

THURSDAY, FEB. 19, 2026

ARCADIA | ATLANTA | CICERO | SHERIDAN
CARMEL | FISHERS | NOBLESVILLE | WESTFIELD



TODAY'S WEATHER

Today: Mostly cloudy early, then partly sunny. Mainly later afternoon shower or storm chances.
Tonight: Showers and storms.



HIGH: 65 LOW: 49

County VSO warns of scam

Veterans encouraged to report suspicious texts & emails

The REPORTER

Hamilton County officials are alerting local veterans about a text message scam circulating across the state that falsely claims to be from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Several veterans have reported receiving text messages asking them to "update their information." The messages include a link to what appears to be a legitimate website, prompting recipients to enter sensitive personal information. Officials say the messages are fraudulent.

"This is a scam, plain and simple," Veteran Service Officer Tom Logan said. "The VA may send text reminders about appointments or benefits, but they will not ask you to update personal information or provide sensitive details through a random text link. If you get a message like that, do not click it."

The VA does send text messages related to benefits, resources, and appointment



Logan

reminders. However, veterans should be extremely cautious of any message requesting personal information, financial details, or immediate payment.

Hamilton County veterans who receive suspicious texts or emails are encouraged to report them:

- VA Health-related scams (VHA): (866) 842-4357
- VA benefits scams (VBA): (833) 388-7233
- Non-VA scams: Federal

Trade Commission at (877) 382-4357 or online at report-fraud.ftc.gov

"These scams are getting more sophisticated and can look very convincing," Logan said. "If something doesn't feel right, call our office first. We are here to help veterans navigate their benefits safely."

Veterans are advised to block, delete, and report suspicious messages. Most importantly, do not click the link. Veterans who have questions or concerns may contact the Hamilton County Veteran Services Office for assistance.

Becoming that pet owner

I'm big believer in the saying, "Never say never." I received a reminder of this fact during a conversation with my husband John last week.

As I was preparing to take our dogs, Elli and Sasha, on their lunchtime walk, John asked, "Aren't you putting their hoodies on them?" I inwardly groaned.

"They're fine today, Honey," I said, "It's 40 degrees. Their own fur coats are long and they'll be okay."

"No ... it's still cold ... they need their hoodies. Why don't you grab them and give them to me, and I'll put the hoodies on the girls." I closed my eyes and sighed.

See, I always said I'd *never* be one of those people who puts T-shirts, hoodies, and other clothing on my dogs ... other than coats when the weather becomes dreadfully cold. It's not like I have anything against people who do this. I mean, come on, how cute do pups look with their human-like attire? I just didn't ever want to do it ... I didn't want to become that pet owner.

See *Pet* ... Page 2



AMY SHANKLAND

Perfectly Imperfect



Photo provided by Hamilton Heights School Corporation

From costumes and choreography to set design and stagecraft, Heights' cast and crew pour their talent and energy into rehearsals for *Shrek Jr. The Musical*. They're ready to entertain audiences during three magical live performances on Friday, Feb. 27 at 7 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 28 at 7 p.m., and Sunday, March 1 at 2:30 p.m. in the high school auditorium.

Heights Drama Department to present *Shrek Jr. The Musical*

Submitted by Hamilton Heights School Corp.

The community is cordially invited to enjoy Hamilton Heights High School Drama Department's production of *Shrek Jr. The Musical*, where beauty is truly in the eye of the ogre.

Based on the Oscar-winning DreamWorks Animation film and the hit Broadway musical, this family-friendly show brings humor, heart, and a fresh twist to a beloved story.

Everyone's favorite ogre, Shrek, leads a cast of fairytale misfits on an adventure to rescue a princess and reclaim his swamp – discovering along the way that true beauty comes from within. Part romance and part delightfully twisted fairytale, *Shrek Jr.* delivers big laughs and a powerful message for audiences of all ages.

The musical is directed by Brooks Myers, Hamilton Heights Theater teacher and Drama Club Sponsor, with Jill Walker, assistant director and Choir teacher. There are three performances only:

See *Shrek* ... Page 2



Photo provided by Hamilton Heights School Corporation

Rehearsal for *Shrek Jr. The Musical* is in full swing as Heights' Drama Department builds a fairytale world one scene at a time. (From left) Duloc performers McKinsey Allen, Adeline Allen, Zoe Wright, Lillie Hooper, Zoey Brown, and Millie Inman are pictured around Lukas Jackson (Lord Farquaad).

Fatal drug overdoses across county cut in half over three years

Submitted by Office of Hamilton County Coroner

Hamilton County Coroner Jeff Jellison has reported a sustained decrease in fatal drug overdoses over the past three years, marking a major public health milestone for the community.

According to local data, the number of confirmed overdose fatalities in Hamilton County has dropped from 39 in 2023 to 33 in 2024, and further down to 17 in 2025, a 56 percent reduction over three years.

This decline in Hamilton County aligns with a broader national trend showing significant decreases in drug overdose deaths across the United States.

Recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reveal a historic drop in drug overdose deaths across the country. According to the CDC, the United States saw an estimated 26.9 percent decline in drug overdose fatalities in 2024, the largest one-year decrease in over two decades, with approximately 80,391 deaths compared to about 110,037 in 2023, the lowest annual total since 2019.

Public health experts also note that overdose deaths had declined slightly in 2023, marking the first decrease nationally since 2018.

Local health officials attribute this progress to enhanced collaboration between first responders, expanded access to lifesaving interventions like naloxone, increased substance use disorder treatment resources, and community education and outreach efforts.

Local and national leaders emphasize that while this progress is promising, overdose deaths remain a leading cause of preventable deaths in the U.S., particularly among adults aged 18 to 44, and continued investment in prevention, treatment, and

See *Overdoses* ... Page 2

Westfield youth need your help to make summer camps great

The REPORTER

The Westfield Youth Assistance Program (WYAP) **needs your help** sending local youth to camp this summer.

WYAP works to connect as many youth as possible with summer camp opportunities, knowing that summer camp can be an empowering and life-changing experience for youth. Many of the youth connected with camps need help obtaining necessary camp supplies. These supplies range from

smaller items like sunscreen and bug spray to larger items like sleeping bags and duffels.

From one WYAP youth: "I want to thank you for the opportunity to go to summer camp. I hope that many children can be part of this adventure. This was my first time ever going to camp, and I love it! I really hope it will be possible that I can go



again! I made a whole lot of friends."

In 2025, WYAP connected youth with 320 unique camp and enrichment opportunities. These connections are all made possible thanks to the generosity of donors, sponsors, and partner agencies.

The deadline for camp supplies is Tuesday, March 10 in

order to ensure the items arrive with plenty of time before Westfield youth attend camp. To support WYAP by purchasing camp supplies, please **visit the Amazon Wishlist**.

Are you looking for a different way to support youth attending summer camp? You can donate to WYAP's "Mayor Andy & Barb Cook WYAP Camp Fund." To ensure your donation goes to the correct fund, please select this campaign in the dropdown on the **donation page**.

New portal makes it easier to work the polls on Election Day

The REPORTER

Hamilton County has launched a new Election Worker Portal to make applying, scheduling, and communication easier than ever.

This secure system helps the Election Office:

- Streamline the application process
- Keep your information secure and up to date
- Improve communication and training
- Ensure efficient staffing on Election Day

Whether you are new or returning, the portal is your central hub for election worker information.

Click here to access the new portal.

OVERDOSES

recovery resources is essential to sustain and accelerate these gains. Public health officials also point to reduced availability of illicit drugs as a contributing factor. Increased efforts to disrupt illegal drug importation, including enhanced border security has limited the supply of illegal drugs entering communities, helping lower overdose risk and prevent

fatal outcomes. "Hamilton County's decline in fatal overdoses is a testament to the hard work of our public health partners, first responders, community organizations, and families," Hamilton County Coroner Jeff Jellison said. "We remain committed to building on this progress and ensuring every resident has access to the support and services they need."

Hamilton County continues to invest in comprehensive strategies that address substance use and overdose, including training and distribution of naloxone to first responders and community members, expanded treatment and recovery services for residents, data-driven outreach and prevention programs and partnerships with local nonprofits and healthcare providers.

from Page 1

PET

My reasons were two-fold: One, I didn't want to fuss with putting clothes on and taking them off my pets. I'm busy enough, like many people. Why add this extra step in the day?

Two, I couldn't pet our dogs all over with them wearing clothes. When a dog wears a T-shirt or other item, your available petting/scratching area is limited. All you can do is pet their head or give them a belly rub. (At least we always still have the latter. Belly rubs are essential for both dogs AND their owners.)

But last fall, John discovered some hoodies on clearance in the pet section of Walmart, and my days of saying "I'll never put clothing on my dogs" were gone. I had to bite my tongue as he scooped the hoodies up and put them in our shopping cart. John was so excited.

It doesn't help when people see Elli and Sasha in their attire and they fawn all over our pups.



Photo provided by Amy Shankland

"Oh, look at how cute your dogs are in their hoodies!" they exclaim. And, of course, John's often right there beside me, grinning in victory.

John and I have a new question in our marriage which has kept it strong. We ask each other, "Does this make you happy?" Despite my vow to never become that pet owner ... I know putting hoodies on the girls makes him happy. We check to make sure they're not panting or uncomfortable, and so far, Elli

and Sasha have been fine. So, yes, Readers, I've caved. When you see me out on my lunchtime walks, Elli and Sasha trotting along wearing their grey and black hoodies, just know that I'm doing my part to keep my marriage solid. You're welcome, Honey.

Amy Shankland is an empty-nester, writer, and fundraising professional living in Noblesville with her husband John and two dogs. You can reach her via email at amys@greenavenue.info.

SHREK

from Page 1

7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Feb. 27 and 28, and 2:30 p.m. Sunday, March 1. Tickets are \$6 and may be

purchased online in advance or at the door.

All proceeds from this swamp-tacular show benefit

the High School Drama Department. Hamilton Heights High School is located at 25802 State Road 19, Arcadia.

Cast & Crew for Shrek Jr., The Musical

- Cast**
 Shrek...Charles Wedmore
 Storyteller...Hannah England
 Storyteller...Millie Inman
 Mama Ogre...Lillie Hooper
 Papa Ogre...Liam Shaffer
 Captain of the Guards...Konnor Roberts
 Pinocchio...Daniel Van Hook
 Big Bad Wolf...Zoey Brown
 Pig 1...Abraham Martin
 Pig 2...Bonnie Brock
 Pig 3...Ellie Maddox
 Wicked Witch...Zoe Wright
 Peter Pan...Adeline Allen
 Ugly Duckling...McKinsey Allen
 Mama Bear...Lillie Hooper
 Papa Bear...Liam Shaffer
 Baby Bear...Aubree Clinger
 Donkey...Chloe Westerfield
 Lord Farquaad...Lukas Jackson
 Gingy...Hunter Wiles
 Young Fiona...Aubree Clinger
 Teen Fiona...Kyligh Rose
 Princess Fiona...Rory Craig
 Knight 1...Luke Steffen
 Knight 2...Mason Rogers
 Knight 3...Korbyn Newby
 Knight 4...Mary Rogers
 Knight 5...Lilli Evans

- Knight 6...Gracie Rhine
 Dragon...Millie Inman
 Pied Piper...Finnigan Craig
 Bishop...Mary Rogers
 Dwarf...Luke Steffen
 Young Shrek/Puss in Boots...Donnie Wedmore
Guards
 Luke Steffen, Mason Rogers, Korbyn Newby, Mary Rogers, Lilli Evans, and Gracie Rhine
Fairy Tale Creatures
 Avalee Gross, Kaprice Hanville, and Kylie Rose
Duloc Performers
 Millie Inman, Hannah England, Zoey Brown, Ellie Maddox, Zoe Wright, Adeline Allen, McKinsey Allen, and Lillie Hooper
Rats
 Zoey Brown, Ellie Maddox, Zoe Wright, Adeline Allen, McKinsey Allen, and Lillie Hooper
Dulocians & Woodland Creatures
 Vivian Stites, Kinley Shaffer, Violet Seall, Lylah Straley, Jethro Gross, and Finnigan Craig
Crew
 Stage Managers...Maddy Pouch & Addison Webb
 Sound...Bella McDole
 Lights...Kaylynn Miller
 Backstage...Eliza Allen, Charles Marquis, Rachel England, Anna Monnin, and Allea Kelley
Directors
 Brooks Myers and Jill Walker

AN EVENING WITH JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

You may know his name, but you don't know his story. Join us for An Evening with James Whitcomb Riley and hear how a simple country poet from Greenfield, Indiana became one of the best-selling authors of his time!

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Seven Hamilton County women selected as 500 Festival Princesses

Submitted

The 500 Festival today announces the seven college-aged women from Hamilton County who have been selected as 2026 500 Festival Princesses.

- **Megan Broviak (Noblesville)** – graduate of Noblesville High School, and a Sophomore at Butler University majoring in Chemistry and Spanish.

- **Melanie Gutierrez (Westfield)** – graduate of Early College High School at Midland College, and a Senior at Indiana University East majoring in Psychology.

- **Jackie Lawrence (Noblesville)** – graduate of Noblesville High School and Butler University, and a law student at Indiana University Robert H. McKinley School of Law.

- **Cameron Noe (Westfield)** – graduate of Westfield High School, and a

Sophomore at Ball State University majoring in Media and Journalism.

- **Emma Pearce (Noblesville)** – graduate of Noblesville High School, and a Junior at Indiana University majoring in Sports Media with a certificate in Journalism.

- **Hannah Pensyl (Westfield)** – graduate of Westfield High School, and a Doctor of Dental Surgery student at the Indiana University School of Dentistry.

- **McKinley Underhill (Noblesville)** – graduate of Noblesville High School, and a Senior at Purdue University majoring in Animal Sciences.

The 500 Festival Princess Program, presented by The National Bank of Indianapolis, has a long-standing tradition of honoring Indiana's most community-driven and academically accomplished young wom-

en. As 500 Festival Princesses, they will embark on a meaningful journey of service and leadership, while growing their professional skills, building meaningful connections across the state, and receiving mentorship from the 500 Festival Board of Directors. Princesses play an important role in advancing the 500 Festival's mission by making a positive, lasting impact on Indianapolis and the state of Indiana while celebrating the legacy of the Indianapolis 500.

Throughout the Month of May, Princesses educate Hoosiers about the rich history and the iconic spirit of the 500 Festival and the Indianapolis 500 through statewide outreach, community service, and engagement – collectively reaching more than 50,000 people each year through over 1,500 hours of service at schools, hospitals, and community

events across Indiana.

“We are proud to welcome this year’s 500 Festival Princesses and look forward to the enthusiasm they will share with communities across the state” said Dave Neff, 500 Festival president and CEO. “Through this program, these young women will build lasting connections, grow as leaders, and help carry forward the spirit and tradition of the 500 Festival.”

Support for the 500 Festival Princess Program is provided by The National Bank of Indianapolis, Marlyne Sexton (in memoriam), Khamis Fine Jewelers, Indianapolis Motor Speedway, and the 500 Festival Foundation.

To learn more about the 500 Festival Princess Program, please visit 500Festival.com/Princess or search #PrincessProgram on social media.

Carmel Symphony Orchestra gets sweet donation from The Hershey Company

The REPORTER

Earlier this year, the Carmel Symphony Orchestra (CSO) was looking for a unique way to thank supporters. Knowing that The Hershey Company had a candy bar named “Symphony,” it seemed like the perfect treat to gift donors. Hershey describes the milk chocolate candy bar as the perfect harmony of flavors that will be music to your taste buds.

CSO reached out to Hershey to see if they would donate the candy. The company’s website states that the company’s purpose is to make more moments of goodness for consumers around the world. It was CSO’s hope that Hershey would see value in the symphony’s mission and want to be a part of CSO’s Donor

Appreciation Night.

While it may have been a bit of a long shot, CSO thought it was worth asking Hershey for the donation. What a pleasant surprise it was when Hershey agreed to donate 250 Symphony candy bars to give donors as a small token of CSO’s appreciation. It was even more of a surprise when CSO staff saw the size of the donated bars, which were the 7.37-ounce “giant” bars, not the regular 1.55-ounce size. CSO is very grateful for The Hershey Company’s generous donation.

The CSO League helped in this effort by volunteering to help gift wrap all 250 candy bars in decorative cellophane bags with a note card that reads, “How sweet of you to support the CSO.”



Photo provided by Carmel Symphony Orchestra

CSO looks forward to greeting donors at intermission with a sweet treat and a big thank you for their continued support of the symphony.

[Click here](#) to get discounted pricing for these three upcoming shows. Hurry – there are only two days left to get the discount.

- Saturday, Feb. 21 at 7 p.m. – Love Letters from Paris: Music from the Heart presented by United Fidelity Bank

- Saturday, March 21 at 7 p.m. – Nordic Nights presented by Pedcor Companies

- Saturday, April 18 at 7 p.m. – Symphonic Odyssey

INDOT announces rural infrastructure projects

The REPORTER

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) announced today that \$179.8 million in federal transportation funding is being awarded to 50 cities, towns, and counties in rural portions of Indiana to invest in local road and bridge improvements and sidewalk projects.

For this latest round of funding, rural communities will design, develop, and purchase right-of-way for local projects. While the funds awarded now are dedicated to construction, INDOT will also financially participate in design, engineering, and right-of-way acquisition components.

Federal transportation funds are leveraged by many communities to re-

habilitate or replace local bridges. As INDOT continues to partner with local governments to make record investments in taking care of existing roads and bridges, this round of funding awards emphasizes improving local bridge conditions. Nearly \$129.1 million in federal funds were awarded for projects to rehab or replace 49 local bridges currently rated in poor condition. Beyond bridge projects, these funds

will support pavement resurfacing/reconstruction projects; Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) projects such as sidewalks, ADA ramps, and trails; and traffic safety projects.

INDOT dedicates approximately 25 percent of its federal highway funds to supporting local projects each year. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) distribute those funds to cities, towns, and counties within the state’s

larger urbanized areas while INDOT distributes funds outside MPO areas. Communities must contribute at least 20 percent in local matching funds and meet other federal requirements to receive federal funding.

Communities were invited to submit project applications to INDOT for potential funding during a call for projects announced in November 2025.

[Click here](#) to view the full list of projects.

Local Projects & Their Costs		
Hamilton County	281st Street from Rulon Road to State Road 213	\$6,755,200
Noblesville	Boden Road, approximately 1,200 feet south of East 166th Street	\$3,053,280
Noblesville	146th Street and Prairie Baptist Road	\$2,912,800
Sheridan	Along 236th Street from State Road 38 to Teler Branch	\$6,568,800
Tipton County	South Main Street, 0.04 miles north of State Road 19	\$1,306,400
Tipton	Jefferson Street from Independence to Ash Street	\$6,642,282
Boone County	CR 300 S and CR 975 E (Pleasant View Road) Intersection	\$4,364,767.55

NOBLESVILLE SCHOOLS Board Highlights

Feb. 17, 2026 Meeting

Submitted by Noblesville Schools

The school board has responsibility for major district functions including school district governance and oversight, setting school policies, approving funding, strategic planning, and hiring and evaluating the superintendent.

- The board recognized band students for their music accomplishments in state competitions.
- North Elementary presented on special school culture events including Grandparents + Games and Book Flood.
- Updated calendars were approved.
- The board approved a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Aspire Indiana to support school-based mental health initiatives for students.
- The board approved an MOU with Noblesville Youth Baseball, allowing them to explore an expansion on district property behind Hazel Dell Elementary.
- A lease refinancing was approved that is expected to save the district approximately \$1.5 million

Go to noblesvilleschools.org/leadership/school-board for meeting agendas, minutes, videos, and more.

Phi Beta Psi Fundraiser Euchre Night

Saturday, February 21, 2026 at 4 p.m.
First Christian Church, 16377 Herriman Blvd., Noblesville

\$15.00 to play

RSVP: pbpnoblesville@gmail.com

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Westfield to break ground in May on Park Street Improvement Project

Submitted by City of Westfield

Construction on the Park Street Improvement Project in Downtown Westfield is scheduled to begin in May 2026. City officials say the project will make Park Street safer, enhance walkability, and be better suited to host future events and festivals.

Work will take place in two phases and is expected to be completed in late spring 2027.

“Restaurant Row on Park Street is a gem in our community,” Mayor Scott Willis said. “We want to make it shine even more and position the businesses along this corridor for even greater success. I acknowledge there will be short-term disruptions, but these improvements will benefit residents, visitors, and business owners in the long-term.”

Keith Dusko, owner of Chiba, 228 Park St., agreed.



Renderings provided by Rundell Ernstberger Associates

The Park Street Improvement Project as seen from Poplar Street (left) and Mill Street (right).

“In my opinion, it is short-term pain for long-term gain,” Dusko said. “I truly believe in the future of Westfield. This landscape will look entirely different in a few years, while at the same time retaining the village feel on Park Street. We are excited for what is coming together.”

To reduce the impact on local businesses, Park Street will remain partially open during construc-

tion. At least one lane will remain open and access to businesses will be maintained throughout the project. Valet service will be discontinued to reduce traffic through the construction zone. Public parking continues to be available on the west end of Park Street in the temporary



Willis

parking lot, in The Union garage (first three hours are free), and in on-street spaces on Mill, Jersey, and Union streets.

Planned upgrades include:

- Changing the traffic direction to east to west (instead of west to east) to improve downtown traffic flow and reduce left turns

- Adding flush curbs to improve pedestrian access and support future event set-up

- Installing brick pavers and updating streetscape features (landscaping, trees, and more)

- Creating parklets for additional seating and gathering space

- Adding new decorative catenary lights to enhance the look and feel of the street

A future phase of the project will add a new plaza connecting Park Street to the Midland Trace Trail, along with a parking garage at Park and Poplar Streets.

Rundell Ernstberger Associates (REA) completed the project design, and construction will be led by FA Wilhelm. For more information about the Park Street Improvement Project, visit westfieldin.gov/parkstreet.

Jungle Jams music camp returns July 20-24

The REPORTER

The popular Jungle Jams music day camp for children ages 5 to 7 returns in July to Allied Solutions Center for the Performing Arts.

Led by instructor “Miss Lisa” Colleen of Bongo Boy Music School, the camp creates an imaginary rainforest setting with stuffed animal friends and an array of drums and other musical instruments for kids to experience. Young campers build a sense of community and learn about positive character traits as they engage in music, games and creative movement activities that illustrate concepts such as rhythm and groove.

During the week, each child makes three simple musical instruments to take home, and on the final day,



Photo provided

Instructor Lisa Colleen leads a drum circle during the annual Jungle Jams summer music camp for ages 5 to 7 at Allied Solutions Center for the Performing Arts.

family and friends are invited to join in the Community Drum Circle Celebration. No musical experience is necessary.

This year’s Jungle Jams camp runs 9 to 11:30 a.m. July 20 to 24. The cost for the week is \$130.

For information and

registration, visit TheCenterPresents.org/JungleJams2026, call (317) 843-3800, or email Outreach@TheCenterPresents.org.

Run for Something endorses Lindsay Gramlich for Indiana House District 39

Submitted

On Tuesday, Feb. 17, Lindsay Gramlich was endorsed by Run for Something (RFS), a national organization that recruits and supports the next generation of leaders for state and local office.

The organization’s slate of newly endorsed candidates includes young, diverse individuals from across the country who are ready to lead in their communities.

“I’m absolutely honored to be endorsed by Run for Something,” Gramlich said. “At a time when our state

legislature is in desperate need of more young, diverse leaders, I’m eager to provide this change and focus on the issues that are most important to Hoosier families.”

Gramlich currently serves as the President and CEO of Girls Inc. of Greater Indianapolis, a youth nonprofit organization.

She is a graduate of DePauw University and Indiana University, and lives in Carmel with her husband, three children, and two rescue dogs.



Gramlich

See *Gramlich* . . . Page 5



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Photos provided by Bierman Autism Centers

Kids can meet turtles, lizards, and other cool reptiles in a calm, comfortable environment.

RSVP for free, family-friendly “Reptile Adventures” at Bierman Autism Centers

The REPORTER

Bierman Autism Centers (BAC) inviting families to Reptile Adventures, a series of free, sensory-friendly community events designed to help children explore, learn, and have fun in a calm, supportive environment.

Set for 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, March 14 at Bierman Autism Centers, 16414 Southpark Drive, Westfield, Reptile Adventures is tailored for children with autism and other developmental needs, while welcoming siblings, caregivers, and the broader communi-

ty. Families can expect a predictable flow, a calmer pace, and flexibility for kids who may need extra time or space to feel comfortable.

What families can expect

- **Reptile Encounters:** Meet gentle turtles, fascinating lizards, and other amazing reptile friends.

- **Cool Facts and Fun:** Learn about reptiles from expert handlers in a kid-friendly format.

- **Crafty Creations:** Enjoy hands-on reptile-themed crafts and activities.

- **Sweet Treats:** Snacks

and refreshments for families during the event.

“Families deserve community experiences that feel exciting without feeling overwhelming,” said Elizabeth Henry, MS, BCBA, COBA, EVP of Services at Bierman Autism Centers.

“Reptile Adventures creates a calm setting where kids can explore something new at their own pace, with support nearby and plenty of chances for joyful connection.”

For many children, even “fun” outings can come with sensory triggers like unpredictable crowds, long waits,

and fast transitions. Reptile Adventures is designed to reduce that pressure so families can enjoy a successful experience together.

“Our teams build these events the way we build our centers: from the child’s perspective first,” Henry added. “If a child wants to observe from a distance before joining in, that is a win. If they jump right into the activity, that is a win too.”

This is a free event. Capacity is limited to protect the sensory environment. RSVP at biermanautism.com/events.

Four teens arrested after traffic stop in Carmel reveals guns, marijuana

By GREGG MONTGOMERY WISH-TV | wistv.com

Four teenagers were taken into custody early Wednesday morning after a traffic stop in Carmel led to the discovery of marijuana and several firearms, including a handgun modified into a fully automatic machine gun, the Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office said in a social media post.

The stop happened shortly after midnight in the 9900 block of Keystone Parkway southbound. That’s just north of the Carmel-Indianapolis border.

A sheriff’s deputy initiated the stop after seeing a vehicle committing a traffic violation. Five teenagers were inside the vehicle, four of whom were juveniles. The investigation led to the arrest of four occupants, including three juveniles.

The post said the arrests resulted in multiple preliminary charges, including possession of a machine gun and three counts of dangerous possession of a firearm by a

juvenile. Additional charges included a count of dealing marijuana and three counts of possession of marijuana.

Deputies recovered firearms equipped with high-capacity magazines. Investigators found 30-round magazines and a 50-round drum inside the vehicle. One of the pistols had been illegally modified with a “switch,” a device that converts a handgun into a fully automatic weapon. The post included photos of the firearms.

The post did not name any of the people in the vehicle, or say where they are from.

The post said the presence of firearms in the hands of juveniles is a serious concern for the community, and the traffic stop highlighted the dangerous situations deputies encounter while on patrol.

This story was originally published by WISH-TV at wistv.com/news/crime-watch-8/4-teens-arrested-after-traffic-stop-in-carmel-reveals-guns-marijuana.

Addie Kane of Fishers makes University of Wyoming President’s Honor Roll

The REPORTER

The University of Wyoming has released its 2025 fall semester President’s Honor Roll.

Among those students is Addie Kane of Fishers.

The President’s Honor

Roll consists of regularly enrolled undergraduates who earned a 4.0 (“A”) grade-point average for the semester. To be eligible, students must have been enrolled for a minimum of 12 credit hours taken for letter grades.

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“Bold leaders like Lindsay Gramlich are at the forefront of the fight for our rights and freedoms at a time when they

have never faced greater threats,” said Amanda Litman, Co-Founder and President of Run for Something. “Run for

Something is proud to endorse Lindsay Gramlich as part of our latest class of young leaders working to secure

lasting change in their communities.”

Learn more about her campaign at Lindsay-Gramlich.com.

from Page 4



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James Stephen Flint

February 11, 1945 – February 12, 2026

James Stephen Flint was born to goodly parents, Allen Hatch Flint and Estel Evelyn Turpin, on February 11, 1945. Jim thrived in the rural farming community of Bellflower, Ill. He learned the importance of a strong work ethic and a love of agriculture in his youth. He would weed the soybean fields with his brother, Dick. He was a proud member of the 4-H and FFA programs.

After graduating from Bellflower High School in 1963, he embarked on a two-and-a-half-year mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Belgium and Northern France. He loved the French and Belgian people, culture, and language. His testimony of the Gospel of Jesus Christ flourished as he served and taught the people of France and Belgium. His mission was a great step in his life-long journey as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Upon returning to the States, Jim left the Midwest to attend Brigham Young University in the beautiful Rocky Mountains. While he studied accounting, he met and married Karen Louise Hupe for time and all eternity in the LDS Manti, Utah Temple. Shortly after graduating from BYU, Jim was drafted into the U.S. Army. He was stationed in Frankfurt, Germany, during the Vietnam War. They enjoyed driving a yellow VW Bug along the narrow streets as they visited the wondrous European sites. He wore his army boots for many, many years. He was quiet about his military service. However, his children and grandchildren are proud and grateful to have an Army Veteran in our family. He was a patriot of this great nation.

When Jim completed his military service, he and Karen decided to raise their family in the Midwest. They lived in Louisville and Indianapolis for a short time before settling down in Columbus, Ind., for 45 years. They found a little house on a hill with a few acres and lots of trees – a perfect spot to raise seven children and teach them to love nature, God, and family. Jim even bought dairy goats for his kids to raise and give them a taste of the agriculture he loved. He also ensured each kid learned how to drive a stick shift before they could get their driver's license. Summer Saturdays included extensive yard work, followed by swimming and a picnic at Brown County State Park.

During his childhood, he developed a love of sports and competition through baseball, basketball, and track and field. He passed his passion for sports and competition to his children. He was always excited to watch the Olympics and IU basketball. However, he loved watching his children compete in sports more than anything. He was our biggest supporter in cross country, track, wrestling, and volleyball.



He ran many miles while cheering kids on at hundreds of races. He was proud to say he rode his bike to all the neighboring counties of Bartholomew County. Jim rode thousands of miles through the countryside, enjoying views of the crops and colorful foliage. He even accomplished a 100-mile bike race in Milwaukee, Wis.

Jim loved being a grandpa. The grandchildren have fond memories of tractor rides and roasting marshmallows with Grandpa. He showed up to support his grandchildren in all their endeavors. He might not have said much, but they knew he cared because he gave his time. He never missed a chance to grab a cookie as an excuse to visit his grandkids.

Jim was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and attended the Columbus 1st ward. He faithfully served as a Sunday School teacher for many years. He faithfully read his scriptures daily. He not only read about Jesus Christ, but he lived as Jesus would want him to live. He served his neighbor. If anyone needed help, they could rely on Jim. He would drop anything to give someone a ride to work, fix a flat tire, or visit them in the hospital. He selflessly drove U.S. veterans to the VA Hospital in Indianapolis. He volunteered many hours serving at the local food bank, Love Chapel. He served in the LDS Bishop's Storehouse, helping people get food and find employment. He served thousands of hours helping the BSA. Jim was an avid scoutmaster and passed that trait to his sons. He was a proud father as his 3 sons achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. He organized a bike ride, "Tour Du Temple," for local youth to ride from Columbus, Ind., to Louisville, Ky., and to Carmel. That tradition still continues. Jim will be remembered for living his testimony of Jesus Christ.

Jim was received into the loving arms of his Lord and Savior on February 12, 2026. He heard the words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." He didn't get to party on his birthday the day before, so it will be a joyous celebration on his Mom's birthday on February 15. Dad, we are so happy for you to be able to ride your bike at every gorgeous sunset and to lead the peloton in the Tour de France wearing the yellow jersey.

Jim is survived by his wife, Karen; his children, Stephen (Tara) Flint, David (Stephanie) Flint, Lisa (Kris) Stumpf, Wendy (Cesar) De Luna, Julie (Tim) Norwood, Heidi (Ben) Eborn, Tim (Chelsea) Flint; and 37 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, Allen and Estel Flint; and brother, Richard (Dick) Flint.

Condolences: randallroberts.com



Photo provided / HisPlaceEatery.com

His Place Eatery offers a great selection.

Lunch at His Place Eatery

We needed a lunch stop after a doctor's appointment the other day, so Mrs. K and I decided to stop at a place we had been to once before: His Place Eatery at 1411 W. 86th St., Indianapolis.



KEN KLINGLENMEIER
A Seat at the Table

To my mind, this is the premier spot in Indy for smoked meats: barbecue ribs, pulled pork, beef brisket, and turkey. (They also have a location at 6916 E. 30th St.)

We walked into the brightly lit, modernly fitted restaurant at about 11:20 and were the second customers of the day. Our server Janice brought us waters and we looked over the menu, which you can see at hisplaceeatery.com/menu. Actually, we had the lunch menu which is featured near the bottom of the page listed above. It has an array of very tempting items listed and is available from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

It didn't take long to decide our order. We chose the pulled pork sandwich (\$14.99), which comes

with a side, so from that list we picked the coleslaw. This visit we decided to share a sandwich – they really are a very generous size.

Our food came quickly. At His Place Eat-

ery, the sandwiches come piled high with smoked goodness, so a half of one certainly was enough for our lunch. The pork was so tender and full of smoky flavor. A little added BBQ sauce made it just right. The coleslaw was very good too – fresh, moist, and crispy – and again, it was a good-sized portion to share.

Lunch ran us just under \$17 plus tip. We really plan on returning for a tasty dinner sometime soon. There are so many things I'd love to try here.

Ken Klinglenmeier offers this series of columns, called "A Seat at the Table," wherein he reviews Indy-area restaurants – specifically their Happy Hour offers. Keep reading The Reporter for future restaurant reviews.



Photo provided by ISDA

Soil sampling program now available for Hoosier farmers

The REPORTER

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA), in partnership with organizations statewide and the Gulf Hypoxia Program (GHP), is reopening its no-cost initiative to expand the use of soil sampling as a nutrient management practice. Indiana's Mississippi River Basin Soil Sampling Program is once again accepting applications.

"Hoosier farmers make decisions every day that shape the future of their land and their communities," said Lt. Governor Micah Beckwith, who also serves as Indiana's Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development. "This no-cost soil sampling program gives producers valuable information they can use to boost productivity, reduce unnecessary expenses, and strengthen the long-term health of their fields. I strongly encourage eligible farmers to apply so they can take advantage of an opportunity that delivers real value to their operation and supports Indiana's broader conservation goals."

ISDA promotes the importance of nutrient management and the principles of the 4R Nutrient Stewardship framework, which emphasizes using the "Right Source, Right Rate, Right Time, and Right Place" to meet crop production goals. Soil sampling and testing are central to that approach and serve as the first step in developing an effective nutrient management plan. By assessing a field's fertility, farmers can make informed fertilizer decisions, monitor nutrient levels over time, improve profitability, and reduce the risk of nutrient loss. This program supports

those efforts and advances Indiana's State Nutrient Reduction Strategy.

"Soil sampling is one of the most effective tools we have for improving both farm profitability and environmental outcomes," ISDA Director Don Lamb said. "This no-cost program gives producers reliable data they can act on, while also supporting Indiana's broader nutrient-reduction goals. We're encouraging eligible farmers to register because the information gained from these samples strengthens individual operations and contributes to a healthier Mississippi River Basin."

This program includes row crop fields, pastures, hay, and specialty crops located within Indiana's portion of the Mississippi River Basin. Eligible landowners will be prioritized by acreage enrolled (i.e., 100 acres or less), fields that have never been soil sampled and fields that haven't been sampled regularly (i.e., within the last four years). Further prioritization may be implemented based on ISDA's workload capacity. This program excludes hobby gardens and private lawns. Interested landowners can sign-up online at ISDA's website or by reaching out to soilsampling@isda.in.gov.

Sign-ups are open now, and ISDA is accepting registrations until Wednesday, April 8, or until funds are exhausted.

This program was made possible thanks to ISDA, Indiana Soybean Alliance, Indiana Corn Marketing Council, Indiana Agriculture Nutrient Alliance (IANA), Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP) members, farmers, and crop advisors.

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Eulayla Barnette

June 11, 1936 – February 16, 2026



Eulayla Barnette, 89, Upland, Ind., passed away on Monday, February 16, 2026, at her home. She was born on June 11, 1936, to Pearl and Dorothy (Ely) Parsons in Pennington Gap, Va.

Eulayla worked for Best Lock for many years before retiring. She was a member of Pentecostal Lighthouse Church and loved going to church. Eulayla enjoyed going to flea markets, cooking, and feeding everyone. Most of all, she loved spending time with her family.

She is survived by her daughter, Velma (Richard) Harber; son, Bob (Heather) Barnette; grandchildren, Jamie (Mike) Killmon, Josh (Ashley) Barnette, Brandon (Jen) Barnette, Austin Barnette, and Christopher Gordon; great-grandchildren, Adrianna, Adeline, Blake, Ethan, Kersten, and Kendall Jo Barnette, and Landon and Ashlynn Killmon; siblings, Delmer (Marie) Parsons, Mary Ward, Jerry (Glenda) Parsons, Verlin (Shirley) Parsons, Pearl (Debbie) Parsons, Sarah (Chad) Fultz; and sister-in-law, Sue Parsons.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Charles Robert Barnette; grandson, Ricky Harber; brother, Will Parsons; sister, Arbadella Ridsen; and brothers-in-law, Randall Ward and Bruce Ridsen.

Services will be held at 1 p.m. Friday, February 20, 2026, at Randall & Roberts Funeral Center, 1685 Westfield Road, Noblesville, with Pastor Michael Ridsen officiating. Visitation will be from 11 a.m. to the time of service at the funeral home. Burial will be at Hamilton Memorial Park Cemetery in Westfield.

Condolences: randallroberts.com

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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 500 words. The limitations of space may not allow for longer ones to appear in print.

Submit obituaries under 500 words online at ReadTheReporter.com/obitform.

Ja'Shaun Pierre Dickman

December 28, 1998 – February 13, 2026



Ja'Shaun Pierre Dickman, 27, Noblesville, left us too soon on Friday, February 13, 2026. He was born on December 28, 1998, in Evansville, Ind., to Lisa Dickman and Perry McFarland. He was welcomed into the home of Michael and Mandy (Conley) Laning in December 2011 and was adopted on October 8, 2013.

He attended Noblesville High School where he played football and lacrosse. He graduated from the Excel Center in 2018.

He enjoyed working at Greek's Pizza, Ginger's Café, and most recently at Fire Dogs Junk Removal.

He was a Lance Corporal in the United States Marines from 2020 to 2023 where he served as a Marine Aircraft Firefighter in Quantico, Va.

Ja'Shaun was a spark of light to all who knew him. He brought a rare kind of joy to every room usually accompanied by his infectious laugh. We will forever carry his smile in our hearts. If you knew him, you know he was hardworking, determined, and took pride in his accomplishments. He took advantage of every opportunity given and lived life to the fullest. He loved those around him fiercely. He would give his shirt off his back to a stranger. He had an insane sense of humor and was quick with funny comments. He was happiest when spending time with his daughter Lyla, especially reading books.

Ja'Shaun leaves behind a great wealth of family and friends. He is survived by his daughter, Iyla Elise Dickman; her mother, Haleigh Beck; his parents; his siblings, Daniel Laning, Mikayla Dickman, and Jadon Stanfield; and his grandparents, aunts and uncles, many cousins, and even more friends.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held on Saturday, February 21, 2026, at the White River Christian Church, 1685 N. 10th St., Noblesville. Visitation will be from noon to 2 p.m. with the service beginning at 2 p.m.

Burial will follow in Crownland Cemetery with military honors.

In lieu of flowers, the family has set up a memorial savings account for Iyla in care of Michael Laning.

Bussell Family Funerals is privileged to assist the family in arrangements.

Condolences: bussellfamilyfunerals.com

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

THE PEOPLE REBEL

"Now may the Lord's strength be displayed, just as you have declared: 'The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.' In accordance with your great love, forgive the sin of these people, just as you have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now."

The Lord replied, "I have forgiven them, as you asked. Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the Lord fills the whole earth, not one of those who saw my glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times—not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their ancestors. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it. But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it. Since the Amalekites and the Canaanites are living in the valleys, turn back tomorrow and set out toward the desert along the route to the Red Sea."

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: "How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites. So tell them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Lord, I will do to you the very thing I heard you say: In this wilderness your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun."

Numbers 14:17-30 (NIV)

Meeting Notices

The Hamilton County Board of Commissioners will meet in an executive session at 12:15 p.m. Monday, Feb. 23, 2026.

A regular meeting will follow at 1:15 p.m. in the Commissioners' Courtroom at the Hamilton County Government and Judicial Center, 1 Hamilton County Square, Noblesville.

TriCo Regional Sewer Utility will hold a Budget and Finance Committee meeting at 7:30 a.m. Friday, Feb. 27, 2026, at 7236 Mayflower Park Drive, Zionsville.

TriCo Regional Sewer Utility will hold a Personnel and Benefits Committee meeting at 7:30 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25, 2026, at 7236 Mayflower Park Drive, Zionsville.

The Hamilton County Solid Waste Management District Board will meet at noon on Monday, Feb. 23, 2026, in the Commissioners' Courtroom at the Hamilton County Government and Judicial Center, 1 Hamilton County Square, Noblesville.

Each year, the Hamilton County Reporter requests government entities to notify us of public meetings as their Open Door Law notification under I.C. 5-14-1.5-5. The Reporter publishes these notices as a public service in our Tuesday through Friday digital editions. Meeting notices for Open Door Law compliance can be sent to PublicNotices@ReadTheReporter.com.

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REPORTER SPORTS THURSDAY

Sports Editor Richie Hall | Sports@ReadTheReporter.com | Twitter @Richie_Hall

CARMEL, FISHERS, GUERIN CATHOLIC, HAMILTON HEIGHTS, HAMILTON SOUTHEASTERN, NOBLESVILLE, SHERIDAN, UNIVERSITY, WESTFIELD

Caleb Small named Hamilton Heights football head coach

Submitted by Hamilton Heights School Corp.

Hamilton Heights is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Caleb Small as the Huskies new head football coach.

"After speaking with Caleb, we all agree that this is the right direction to go for our football program and we feel that Caleb will positively and effectively step in as our varsity head football coach," said Superintendent Derek Arrowood. "He has leadership experience and the passion to develop young people, both on and off the field. I am confident that he will do a good job of guiding and leading our program."

Mr. Small will replace Jon Kirschner who has been head coach at Hamilton Heights the past eight years (41-43) and guided the program to its first-ever Hoosier Conference championship in 2023.

Mr. Small is a 2008 graduate of Hamilton Heights High School and a 2013 Marian University graduate where he was a four-year letter-winner in both football and baseball while earning a degree in Business Marketing and Secondary Education. He will be a part-time Physical Education instructor and part-time Business teacher at Hamilton Heights HS.

Mr. Small has been fortunate to be in a very good

position for several years working as Offensive Coordinator and quarterbacks coach at both Noblesville and Ben Davis. Those experiences earned him two head coaching positions, successfully leading the Northwestern Tigers to a 9-2 season in 2024 and the Kokomo Wildcats to a 4-7 season in 2025.



Small

"Caleb is coming back home to coach at his alma mater having gained 13-plus years of high-level coaching experience along the way. He added to his resume invaluable successful experiences as the OC at Noblesville and Ben Davis where he played an integral part in the 2023 state championship and the four 6A final four appearances that preceded the state championship. The past two years, he has been head coach of two different programs and had success developing young men at both," said Athletic Director Kurt Ogden. "We feel that Caleb's ability to build relationships and a selfless culture while pursuing excellence on and off the field, will positively impact more athletes at Hamilton Heights than just the football team. His past coaching experiences clearly made him the front-runner for the job."

Caleb and his wife Ally, reside in Cicero. They have been married nine years and have two children, son Elliot (7) and daughter Parker (5).

Boys Wrestling Preview

Rocks' Maddox ready to dominate in return to state

By RICHARD TORRES
For The Reporter

WESTFIELD — As a freshman, Westfield's Connor Maddox stood precisely in the same position a year ago.

Ranked in the state at 106 pounds and perched atop the podium at every postseason step prior to the 2025 IHSAA state finals, Maddox had all the notable tangibles at his disposal, and he used them to his advantage.

With a mixture of speed, strength, technique and confidence, Maddox rolled to a 40-3 record overall and a fourth-place finish during his first-ever trip to the state finals.

"I'm never going to go out onto a mat thinking I'm going to lose. I'm never going to, like, not give myself a chance when I'm out there," Maddox remarked on his mental approach. "I wouldn't say it's arrogance. I'd say it's more confidence, in all the people around me, all my coaches and partners."

Now, as an unbeaten 106-pound sophomore, Maddox (30-0) has added two new elements for his return to downtown Indianapolis: experience and intimidation.

The first was earned through two technical fall wins inside Gainbridge Fieldhouse to start before consecutive losses last year forced him to settle for a top four placement.

The second Maddox picked up this December, as he became one of two wrestlers from Indiana to win an Ironman title at Walsh Jesuit High School in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

"It was a big confidence booster, and it kind of helps going out there with winning a tournament like the Ironman," Maddox said. "Guys really don't want to wrestle you. It's kind of an intimidation factor a little bit."

By winning one of the most prestigious in-season tournaments, Maddox more than cemented himself as the state's top-ranked wrestler in his weight class, according to IndianaMat.

He also became an instant favorite. A distinction Maddox wants to prove at

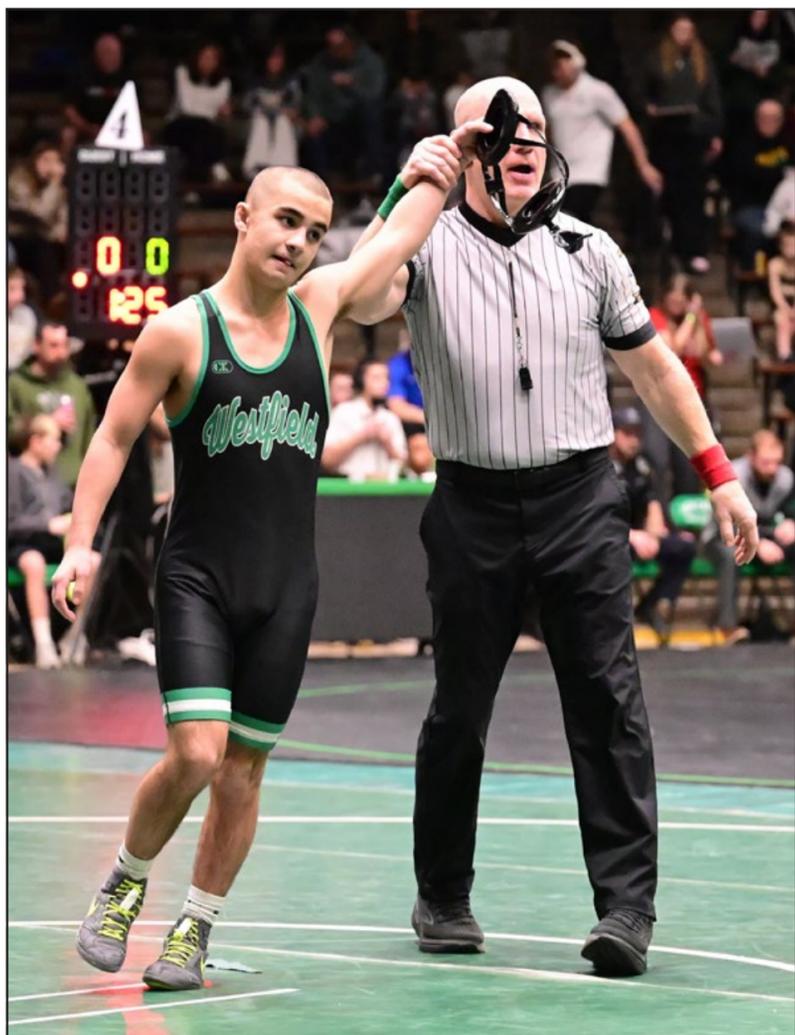


Photo by Manford Photography

Westfield's Connor Maddox gets his hand raised in victory after winning the 106-pound division at the New Castle Semi-State. Maddox is unbeaten at 30-0 heading into this weekend's IHSAA state finals.

88th Annual IHSAA Boys Wrestling State Finals

At Gainbridge Fieldhouse, Indianapolis

Friday, Feb. 20

Session 1

1:30 p.m. – Gates open
2:30 p.m. – Parade of Champions
2:45 p.m. – Presentation of Colors and National Anthem
3 p.m. – First Round Weight Classes 150-285
6 p.m. – First Round Weight Classes 106-144

Saturday, Feb. 21

Session 2

8 a.m. – Gates open
9 a.m. – Quarterfinals begin with semifinals to follow
(Fieldhouse cleared of all spectators following semifinals)

Session 3

3:30 p.m. – Gates open
4:30 p.m. – Consolation matches
7 p.m. – Introduction of state championship participants
Approx. 7:24 p.m. – Presentation of Colors and National Anthem
7:30 p.m. – State championship matches begin

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er title defense with a 17-1 tech fall in 2:15.

Along the way, he handed 12th-ranked Mason Baylor (40-1) of Milan his first loss, while defeating third-ranked Lukas Scott (36-2) of Southmont in the finals.

"You know, last year, getting fourth was very disappointing, and I didn't ever want to lose like that again, so I just made sure that I really put in the work this offseason," Maddox said. "I wanted to go out on a good note, not just win, but dominate and really kind of take over a little bit."

Maddox is on track to achieve his goal, and if the trend continues in Indianapolis, he could become Westfield's first-ever individual boys wrestling state champion.

The last Shamrocks to reach the championship match spotlight during the

IHSAA state finals were seniors Mihail Platonov (39-8) at 285 in 2021-22 and Carson Eldred (42-3) at 120 in 2019-20. Both finished as state runners-up.

The most recent individual state champion from a Hamilton County wrestling program was Mitch Sliga of Fishers, who won two straight titles at 195 in 2012 and 2013.

"This is kind of where I knew I was going to be coming into the season. I've known I was this good for a long time, and I'm just grateful that God's given me the ability to really showcase my true talents," Maddox said. "Even after getting fourth last year, I still thought that I was the best guy in the state regardless of how the tournament went. I just didn't show up to the fullest of my talents and my capabilities, so I'm glad that everything is finally coming together."

Wrestling

Black Talon Club gives opportunities to Sheridan's up-and-coming wrestlers

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

Young wrestlers in Sheridan have a place to go in order to start their journey in the sport, sharpen their skills, or just have fun.

The Black Talon Wrestling Club started last year and is entering its second year with greatly expanded membership. Club assistant Katie Hamersley said the first year, "we probably had 15 kids and we have tripled that this year."

The club wrestlers are divided into beginners, which is primarily for the younger wrestlers. They are being taught fundamentals and are entered in what Hamersley calls "friendly matches."

There is also a group for older, more advanced wrestlers. Some of the high school wrestlers compete in that class. As for older kids that are just starting out, Hamersley said they would be placed in the advanced group "just because of their size."

"I think we had a couple middle schoolers wrestle at the beginners class, but they stayed for the advanced," said Hamersley. "There were two of them, so they matched up in weight."

Some of the club's young wrestlers got the opportunity to compete in a youth tournament at Clinton Central. Hamersley

said 20 wrestlers showed up for that tournament.

"They really like it and they're focused, which is great, even the really little ones," said Hamersley. "The first tournament, everyone had a good time, even the parents just watching."

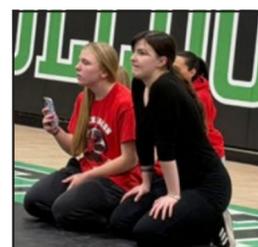
Hamersley said the focus for the little wrestlers are on "stance, how to do a proper takedown, how a match would go. They're learning how to do the top-bottom position. Just basic moves."

"The high school girls volunteer to help with the younger kids," said Hamersley. "My daughter AJ Hamersley is the assistant coach. She'll sometimes also lead practices if she needs to. We have four to five girls that show up consistently to teach the younger kids. If it wasn't for them, it would be very hectic."

"They love it," said Katie Hamersley. "They've got buddies, the kids love them."

AJ Hamersley is a senior and wrestled for the Blackhawks, while freshman Ellen Phillips also helps with the club.

"Getting to teach and mentor the kids in a sport that has taught me so much is very rewarding," said AJ Hamersley. "I'm excited to be a part of something that creates op-



Photos provided

(TOP) Twenty Black Talon wrestlers competed at the recent Clinton Central youth tournament. Over 200 wrestlers were in attendance. (ABOVE LEFT) Sheridan seniors Devyn Pewarski, Eva Todd, AJ Hamersley, and Ryleigh Hampton are shown coaching two Black Talon youth wrestlers. (ABOVE CENTER) Black Talon Wrestling Club coach AJ Hamersley demonstrates a skill during a club practice. This is the second year of the club, with the membership having tripled from the first year. (ABOVE RIGHT) Club coaches AJ Hamersley and Eva Todd are shown coaching a match at a Clinton Central youth tournament.

portunities for these kids, especially the girls."

"Teaching is what I want to do in the future and being able to teach and mentor these kids has had a huge impact on me and them as well," said Phillips. "I fell in love with this sport this season and want to show the kids how

great it is."

Colin Warner, an assistant with the Sheridan girls team, also helps with the club. He will be there for the club's first-ever tournament for beginners this Sunday, Feb. 22 at Sheridan High School. The event will be for ages 6 to 12. Doors open at 8 a.m. with

wrestling to start at 9 a.m.

"Colin said he wanted to give the kids all the opportunities to wrestle as they can," said Katie Hamersley.

The club's season begins in January and lasts through March or April.

"It depends on if we have kids who go further

in the ISWA tournament," said Hamersley. "That's usually the older kids. They switch from folkstyle to freestyle wrestling at some point, and we also teach the freestyle."

For more information on Black Talon Wrestling Club, visit its Facebook page at [this link](#).

Gymnastics



Photos provided

(ABOVE LEFT) The Noblesville gymnastics team won the Hoosier Crossroads Conference meet Tuesday at The Gymnastics Company. The Millers scored 104.825 points. (ABOVE RIGHT) Hailey Nobbe set a new Noblesville school record on the floor exercise of 9.425.

Miller gymnasts win HCC meet Nobbe sets NHS floor exercise record

The REPORTER

The Noblesville gymnastics team won the Hoosier Crossroads Conference meet, which took place Tuesday at The Gymnastics Company in Indianapolis.

The Millers scored 104.825 points. Hailey Nobbe led the way, winning the all-around by totaling 36.325 points. Nobbe set a new Noblesville school record in the floor exercise, scoring 9.425 to break the old record of 9.40.

Nobbe also won the balance beam with a score of 9.275. Valorey Bittles was second in the all-around and also the runner-up on beam and floor.

Bittles finished first in the vault by scoring 9.30 and won the uneven bars

with a mark of 8.90. Nobbe placed second in the vault.

The Millers finish their regular season Saturday at the Southmont Mountie Invitational, then return to The Gymnastics Company on Friday, Feb. 27 to compete in the Franklin Central sectional.

Noblesville scores and placings now follow.

All-around scores: 1. Hailey Nobbe 36.325, 2. Valorey Bittles 35.975, 7. Emmerson Leckrone 32.40, 8. Vera Deichman 31.90.

Vault: 1. Bittles 9.30, 2. Nobbe 9.15, Leckrone 8.50, Deichman 8.375, Sterling Southard 8.10.

Uneven bars: 1. Bittles 8.90, 3. Nobbe 8.475, T7. Deichman 7.50; Leckrone 7.50, Phoenix Rollins 4.525.

Balance beam: 1. Nobbe 9.275, 2. Bittles 8.85, Deichman 7.675, Leckrone 7.55, Lilly Martin 5.20.

Floor exercise: 1. Nobbe 9.425, 2. Bittles 8.925, 7. Leckrone 8.85, 8. Deichman 8.35, Rollins 6.50.

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SPORTS SCHEDULE

Thursday, Feb. 19

BOYS BASKETBALL

Roncalli at Guerin Catholic, 7:30 p.m.

University at KIPP Legacy School, 7:30 p.m.

BOYS SWIMMING SECTIONAL PRELIMS

Guerrin Catholic, Noblesville, Westfield at Carmel, 6 p.m.

Hamilton Heights, Hamilton Southeastern at Fishers, 6 p.m.

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

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