



THE HAMILTON COUNTY REPORTER NEWSPAPER FEBRUARY 2024 YOUNG ARTIST OF THE MONTH: LIA CHRISTMAN (2ND PLACE)
SPONSORED BY: TOM WOOD VOLKSWAGEN NOBLESVILLE • GAYLOR ELECTRIC (CEO CHUCK GOODRICH) • ADLER ATTORNEYS

WILL ————— PROFESSOR

from Page 1

a juvenile probation officer, this became my passion because I just saw how it really does transform lives and families.”

According to Evans, if you're seeing strong-willed, kind of defiant behaviors on a regular basis that your normal parenting techniques are ineffective in dealing with, this program could help.

“We talk about the compliant child versus the strong-willed child,” Evans said. “With the compliant child, you can say, ‘Hey, I need you to wear your coat because it's cold outside,’ and they'll go get their coat. The strong-willed child will say, ‘I don't need my coat. It's not cold outside.’ And it might be negative degrees. So when you start to see that kind of behavior that and your normal parenting techniques are just not effective, that's when you may have a strong-willed child.”

Evans stressed that there is nothing wrong with a child who has a strong will.

“It's just going to be a different parenting experience, and we're going to approach our strong-willed kids differently than we would a compliant child,” Evans said. “For many parents, their idea of success is to break that strong-willed

in their child so they become compliant. The reality is that strong leaders are all strong-willed people. We want strong-willed people, because they're going to lead our businesses; they're going to change things for the better in our communities. We just have to make sure that they're directed in the right direction, and so that's really what we at Parent Project do.”

Evans told The Reporter his teams does not teach how to control or break what is in strong-willed kids, but to help direct that to a positive place where they can use that strong will for positive ends.

While there is a cost for the program, there are options for financial assistance if needed.

“There are some scholarships available,” Evans said. “We do have some scholarships through the Hamilton County Council on Alcohol and Other Drugs. Also, Advocate Plumbing is a company that believes in helping families, so they have also stepped up to help provide scholarships.”

Parenting Solutions is located at 605 Sheridan Road, Suite 1108, Noblesville. Learn more online at ParentingSolutionsNow.com or call (317) 399-5332.

My kids really helped me to see how important it is to accept ourselves as we are. Somehow, seeing life through the lens of a mother really helped me to see my own life more clearly. During their hard times in life, my message to them is honest. Telling them that it won't be their last challenge in life, and if they can see adversity as a teacher, it helps. Way easier said than done, right?

My oldest son was a dis-

tance runner in high school and went through a lot of really difficult times with tough injuries that really changed the story he had mapped out for himself. It was so hard to watch him live through those years, but on the other side of those injuries, have been some beautiful life moments. Watching him come to this realization was both painful and glorious. Crossing the New York City marathon finish line a couple years

ago was as much a thing of beauty for him as it was for me. The fact that we did it together, which is a story for a later date, is remarkable.

It's not to say we won't still struggle when adversity comes our way, and it may take years to realize what it taught us. It takes humble courage to look at your life and realize that sometimes your hard times in life are your best teaching moments. I've seen many kids and young adults, who live

with disabilities, come to this realization way before I ever did. I'm always just in awe, and so motivated when I see that. Motivated to keep pushing forward.

Until next time...

Amy Shinneman is a former National Ambassador for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, disability blogger, wife, and mom of two boys. You can find her blog at humblycourageous.com and reach her on Instagram @ashinneman.

from Page 1

DOLLS

from Page 1

My sister had a doll just like Mary Jane but the elastic, which made its joints move, had worn out. By then Ruth was more interested in boys than dolls and her doll was never repaired.

Sometime after I was married, my oldest brother decided to do some housecleaning for our parents. I had left my toys in the old smokehouse which for years had served as my playhouse. I thought the toys were safe there; my parents would have left them there till I decided to bring them home.

Brother did not know the value of old old toys. He thought he was being helpful when he burned my dolls, my baby coat, a small wooden truck he had given me one Christmas, a large, leather-covered camel-back trunk and anything

else he could find that was burnable. I was glad I had given my doll bed and my fanciest doll to two little neighbor girls. (Otherwise they wouldn't have had any Christmas gifts.) Also I had given my doll buggy to my niece. At least that much didn't burn!

Uncle Will made the doll bed when I was about 6 or 7. Cousin Vera bought the beautiful sleeping eyed doll. Aunt Dora made pillow, mattress, bed covers, silk doll dresses and an everyday outfit. The silk dress was white, trimmed with pink silk ribbon down the front and around the neck and sleeves. I don't recall this doll's name. Another doll I had was handed down from Vera. The body was rag but the head was China. Heads like hers are quite

valuable now. Poor thing met a sad fate at the hands of my youngest brother. He made a parachute consisting of a large handkerchief, some string and a bolt. To see how well the parachute would worked, my brother borrowed my doll. Too bad bolts and China heads aren't more compatible.

Little girls outgrow their dolls as a multitude of other interests takeover. In later years the interest sometimes returns. One lady got disgusted with her alcoholic friend and told him not to come back. Then she bought a crib and a baby doll. That arrangement was much more satisfactory, she said.

There are several lessons to glean from my doll stories. One obvious one is to take care of your own be-

longings. If you don't, don't blame anyone who destroys them. Also, don't loan anything that isn't expendable. Remember, one man's junk may be another man's treasure.

If you happen to be the one who is doing the burning, find out the value of the article before deciding whether to destroy it. My brother could quote you prices on old furniture and old China. He obviously didn't know much about toys.

(I once saw a tin toy at a yard sale. The toy was marked \$.25. I did not buy it because it was dirty. Later I saw a similar one sell for around \$100. At the same sale a broken toy piano sold for over \$100. Junk? Treasure?)

By Dorothy Howard Adler

Thanks for reading!

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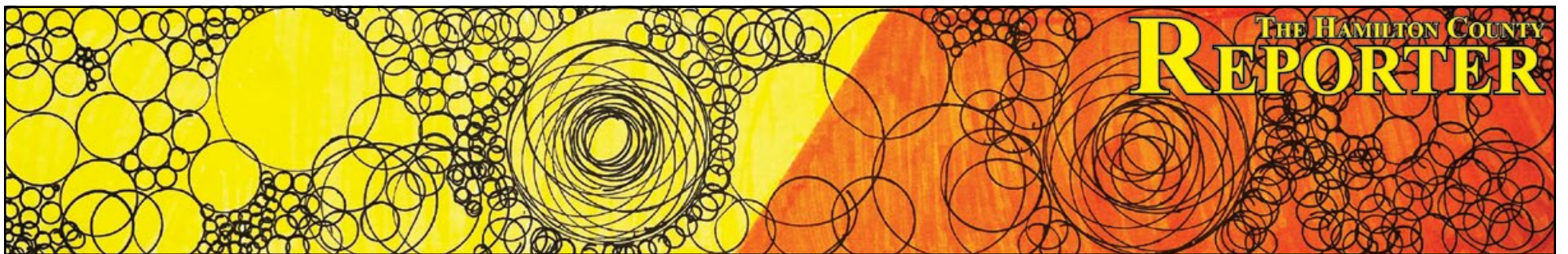
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THE HAMILTON COUNTY REPORTER NEWSPAPER FEBRUARY 2024 YOUNG ARTIST OF THE MONTH: AVA GIST (3RD PLACE)
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Westfield Lions Club announce 2024 scholarships

Club increases number & value of scholarships

By **JEFF LARRISON**
Westfield Lions Club

Each year the Westfield Lions Club provides a variety of scholarships for graduating Westfield High School seniors.

A combination of factors has led to the club adding more scholarships and increasing the dollar amounts for them. The sizes of the graduating classes each year has continued to jump; the cost of college increases each year; and the Westfield Lions Club has had tremendous success with its largest fundraising event, their semi-annual "Poker for Sight" Texas Hold 'em Tournament.

All of this has led the Lions to expanding their scholarship offerings and raising the amounts of each scholarship.

For years the Club offered three scholarships – the Florence Benson Memorial Scholarship, the Lester Tudor Memorial Scholarship, and one or two scholarships for the Westfield H.S. LEO Club. Together these scholarships typically totaled \$3,000. In 2023 the Club

decided to aggressively expand their list to total nine scholarships worth \$16,500.

A major change in the scholarship offerings involves the introduction of scholarships for students interested in pursuing an education at trade and vocational schools, including the culinary arts. The Lions recognized that not all graduating students are interested in going to the traditional four-year colleges, and there seems to be a need to encourage students to consider pursuing careers in the trades.

The 2024 list of Westfield Lions Club scholarships is:

- **Don Russel Career Development Scholarship (\$2,000):** Named in honor of one of the most outstanding Lions in the Westfield club's history, this scholarship is awarded to a student who will be attending a trade or vocational school.

- **(2) Trade & Vocational Scholarship (\$2,000):** These two scholarships are also for graduating seniors intending to attend



trade or vocational schools.

- **Culinary Arts Scholarship (\$2,000):** The Westfield Lions Club has long been a financial supporter of the WHS Culinary Arts program. In 2023 they offered their first scholarship specifically targeted to a graduating culinary arts student who will be continuing their training for the food service industry.

- **Service Over Self Scholarship (\$3,500 total to be divided between two students):** These scholarships (formerly known as LEO Club scholarships) are awarded to students who demonstrate a commitment to serving in their community. The Lions Club works

closely with the SOS Club to help support their service work in Westfield.

- **Lester Tudor Memorial Scholarship (\$2,000):** Named in honor of a former Lion who also was a principal at Westfield H.S.

- **Florence Benson Memorial Scholarship (\$2,000):** Named in honor of a former Westfield H.S. home economics teacher who was recognized as an outstanding educator and community volunteer. This scholarship is awarded to a student who demonstrates a commitment to serving others in the community.

- **Outstanding Male Athlete of the Year (\$500):** Selected by the Westfield Athletic Department.

- **Outstanding Female Athlete of the Year (\$500):** Selected by the Westfield Athletic Department.

Applications for these scholarships are available in the Westfield High School guidance department. For more information on the scholarships and the Westfield Lions Club, go to WestfieldLions.org.

Sheridan Kiwanis cancel pork dinner

The REPORTER

Saturday night's Sheridan boys basketball game has been postponed to Monday, Feb. 19 due to the girls

team going to semi-state.

In light of that, the Kiwanis Club of Greater Sheridan has canceled the pulled pork dinner.

Live Music Feb. 16 - Tyler Robling Dou
Open Mic Tuesdays 7-10 p.m.
Trivia Wednesdays 7:30-9:30 p.m.
Keyboardist Dave Lowe every Thursday 6-9 p.m.
17419 Suite C, Carey Rd., Westfield 317.867.0397

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Westfield Youth Assistance Program's Christine D. Brown Memorial Scholarship application now open

The REPORTER

The Westfield Youth Assistance Program's (WYAP) application for the annual Christine D. Brown Memorial Scholarship is now available on the WYAP website, youthassistance.org/westfield.

The Memorial Scholarship is in honor of WYAP Early Intervention Advocate Christine Brown, who passed away in August of 2022. Brown's family, the board of directors, and generous donors have established the Christine D. Brown Memorial Scholarship with one annual \$5,002 scholarship.

Brown worked with 502 youth over her 10 years with WYAP and touched countless lives in the Westfield community and beyond. The annual scholarship ensures that her legacy continues and is open to all current and former graduates aged 25 and under who attended Westfield Washington Schools or resided in the township.

"Christine was an integral part of the Youth As-

sistance Program, providing support and guidance to numerous youth and their families," WYAP Board President Tammy Havard said. "We are honored to be able to continue to offer this scholarship in her name."

During WYAP's 14-year history, the program has connected hundreds of youth in Westfield with mentoring, tutoring, mental health counseling, medical services, enrichment activities, and more. The scholarship highlights WYAP's emphasis on giving back to Westfield Washington Township youth. The organization's long-term goal is to give the youth in the community every advantage to be successful and grow into adults who contribute in large measure to the Westfield community.

The application deadline for the scholarships is Monday, April 1, 2024. The recipient will be notified by April 15 and invited to attend the WYAP Youth Recognition Breakfast at IMMI in May.

WESTFIELD youth Assistance PROGRAM
Advocate • Connect • Empower

About the Westfield Youth Assistance Program

The Westfield Youth Assistance Program (WYAP) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization located at 2728 E. 171st St. WYAP serves youth aged 3 to 17 who are facing challenging life circumstances. WYAP takes a holistic approach to coordinate the community's vast array of talents, services, and resources to help youth and empower parents and caregivers. 2024 marks the organization's 15th anniversary. Visit youthassistance.org/westfield for more information.

Your time to be heard: new survey invites public to help 'elevate' Carmel

Submitted by
City of Carmel

The City of Carmel strives to be the best. What are city officials getting right? Where can they make improvements?

The city has launched a new Community Survey and is asking for your input. Whether you live or work here, or just love to visit Carmel, you are welcome and encouraged to participate. Your voice matters.

Data from the survey will be collected and analyzed to help inform the

new administration what is top-of-mind in the community.

Your input is anonymous. You will not be asked to provide your name, so share your thoughts freely and be sure to share this survey with your friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues. The survey includes 29 questions and should take about 15 minutes to complete.

"I am thrilled to launch a survey that will give our



Finkam

residents a real voice in the direction we take and the decisions we make," Mayor Sue Finkam said. "I heard over and over during my campaign that residents felt their voices were not heard. This survey will help inform us what you care about so that together, we can elevate Carmel."

Now is your chance to be heard. Click here to take the survey.

Thanks for reading!

Supporting the Arts
For one week each month this year, The Hamilton County Reporter is giving young artists at local schools the chance to design the banner at the top of the first three pages in Hamilton County's Hometown Newspaper.

This Week
Sheridan Middle School
winning art is on Pages 1, 2 & 3
Next month, winning artists from another Hamilton County school will be featured in the pages of The Hamilton County Reporter.

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A Time to Honor book donation to Indiana schools & libraries honoring Vietnam Veterans

Submitted

The Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans, Inc. (WHVV) nonprofit organization recently donated copies of the historic book, *A Time to Honor: Stories of Duty and Sacrifice*, and DVDs, valued at \$50,000, to the Indiana Daughters of the American Revolution (INDAR).

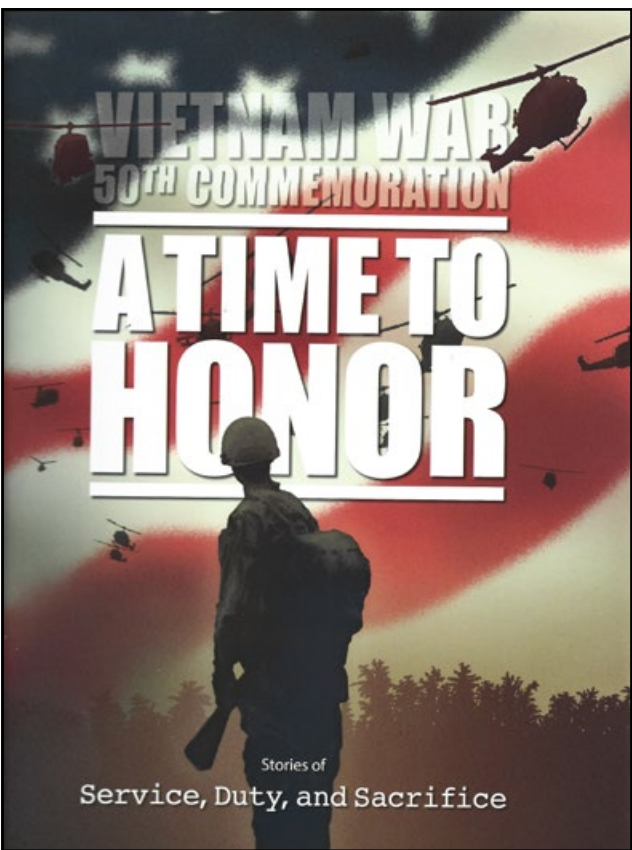
Distribution of the book to over 730 Indiana high schools and public libraries is currently underway. Members of Horseshoe Prairie Chapter (DAR) are presenting the hardbound books locally, which tell the stories of service from all states, all military branches, and different Military Occupational Specialty (M.O.S.) jobs during the Vietnam War years of 1955 to 1975. The real stories of service, duty, and sacrifice are sourced from the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress.

To date, the collaboration with WHVV, the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA), and INDAR has resulted in over 12,000 Indiana Vietnam Era Veterans Gift book/DVDs presented to each individual veteran at 188 dedicated events in 84 counties across Indiana. Over 800 INDAR members have volunteered in this effort.

Vietnam veterans are the backbone of our communities. They came home over 50 years ago to widespread disrespect and yet they initiated respect for all future war veterans. They tried to blend in as they built businesses, gave back, and continued to love their country.

WHVV, IDVA, and INDAR are “THANKING OUR HEROES ONE AT A TIME.”

For more information about WHVV and DAR, please contact Jill Fewell



Graphic provided

at jill@WHVV.org and shirley1776@yahoo.com, Shirley Hunter Smith at respectively.

Wreaths Across America partners with Library of Congress Veterans History Project to launch new webinar series

The REPORTER

Wreaths Across America (WAA), in collaboration with the Library of Congress Veterans History Project (VHP), announces the launch of a new, free webinar series for educators.

These four-part quarterly webinars aim to equip educators and youth of all ages with the vast resources available from the Library of Congress and will focus on how teachers and students can participate in collecting, preserving, and sharing veterans’ stories critical to our nation’s history and the teaching of the next generation about the value of freedom.

The series will kick off at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, March 19 and will be co-hosted by Cindy Tatum, Wreaths Across Ameri-

ca Curriculum Developer and Gold Star Mother, and Andrew Huber, Senior Liaison for the Library of Congress Veterans History Project. Later dates for the remaining webinars in the series include May 14, August, and October to be announced.

Registration is now open for the first event. [Click here](#) to register for free.

“One of the goals of this webinar series is to provide valuable resources to educators as well as students, who we know will benefit from developing listening and interviewing skills, developing a more impactful understanding of history from sharing personal stories and learning more about multi-media practices,” Tatum said.

Educators’ takeaways

from webinar participation include developing a more thorough understanding of the use of the Library of Congress as an educational resource, providing a project for experiential learning for students in developing interviewing techniques and listening skills, increasing awareness of the WAA K-12 curriculum and wreath-laying projects that develop community development and leadership opportunities for students.

“This webinar series is designed to give educators and classrooms all the tools they need to start using the Veterans History Project website for primary source research and create their own primary source materials for inclusion in the Project,” Huber said. “Participants will learn about VHPs

standards and requirements as well as basic oral history techniques so they can join the dozens of schools nationwide documenting and preserving the history of our nation’s veterans.”

Educators and homeschoolers are encouraged to explore the TEACH program curriculum and stay informed about new lesson plans on WAA’s website at wreathsasscrossamerica.org/teach. The program offers a comprehensive curriculum tailored for kindergarten through high school, engaging students with stories of courage and character while emphasizing character development and service projects.

[Click here](#) for more information regarding the Library of Congress Veterans History Project.

Letter to the Editor

Carmel’s resident non-mayor wishes Mr. Jackson well

Dear Editor:

Quietly and efficiently, the new mayor of Carmel is bringing the state’s highly effective budget director into her government as chief financial officer.

Zac Jackson is charged with managing city finances and cash flow planning, analyzing the city’s financial position and setting financial strategy.

That is one tall order in a city famous for its \$1.5 billion debt and fiscal stonewalling.

Even the new mayor herself found it impossible, as a city councilor, to crack the Iron Curtain surrounding Carmel Redevelopment Commission’s \$18.5 million cost overruns on the over-priced luxury Hotel Carmichael.

Jackson also can finally clear up the half-in, half-out debt reporting maze that lists 79 bonds in one place and 22 fewer elsewhere, designating some bonds “developer-backed” in an obvious ploy to keep the outstanding principal owed under \$1 billion.

Inflation, stagnation, rising interest rates and a general monetary mess coast to coast will only add to Jackson’s burdens.

We non-mayors wish him well.

Bill Shaffer
Carmel

Letters to the Editor do not reflect the opinions of The Reporter, its publisher or its staff. You can submit your own Letter to the Editor by email to News@ReadTheReporter.com. Please include your phone number and city of residence. The Reporter will publish one letter per person per week.

Noblesville student named to president’s list at Drake University

The REPORTER

Harrison Stull of Noblesville has been named to the president’s list at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa.

To be eligible for the

president’s list, students must have earned a perfect 4.0 grade-point average during the Fall 2023 semester.

Stull is studying in the College of Arts & Sciences.

Fishers student makes dean’s list at Fairfield University

The REPORTER

Kyla M. Berg of Fishers has received dean’s list honors for the Fall 2023 semester at Fairfield University in Fairfield, Conn.

In order to be placed on the dean’s list, students must

have completed a minimum of 12 credit hours in a semester, have no outstanding or incomplete grades for that semester, and have attained a semester grade-point average of 3.50 or better.

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Ballet group goes all wild west in Carmel

By **AMBER SHATTO**
A Seat on the Aisle

Gregory Hancock Dance Theatre (GHDT) accomplishes bringing iconic themes of American Western classics into a contemporary dance presentation complete with cowboys, gunslingers, bandits, and saloon girls for 90 minutes of engaging storytelling in *The Wild Wild West*.

Executive Artistic Director Gregory Hancock, never one to settle for a stale showcase, takes audiences back into the 1800s to experience the lawless frontier through an array of settings and characters with performances from GHDT company dancers and pre-professional students of The Academy of GHDT (G2) in the intimate setting of The Florence Theatre, 329 Grapple Drive, Carmel.

Company dancer Thomas Mason opens the production as protagonist Tobias Clayton as he walks onto the floor in the darkness engaging only our sense of sound as his Western boots tap the floor demonstrating to the audience that this is, in fact, a performance of costume

and movement authenticity. The first theme of conflict emerges when the Eastwood-with-grace character falls for an Indian princess portrayed by Olivia Payton. Powerful tribal dancing by members of the company led by stoic Indian Chief Chloe Holzman fills the stage before Tobias accepts that he must move on as he finds himself a stranger in a new town.

While GHDT is a company comprised of predominantly women, this production is comprised of predominately male characters. Next we see cowboy-walking townspeople donning lip-covering hair, broad-brimmed hats, and hip-slung weapons sizing up Tobias. The scene evolves into an uproarious saloon setting with dancing by colorful saloon girls. Conflict eventually erupts here, too, as villains emerge. Tobias finds love again as we see Abigail Lessaris as darling Clementine who delivers a seemingly effortlessly sharp performance. The two join in a romantic series of movement.

As more drama unfolds, a mysterious woman per-

formed by Camden Lancaster is introduced and aids Tobias in his final quest. With a consistent presence throughout the last portion of the show, Ms. Lancaster captivates the audience with her movement in her striking red dress. The story concludes as company members join in a jubilant dance with beautiful lifts and an array of costumes. Also of note, the G2 students make frequent appearances throughout the production as the cavalry who must have been riding Lipizzaner stallions due to their graceful footwork.

In this particular GHDT production, the “theatre” element knocks even harder. Leaning into this classic genre portraying the American Old West, black and white title cards charmingly appear to identify each scene change. The performance presents very similarly to an early-style silent Western due to the inherent qualities of storytelling through movement and expressions. One exception is the highly entertaining hoots, hollers, and heckling, particularly of Ms. Payton who delivers endless laugh-out-loud worthy phrases with melodra-



Photo by Robert Candis

Tribal dances in *The Wild Wild West*.

matic appeal as her cowboy character.

The entertaining and familiar music selections in *The Wild Wild West* range from the classic American Western age through the Spaghetti Western era but also includes traditional American works featuring drums and chanting. Mr. Hancock effectively dresses the artists in detailed costumes in a collection of colors and fabrics from the Earth tones of the cowboys and bandits to the bright sheen of the saloon girls. Lighting choices by Mr. Mason not only set the tone but also serve as a set piece at times. Red lights illustrate moments of conflict and alarm while warm hues bring us to the heat of high noon, but the use of green

lights during prairie moments soften the black-box atmosphere and transports the audience from the town to a softer setting where the prairie women take the stage in an emotional segment.

As GHDT Board of Directors President Anindita Sen points out, The Florence allows for a concert where audience members can enjoy hearing dancer footwork and even their breaths at times as they prepare and recover throughout a performance. Witnessing these artistic athletes execute their expressive movement up close provides a special perspective for all to appreciate. This setting also allows for enjoyable audience interaction in *The Wild Wild West* as audiences feel like bystanders during saloon scenes.

You can experience *The Wild Wild West* on Saturdays and Sundays through Feb. 25. Performances begin at 5 p.m. and 3 p.m., respectively, so you can saddle up and head on over to your favorite waterin’ hole afterwards. With the opportunity to see pistols in the dancers’ hands during their graceful turns in a 90-minute package of thrilling storytelling and immensely skillful dancing, pick up your Uncle Bill and other Western film-appreciating loved ones on your way to The Florence and assure them that they’re in for a unique treat!

Tickets can be purchased at gregoryhancockdancetheatre.org.

Read more great play reviews from *A Seat on the Aisle* at asota.wordpress.com.

Ever want to lose sleep over bees? Well, look no further. We got you.

By **DANIEL SHOCK**
A Seat on the Aisle

Honeybees are disappearing. This is a concern because they pollinate 70 percent of the crops that feed 90 percent of the world. If the bees disappear, the plants disappear, followed by the eaters of the plants (us).

This is the problem that keeps the characters up at night in Madhuri Shekar’s play, *Queen*.

The play centers around two doctoral candidates, Sanam (Isha Narayanan) and Ariel (Chynna Fry), who are on the verge of publishing the results of nearly a decade of work to explain the cause of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). They are certain that they have identified the cause and feel a righteous purpose as they are about to save the world.

While preparing the final presentation for their project leader, Dr. Phillip Hayes (Ryan Artzberger), Sanam finds that the last batch of data has changed the statistical significance of their findings and calls into question their method and results. The two candidates’

friendship is tested as they struggle to reconcile the data with their own idealism and pressure from Dr. Hayes to publish and ignore the latest numbers.

I didn’t know a thing about this play before the lights came up, but I quickly forgot I was watching a performance and was absorbed into the story and the dilemma the characters faced. The actors, brought together by director Kelsey Leigh Miller, worked so well together that it felt more like a documentary than a scripted performance. Isha Narayanan, as Sanam, was utterly convincing as a young statistician facing enormous pressure to compromise her integrity for the easy solution. As Ariel, the biologist, single mother, and colleague of Sanam, Chynna Fry faces disappointment, manipulation, and gaslighting from all sides as she navigates all the aspects of her life competing for her time.



Photos provided

IRT fixture Ryan Artzberger presents Dr. Hayes as the good mentor who reveals himself to be as self-centered and petulant as a child when he doesn’t get what he wants. Finally, Nayan Patadia as Arvind the rich suitor that Sanam meets for dinner on a date arranged by her parents, brings that fresh perspective that we all often need to work out the solution to a problem. He has the opposite trajectory of Dr. Hayes; we start out disliking him but start to see him as more than he seemed at first. The entire cast was captivating.

See *Queen* . . . Page 7

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Carmel Symphony Orchestra captivates Valentine's audience



Reporter photos by Shana Sloma

On Saturday, Feb. 10, Carmel Symphony Orchestra (CSO) enchanted Valentine's Day patrons with a night of romantic music featuring acclaimed Mallorcan violinist Francisco Fullana, festive cocktails and cookies, and scenes from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* performed by students from the Carmel High School Theater Department. The performance at the Palladium offered symphony music lovers of all ages the chance to listen to an eclectic mix of vibrant music while enjoying a holiday treat. Fullana passionately performed solos during Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto in E minor* and Sarsate's *Ziugueirweisen*. Following Intermission, CSO, under the musical direction of David Commanday, gave an emotional performance of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet, Suite No. 2* followed by Bernstein's *Symphonic Dances* from *West Side Story*.



QUEEN

from Page 6

The technical aspects of the production serve the story well. The set, designed by McJah Balams, is simple and charming. I enjoyed the honeycomb design. Costumes by Finnegan Chu were simple and appropriate. Sound design by Ben Dobler was very well done, with several cell phone rings and voicemails that were well-timed with finger presses.

This production of *Queen* is the best theatrical surprise I've had in a while. I felt like I knew all these people. My sister is a scientist. I've known Ph.D.'s. I work in the agricultural industry. It felt real and genuine. I was on the edge of my seat at intermission, wondering how this was going to be resolved.

Director Kelsey Leigh Miller, in her director's notes, says of the characters: "Each of the characters in this play is susceptible to a particular kind of near-sightedness. Tunnel

vision that comes from a singular goal – professional, social, personal – can very easily blind us to the bigger picture, the bigger picture of our relationships, our community, or our world." The best theatre asks us a question; most of the time, the answer is both complicated and simple at the same time. Strongly recommended.

Content advisory: there is some cursing in this show. None of it would be a concern to me as a parent of a 13-year-old.

Queen is produced by Summit at the Phoenix Theatre Cultural Centre, 705 N. Illinois St. The show runs through Feb. 24. Performance dates and times: Feb. 15 to 17: 7:30 p.m.; Feb. 18: 2 p.m.; Feb. 22 to 24: 7:30 p.m.; Feb. 25: 2 p.m.

Tickets can be purchased at the box office at (317) 635-7529 or online at phoenixtheatre.org/buy-tickets.

Read more great play reviews from *A Seat on the Aisle* at asota.wordpress.com.

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Let's Talk

Hamilton County real estate market see active start to near year

The REPORTER

Despite a slight decrease in sales, January 2024 started off on a strong note for the central Indiana residential real estate market. The 16-county central Indiana area saw an increase in available housing inventory, and homes sold more quickly than in January 2023.

According to F.C. Tucker Company, part of the Howard Hanna family of companies:

- Available housing inventory increased 1.6 percent compared to January 2023.

- Homes sold four days, or 8.2 percent, faster than this time last year.

- Compared to January 2023, the average home sale price for the 16-county central Indiana region increased 6.6 percent to \$326,978.

- Pended home sales decreased, down 4.8 percent compared to this time last year.

In Noblesville:

- The number of closed home sales increased 40.9 percent compared to January 2023.

- Homes in Noblesville sold more quickly than in January 2023, leaving the market 25.5 percent, or 12 days, faster.

- Compared to this time last year, the average sale price of a home in Noblesville decreased 1.7 percent to \$387,602.

- The average price per square foot for a Noblesville home decreased 3 percent to \$146.64.

In Hamilton County:

- Pended home sales decreased 15 percent compared to this time last year.

- Homes sold 11.6 percent, or five days, faster than in January of 2023.

- Compared to January 2023, the average home sale price increased 6.4 percent to \$503,159.

- Available housing inventory increased 4.5 percent compared to January 2023.

- In January 2024, 2,470 central Indiana homes were purchased, down 4.8 percent from the 2,595 sold in January 2023.

- Decatur County had the greatest increase in pended home sales in January 2024, up 100 percent compared to this time last year.

- Hancock County pended sales had the greatest decrease, with a 32.7 percent decrease in homes sold compared to January 2023.

- Central Indiana year-to-date home sale prices increased, up 6.6 percent overall:

- Morgan County recorded the highest average year-to-date home sale price increase at 53.1 percent.

- Boone County had the highest average year-to-date home sale price in the region at \$547,621.

- Homes sold in 45 days on average, selling four days, or 8.2 percent, faster than January 2023. Hancock County homes sold 48.9 percent faster than this time last year, the greatest increase in central Indiana.

- However, 11 of the 16 central Indiana counties saw homes leaving the market more quickly compared to this time last year.

- Central Indiana experienced a 1.6 percent increase in overall available home inventory in January 2024, compared to January 2023, with 55 more homes available for sale.

- Hendricks County had the largest inventory increase – up 54.6 percent compared to January 2023.

- Hancock County experienced the largest decrease in inventory – down 25.1 percent compared to this time last year.

See Market . . . Page 8

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Indiana remains a top agricultural state according to new census

The REPORTER

According to the newly released **agricultural census data** from The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s National Agricultural Statistics Service, Indiana remains a top agricultural state, with agricultural products valued at over \$18 billion.

"This data shows that agriculture remains a pillar of the Indiana economy with the total value of agriculture production growing 62 percent over the five-year period," said Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, who also serves as the Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development. "The Census of Agriculture is all encompassing, and it allows us to compare ourselves to fellow states, whether that is in ranking of commodities, prices, demographics and more."

The Census of Agriculture is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. Even small plots of land – whether rural or urban – growing fruit, vegetables or some food animals count if \$1,000 or more of such products were raised and sold, or normally would have been sold,

during the Census year. The Census of Agriculture, taken only once every five years, looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income, and expenditures.

"We are thankful for all the farmers who completed the survey, this data allows our department to provide accurate and reliable information and data to Hoosiers, to farmers and to decision makers," Indiana State Department of Agriculture Director Don Lamb said. "The data comes out every five years and its always exciting to see our statewide growth."

Data from the census shapes programs and initiatives that benefit Indiana farmers, expands access to resources that help farmers and help farmers diversify into new markets, including local and regional food systems, specialty crops and organic production.

Listed below are some highlights from the **2022 Census of Agriculture for Indiana**.



Crouch

Indiana rankings:

- No. 1 producer of popcorn, gourds and duck
- No. 2 producer of pumpkins
- No. 3 producer of spearmint and turkeys
- No. 4 producer of peppermint and soybeans
- No. 5 producing state for corn and hogs
- No. 6 producer of eggs and watermelons
- No. 10 producing state for maple syrup and hemp for floral (CBD and other cannabinoid usage)
- Total Value of Agricultural Production over \$18 billion at 65 percent crops and 35 percent livestock (up from \$11.1 million in 2017, a 64 percent increase)
- Land data:
 - Number of farms: 53,599
 - Land in farms: 14.6 million acres
 - Average farm size: 272 acres
- Top five Indiana counties with the largest number of farms: LaGrange, Elkhart, Allen, Adams, and Daviess
- Top five Indiana counties with the highest value of agriculture production: Jay, Jasper, Elkhart, LaGrange, and Dubois

Demographics:

- Indiana has 94,282 farmers (30,691 female and 63,321 male)
- Average age of the Hoosier Farmer is 56
- Young Producers (those under 35 years old) total 11,058 with the average age as 28.7
- New and Beginning farmers (those with less than 10 years' experience) total 26,428 with the average age as 43.2
- Producers with military service totals 6,621

Additional USDA Ag Census data will be coming out throughout the year, including the market value of ag products sold, state and county profiles, race, ethnicity and gender profiles, watershed information, specialty crops, aquaculture and more. See all those at nass.usda.gov.

Pro-family group endorses Laura Alerding for State Representative

Submitted by American Family Association of Indiana PAC

The American Family Association of Indiana PAC announced Tuesday that it has endorsed Laura Alerding for State Representative in Indiana House District 29.

This Hamilton County district covering primarily the city of Noblesville became an open seat when incumbent State Representative Chuck Goodrich chose to run for Congress.

The May 7 Indiana Primary is a very important part of the election process and our civic duty. This year, Hoosier voters will have a long list of races to consider including candidates for president, U.S. Senator, Governor, U.S. Representative, State Representative, State Senator, and many local offices. The number of campaign television and radio ads, mailings, phone calls, events, and candidate efforts will become overwhelming to many voters.



Alerding

appropriate," AFA-IN PAC President Micah Clark said. "Her efforts fit with the Republican agenda in the Indiana General Assembly where recent constituent surveys found overwhelming support for keeping explicit content away from minor children."

In this current session of the state legislature, there were six separate House bills filed to protect young children from adult content. (More than 30 legislators signed on as authors or co-authors to these bills.) On Jan. 18, Senate Bill 17 requiring adult websites to have some kind of age verification system passed 44-1. It is expected to move through the House this month with similar strong support.

"Laura has a good record of political, educational, and business experience," Clark said. "More importantly, she stood up to liberal attacks for her conservative, pro-family values. She did not waver from what was best for Hoosier families and children. The Indiana General Assembly needs more legislators who are not there just to be somebody, but ones like Laura Alerding who have already proven that they will stand for common sense principles."

The AFA of Indiana Political Action Committee was formed in March 2006 to educate voters about candidates who embrace traditional values and issues that impact families, churches, and communities.

Thanks for reading
The REPORTER!
For more news, visit
ReadTheReporter.com

MARKET

from Page 7

"The residential real estate market was active to start the new year, with a bump in available inventory and homes selling quickly throughout the central Indiana region," F.C. Tucker Company President Jim Litten said. "Mortgage interest rates trended downward in January and are expected to continue to slowly decrease, setting the stage for a more robust spring market compared to what we experienced last year."

Of the pended home sales in the region last month, two were priced \$2,000,000 or higher; 20 were priced \$1,000,000 to \$1,999,999; 276 were priced \$500,000 to \$999,999; 814 were priced \$300,000 to \$499,999; 774 were priced \$200,000 to \$299,999; 495 were priced \$100,000 to \$199,999; and 89 were priced at \$99,999 or less.



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Here Is Your Indiana Government book revamped with civics focus for students

The REPORTER

The **Indiana Chamber of Commerce** and **Indiana Bar Foundation** have teamed up to bring the importance of civics for young Hoosiers to the forefront. The 40th edition of the *Here Is Your Indiana Government* book – previously published exclusively by the Indiana Chamber – is now complimentary via an electronic guide and specifically designed to help teach to civics and government standards for grades 4 through 12.

The publication, which is still relevant for the general public and business community, is a resource to educate readers about the structure of Indiana government. This includes nearly 250 pages of content, including charts, photos, historical information, and interesting Indiana facts.

“We’re excited to bring back this staple of our publications division,” Indiana Chamber President and CEO Vanessa Green Sinderson said. “Increasing civic engagement for all Hoosiers is one of the goals of the Indiana Chamber’s new long-range visioning plan for the state called **Indiana Prosperity 2035**. For decades, Indiana students have been educated through this book and we’re pleased to make it even more impactful by meeting current educational standards regarding civics.”

The overhaul of the publication coincides with a new Indiana law now in effect that every middle school student must take one semester of civics education (in advance of the high school government requirement).

Indiana Bar Foundation President and CEO Charles Dunlap echoes Sinderson’s en-

thusiasm about this collaboration.

“The Foundation is excited to be a part of the *Here Is Your Indiana Government* resource book,” Dunlap said. “This will be an outstanding tool for educators around the state to help learn and teach about state and local government. Hoosier students and educators are getting a top-notch resource to help better understand our government.”

The PDF of *Here Is Your Indiana Government: 2024-2025 Edition* can be downloaded at no cost at inbarfoundation.org/IndianaGovernmentBook. Hard copies of the publication will also be available for sale at indianachamber.com/here. (The book will be printed in March and pre-orders are currently being taken.)

The book is sponsored by Church Church Hittle and Antrim, Indiana Civics Coalition, and the IU Center for Representative Government.

The timing of *Here Is...* also aligns with the deadline for young Hoosier students to take part in the first-ever **Indiana Civics Bee**. To do so, a student must submit a 500-word essay to a **participating local chamber** by Feb. 19 with their ideas for improving their community and showing their enthusiasm for civics. The top three winners from each local event will advance to compete in the Indiana Civics Bee on Aug. 23 at the Statehouse in Indianapolis.

The program is hosted by the Indiana Chamber and **Indiana Department of Education**. The state finalist winner will have the opportunity to compete this fall in Washington, D.C., at the **National Civics Bee**.

IU Kokomo offers free FAFSA assistance on College Goal Sunday

The REPORTER

Have questions about college financial aid? Need some help filling out the FAFSA?

Financial aid experts at Indiana University Kokomo will be on hand to help on Feb. 25 for College Goal Sunday. Free assistance will be available from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Library, 2300 S. Washington St., Kokomo. Students planning to attend any college may participate.

“We host College Goal Sunday because we are a community resource not only for our current and potential students, but anyone in our community who wants to attend college,” said Meredith Dittfield, assistant director of financial aid and scholarships. “We have the FAFSA experts here to assist both parents and students in completing their forms and taking the first step to attain financial aid to attend college.”

IU Kokomo is one of 40 sites statewide participating, offering expert help with the form required for students to be considered for federal and state grants, scholarships, and student loans at

most colleges, universities, and vocational/technical schools nationwide. It must be filed by the State of Indiana priority deadline of April 15 to guarantee state aid for those who qualify.

Dittfield noted that IU Kokomo financial aid staff have experience with the new FAFSA form that launched in December 2023, making their assistance even more valuable than usual.

She added that families should apply for their U.S. Department of Education FSA ID at StudentAid.gov at least three days before attending the event.

Students should attend with a parent or guardian. Parents should bring their completed 2022 IRS 1040 tax returns, W-2 forms, and other 2022 income and benefits information. Students who worked last year should bring their income information as well. Students over the age of 24 may attend alone and bring their own completed tax paperwork.

Spanish language interpreters will be available during the event.

See FAFSA . . . Page 10

Top priorities advance as session crosses halfway point

The 2024 session recently crossed the halfway point, meaning House bills are now being heard by the Senate, and Senate bills are being considered by the House. This session, I joined my House Republican colleagues in focusing our legislative priorities on supporting Hoosier taxpayers and students.

According to the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, Indiana’s post-secondary going rate has steadily declined in recent years and flattened at 53 percent. We want to give all Hoosier students pathways to success no matter what they decide to pursue after high school. That’s why I supported legislation that would expand the Frank

GUEST COLUMNIST



CHRIS JETER
State Representative

O’Bannon Grant and the 21st Century Scholarship beyond traditional college coursework to include job training. This effort would be a critical step toward helping our students get connected to and pay for the skills they need for in-demand careers.

According to the Anti-Defamation League, reports of antisemitic events have increased by nearly 360 percent since the Israel-Hamas war began in October 2023. To support our Hoosier Jewish students, I authored legislation that would clearly define antisemitism for our public education institutions, which would ensure the concept doesn’t wind up in K-12 classrooms or on college campuses.

I also supported legislation providing a supplemental payment also known as a 13th check to the state’s nearly 100,000 retired public servants, like law enforcement and teachers, to help with increasing costs for daily necessities. Payments would be based on an employee’s number of years vested in their retirement plan. Indiana already has existing resources available to give these payments, which would average about \$360 per recipient.

To better support taxpayers and business owners who interact with state agencies, I co-authored House Bill 1003 to create a more efficient and balanced appeals process that is presided over by administrative law judges. This legislation would make rulings by the Office of Administrative Law Proceeding final for disputes between

agencies and Hoosiers and would increase consistency and efficiency in the resolution of these cases. Currently, these rulings are not final and still have to back to the agency for approval, placing them in limbo.

House Bill 1001, House Bill 1002, House Bill 1003 and House Bill 1004 all recently advanced to the Indiana Senate for further consideration. As we move ahead, I look forward to working with my Senate colleagues on our efforts to support Hoosier students and taxpayers.

To follow the legislative process, visit iga.in.gov. To stay in touch, sign up for my e-newsletter at in.gov/h88.

State Rep. Chris Jeter (R-Fishers) represents House District 88, which includes portions of Hamilton, Hancock, Madison, and Marion counties.

Who’s on my ballot for the May 7, 2024 Primary Election?

Note that * indicates the candidate is the incumbent for that office.

To view precinct and district maps, please visit hamiltoncounty.in.gov/221/Precinct-and-District-Maps.

NOTE: Candidates for precinct committeement and state delegates will appear in upcoming editions of *The Reporter*.

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Westfield’s Simon Moon Park expansion to begin this spring

The REPORTER

Simon Moon Park, 3044 E. 171st St., Westfield, is set to undergo a transformative expansion project that expands the current park and facilities for the community.

Expansion plans including a much-needed parking lot expansion, outdoor education classroom, fishing piers, boardwalks, updated playground, and a reengineered sledding hill.

Bids were recently opened at a public meeting and will be awarded to Norcon, Inc. with offices in Indianapolis, for approximately \$6.8 million which was a significantly



Willis

under the \$8.2 million engineering estimate.

The expansion project will be paid for by park impact fees, which are fees imposed upon developers when residential projects are



Graphic provided by City of Westfield

built. There will be no taxpayer funds or bonds used.

“We are thrilled to expand Simon Moon Park and provide our community with even more opportunities for outdoor recreation and

social engagement,” Mayor Scott Willis said. “This project is a testament to our commitment to creating vibrant and inclusive spaces that fosters a sense of community and well-being.”

Construction is anticipated to begin in early April 2024. Keep an eye on City of Westfield social media channels for updates regarding park access during construction.

DNR has solar eclipse glasses & T-shirts available

The REPORTER

It’s time to prepare for the April 8 solar eclipse, during which the moon will completely cover the sun over a significant portion of Indiana, causing darkness at mid-afternoon.

Because viewing the sun at any phase of the eclipse without proper eye protection can cause permanent eye damage or even blindness, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is providing the opportunity to buy eclipse glasses.

The glasses, branded with the state’s eclipse logo and purchased from a vendor on the American Astronomical Society’s approved list (eclipse.aas.org/eye-safety/viewers-filters), have two-millimeter scratch-resistant polymer lenses that filter 100 percent

of the sun’s harmful ultraviolet and infrared rays and have been independently tested to be safe for watching all phases of the eclipse. Four-packs can be bought at ShopINStateParks.com for \$10 each plus shipping and handling. You can also buy four-packs for \$10 each at any Indiana State Park inn gift shop or property office or individual pairs for \$3 each. A list of

properties is at on.IN.gov/stateparks.

Commemorative eclipse logo T-shirts are also available online. The short-sleeve version costs \$24.95, and the long-sleeve shirt costs \$32.95, plus tax. Park offices and inn gift shops are also starting to stock eclipse shirts; call ahead for shirt and size availability. Learn more about the eclipse at on.IN.gov/eclipse.

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Carmel man sentenced to more than eight years in federal prison for \$2M international identity theft scheme

The REPORTER

Tuong Quoc Ho, a.k.a. Robert Parker, 36, Carmel, has been sentenced to 102 months in federal prison after pleading guilty to 20 counts of wire fraud, two counts of aggravated identity theft, one count of possession of multiple unauthorized access devices, one count of unlawful possession of identification, and two counts of money laundering.

According to court documents, beginning in 2013 and lasting through February 2020, Ho devised and led a complex, international scheme to defraud multiple victims throughout the United States and abroad of approximately \$2 million.

To carry out the scheme, Ho and his co-conspirators unlawfully obtained personally identifiable information (PII) including names, addresses, dates of birth, phone numbers, social security numbers, and credit card numbers of hundreds of victims throughout the United States and worldwide.

They used that PII to create fraudulent PayPal and eBay accounts in the victims’ names. Ho then placed expensive items, such as Vera Bradley handbags, American Girl dolls, Play Stations, and blood pressure monitoring devices for sale on eBay.

Ho did not have the majority, if any, of the items on hand at the time of the sale, but instead purchased the items after they were sold through online retailers using stolen credit card information that he unlawfully obtained, and had those items directly shipped from the retailer to the buyer. Ho and his co-conspirators sold many of the items at prices lower than market value, but still profited off those items because they were purchased with stolen credit cards.

Ho linked his personal bank information to the fake PayPal and eBay accounts and collected the money. Ho’s personal bank accounts were linked to over 500 fraudulent PayPal accounts. When PayPal suspected suspicious activity on the account, it restricted the accounts and required additional documentation to re-establish access. Ho modified and used PII of identity theft victims to create fraudulent driver’s licenses, passports, utility bills, and bank statements to make them appear to belong

to the account holder.

In total, Ho stole over \$2 million and wired \$1.2 million to family and other individuals in Vietnam. Ho also laundered the money, using over \$300,000 to purchase his home in Carmel.

On Oct. 24, 2018, Carmel Police Department officers executed search warrants at Ho’s residence and other buildings owned by Ho and arrested him on state charges. CPD recovered over 400 packages of merchandise addressed to Ho’s alias, “Robert Parker.” At least \$78,000 worth of that merchandise was purchased with stolen credit cards. Ho continued to operate his scheme after his home was searched by law enforcement until his arrest by federal authorities in 2020.

“Over seven years, the Defendant stole hundreds of identities and millions of dollars, exploiting eCommerce and financial platforms in a complex international scheme,” said Zachary A. Myers, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana. “Making the public safer from these pernicious identity theft schemes is a critical priority for our office, in partnership with outstanding investigators like the FBI and Carmel Police Department. The serious federal prison sentence imposed today should serve as a warning to fraudsters that we are dedicated to finding you and holding you accountable for the harm you cause.”

“This case shows the significant value of partnership in the law enforcement community,” FBI Indianapolis Special Agent in Charge Herbert J. Stapleton said. “The Carmel Police Department, the U.S. Attorney’s Office, and the FBI combined our efforts in a complicated and intricate case to put a long-time criminal behind bars for many years to come.”

The FBI and Carmel Police Department investigated this case. The sentence was imposed by U.S. District Court Judge James R. Sweeney. Judge Sweeney also ordered that Ho be supervised by the U.S. Probation Office for three years following his release from federal prison and pay \$217,147.87 in restitution.

U.S. Attorney Myers thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys MaryAnn T. Minard and James M. Warden, who prosecuted this case.



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FAFSA — from Page 9

Those who attend College Goal Sunday and submit a completed evaluation form will automatically be entered in a drawing for one of five \$1,000 scholarships. The winners will be notified this spring, and scholarships will be sent directly to the higher education institution selected by the winning students.

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Linda Faye Uhl

September 14, 1948 – February 4, 2024

Linda Faye Uhl, 75, Haines City, Fla., passed away on Sunday, February 4, 2024, at Advent Celebration Health in Kissimmee, Fla. She was born in Anderson on September 14, 1948, to the late Dale and Bessie "Jewell" Marie (Short) Lambert.

On April 10, 1982, she married David "Larry" Uhl and they shared 41 years of marriage.

Linda grew up in Cicero and attended Jackson Central High School and was part of the first graduating class from Hamilton Heights High School in 1966. She worked as a Secretary for Roubush Equipment for several years before her retirement. Linda was a former member of the Atlanta Gun Club where she won several shooting contests and served as secretary. She recently became a member of the Auxiliary of the Legion Air. In her free time, she enjoyed scrapbooking, crossword puzzles, jigsaw puzzles, "Easter egg hunting" for golf balls, planning to get together with friends and family, and going out to eat. Linda was the self-appointed matriarch of the family and loved being with family and friends.

Linda is survived by her husband, David "Larry" Uhl of Haines City, Fla.; son, Danny Zook of Shelbyville, Ind.; stepson, Lawrence (Kelly) Uhl of Indianapolis; grandchildren, Olivia (Patrick) Phillips of Indianapolis, Danielle Diltz of Morristown, Ind., Benjamin Uhl of Indianapolis, Emily Uhl of Indianapolis, and Cassie Zook of Anderson, Ind.; five great-grandchildren; sister, Cathy (Rick) Birden of Sheridan; brother, Alan (Charlene) Lambert of Noblesville; and several nieces and nephews.

Linda preceded in death by her parents, Dale and Bessie "Jewell" Marie Short; son, Anthony Zook; stepson, Jeffery Uhl; brother, Charlie Lambert; and sister, Carolyn Adams.

The funeral service will be at 2 p.m. on Thursday, February 15, 2024, at Hartley Funeral Home, Cicero, with Eric Adams officiating. Burial will follow in the Cicero Cemetery, Cicero.

A time for visitation will be from noon to 2 p.m. on Thursday, February 15, 2024, at Hartley Funeral Home, 209 W. Jackson St., Cicero.

Memorial contributions may be made to American Legion – American Legion Post, 34107 11th St., Haines City, FL 33844.

Online condolences can be given at hartleyfuneral-home.com.



Michael Douglas Zatkoff

July 5, 1956 – February 12, 2024

Michael Douglas Zatkoff, 67, Fishers, passed away on Monday, February 12, 2024, at his home surrounded and loved by family. He was born on July 5, 1956, to William and Evelyn (Kazmirowski) Zatkoff in South Bend, Ind.

Michael was an entrepreneur and an environmentalist who was not only a self-starter but inspired, encouraged, and supported many others to start their own business and make their dreams a reality. He worked hard, but he played hard as well. Michael loved golfing, listening to NPR (24/7), traveling, reading, golfing, and more golfing. Michael also organized and/or participated in chess clubs, soccer teams, golf leagues, bowling and softball teams, and many other activities in Noblesville at schools and with Our Lady of Grace Church. Michael appreciated a good (bad) joke, a good steak, and a cheap glass of wine. He lived by the motto "Family First" and was considered family and called "Dad" by many more people than those listed below.

He is survived by his wife, Carolyn Zatkoff; children, Nicholas Zatkoff, Matthew (Teresa) Zatkoff, Wilgues Jean Pierre (Hannah), Evelyn (James) Zatkoff, Stephanie (Allyn) Beaver, and Genese Zatkoff; and grandchildren, Alexis, Phoebe, Sylvina, and Mandela.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Services will be held at a later time.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Vincent de Paul Society, 1391 Greenfield Ave., Noblesville, IN 46060 (SVDPNoblesville.org).

Condolences: randallroberts.com



TODAY'S BIBLE READING

DINAH AND THE SHECHEMITES

Their proposal seemed good to Hamor and his son Shechem. The young man, who was the most honored of all his father's family, lost no time in doing what they said, because he was delighted with Jacob's daughter. So Hamor and his son Shechem went to the gate of their city to speak to the men of their city. "These men are friendly toward us," they said. "Let them live in our land and trade in it; the land has plenty of room for them. We can marry their daughters and they can marry ours. But the men will agree to live with us as one people only on the condition that our males be circumcised, as they themselves are. Won't their livestock, their property and all their other animals become ours? So let us agree to their terms, and they will settle among us."

All the men who went out of the city gate agreed with Hamor and his son Shechem, and every male in the city was circumcised.

Genesis 34:11-17 (NIV)



The Reporter's policy on obituaries

The Hamilton County Reporter does not charge families for publishing obituary notices in our pages. Every obituary appearing in online editions Wednesday through Saturday also appears in our Monday print editions. In order to continue to offer this as a community service, we ask that obituaries not exceed 600 words. The limitations of space may not allow for longer ones to appear in print.

Families and funeral homes are asked to send obituaries to obits@ReadTheReporter.com.

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Can't keep a good man down

Despite two medical conditions, Anthony Russell keep his commitment to himself & other players

By **RICHIE HALL**
sports@readthereporter.com

Imagine that one minute, you're playing the sport that you love – then the next minute, you're passed out on the ice.

As scary as it sounds, it's the reality for Anthony Russell. The Hamilton Southeastern senior who has a passion for the sport of hockey has been dealing with that reality for the past couple of years. His condition was undiagnosed until recently when he found out he had POTS syndrome, a blood circulation disorder, and neurocardiogenic syncope, a fainting spell that happens when someone's body overreacts to certain triggers.

Despite these lifelong challenges, Russell is determined to not let his conditions stop him "from staying close to the game I adore. I refuse to let go of my passion. I turned these challenges into opportunities for growth."

Russell said he has been playing hockey since he was "6 or 7 years old." During his sophomore year at HSE, he began to experience what he called "troubling symptoms: dizziness, breathlessness and weakness." He went to the doctor and after an EKG test, was prevented from playing hockey. But it turned out there was an error with the machine.

"So, I was cleared to play hockey," said Russell. "But

the symptoms did persist."

During his sophomore year, Russell was a practice player, so he didn't get to play during games. "I struggled to keep up with everyone," he said.

Russell's symptoms became worse during his junior year.

"I began to pass out quite frequently," said Russell. "This happened during games and practices both. Everyone was worried and so was I. I didn't know what was going on at the time."

Russell said that during that year, passing out became what he called "a terrifying, yet often norm."

"For me, it looks like someone turns out the lights in the room," said Russell. "It's incredibly scary. Seeing everyone surrounding you. It's terrifying in itself because your body doesn't want you to pass out. Something is wrong."

"It's just very scary," he said. "Passing out's like being trapped in a nightmare. I feel very powerless. It's sometimes in those moments that I find strength that I didn't know I had."

Russell finally started to get some answers about what his condition was as his senior year began. After many tests – "on my lungs, my heart, everything you could think of," he said – Russell got his first diagnosis, neurocardiogenic syncope, last September.

Also known as vasovagal syncope, neurocardio-

genic syncope occurs after triggers such as the sight of blood or extreme emotional distress, according to the Mayo Clinic.

"The vasovagal syncope trigger causes your heart rate and blood pressure to drop suddenly. That leads to reduced blood flow to your brain, causing you to briefly lose consciousness," said an [article on the Mayo Clinic website](#).

Russell received that diagnosis around the time he met David DiMartino, who took over as the head coach of the HSE Prep Team (the hockey team for the Hamilton Southeastern Schools district) in August. DiMartino said he had spoken to the HSE coach from the previous year and had gotten a heads up about Russell's condition.

"At the time, we knew it was happening, we didn't know why," said DiMartino. "It was a little concerning at first."

"I was worried," said DiMartino. "I said, 'Are you cleared to play?' And he was. It was something to keep an eye out for. I didn't know what to make of it until we had an incident. I was hoping it was never going to happen."

But the HSE team worked through it. Russell said he carried a backpack of medical tools to every practice.

"He seemed pretty well-versed to what to do in those situations," said



Photos provided
Anthony Russell has continued to pursue his passion of hockey despite being diagnosed with two health conditions, POTS syndrome and neurocardiogenic syncope. The Hamilton Southeastern senior played on the HSE Prep Team this year and has been coaching young players as well.

DiMartino. "One of my assistant coaches is a fireman, so he's medically trained as well." As a result, DiMartino said the team was "in good shape to handle anything that happened."

Russell said he found out about his other condition, POTS syndrome "about a month ago." POTS stands for "postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome," which causes an increased heart rate whenever someone rises to a standing position.

"I felt a lot of relief," said Russell. "I felt that I had closure and I had an-

swers. When that kind of thing happens, people want answers."

Russell had the support of his team, which he said "means so much to me." He also found strength in the love of the game and found ways to turn his diagnoses into a positive.

"I turned these challenges into opportunities for growth," said Russell. "I began coaching various sports, started an athletic spirit club at my school, and guided my own youth hockey team."

Russell coaches at Learn to Play Hockey, which has

practices at Carmel Skadium and the Fuel Tank in Fishers. He also coaches another team in Carmel, which features players from ages 4 to 12 and 13, with the vast majority 6 or 7.

"They're an absolute joy to work with," said Russell.

J.J. Beck is the Director of Program Development for the Indianapolis Youth Hockey Association (IHYA). She met Russell more than a year ago but noted that his connection to the sport dates back several years.

See Russell . . . Page 13



Explaining POTS

"When we stand, gravity pulls more blood into the lower half of the body. In a healthy person, to ensure that a sufficient amount of blood reaches the brain, the body activates several nervous system responses. One such response is releasing hormones that help tighten blood vessels and cause a modest increase in heart rate. This leads to better blood flow to the heart and brain. Once the brain is receiving enough blood and oxygen, these nervous system responses settle back to normal.

In people with POTS, for unclear reasons that may differ from person to person, the blood vessels don't respond efficiently to the signal to tighten. As a result, the longer you are upright, the more blood pools in the lower half of your body. This leads to not enough blood returning to the brain, which can be felt as lightheadedness (faintness), brain fog and fatigue. As the nervous system continues to release epinephrine and norepinephrine to tighten the blood vessels, the heart rate increases further. This may cause shakiness, forceful or skipped heartbeats, and chest pain."

Source: John Hopkins Medicine website (hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/postural-orthostatic-tachycardia-syndrome-pots)

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97

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12/22 vs. 12/23

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SPORTS SCHEDULE

Thursday, Feb. 15

BOYS SWIMMING SECTIONAL PRELIMS

Guerin Catholic, Noblesville, Westfield at Carmel, 5:30 p.m.
Hamilton Heights, Hamilton Southeastern at Fishers, 5:30 p.m.
University at Lawrence North, 5:30 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 16

BOYS BASKETBALL

Avon at Noblesville, 7:30 p.m.
Brownsburg at Hamilton Southeastern, 7:30 p.m.
Carmel at Warren Central, 7:30 p.m.
Fishers at Zionsville, 7:30 p.m.
Franklin Central at Westfield, 7:30 p.m.
Hamilton Heights at Twin Lakes (Hoosier Conference third-place game), 8 p.m.

BOYS WRESTLING

State finals first round at Ford Center, Evansville
– 3 p.m., weight classes 152-285
– 6:30 p.m., weight classes 106-144

Saturday, Feb. 17

BOYS BASKETBALL

University at Decatur Central, 1:30 p.m.

BOYS SWIMMING

– Diving prelims, semifinals at 9 a.m.
– Swimming, diving finals at 1 p.m.

Guerin Catholic, Noblesville, Westfield at Carmel
Hamilton Heights, Hamilton Southeastern at Fishers
University at Lawrence North

GIRLS BASKETBALL SEMI-STATES

Class 4A at La Porte

Homestead vs. Lake Central, 11 a.m.
Noblesville vs. Valparaiso, 1 p.m.
Championship, 8:30 p.m.

Class 3A at Huntington North

Hamilton Heights vs. Norwell, 10 a.m.
Bremen vs. NorthWood, noon
Championship, 8 p.m.

Class 2A at Shelbyville

Brownstown Central vs. Linton-Stockton, 10 a.m.
Sheridan vs. Eastern Hancock, noon
Championship, 8 p.m.

GYMNASTICS

Noblesville, Westfield at
Southmont Mountie Invitational, noon

Please email schedule changes or corrections
to sports@readthereporter.com.

‘I enjoy teaching kids’: Westfield baseball coach on 22 years at helm

By PHIL SANCHEZ
WISH-TV | wishtv.com

Twenty-two years is a long time to do any job, let alone coaching a high school baseball team.

But, Ryan Bunnell, a baseball lifer, wouldn't have it any other way.

“Westfield was a 3A school in my first year coaching at WHS with 1,175 students and has grown into a school of 3,000 in my time here. The first few years were tough. We were a 3A school in a 4A conference so we had to learn how to do the things that championship teams do to compete,” Bunnell said.

According to Bunnell, who also teaches social studies at Westfield, the upcoming season could prove to be one of the more competitive in an already-tough **Hoosier Crossroads Conference**.

“The HCC is always talented and tough but I think 2024 has the potential to be the most talented top to bottom in my 22 years in it. The reigning champion, Noblesville, is possibly more talented than they were last year, returning Nolan Decker along with some very talented young arms and bats,” Bunnell said. “As always, it will be a battle day in and day out in the HCC, but, if our guys are playing for

each other and pulling on the same end of the rope, I think we can compete with anyone,” Bunnell said.

Bunnell said the team will look to seniors Ty Anderson, Brayden Hibler and Preston Tamm as well as juniors Matt Drozlek, Drew Law and Ethan Colling to provide the Shamrocks with production this season.

“We’ve been fortunate to get outside four times already, so that’s been a great thing for our guys. Anytime we can get outside in January and February it is a boost to morale as the grind of the winter indoor off-season can get tough at times. Our guys have enjoyed getting outside the last few weeks.”

Bunnell, who also coaches for the Indiana Bulls travel organization during the summer, is just 12 wins away from 300. He says, though, that coaching is more than wins and losses.

“I enjoy teaching kids to put the needs of others ahead of their own, which translates into being a good husband or father. There is a lot of failure in the game of baseball, which provides great opportunities to teach kids how to persevere through the adversity life is going to throw at them. So, it’s building great young men, great husbands, and great fathers that keep me



Provided photo / Courtesy WISH-TV
Ryan Bunnell has been the head baseball coach at Westfield High School for 22 years and is just 12 wins away from 300, but says coaching is more than wins and losses.

passionate about coaching.”

High school coaching can be a grind – long hours, late nights, early mornings – but Bunnell points to his family as his backbone.

“I’m really lucky. My beautiful wife, Michelle, is a principal and understands the time demands involved in having an impact on kids’ lives. My daughter, who was a manager for us when she was in high school, is a fourth-grade teacher in Fort Worth, Texas. My oldest son, **A.J.**, is a senior pitcher

er at **Anderson University**. I’m excited for his senior year in college as his senior year of high school baseball (at) Westfield was lost to COVID. My stepson, Cooper, is a senior at Indiana University with a bright future as a writer. My youngest son, Beau, is a junior at Westfield playing defensive end for the football team.

“Coaching demands such a great deal of time away from family, so I simply couldn’t do it without the support of my wife and kids.”

RUSSELL

from Page 12

“I admire Anthony’s perseverance and dedication to hockey in spite of facing challenges related to his condition,” said Beck. “It is remarkable how he has maintained a strong passion for the sport and managed to stay actively involved in the hockey community. His ability to navigate his condition while continuing to contribute to the sport is inspiring.”

Russell is headed to Ball State University, where he wants to go into nursing or

pediatrics. “I definitely have a passion for helping people,” he said.

Russell also wants his story to prove that even if someone people are facing hardships, it’s possible for them to pursue what they love.

“I believe my experience can inspire others facing similar challenges and show the importance of courage and determination in the face of challenges,” said Russell.

The REPORTER

Eight Hamilton County wrestlers will be heading down to Evansville this weekend to compete for a state championship.

The IHSAA wrestling finals begin Friday at the Ford Center in Evansville. The event is in a different place this year since its usual site of Gainbridge Fieldhouse in Indianapolis is being used for the NBA All-Star Game. But the goal is still a place on the podium – the higher,

the better – for the 224 wrestlers who qualified for state this year.

The state finals begin with Friday’s first-round action. It could arguably be the most tense day for a high school wrestler, as it’s win or go home. That one victory means you advance to Saturday and a guaranteed spot in the top eight.

Gates open at 1:30 p.m. Eastern Time (12:30 p.m. Central), with the Parade of Champions starting at 2:30 p.m. ET. First-round matches for weight classes from 150 to 285 pounds will begin at 3 p.m. ET, followed by matches for 106 to 144 pounds starting at 6:30 p.m. ET.

As a result, no one is looking past their first-round opponent. Here is a look at the eight first-round matches involving county wrestlers.

120 pounds: Fishers junior Chayce Yant will take on Norwell sophomore Hunter Douglas. Yant is ranked 10th in the state in his class according to IndianaMat.com and is 39-3 for the year. He won the New Castle semi-state championship last Saturday. Douglas is 18-6.

126 pounds: Guerin Catholic senior Peter Nguyen, ranked 14th, will wrestle top-ranked Isaiah Schaefer, a junior from Evansville Mater Dei. Nguyen holds a 33-4 record, while Schaefer is 36-2.

132 pounds: Hamilton Heights senior Isaac Kuhn, ranked 19th, will also take on a No. 1 wrestler: Brownsburg junior Jake Hockaday. Kuhn is 30-6 while Hockaday is 33-2.

150 pounds: Carson Fetting, another Hamilton Heights senior, faces Evansville Mater Dei senior Tyler Vanover. Fetting is rated No. 16 and holds a

42-2 record; Vanover is ranked sixth and is 36-3.

157 pounds: Hamilton Heights junior Michael Cain, ranked 11th, faces third-ranked Western senior Mitchell Betz. Cain is 40-7 for the season and Betz is 37-1. On the other side of the bracket, Noblesville freshman Aidan Kincaide, ranked 12th, takes on eighth-ranked Gavin Davis of Belmont. Kincaide is 35-5, Davis is 28-1.

165 pounds: Fishers sophomore Xavier Smith, ranked 15th, will wrestle No. 16 Brownsburg senior Jesse Derringer. Smith holds a 37-3 record, while Derringer is 27-9.

285 pounds: Noblesville senior Austin Hastings, ranked seventh, takes on No. 18 Heritage Hills sophomore Hayden Smith. Hastings won the New Castle semi-state championship and is 40-2 for the season. Smith is 32-3.

Gymnastics

Westfield places third of 10 at Logansport Invitational

The REPORTER

The Westfield gymnastics team finished third at the 10-team Logansport Invitational last Saturday.

The Shamrocks scored 100.90 points, behind only Northwestern and Elkhart. Westfield had several gymnasts score personal bests, including Elianna Reyn-

olds, who broke the school record with an 8.55 on the uneven bars.

Reynolds placed third on the bars and finished in the top six in her other events, finishing tied for fourth on vault (8.80), sixth on the floor exercise (9.00) and sixth on balance beam (8.40). That gave

her a total of 34.75 for the all-around, in which she placed sixth.

Isa Galan and Madie Doran also tied for fourth on the vault, with both scoring 8.80. Other notable performers were Avery Mason on bars, Blair Watts on floor and Heidi Burke on floor.



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