Matt Painter do sound familiar:

“I don’t know if I have ever seen a player that we have taken with more fortitude than Luke has,” Painter said on National Signing Day. “He’s very determined, tough, hard-nosed, picks you up full-court and birddogs the basketball.”

Ertel is the 41st ranked player in the Class of 2026 by 247sports.com. He ran away with the voting for Indiana Mr. Basketball after leading Mt. Vernon to the Class 4A state championship.

Raleigh Burgess
Preseason leg surgery led to the decision to redshirt the 6-11, 245-pound Burgess.

Could the sophomore be the X-factor against opponents who play two big men on the front line?

Unknown
Sinan Huan
Barring another injury to Jacobsen and Burgess, it would seem the 7-1 center from Beijing via Georgetown Prep in Washington, D.C. will redshirt. Then again, it was assumed by many that Zach Edey would redshirt as a freshman.

Huan is the seventh 7-footer to sign with Purdue since 2012 (AJ Hammons, Isaac Haas, Matt Haarms, Edey, Will Berg, Jacobsen).

“He’s a player that can change the game on the defensive end, not just blocking shots but by being a deterrent in the lane,” Matt Painter said in a statement back in November on National Signing Day.

Jacob Webber
On paper, Webber would seem to be the perfect candidate to step into Fletcher Loyer’s role as a dangerous 3-point shooter. But carrying just 175 pounds on a 6-6 frame entering his senior year at La Lumiere makes one wonder if he could take the physical beating Loyer endured as a freshman at Purdue.

“Jacob gives us great positional size as a guard and is the best move-and-shoot player in the country,” Painter said of Webber, ranked 64th nationally by 247sports.com. “We think he’s the most prolific shooter in the country.”

Rivers Knight
Webber’s teammate at La Lumiere, the 6-8 Knight caught Painter’s attention after injury kept Knight off the summer basketball circuit. Also like his teammate, Knight’s best attribute is his long-distance shooting touch.



Daniel Jacobsen

“He can really stretch the defense at that four position,” Painter said. “He has range to 25 feet and can consistently knock them down.”

Walk-ons
Sam King
King is intriguing for two reasons: Walk-ons are seldom asked to redshirt before their senior year. The other reason? King is 6-9, 230 pounds. Best case scenario is a repeat of walk-on turned scholarship forward Grady Eifert’s impact in 2019.

Jack Lusk
The son of assistant coach Paul Lusk will enter his third season in the program. The 6-4, 195-pound guard has yet to score a point in a Boilermaker uniform.

Jace Rayl
The 5-11 senior guard played eight games this past season. He is the grandson of 1959 Indiana Mr. Basketball Jimmy Rayl.

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.

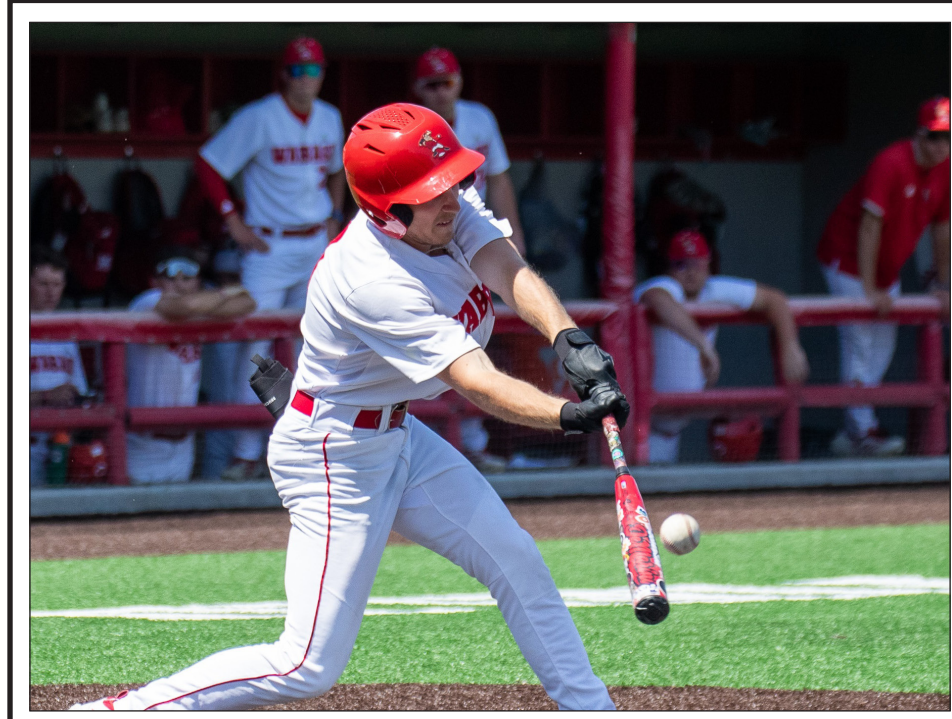


Photo courtesy Andy Chandler

BRAIN HEALTH

Continued from Page 1

getting at least seven hours of sleep daily or most days, 39% say they eat a healthy, balanced diet regularly, 42% engage in mentally stimulating activities such as reading or puzzles, and just 34% report regular physical activity. Nearly one-third say they exercise less than weekly or not at all.

At the same time, Americans express strong interest in programs designed to support brain health. Seventy-three percent say they would consider participating in such programs, particularly those focused on cognitive exercises (57%), health monitoring (46%), nutrition (36%) and physical activity (26%).

Many adults view midlife — ages 35 to 64 — as a critical window for protecting brain health. Nearly two in five (38%) believe people should begin taking steps during midlife, and 46% say formal brain health programs are most appropriate during this stage. At the same time, about one-third view brain health as a lifelong priority.

Health care providers are seen as trusted sources of guidance, but conversations about brain health rarely occur. Eighty-six percent of adults would welcome these discussions during routine visits. Yet only 14% report ever discussing how to maintain brain health with their provider, and just 11% say they have talked about reducing dementia risk.

“These findings highlight an opportunity to better integrate brain health into routine health care,” Snyder said. “People are motivated to protect their brain health, and actionable guidance can support those efforts.”

To address these gaps, the Alzheimer’s Association is working with partners across communities, workplaces and health care systems to deliver research-backed resources and programs. These efforts are informed by the landmark U.S. POINTER study, which found that combining multiple healthy lifestyle habits can help protect cognitive function.

Learn more at alz.org/facts. “The takeaway from this report is clear: brain health is a lifelong priority, not an issue limited to older age,” Snyder said. “By connecting individuals, communities, workplaces and health care, we can build a more equitable framework to support cognitive health and help reduce dementia risk for everyone.”

OH SO CLOSE

Wabash College is having a tough year on the diamond. The Little Giants dropped a doubleheader to 16th-ranked Wittenberg Wednesday at Godrich Ballpark. Wabash came within a whisker of winning the first game but fell 4-3. The second game wasn’t close as the national powerhouse rolled to a 16-6 win. The losses drop Wabash to 9-21 overall and 3-9 in North Coast Athletic Conference play. Wabash played Hanover yesterday and travels to Naperville, Ill. Saturday and DePauw Tuesday before returning home Wednesday at 5 p.m. against Franklin.

RECOGNIZE ME?

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A.G. Announces Nearly 30 Items Recalled in March

Attorney General Todd Rokita alerted Hoosiers to nearly 30 recalled products during the month of March. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission listed recalled items in multiple areas, from children's toys, furniture, outdoor equipment, and more.

"Hoosiers deserve to know their families are safe in their own homes," Rokita said. "That's why we're sounding the alarm on nearly 30 dangerous recalled products this month – from children's toys and furniture to power tools and grills. If you own any of these items, stop using them immediately and contact the manufacturer for a refund, repair, or replacement. Your family's safety is too important to take chances."

The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports the following products were recalled in March:

Outdoor equipment:

Petzl America Recalls Nomic and Ergonomic Ice Climbing Axes Due to Fall Hazard; Risk of Serious Injury or Death | CPSC.gov

- The ice axe shaft can break at the handle during use, posing a fall hazard, which can result in serious injury or death.

Amazon Recalls Amazon Basics Camping Folding Pocket Knives Due to Laceration Hazard | CPSC.gov

- The folding mechanism on the blade can fail to remain properly secured in the closed position, posing a laceration hazard.

Children's Toys/Products/sleepwear:

HALO Dream Recalls Magic Sleepsuits Due to Choking Hazard | CPSC.gov

- The zipper head can detach from certain sleepsuits, posing a choking hazard to infants.

4our Kiddies Tip Restraint Kits Recalled Due to Tip-Over Hazard; Risk of Serious Injury and Death | CPSC.gov

- The recalled plastic tip restraint kits (also referred to as furniture straps) can break or degrade, posing tip-over and entrapment hazards that can result in serious injuries or death to children or elderly consumers interacting with furniture that is secured to the wall with the defective plastic tip restraints. This is a hidden defect because consumers who purchase and install this product may be under a false sense of security that their furniture is safe from a tip-over incident.

AirClub Convertible Bassinets Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Fall Hazard; Violates Mandatory Standard for Bedside Sleepers | CPSC.gov

- The recalled convertible bassinets violate the mandatory standard for bedside sleepers because the mechanism used to attach the product to the adult bed creates

an opening between the bedside sleeper and mattress, posing a deadly fall hazard to infants.

FUNTOK Ride-On Trucks Recalled Due to Fire and Burn Hazards; Risk of Serious Injury or Death; Imported by Shenzhen Luobei Trading | CPSC.gov

- The truck's circuit board can overheat and ignite, posing fire and burn hazards.

Infant Walkers Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Fall Hazard; Violate Mandatory Standard for Infant Walkers; Sold on Amazon by Goregent Official Store | CPSC.gov

- The recalled infant walkers violate the mandatory standard for infant walkers because they can fit through a standard doorway and fail to stop at the edge of a step, posing a risk of serious injury or death due to a fall hazard.

LFTE USA Recalls Playground Swing Set Seats Due to Fall Hazard | CPSC.gov

- The rivets used to support the swing seat can fail, posing a fall hazard to children.

Stoney Games Recalls Kluster Magnet Chess Games Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Magnet Ingestion; Violates Mandatory Standard for Toys | CPSC.gov

- The recalled magnet games violate the mandatory standard for toys because they contain loose high-powered magnets that fit within CPSC's small parts cylinder, posing an ingestion hazard to children. When high-powered magnets are swallowed, the ingested magnets can attract each other, or other metal objects, and become lodged in the digestive system. This can result in perforations, twisting, and/or blockage of the intestines, blood poisoning and death.

GLMZZ Fidget Magnet Ball Toys Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Magnet Ingestion; Violates Mandatory Standard for Toys | CPSC.gov

- The magnet ball toys violate the mandatory standard for toys because they are high-powered magnets, posing an ingestion hazard to children. When high-powered magnets are swallowed, they can attract each other, or other metal objects, and become lodged in the digestive system. This can result in perforations, twisting, and/or blockage of the intestines, blood poisoning and death.

Cubimana Island Storm 3 In 1 Building Sets Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Battery Ingestion; Violates Mandatory Standard for Toys; Sold on Amazon by RBS Toys | CPSC.gov

- The Island Storm Building Sets violate the mandatory safety standard for toys because the battery compartment within the LED light

piece contains button cell batteries that can be easily accessed by children. When button cell or coin batteries are swallowed, the ingested batteries can cause serious injuries, internal chemical burns and death.

Unique Brands Com Recalls Forever 21 Pajama Pants Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Burn Hazard; Violates Mandatory Flammability Standards for Children's Sleepwear | CPSC.gov

- The recalled children's pajama pants violate the mandatory standards for flammability of children's sleepwear, posing a burn hazard and risk of serious injury or death to children.

Home furniture:

17 Stories Furniture

14-Drawer Dressers Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Tip-Over and Entrapment Hazards; Violates Mandatory Standard for Clothing Storage Units; Imported by Hong Kong Baojia International | CPSC.gov

- The recalled dressers are unstable if they are not anchored to the wall, posing tip-over and entrapment hazards that can result in risks of serious injuries or death to children. The dressers violate the mandatory standard as required by the STURDY Act.

LIVEHOM 11-Drawer Dressers Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Tip-Over and Entrapment Hazards; Violates Mandatory Standard for Clothing Storage Units; Sold on Amazon by Simplehome | CPSC.gov

- The recalled dressers are unstable if they are not anchored to the wall, posing tip-over and entrapment hazards that can result in risks of serious injuries or death to children. The dressers violate the mandatory safety standard as required by the STURDY Act.

Tainoki Fine Furniture Recalls Office Chairs Due to Risk of Serious Injury and Fall Hazard | CPSC.gov

- The recalled chairs' base can bend, posing a fall hazard.

MPINOI Adult Portable Bed Rails Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Entrapment and Asphyxiation; Violates Mandatory Standard for Adult Portable Bed Rails; Sold on Amazon by Bioenrrty | CPSC.gov

- The recalled bed rails violate the mandatory standard for adult portable bed rails because users can become entrapped within the bed rail, or between the bed rail and the side of the mattress, posing a serious entrapment hazard and risk of death by asphyxiation. In addition, the bed rails do not bear the required hazard warning labels.

Vive Health Recalls Adult Portable Bed Rails Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Entrapment and Asphyxiation; Two Deaths Reported | CPSC.gov

- When the recalled bed rails are attached to a bed, users can become entrapped within the bed rail or between the bed rail and the side of the mattress. This poses a serious entrapment hazard and risk of death by asphyxiation.

Home cleaning:

Wagner Spray Tech Recalls 900 Series Power Steamers Due to Burn Hazard | CPSC.gov

- The attached hose can get excessively hot and the nozzle/gun can expel hot water during use and after the trigger is engaged, posing a serious burn hazard to consumers

Mechanical:

DuraTrac Recalls Stainless Steel Gas Connectors Due to Fire Hazard | CPSC.gov

- The recalled DuraTrac gas connectors contain a manufacturing defect that could cause a gas leak, posing a fire hazard to consumers.

Cookware/Drinkware:

Nexgrill Recalls Over 10.2 Million Metal Wire Bristle Grill Brushes Due to Ingestion Hazard; Sold at Home Depot | CPSC.gov

- Small metal wire bristles can detach from the brushes and stick to the grill or food, posing an ingestion hazard and risk of serious internal injuries that could require surgery.

Electrolux Group Recalls Frigidaire Gas Ranges Due to Burn Hazard | CPSC.gov

- The ovens in the ranges can experience a delayed ignition of the oven's bake burner, posing a risk of burn hazards to users.

Lifetime Brands Recalls BUILT LUUM Light Up Tumblers Due to Risk of Choking and Battery Ingestion Hazards | CPSC.gov

- The recalled LED tumblers can break, making the button cell batteries accessible to children and posing choking and ingestion hazards. When button cell or coin batteries are swallowed, the ingested batteries can cause serious injuries, internal chemical burns and death.

Electronics:

CCCEI Brand Power Strips Recalled Due to

Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Fire; Sold by Middle Way Electronics | CPSC.gov

- The power strips do not contain supplementary overcurrent protection, which creates a risk of fire if the power strips are overloaded. The resulting fire can cause serious injury or death from smoke inhalation and burns.

DIY Cold Plunge Recalls Sauna Heater Kits Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Fire Hazard | CPSC.gov

- Electrical conductors within the sauna heater kits can overheat, posing a fire hazard and risk of serious injury or death.

Sunnyses LED Mini Lights Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Battery Ingestion; Violates Mandatory Standard for Consumer Products with Coin Batteries | CPSC.gov

- The recalled LED lights violate the mandatory standard for consumer products containing button cell or coin batteries because the lights contain lithium coin batteries that can be accessed easily by children, posing an ingestion hazard. Additionally, the screw used on the remote controls to secure the battery compartments that contain a lithium coin battery does not remain attached. Also, the packaging does not have the warnings as required by Reese's Law. When button cell or coin batteries are swallowed, the ingested batteries can cause serious injuries, internal chemical burns and death.

Bicycle gear/helmets:

Specialized Bicycle Components Recalls Specialized Turbo Como SL Electric Bicycles Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Fall Hazard | CPSC.gov

- The bike's fork steerer tube can develop a small fatigue crack that can lead to a progressive failure of the fork, posing a fall hazard.

Aisstxoer Adult Bicycle Helmets Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Head Injury; Violates Mandatory Standard for Bicycle Helmets; Sold on Amazon by

YXTDZ Store | CPSC.gov

- The recalled helmets violate the mandatory safety standard for bicycle helmets because the helmets do not comply with the impact attenuation, positional stability, and certification requirements. The helmets can fail to protect the user in the event of a crash, posing a serious risk of injury or death due to head injury.

ProRider Recalls Bicycle Helmets Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Head Injury; Violates Mandatory Standard for Bicycle Helmets | CPSC.gov

- The recalled helmets violate the mandatory safety standard for bicycle helmets because the helmets do not comply with the impact attenuation, positional stability, labeling and certification requirements. The helmets can fail to protect the user in the event of a crash, posing a serious risk of injury or death due to head injury.

Hair products:

Tomum Minoxidil Hair Serum Spray Bottles Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Child Poisoning; Violates Mandatory Standard for Child-Resistant Packaging; Distributed by Belleka | CPSC.gov

- The hair serum contains minoxidil, which must be in child-resistant packaging as required by the Poison Prevention Packaging Act. The hair serum's bottles are not child-resistant, posing a risk of serious injury or death from poisoning if the contents are swallowed by young children.

If you believe you recently purchased a recalled product, stop using it, and check its recall notice (linked above for all products). Then follow the notice's instructions, including where to return the product, how to get the product fixed, how to dispose of the product, how to receive a refund for the product, or what steps must be taken to receive a replacement product.

To view recalls issued before March, visit the Consumer Protection Safety Commission website.

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Sen. Deery Shares Update

Like many of you, I have been frustrated with our federal government for years over its refusal to both secure the border and to create a rational, orderly immigration process that allows our country to maximize competitiveness.



Spencer Deery
State Senator

Most of the problems in our broken system can only be fixed by the federal government, but Indiana is doing its part through several common sense reforms.

Specifically, Indiana's reforms fall into five categories:

Keeping criminals out of our communities. When someone commits a crime, is arrested, and determined to not be here legally, local authorities must allow federal authorities to take custody.

Prohibiting employers from knowingly hiring illegal immigrants. Indiana's new law increases penalties for violations, and repeat offenders will lose their license to operate in the state. This both benefits Hoosiers and protects workers from exploitation by bad actors.

Preventing welfare payments to illegal immigrants through

additional immigration status checks.

Keeping illegal or dangerous commercial truck drivers off Indiana's roads. To ensure individuals can read and understand temporary or digital road signs, I supported a new law that says CDL tests must be passed in English. Illegal aliens are ineligible to receive a CDL in Indiana.

Cracking down on human trafficking. Indiana's new law makes it easier for prosecutors to investigate and stop these horrendous crimes.

These are common sense reforms that I was proud to support to promote law and order and to keep Hoosiers safe and prosperous. Indiana is doing its job, and I call on the federal government to do the same!

Suspending the Gas Tax

Despite all Senate Republicans have done to maintain our state's

low cost of living, one of the top issues on Hoosiers' minds right now is the rising cost of gas. With this in mind, I supported Senate Republicans' push to suspend the gas tax last week.

I'm pleased that Gov. Braun listened and announced he will suspend the sales tax on gas for 30 days to provide some relief for Hoosiers. Hoosiers need this money more than the government right now.

Free Fishing Days
The first of four Free Fishing Days this year is May 10, when Hoosiers without a license or a trout/salmon stamp can fish in the state's public waters.

These days are a great opportunity to learn how to fish or even introduce a friend or young one to fishing.

Additional Free Fishing Days will take place June 6-7 and Sept. 26.



Photo courtesy Crawfordsville Fire Department

A lithium-ion battery being charged in the garage was the likely cause of this fire.

Garage Fire Caused by Lithium-Ion Battery

A fire that destroyed a garage and damaged nearby structures this week was likely caused by a lithium-ion battery, Crawfordsville Fire Department officials report.

On Tuesday evening, CFD responded to a structure fire in the 600 block of East Wabash Avenue a little after 7:30. Upon arrival, crews found a fully involved detached garage located behind a residence. The fire had begun to spread to the home and was threatening three nearby structures.

Firefighters initiated a coordinated response on three fronts, including a defensive

attack on the garage, a defensive operation to protect adjacent structures and an offensive interior attack within the residence. Everything was under control within an hour.

All occupants had safely evacuated prior to firefighters' arrival. Crews were also able to safely retrieve pets from the residence and return them to the homeowners. No injuries were reported among civilians, firefighters or pets.

The detached garage is considered a total loss. The residence and nearby structures sustained varying degrees of fire damage. A preliminary investigation

conducted by the Crawfordsville Fire Department determined the fire was unintentional and likely caused by thermal runaway from a lithium-ion battery that was being charged inside the garage.

East Wabash Avenue was closed during the incident and reopened after crews cleared the scene at approximately 10 p.m.

Assisting agencies included the Crawfordsville Police Department, Montgomery County Central Communications Center, Crawfordsville Electric Light & Power, Indiana American Water Company and CenterPoint Energy.

Witham Hosts Fundraiser and Mother's Day Raffle

The Witham Health Services Volunteer Organization will host a fundraiser with Merle Norman Boutique and Spa on Thursday, April 23, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the main entrance of Witham Health Services

at 2605 North Lebanon Street in Lebanon.

Shop from a variety of products and brands, including Brighton earrings, necklaces bracelets, and totes, Ambre blends fragrances, cosmetic gift sets, spring

sweatshirts and clothes, Oofos flip flops, Vera Bradley, Merle Norman skin care, cosmetic gifts and more.

Proceeds from the fundraiser benefit the Witham Volunteer Organization Scholarship

Program and various fund the need initiatives for Witham Hospital.

Starting April 20, visit the Waterfall's Edge Gift Shop and Pavilion Boutique on the Lebanon campus and enter to win a Mother's

Day basket with items donated by local businesses. The basket is valued at over \$100. Tickets are \$1 each or six tickets for \$5. The drawing will be held on Friday, May 8.

For more infor-

mation about these events or to learn about volunteer opportunities at Witham, contact Director of Volunteer Services Amy Mitchell at 765-485-8175 or amitchell@witham.org.

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Speech Marks 81st Anniversary of Ernie Pyle's Death

One of the most famous war correspondents in U.S. history was Indiana's Ernie Pyle. His work during World War II was read by millions and carried in newspapers and magazines across the country. He was killed on April 18, 1945 in battle. On the 81st anniversary of his passing historian, photographer and archivist Andy Chandler was asked to give a speech at the Ernie Pyle WW II Museum in Dana, Ind. Here is the text from that speech.

Friends. It is my privilege and honor to speak to you today on this solemn occasion. Thank you.

When I was asked to give this speech, the original topic was to be about the grandiose memorial and cemetery that was planned immediately after the untimely death of Dana and Helt Township's favorite son: Ernest Taylor Pyle.

However, in researching this overlooked moment in this township's history, something began to shine brighter than an overlooked episode: this community.

After Pyle's death, prominent state officials including Indiana Governor Ralph Gates, attempted to fundraise for a modest library and memorial to Pyle in Dana.

They went to Ernie's widow and Jerry originally agreed to a statue, library and scholarship from IU in his name. However, forces outside of her and the community grabbed the reins and what was intended to be a humble tribute, became plans for a 100-acre monstrosity here where we're standing, complete with two reflection ponds. Ernie's

body was to be repatriated to Dana and placed in a grandiose mausoleum. Surrounded by the graves of unknown soldiers from WWII.

Jerry was incensed. She and Ernie's father Will put an end to that project. Too ostentatious. Ernie would stay in the Pacific where he lies side by side with the men he reported on.

However, it wasn't the end for a community wanting to honor its favorite son.

After all, not only did this community give the world one of its greatest reporters but also sparked in him a world view steeped in Midwestern values. It's a world view that exists today in the faces of people I have met at the museum, and other places like Carters Nest where I get my favorite basket of fries, Off the Tracks cafe and the faces in front of me right now: that of personal humility in the form of self-deprecation, while at the same time, valuing others ahead of oneself.

It is a community where people still put down everything to help others in need.

Pyle spoke of this attitude in a 1937 column describing the aftermath of his mother's debilitating stroke. The day after the stroke:

"The help began to roll in instantly. The strongest men in the neighborhood came, without being asked, to help lift my mother into her bed. The women came, to help my Aunt Mary with the washing and housework. Others came, and others called to see what they could do . . .

For nearly forty years my mother was the one who went to all these people when they need-



Photos courtesy Andy Chandler

Colors were presented at the ceremony.

ed help. They haven't forgotten and now they're coming to her in droves. Indiana farmers know what a 'Good neighbor Policy' is. It's born in them."

In the 81 years since his passing, this community rallied around the house he was born in and brought it into town. Before it opened, they donated much of what is seen inside today. When the museum changed ownership a decade and a half ago, the community rallied around it to keep it open as a tribute to Ernie. Recently, they saw the opening of a research area and the unveiling of a statue. This is the beginning of the Ernie Pyle Veterans Memorial Park: and I can assure you, it will be much easier to maintain than the 100-acre park originally proposed.

Yet Ernie, like us, was led to dream, and when during one of his frequent visits after he started working for Scripps, he wrote to his future wife in 1925, that



Ernie Pyle Festival Queen Melanie Kashon put a wreath on the monument to Pyle at Ernie Pyle Park in Dana.

he would lie on the front yard at night, look up at the stars and think of "my Jerry." Perhaps we too look up at those same stars in this same sky and dream of places we have yet to visit and reminisce or dream of love we have and have yet to experience.

In closing, I want to speak specifically to the

students here. I'm reminded of the two report cards of his we have in our collection: his first grade and freshman year report cards. He was an A's and B's student. To the young ones still in school: he may have a statue in town and a monument here, but Ernie tied his shoes and went out the door just

like you. His parents had to meet the teacher, just like yours do! If you look at Ernie's report cards, his father had to sign each page of them. He didn't get them by email.

Perhaps at this very moment, as I look at one of you, I'm also looking at a future Pulitzer Prize recipient. It's happened here before.

Master Gardeners Annual Plant Sale & Show Next Saturday

By Sheri Bethard, President Master Gardeners of Montgomery County

Plants, plants and more plants! This is what you will see when you visit the Montgomery County Master Gardeners' Plant Sale & Show, held this year in the 4-H Building on the 4-H Fairgrounds at 400 Parke, Crawfordsville, Saturday, May 2, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. (extended time), rain or shine. You will not be disappointed. There will be hundreds of plants to choose from to beautify your landscape, patio and home – all which have been locally grown by the Master Gardeners and local wholesale nursery suppliers.

Indiana grown sweet strawberries, a large variety of tomatoes, peppers and lettuce mixes will be available. We will also have a large selection of 23 herbs for your culinary needs.,

For your landscape and flower beds, Native, perennial, and annual plants which grow best in our area will be for sale. With such a large assortment of plants for inside and outside, sun or shade, wet or dry areas with too many to list, you will have to come see for yourself.

The plant sale is the main and sometimes

only fundraiser the Master Gardeners of Montgomery County has each year. With monies raised, it helps fund projects and educational opportunities for all of Montgomery County in the horticultural area such as the Nicholson Elementary School Garden for second and third graders. In addition, we award a scholarship yearly to a high school senior who will be seeking a degree in agriculture, horticulture, environmental science or plant-related fields of study along with a Floral Culture award at the 4-H annual fair. We are currently working on the Montgomery County Pollinator Garden and planting native trees on the 4-H Fairgrounds. With funds raised we are supporting the Seed Library located in Crawfordsville District Public Library. Throughout the year, we will be presenting programs for the public to attend in the gardening / horticulture arena, such as our recent leaf cutting propagation and the winter seed sowing workshops and the gardening programs at the library last month.

Our Master Gardeners will be on premise to answer your gardening questions and make suggestions to

best suit your landscape project/needs. This year nine vendors will be on premise to accentuate your plant buying, such as house plants, tropicals, specialty plants, landscape information, garden décor, birdhouses, plant stands, homemade jams / jelly & honey products, yard maintenance. The vendors scheduled this year will be ProGreen Gardening Center, Yund Outdoor / Davidson's Greenhouse, Walnut Fork Crafts, Sugar Creek Lawn & Hardscape, Gilley's Metal yard art, The Plant Pub, Stadler Laser Wood Crafts, and Denhart's along with five of the non-profit organizations serving Montgomery County and a Wildfire348 with biscuits and gravy, pizza's and drinks So, come prepared to spend time browsing all our plants and vendors. Nucor will be giving away free Eastern White Pine, American Arborvitae, Northern Red Oak and Hybrid Poplars in the 4-H Barn. So, come early and make a day of it.

To learn more about Montgomery County Master Gardeners please visit our Facebook Page - Master Gardeners of Montgomery County (Indiana) at <https://www.facebook.com/>

Spring Fashion Show

AND VENDOR SHOWCASE

THE CORNERSTONE EVENT CENTER
221 S. WASHINGTON STREET, CRAWFORDSVILLE

APRIL 28TH | EVENT STARTS AT 6:30PM

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TICKETS \$25 EARLY BIRD - \$30 APRIL 22-28

SWEET AND SALTY DESSERT BAR INCLUDED WITH ADMISSION

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