



REPORTER

THE HAMILTON COUNTY
Your Hometown Newspaper

FRIDAY, OCT. 16, 2026

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



TODAY'S WEATHER

Today: Mostly cloudy, with periods of showers and storms. Some storms could produce damaging wind gusts.

Tonight: Showers and storms likely. Some storms could produce damaging wind gusts.

HIGH: 72 LOW: 58



HCPR dedicates tree to Prevail in honor of 40th anniversary

The REPORTER

In recognition of Prevail, Inc.'s 40 years of providing life-saving services to survivors of crime and abuse, Hamilton County Parks and Recreation (HCPR) has planted and dedicated a serviceberry tree in the organization's honor at Cool Creek Park.

The tree was unveiled on Thursday, Oct. 8, by Prevail Executive Director Tami Wanninger and Hamilton County Parks & Recreation Director Chris Stice.

The dedicated tree provides a place for reflection while symbolizing growth, hope and healing. As the tree grows, it will serve as a meaningful tribute to the over 70,000 survivors who have found support through Prevail and a reminder of the organization's ongoing work in the community.

"We are thrilled to honor



Photos provided by Prevail, Inc.

(ABOVE LEFT) This serviceberry tree at Cool Creek Park, complete with its purple ribbon, honors Prevail for its 40 years of helping victims of crime and abuse. **(ABOVE RIGHT)** Hamilton County Parks & Recreation Director Chris Stice and Prevail Executive Director Tami Wanninger stand next to the serviceberry tree.

Prevail during their 40th anniversary year and to help raise awareness of their important work throughout Hamilton County, especially during Do-

mestic Violence Awareness Month," Stice said. "As people pass by, we hope they are inspired to learn more, start conversations and consider

how they can help create a safer community for everyone."

See Tree . . . Page 2

Fall into friendship

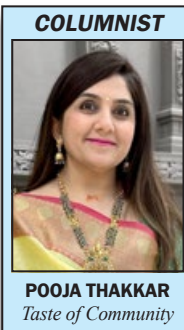
There is something magical about fall. The air turns crisp, the trees put on their most colorful show, and familiar streets begin to look different. We pull out our cozy sweaters, reach for warm cups of chai or coffee, and find ourselves slowing down just enough to notice the beauty around us.

But fall also reminds me of something else: friendship.

Like the changing leaves, friendships come in different colors, shapes, and seasons. Some friendships begin in childhood and grow alongside us. Others find us unexpectedly – in a workplace conversation, a neighborhood gathering, a community event, or while sharing a meal around a table. Some people enter our lives for a season, while others become part of our story for years to come.

When I think about friendship, I am reminded that belonging does not always begin with a grand gesture. Sometimes, it begins with a simple hello, an invitation to sit together, a message asking, "How are you doing?" or remembering to check in when life gets busy.

See Friendship . . . Page 2



Diwali festival casts a light over Carmel

By WYNNE BRUBAKER
news@readthereporter.com

The lights shining within each of us illuminate our futures and dispel our doubts. Carmel's third annual Diwali celebration on Oct. 10 honored this inner light while bringing together a multicultural community.

Dr. Anita Joshi, Carmel city councilor and chair of the Diwali committee, spoke to The Reporter about what it means to celebrate Diwali.

"Diwali is a festival of lights," Dr. Joshi said. "It's celebrated all over India by multiple religious groups: Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists. It is celebrated usually in the fall, but it is on the lunar calendar, so it changes year to year. It is a celebration of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance. The idea is to use the diyas – the little tea lights that you see everywhere – to illuminate the space so that there is no darkness. It is to bring light, bring joy, bring family together to celebrate the holiday."

Food and dancing were only



Reporter photo by Wynne BruBaker

As the sun was setting over Carmel on Friday, Oct. 9, VIPs were getting an early taste of Diwali before the festival of light would open to the public on Saturday.

a part of the allure for those attending the festival.

"The decor is gorgeous and well done," Dr. Joshi said. "We have over 200 performers, 15 different dance teams, and 12 different restaurants and ven-

dors serving authentic Indian food and drinks. We have wonderful cultural arts and crafts activities for the kids. There's going to be block printing, flower bracelet making, and so much more.

The details in the decorations and vibrant activities brought the Carmel Diwali Festival to life, with a remarkable addition to this year's festivities.

See Diwali . . . Page 3

HCPR Director Chris Stice elected to American Academy for Park & Recreation Administration

The REPORTER

Chris Stice, Director of Hamilton County Parks and Recreation (HCPR), has been elected as a Fellow of the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA), one of the highest professional honors in the parks, recreation, and conservation field.

Stice was formally inducted during the Academy's Annual Networking Reception and Awards Dinner on Sept. 30, held in conjunction with the 2026 National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Conference in Philadelphia, Pa.

Induction to the Academy recognizes distinguished leaders whose careers have demonstrated exceptional service, visionary leadership, and

lasting contributions in parks, recreation, and conservation, and the outstanding service to the communities they serve. Academy Fellows represent the profession's most accomplished practitioner, educators, urban directors, and advocates who have significantly advanced the quality of life through parks, recreation, and conservation in communities across the nation.

Membership is determined through a rigorous nomination and peer-review process and is limited to 150 active members. Candidates must demonstrate a distinguished record of professional achievement, leadership, service to the profession, and meaningful contributions that have strengthened parks, recreation, conservation, tourism, sports management, or related

fields. The Academy recognizes Fellows in four categories:

1. Practitioner/Professional: Senior leaders with at least 15 years of executive level experience.

2. Educator: Distinguished university faculty or academic leaders with at least 15 years of service advancing parks and recreation education.

3. Advocate: Professionals from the private or nonprofit sectors whose leadership has significantly benefited the profession.

4. Urban Director: CEOs or Directors leading major public metropolitan park, recreation or conservation systems serving urban populations.

Founded in 1980, the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration ad-

vances excellence in the administration of parks, recreation and conservation through leadership, research, education, mentoring, and public service. The Academy promotes innovation, supports scholarly research, recognizes exemplary leadership, and serves as a trusted voice on issues that shape the future of the profession.

"The Academy is honored to welcome the Class of 2026," said AAPRA President Elizabeth S. Kessler, Executive Director of the McHenry County Conservation District in Woodstock, Ill. "This distinguished class represents exceptional leadership, innovation, and service from across the country. The collective experience, com-

See Stice . . . Page 2



HSE Schools highlights academic growth & expanded opportunities

Submitted by HSE Schools

More students at Fishers and Hamilton Southeastern high schools are taking on advanced coursework, and more are succeeding.

Since 2022, Advanced Placement (AP) participation has increased 21 percent at Fishers High School (FHS) and 38 percent at Hamilton Southeastern High School (HHS). During that same period, the number of students earning qualifying AP scores has grown even faster, increasing 40 percent and 59 percent, respectively.

Those results were among the academic highlights shared with the Hamilton Southeastern Board of School Trustees on Wednesday, Oct. 14, along with strong ILEARN performance and a look at how educators are using student data to strengthen instruction and provide targeted support.

During the 2025-26 school year, more than 2,800 students across both high schools took AP courses, with more than 2,400 earning at least one qualifying score of 3 or higher.

See Opportunities . . . Page 3

Come meet the candidates

The Reporter is doing our part to help voters make informed decisions when casting their ballots whether early, absentee, or on Election Day.

The Reporter will publish Candidate Bios for all candidates who choose to engage with our readers. Those will publish every Monday through Friday through Election Day (and at [this link](#)), and those pages will be updated as more candidates choose to submit their information.

Election Day polling places are listed on Page 8 at [this link](#). Please note that Vote Centers will **not** take effect in Hamilton County until the May 2027 primary election.

This is a free public service we are providing both to candidates and our readers.

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Early Voting Totals

Below are the number of early voters as of Thursday, Oct. 15, listed by polling location. [Click here](#) for more information on early voting.

Judicial Center	3,888
4-H Fairgrounds	6,222
TOTAL	10,110

Beth Sheller
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TREE

The tree also carries special significance during October, which is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. A purple ribbon has been placed around the tree and will remain throughout the month as a visible reminder of the importance of community awareness and prevention.

“We are grateful to Hamilton County Parks and Recreation for honoring Prevail’s 40 years of service,” Wanninger said. “Prevail’s work has always been deeply

ly rooted in community and a tree felt like a special way to capture that connection. Just as a tree grows strong with deep roots and the right support, survivors can find strength and healing when they have a community that stands beside them.”

About Prevail

Prevail is a non-profit organization based in Noblesville and dedicated to offering crisis intervention and restorative support services free of charge for those who have experienced crime and

abuse, in a confidential, supportive, non-judgmental environment that is meant to empower those served. Since the beginning, Prevail has been committed to empowering survivors and fostering a safe community free of violence. For more information, visit prevail-inc.org.

About Hamilton County Parks and Recreation

The Hamilton County Parks and Recreation Department exists to serve the leisure and recreation

needs of its residents and tourists, and to enhance the quality of life in the county. HCPR strives to preserve and provide high-quality, passive parks and facilities, to offer historical and natural resource education and services, and to be recognized as a leader and resource for our community and its citizens in the pursuit of living an environmentally responsible lifestyle. For more information, visit myhamiltoncountyparks.com.

from Page 1

STICE

mitment to public service, and passion for improving communities through parks, recreation and conservation will strengthen the Academy in achieving its vision and help inspire the next generation of leaders.”

Stice’s election as a Fellow recognizes a career spanning 30 years of service to Hamilton County Parks and Recreation, its elected officials, Park Board, staff, and community. Throughout his tenure, he has helped lead the acquisition and development of the county park system, growing it from 200 acres to more than 1,800 acres and expanding the staff, programs and opportunities that contribute to Hamilton County’s quality of life.

His leadership has advanced park development, conservation, public ac-

cess, and trail connections throughout the county. He has also supported expanded recreational opportunities, including the 44,000-square-foot indoor archery complex, year-round camping at White River Campground, the development of Seven Streams Park and Bur Oak Bend properties, as well as the expansion of Potter’s Bridge Park and the Nation’s Trail.

“My goal has always been to create places where our community can experience what I call ‘mantle moments,’ memories so meaningful that a photograph of that experience earns a place on the fireplace mantle at home,” Stice said. “Whether it’s a child’s first fishing trip, a family gathering or a quiet moment connecting with nature, our parks provide the setting for stories people cherish for a lifetime.”



Photos provided (ABOVE LEFT) Stice shows off his recognition plaque. (ABOVE RIGHT) Former Director of the National Park Service Fran P. Mainella took a moment to post with Hamilton County’s own Parks Director. (BELOW) The HCPR team was there to support Stice at the ceremony.



Beyond Hamilton County, Stice has contributed to the parks and recreation profession through national and regional leadership. His service includes chairing the NRPA National Conference Program Commit-

tee, serving on the National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials (NACPRO) Board and Legislative Committee, serving as president of the Indiana Park and Recreation Association (IPRA) Board, and serving as president of the

Great Lakes Park Training Institute Board. Through these roles, he has been a strong advocate in the parks and recreation field.

Learn more about the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration at aapra.org.

FRIENDSHIP

We often talk about building stronger communities, but communities are made of relationships. And relationships grow when we make time for one another.

As our calendars fill with school activities, work commitments, holiday preparations, and end-of-year responsibilities, it can be easy to postpone that coffee date, delay that phone call, or assume someone else will reach out first. Yet, behind every busy schedule is a person who may appreciate

being remembered.

Perhaps this fall is an invitation to reconnect. Reach out to an old friend you have not spoken with in months. Welcome a new neighbor. Invite someone who often stands on the edge of a gathering to join your conversation. Sit with someone whose story you have not yet heard.

Friendship also asks us to embrace differences. We may celebrate different holidays, prepare different comfort foods, speak different languages, or see the world through different experiences. We do not have to be identical to find common ground. Sometimes, the most meaningful friendships grow when we become curious about what makes someone else who they are.

In my *Taste of Community* journey, I continue to see how sharing stories creates opportunities for connection. A dish can open a conversation. A memory can reveal a shared feeling. A simple question can help two people discover that, despite their differences, they have more in common than they imagined.

Perhaps that is the beauty of friendship: it gives us room to be ourselves while encouraging us to make

room for others.

And just as trees do not hold on to every leaf to remain beautiful, friendships also change. People move, priorities shift, and seasons of life take us in different directions. We can appreciate the friendships that shaped us, nurture those that continue to grow, and remain open to the new connections waiting to unfold.

So, as fall paints our community in shades of gold, orange, and red, let us remember that warmth is something we can offer one another, too.

Who could use a little friendship from you this fall?

Maybe it is someone you already know. Maybe it is someone you have yet to meet.

Take the first step. Share a cup of chai, exchange a story, extend an invitation, or simply show up.

Because sometimes, the smallest act of friendship becomes the beginning of someone’s sense of belonging.

And every story shared is an opportunity to grow a little closer, together.

Pooja Thakkar is working to build cultural connections. You can read her column each week in the pages of The Reporter.

from Page 1



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DIWALI

from Page 1

“This year for the first time, we [sold] a take-home teacup that is printed with our Diwali logo, and it’ll say ‘Carmel Diwali ‘26.” Dr. Joshi said. “Every year we hope to bring those back to the Diwali celebration as a memento. I also love the Palladiscope show at the end. It’s so gorgeous to see the colors of Diwali lit up on the Palladiscope itself, and I love that end to the celebration with the cold spark fireworks.”

Dr. Joshi and the Carmel Diwali Committee organized the festival to represent aspects of Indian culture in Hamilton County.

“As an American-born woman of Indian heritage, it was important for me to share my culture,” Dr. Joshi said. “I’ve done that all my life with my friends and people who are close to me, and we found that there was a growing community here in Carmel – the Indian diaspora has grown. We thought it was high time that we brought our neighbors together with us to celebrate joy in different ways. We also enjoy all of the other beautiful celebrations like the Christkindlmarkt, and everything else that happens on Carter Green, so to be able to bring another cultural celebration to this space was just really important to me.”

Dr. Joshi said that bringing Diwali to Carmel provided Indian people with a way to connect with their cultural heritage.

“Anytime a culture comes together to celebrate its heritage, it makes people feel proud,” Dr. Joshi said. “It makes people feel seen. It makes people feel excited that they are really a part of the big Carmel community and that their heritage can

be celebrated along with everyone else. It’s a really lovely way to bring the Indian community together, and then share that joy with their neighbors.”

However, the Diwali celebration in Carmel is not just for Indian people. Dr. Joshi told The Reporter that the celebration supplied everyone in the community with an opportunity to learn about their neighbors’ culture and traditions.

“This is not at all just for Indian people,” Dr. Joshi said. “This is a celebration of community. And when I say community, it’s not just the Indian community. It’s the entire community of Carmel because Carmel is a very diverse place. It is a place that has many different languages and ethnicities represented, and there are so many people from all over the world that live here. To share in one another’s festivals on a regular basis is super important to get to know your neighbors. These are things that we share as a community, and it binds us together more strongly.”

Along with the community connection, the Carmel Diwali Festival teaches people about Indian cultures.

“It is an opportunity to learn about Indian culture and about this great holiday,” Dr. Joshi said. “You can see so many similarities in how other holidays are celebrated. We all talk about light and food and festivities and dance and music, and that is part of every celebration in every culture. You start to see the similar threads that all bind us together as a community.”

If you did not attend this year’s Diwali in Carmel, it will be back in 2027 and The Reporter will have all the details well in advance.



With 15 dance teams, more than 200 performers, and a dozen food vendors, there was something for everyone at Carmel’s third annual Diwali celebration.

Reporter photos by Wynne BruBaker

OPPORTUNITIES

from Page 1

Additionally, 58 percent of graduating seniors at FHS and 56 percent at HHS have earned at least one qualifying AP score. HHS also achieved a record 89.3 percent AP success rate.

“What’s encouraging is that we’re seeing more students take on challenging coursework while continuing to achieve at high levels,” Superintendent Dr. Matt Kegley said. “We want to continue opening doors for students while making sure they have the academic foundation and support to be successful.”

The district has continued to expand advanced coursework based on student interests and emerging career opportunities, including AP Precalculus, expanded computer science offerings and opportunities in areas such as cybersecurity.

The academic update also highlighted the district’s performance on the 2025-26 ILEARN assessment, with 66.4 percent of students demonstrating proficiency in English language arts and 68.1 percent in mathematics. Both results were more than 24 percentage points above state averages, placing HSE among Indiana’s highest-performing school districts.

While those results are

encouraging, district leaders emphasized that assessment data plays an important role in identifying where students need additional support and where they are ready for greater challenges.

Indiana’s redesigned ILEARN assessment provides checkpoints throughout the school year, allowing educators to monitor student progress, identify learning gaps, and adjust instruction before the end-of-year assessment.

At the junior high level, for example, students receive targeted instruction during a dedicated period based on specific skills they have not yet mastered. Those interventions change throughout the year as students’ needs evolve.

HSE Schools has taken a similar approach to literacy instruction, investing in updated curriculum, research-based reading practices aligned with the science of reading and instructional coaches in every K-6 building. These coaches work alongside teachers to examine classroom data and make instructional adjustments based on student needs.



Kegley

“Strong results are worth celebrating, but they also show us where we can continue to improve,” Kegley said. “Whether a student needs additional instruction to master a skill or is ready for a greater academic challenge, our responsibility is to recognize those needs and respond. That’s the work happening in our classrooms every day.”

District leaders emphasized that academic progress is not the result of any single program or initiative, but rather the combined efforts of teachers, staff, students, and families, supported by effective curriculum, professional development, and timely information about student learning.

As HSE Schools looks ahead, the focus remains on strengthening foundational skills, providing targeted support, and expanding opportunities for students to pursue more challenging coursework.

“Our goal is to keep raising expectations while making sure every student has the support and opportunities to meet them,” Kegley said.

Directed by Brent Wooldridge

October 8-18, 2026

Thursday, Friday, Saturday at 7:30 and Sunday at 2:30

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God & the frying pan

“Obviously, I’m not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ’s servant.” (Galatians 1:10)

Many of us teachers and preachers can be our worst (or best) self-critics.

Our hearts and minds are often poured into each lesson, each message, each sermon, spending hours upon hours until it feels “just right.” We are often hyped-up, prayed-up, and ready to go with the best message possible, ready to dazzle those who would hear. Ready to please our God.

Afterwards, though, we may think our delivery “could have been better.” We can receive both positive, uplifting kudos, and cruel, negative criticism, that later can either become blessings in disguise in unexpected ways or fester into persistent, irritating thoughts of self-reproach.



COLUMNIST
BONNIE ZICKGRAF
Sacred or Secular?

So with all these thoughts in mind, I prayed two days after my last message delivery, speaking to God while washing the dishes, as I sometimes do. Peering out the back window above the kitchen sink and up to my wrists in Dawn dishwashing bubbles, I asked our Lord if He was pleased with “how it went.”

The sun was going down and began to cast an orange outline to the underside of the bluish-gray clouds. It was beautiful. I turned and reached for the last item to wash: the frying pan on the stove. I glanced out of the window again and saw the answer to my prayer.

It was an unmistakable profile of the face of Jesus in the cloud. I dropped the dish cloth in the sink, grabbed a towel and went out to the back porch just to confirm, just to stand silently to enjoy this amazing view. He was pleased and was telling me He is near.

A minute or so passed by and I went back inside, thanking Him for His kind message. Returning to my frying pan in the sink, I glanced at the cloud once again and where the face of Jesus was in that cloud, there was now the clear shape of a beautiful heart. A heart!

My own heart was full, my Spirit content. Tears welled up at the thought of His tender, overwhelming love. God is very near, among the frying pans, the dish soap, and embedded within our messages and lessons. He is always pleased when we share His true Word, and even more so when we pray to Him. Such a caring, loving God He is!

Rev. Bonnie Zickgraf is a retired pastor, registered nurse, electroplater, and podcaster. She continues to serve various preschool, youth, and adult ministries, including the Nurses' Honor Guard for the State of Indiana. She loves to laugh, write, eat, and pray! Send comments to bonniezickgraf@gmail.com.

Feeling good about looking good on a budget this fall

Style is forever... It's about something else that comes from within you.” – Ralph Lauren

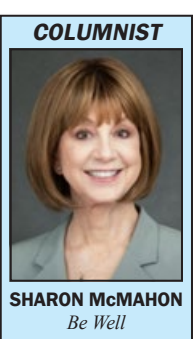
It seems like a weird time to be bringing up “style” or “fashion” doesn’t it? Our community has faced historic flood issues and damage. The world, as well, is enduring earthquakes and floods causing catastrophic damage and loss of life. Measles has reared its ugly head again after years of eradication. Politics is as crazy and often ridiculous as ever. Who wants to talk about fashion and/or style?

Well, I do, at least for now.

I, of course, am not a professional designer of fashion/couture or style, but I have an interest in such and a theory about the importance of style in particular as it relates to the world around us. Society is inundated with images of not only how we should look but how we drape our bodies to look our best – or so they say. I wholeheartedly believe that the way we present ourselves stylistically is important to both our physical and mental health.

Remember, this is an opinion column, and I will share those observations. Keep in mind I am addressing female style, for the most part.

First, and foremost, *size is irrelevant to this issue*. If you are a size 2 or a size 20 or anything in between, you can still present yourself in a positive, stylish, and yes, comfortable way to the outside world. It is widely accepted that if you feel better about yourself you will ap-



COLUMNIST
SHARON McMAHON
Be Well

proach emotional and mental issues with more clarity, and you will take better care of yourself with increased fitness activity and nutrition.

The world is populated with many sizes of humans and I fully believe that if we are taking the best care of ourselves, we will want to present ourselves in the most attractive manner.

Some of you, dear readers, may believe that I am referring to spending a hefty portion of our incomes on fashion – nothing could be farther from the truth! In fact, much of what is referred to as “fast fashion” is not inexpensive and often poorly made and not among the items I would recommend other than an occasional trendy addition to the wardrobe.

I am referring to style – something we all have whether we realize it or not. What colors do you like and make you happy? Solid colors mostly, or printed fabrics? Sleeve length? Skinny, straight, wide leg, flared, or barrel jeans? Tailored and fitted, or ruffles and loose fitting? We all have our preferences and other than a brief foray into another style once in a while we are usually more content with our personal style choices.

Along with the fit and the style to which we prefer, an issue may be cost and selection. Hear me out – I firmly believe that we can dress ourselves attractively and comfortably on a small budget. Department store prices can be unattainable for some, although sometimes you can find a “super sale” but I endeavor to

say that you can often find great bargains of just what you are looking for in consignment and thrift stores (I once nabbed a Lauren blazer for \$10 *with tags attached!*) and sometimes the big box stores if you shop carefully and mindfully.

My main point is this: We all have our personal style, we all wish to present ourselves to the world in stylish manner, and we all want to look and feel our best* I know I do, and I believe that you do as well!

*Footwear – so important. Search out and purchase the best you can afford; it is difficult to smile when your feet hurt and after all, your smile is your best accessory!

Sharon McMahon, CNWC

The opinions expressed in this article are not intended to replace advice of your personal physician or licensed health professional. Please consult your physician for to any issues you may have related nutrition or fitness activity.

Flesh, Fear, and Forever:
An eschatological view of artificial intelligence

Colossians 3:1-15 (NLT)

Emmanuel United Methodist Church
16000 Cumberland Rd.
Noblesville, IN

October 18, 2026
10 AM
Rev. Bonnie Zickgraf, BSN, RN

Prevail

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Local candidates to speak at next North GOP dinner

The REPORTER

The Northern Hamilton County GOP invites you to the next dinner, set for 6 p.m. Monday, Oct. 19, at the Hamilton County FOP Lodge, 7201 E. 196th St., Noblesville.

Featured speakers will include:

- Beth Sheller, candidate for Hamilton County Clerk
- Dustin Dixon, candidate for Hamilton County Sheriff
- Danica Eyler, candidate for Judge of Superior Court 8
- Mark Hall, candidate for County Council District 3

- Ken Alexander, candidate for County Council District 4

- ... and other Republican candidates.

Dr. David Mundy, Superintendent of Sheridan Community Schools, will speak on his district’s referendum.

North GOP members will stuff candidate material after the meeting for those knocking on doors on Saturday, Oct. 24.

Cost to attend is free for sponsors and members and \$10 for guests. Please RSVP to emily.pearson317@gmail.com by Sunday, Oct. 18, if you can attend.

Thanks for reading!

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FAITH
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Secretary of State candidates detail plans for business services & elections

WISH-TV | wishtv.com

Indiana’s candidates for secretary of state on Tuesday said the office needs to better align its business services with the needs of business owners and consumers.

During a forum sponsored by the Rotary Club of Indianapolis and moderated by WISH-TV government reporter Garrett Bergquist, the four candidates detailed plans for securities protection, auto dealer regulation, and business filing systems. Although the secretary of state’s office is best known for administering elections, it also oversees business licensing and several related regulatory functions.

Consumers can file complaints and get restitution through the office’s securities division, which includes investigators and attorneys who assist law enforcement and prosecutors

on securities cases.

“Part of that role is to educate our most vulnerable populations about the signs of being defrauded. And I think we can do a little bit better job of expressing that,” Shillings said, adding that she believes the office can also do a better job of monitoring restitution in those cases.

Ballard said he will push for a closer working relationship between the securities division and its counterpart in the attorney general’s office, which focuses more on criminal prosecutions. Engling said he will focus on better educating business owners about securities regulations and resources available to them, while Bayh said the office needs to better advertise those tools and make them work for entrepreneurs.

The candidates also said they want to improve vehi-

cle titling at the dealer level. Engling said he is already talking to state lawmakers about ways to simplify titling. Shillings said the office needs to listen to all dealers’ needs regardless of whether they donated to the officeholder’s campaign, while Ballard said he wants to improve communications between the auto services division and the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Ballard said communication must also improve whenever the office fines dealers.

“One thing that I’m really interested in is e-title,” Bayh said. “Some of the paper titling in the dealerships has increased costs. It’s made some things messy with title searches and things like that. To the extent that we can move in an e-title direction, I think that makes sense.”

Engling split from the



Ballard



Bayh



Engling



Shillings

other candidates over how election officials handled the recount between state Sen. Spencer Deery, R-West Lafayette, and primary challenger Paula Copenhaver. The Indiana Recount Commission, consisting of one Republican, one Democrat, and the secretary of state, rejected several ballots over a lack of a county clerk’s seal and awarded Copenhaver the election before the Indiana Supreme Court reversed the decision.

Bayh, Ballard, and Shillings all said ballots should not be thrown out due to clerical errors and voter intent should be respected. Bayh said he will work with the legislature to codify that into state law. Ballard said he wants to replace the current recount commission with five retired judges serving on a nonpartisan basis. Shillings said she agrees with the court’s decision but does not believe changing the commission is necessary, noting that any change to state law must go through the General Assembly.

Engling said both the recount commission and the Indiana Supreme Court followed the law as written and he accepts both decisions.

“If you have a preferred outcome, you can work directly with the Statehouse to change the law, but otherwise, you have to follow the law,” he said.

Engling was also the only candidate who did not disavow turning over voter data to the federal government, unlike outgoing Secretary of State and fellow Republican Diego Morales. Engling did not explicitly say whether he would turn over bulk data, but stated the office’s core responsibility is ensuring voter regis-

trations are valid. Shillings said elections should remain sovereign to states. Bayh said personal data should not go to the federal government without good cause.

“The fact that the federal government wants to interfere in our elections goes up against the founding of our country. That’s not how we were built,” Ballard said. “The states run their elections. It’s always been that way, and to bring the federal government into our elections, wow.”

All four candidates said each county should decide whether to become a vote center county. Hamilton County will become the 73rd of Indiana’s 92 counties to adopt the vote center model next year. The candidates also said officials in each county should decide whether to use hand-marked paper ballots or another voting system such as a ballot marking device. State law requires a paper audit trail for all voting forms.

Early voting continues through Nov. 2. Election Day is on Nov. 3.

This story was originally published by WISH-TV at wishtv.com/news/election/indiana-secretary-of-state-candidates-detail-plans-for-business-services-and-elections.

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Letter to the Editor

Why I’m supporting the Republican team for Fall Creek Township

Dear Editor:

When township government works, you hardly notice it. The cemeteries are mowed, a family facing eviction gets help with rent, and a trail opens along Fall Creek. This year that quiet work was tested, and Fall Creek Township showed what experienced leadership can do.

That is why I am supporting Lynne Goodin, Diane Eaton, and Susan Davis for the Township Board, and Doug Allman for Trustee.

In 2026 the General Assembly made its most serious push in decades to shrink township government. The new law forces hundreds of townships to merge. Fall Creek came through in strong shape because it had already proven its value. Doug Allman has kept our tax rate among the lowest in Hamilton County while expanding office hours, the food pantry, and assistance programs. With Senate Enrolled Act 1 also tightening local budgets, this is not the moment for on-the-job training.

Doug was named the DNR’s Conservationist of the Year. He led the development of Fall Creek Woods Natural Area, 80 acres of woods, prairie, trails, and a kayak launch. With 92 newly purchased

acres, about 172 acres are now preserved for our children and grandchildren. The township also cares for our pioneer cemeteries: Arnett, Brooks, Kinnamon, McKay, and Mount Zion.

In August, Fall Creek hit its highest level in 40 years. Doug called the mayor to warn that the water was rising fast in Luxhaven, and the township housed the families who were displaced. In the weeks that followed, he helped coordinate cleanup supplies and motel placements, and he connected families to FEMA assistance.

When a neighbor loses shelter in the middle of the night, a trustee who answers the phone and takes action makes all the difference.

Lynne Goodin holds a law degree, an MBA, and a CPA license, which makes her ideal for overseeing the township budget. She has served on the Binford Redevelopment and Growth and Bosma Enterprises boards, and HOA board. She is also the founder of the Liberty Belles, a local group that works to keep senior residents informed of local policy changes and events affecting them. Lynne has made clear that her priorities are keeping township taxes low, providing

responsible poor relief, and ensuring quality fire and EMS services along with well-kept cemeteries and parks.

Diane Eaton, a 40-year Fishers resident, holds a master’s degree in nursing and built two businesses, including The Balmoral House. She is a former president of the HSE Schools board and has served on the Fishers Plan Commission.

Susan Davis, a Fall Creek resident for more than 25 years, is the only incumbent on the ballot. She has already helped guide the township through this year’s legislative upheaval and the August flood.

I wholeheartedly trust this team to oversee our tax dollars. They are compassionate to those in need, accountable to taxpayers, experienced in public service, and visionary in their leadership.

This is not the time to gamble on rhetoric and ideas. Results matter. On or before Nov. 3, vote for Doug Allman for Trustee, and for Lynne Goodin, Diane Eaton, and Susan Davis for Township Board. Board candidates must be selected individually because straight-ticket voting does not cover them.

Tiffanie Ditlevson
Fishers

Letter to the Editor

Carmel voter: make sure your votes for referendum & state legislature align

Dear Editor:

Recently, our community has heard a lot about the school referendums in Carmel and Westfield and why they are so important to our local public schools.

As a proud 2024 graduate of Carmel High School, I know firsthand how critical these referendums are for the continued functioning of our exceptional public schools. Largely absent from the conversation, however, is the reasoning why these referendums even need to be placed on the ballot in the first place.

Across the state, a record 38 Indiana school districts have referendum questions on the ballot, largely due to a property tax reform law enacted by Republicans in the state legislature last year (SEA 1) that reduced the property tax revenue schools were expected to receive by over \$700 million statewide, including tens of millions of dollars from Carmel and Westfield schools.

These referendums offer another reminder that what happens at the Indiana Statehouse trickles down to our local communities and to our local schools, who are now forced to deal with a problem imposed on them by our state lawmakers who refuse to provide our public schools with adequate state resources.

Your votes for the referendum and the state legislature are intricately connected. If you’re choosing to support the referendum, do your research to determine whether your choice for State Representative or State Senator is a vocal, hands-on supporter of the referendum, or if their support is empty optics and backtracking on the choices that led us here.

Make sure your votes for our local schools and for our state officials align.

Ben Boyce
Carmel

Letter guidelines this election season

With the approach of the Nov. 3 General Election, the Hamilton County Reporter is establishing some Letters to the Editor guidelines to keep things fair and balanced.

Letters addressing new topics about the upcoming election or the policies of individual candidates will be accepted until the end of the business day on Thursday, Oct. 22, and will be published on Friday, Oct. 23.

Letters in response to new topics published in our Oct. 23 edition will be accepted until Tuesday, Oct. 27, and will be published in our Wednesday, Oct. 28 edition.

These deadlines will give candidates and their supporters the opportunity to reply to letters addressing new topics.

Straight letters of endorsement will be accepted until Thursday, Oct. 29, and will publish on Friday, Oct. 30.

The Reporter will not publish Letters to the Editor containing personal attacks. [Click here](#) to read The Reporter’s policy on attack ads and Letters to the Editor.

Please send your letters to
News@ReadTheReporter.com.

Letters to the Editor do not represent the opinions of The Reporter or our staff.



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(Acts 2:42; 4:24; 16:25)



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(1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Acts 2:42; 20:7)



Preaching the Word of God
(2 Timothy 4:2; Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7)



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(1 Corinthians 16:1; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Acts 2, 4)

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Letter to the Editor

A vote NO is not a vote against our children

Dear Editor:

I love our Noblesville community, and I believe deeply in the importance of providing every child with an excellent education. I have tremendous respect for the teachers who pour their hearts into our classrooms every day, often going above and beyond to help students succeed. They deserve our appreciation, our support, and the resources necessary to do their jobs well.

Our students deserve nothing less than the very best we can provide.

That is why my position on the proposed Noblesville Schools referendum is not one I take lightly. I recognize that school funding is complicated, that operating costs continue to rise, and that difficult decisions must be made. I also recognize that many families, seniors, and homeowners in our community are facing those same financial pressures.

I believe we can support our teachers, prioritize academic excellence, protect opportunities for our students, and still demand responsible fiscal stewardship. These are not competing priorities. They are responsibilities that should work together.

The current school board has expressed concern about the potential loss of programs, staffing, and opportunities if the referendum fails. Those concerns deserve to be heard and taken seriously. But I believe taxpayers also deserve more than a choice between higher taxes and the possibility of losing programs they value.

Before asking our community to make another eight-year financial commitment, we should be willing to take a comprehensive look at how our existing dollars are being spent.

With an annual district budget of approximately \$170 million, every dollar matters. We have a responsibility to examine administrative expenses, operational efficiencies, spending priorities, and opportunities to direct more resources where they matter most: our classrooms, our teachers, and our students.

I am committed to advocating for a thorough, independent financial audit and comprehensive spending review, regardless of whether this referendum passes or fails. Our community deserves transparency, clear answers, and confidence that taxpayer dollars are being used as effectively as possible.

I want our teachers to be well compensated and supported. I want our classrooms equipped for success.

I want students challenged academically, prepared for life beyond graduation, and given opportunities to discover their God-given potential.

And I want the hardworking taxpayers of Noblesville to know their voices matter, too.

We should never have to choose between loving our schools and holding them financially accountable.

A vote NO is not a rejection of our teachers. It is not a rejection of our students. And it is certainly not a rejection of the value of public education.

For me, it is a call to take a closer look, ask difficult questions, establish clear priorities, and pursue sustainable solutions that respect both the needs of our schools and the financial realities of our community.

I believe in Noblesville Schools. I believe in our educators. I believe in our students. And I believe that strong schools and responsible stewardship must go hand in hand.

Our children deserve academic excellence. Our teachers deserve meaningful support. And our taxpayers deserve accountability.

We owe all three nothing less.

Denise Dye
Candidate, Noblesville School Board

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.



BLACKHAWK PROUD

SHERIDAN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

STATE OF THE SCHOOLS

FINANCE & DISTRICT UPDATE



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2026
6:00 P.M.



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District Updates



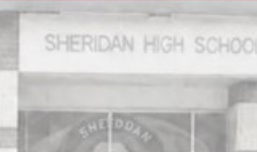
Financial Update



Community Q&A

COME SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING ACROSS SHERIDAN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS.

Dr. Mundy will share district highlights, provide an update on school finances, and answer community questions - including questions about the upcoming referendum.



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Letter to the Editor

Fishers voter explains ‘no’ vote on HSE Schools referendum

Dear Editor:

I am a lifelong Fishers resident, and I will be voting no on the Hamilton Southeastern Schools referendum on Nov. 3.

This vote isn't to spite our teachers or schools, I believe that both are very good for society, however it is simply a vote to keep life affordable for the average family of this city.

Due to the state law, SEA-1, that passed last year, the average family in Indiana pays less in property taxes, which in today's economy could mean a lot for the affordability of individual families in Fishers.

The new referendum that is to be voted on this November would make up for the money not being taken in because of SEA-1 by raising property taxes in the district to give more money to our teachers and schools. The problem with this, however, is that enrollment for schools district-wide is at decade lows; only around 19,800 new enrollments were counted for 2026, which is the first time this number has been sub-20,000 in over 10 years. This is far from a onetime occurrence, too; the enrollment for schools in the district has been steadily decreasing for the past seven years now!

When you take into account this and the fact that the budget for schools have followed the exact opposite trend and have actually gone up by \$43 million in two years, it starts to get a little foggy as to why we should put more strain on the families of our city by raising their taxes to provide more money for under-enrolled schools.

A plan that I would rather see is one that matches the spending for schools to the rate of enrollment per year, which only makes sense. Until then I do not believe that families around the district should be forced to pay more, which is why I will say no to the proposed referendum on Nov. 3.

Sawyer A. Gwin
Fishers

Letter to the Editor

Two open seats do not require two selections

Dear Editor:

As voters prepare to cast their ballots in the Noblesville School Board election, I want to clarify a point that I recently questioned myself: With two seats available, are we required to vote for two candidates?

The answer is no. Voters may select up to two candidates, but choosing just one is valid. That vote still counts, and leaving a second selection unused does not invalidate the ballot.

I am supporting Denise Dye because her stated priorities – academic achievement, meaningful partnerships with parents, and responsible financial stewardship – reflect the direction I want for our schools. I believe school board leadership should keep students' education at the center of its decisions, welcome families into the conversation, and approach taxpayer dollars with care and accountability.

Understanding how our selections are counted matters. Each candidate we select receives one vote. Selecting Denise and another candidate gives each of them a vote as they compete for the two available seats. Selecting only Denise gives her one vote without adding to a competing candidate's total.

Voting for one candidate does not give that person two votes. Likewise, choosing a second candidate does not erase the first vote. The distinction is simply whether we also want to support someone else in the same race.

If voters support two candidates, they may vote for both. But if Denise is the only candidate they wish to support, there is no obligation to select another name merely because two seats are open.

For me, the choice is Denise Dye alone in the school board contest.

I encourage voters to review the candidates, read the ballot instructions carefully, and make deliberate choices. An available selection is an option, not an obligation. Every vote we cast should reflect someone we actually want to represent us.

Meredith Ziegenhagel
Noblesville

Letter to the Editor

Noblesville sophomore urges support for referendum

Dear Editor:

The referendum matters to me because it affects my experience as a student at Noblesville High School and the opportunities I have to succeed.

As a sophomore, I take several dual-credit classes because I want to challenge myself academically and also prepare for colleges.

I believe students should have access to the resources, teachers, and support they need to reach their full potential. Having a strong education now will make a difference in the opportunities we all have in the future. The loss of a mass number of classes could cause a detrimental change in student opportunities.

For taxes to only raise by \$12 a year, students in elementary will have the same experience we had growing up. If the referendum doesn't pass, many enjoyable, creative classes will be closed, leading to an unfair experience for the younger generation.

Now we can either vote against the referendum to save a few bucks, or watch as those still growing up gain a future and an abundance of opportunities.

Parker Applegate
Noblesville

Thanks for reading The Reporter!



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Photos provided by Altrusa Club of Hamilton County
(ABOVE LEFT) Altrusa members collected food and supplies donations for the Mary Rigg Food Pantry during their October meeting. (ABOVE RIGHT) Members Gloria and Brenna present a completed crocheted mat made of plastic bags for people experiencing homelessness in the local community.

Altrusa Club invites you to help them help the homeless

Submitted

Did you know you can give plastic bags a second purpose while helping a neighbor in need? If you're looking for a meaningful way to give back to the community this holiday season, the Altrusa Club of Hamilton County

will host a hands-on service project to support the homeless. Join them on Friday, Nov. 30, at the Ignite Studio at Hamilton East Public Library in Fishers and lend a helping hand. Club members and

guests will transform plastic bags into crocheted mats that provide a dry, protective barrier from cold or wet ground for those who need a place to sleep or rest. Anyone is welcome who's interested in giving back, meeting others in the

community, and helping turn something as simple as a plastic bag into something useful for a neighbor in need. To learn more about Altrusa or get involved, please reach out to Co-President Sharon Porter at sharon@justnoteworthyevents.com.

This time, the witch hunt is trending

The REPORTER

Salem, a new one-act ballet by Gregory Hancock Dance Theatre, features sound design by emerging artist Seager and a storyline that not only acknowledges Salem, Mass., on its 400th Anniversary, but also what could possibly lie in wait under dark, dystopian autumn skies. *Salem* will give a nod to the town's dark past, and a mirror to a future that no one can afford to ignore. The production hits the stage Friday, Oct. 23, and Saturday, Oct. 24, at The Tarkington at the Allied

Solutions Center for the Performing Arts in Carmel. [Click here](#) to get your tickets. Also on the bill is the world premiere of *Ophelia*, based on the doomed character from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and featuring a haunting score by composer Cory Gabel, and the return of *La Llorona*, a visually stunning work that explores the Mexican folklore of "the weeping woman," a doomed spirit who spends eternity waiting for her lost children after a fit of rage and impossible choices end their lives. Rounding out the eve-



ning is *Salome*, Hancock's acclaimed piece on the beheading of John the Baptist and the psychological warfare that occurred in one family leading to his demise.

All these pieces fit together to create the perfect topper to dark autumn nights. Find out more at GregoryHancockDanceTheatre.org.

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Pappy Van Winkle

“We make fine bourbon, at a profit if we can, at a loss if we must, but always fine bourbon.” – Julian “Pappy” Van Winkle

Pappy Van Winkle. Just saying the name invokes a certain mystique. It is no overstatement to say that it is the most legendary, sought after, and – let’s be honest – overhyped bourbon out there. In reality, there is no more Pappy Van Winkle. I’ll get to that in a minute.

Again, I’m not going to lie to you, I don’t have much experience with it. The first time I tried it was in the early 2000s at a bourbon tasting put on by a local liquor store. Yes, they had it to sample! I recall that it was quite good. I also recall that I couldn’t afford it at the totally unreasonable price of around \$130 a bottle at that time. Wow!

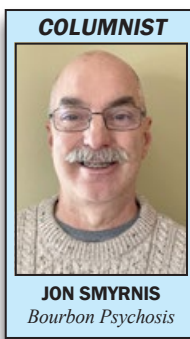
Over the ensuing years, a handful of friends have managed to acquire bottles and have been kind enough to share a dram with me. They weren’t the Pappy 23-year. Like everything else in the Buffalo Trace world, there are a few iterations of Pappy. The “younger” Van Winkles are Old Rip Van Winkle 10-year, and Van Winkle Special Reserve 12-year. These are the bottles my friends acquired, and, again, they were quite good. I recall heavy notes of caramel and toffee with a nice, sweet, and warm 107-proof finish.

Let’s get to a little history. Julian Van Winkle (the Colonel Sanders-looking guy with the cigar on the label) started the Stitzel-Weller Distillery in 1935. History ran its course with the usual ups and downs (most notably the bourbon crash of the 1970s and ‘80s) and the distillery was sold in 1972.

Julian Van Winkle III (Pappy’s grandson) wanted to resurrect the brand in the 1990s, so he bought back old unused barrels of the Stitzel-Weller hooch and bottled them under his own label. Yada, yada, yada, a star was born.

And now ... it’s gone. Seriously. There is no more of the original Stitzel-Weller Pappy Van Winkle bourbon. Well, there is some, but it only exists in the hands of private collectors and high-end bourbon retailers/auction houses. I can’t even imagine how much it would cost!

Today’s Pappy comes from barrels aged in the cooler, lower floors of Buffalo Trace’s rickhouses. It is “picked” by the Van Winkles themselves, most notably by Pappy’s above-mentioned grandson, Julian, who is the spitting image of his grandfather. Once a year the Van Winkles go to a special tasting of these precious barrels, and through pure taste memory pick the ones that will become the legendary juice. The Van Winkle family has complete proprietary control over which barrels get picked.



JON SMYRNIS
Bourbon Psychosis

The “official” retail price for the Pappy Van Winkle Family Reserve 23 Years Old is \$500. Unless you know the Van Winkles, are connected at Buffalo Trace, or have some other other-worldly connections, you aren’t going to find it **anywhere** for that. Of course, the “lesser” expressions are a little less expensive.

For an average guy like me, the only place to get these bottles is on the secondary market for prices ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000. There are those out there who can do that. Me? No. Is it worth it? Of course not. Would anyone really think that a bottle of bourbon is worth a thousand dollars or more no matter how good it is? Once again, as good ole Dad used to say, “it’s all made to sell.”

Gotta hand it to them, though; the Van Winkles and Buffalo Trace have done an excellent job with their marketing and hype. Television and movies have helped. Pappy features prominently in *Justified* and *Landman*, as well as in several movies, including one called *Heist* that is about the “Pappygate” theft. I’m not going to go into that here (Google is our friend).

One more little snippet about Buffalo Trace and high-end bourbons. They also produce the “Buffalo Trace Antique Collection.” This is a collection of whiskeys that are almost as rare as Pappy. This line isn’t in collaboration with the Van Winkles, so Pappy isn’t included in it. It includes George T. Stagg, William Larue Weller, Thomas Handy Sazerac, Eagle Rare 17 Year, and Sazerac Rye 18 Year. These also come with quite hefty price tags as well and, as with the Van Winkle line, are usually only found on the secondary market. Do I have any of these? Again, nope.

This is getting long, so let’s wrap things up and cut to the chase. Would I like to have one of these rare Buffalo Trace whiskeys? Sure! It just isn’t practicable for my income level. Of course, I could’ve had a few of them if I had gone with extremely expensive quality over quantity in my bourbon collection. But, hey! They say that variety is the spice of life, and I do have some quite nice whiskeys in my collection.

For those of you who can afford it, or have managed to snag a bottle in a bourbon lottery at retail, cheers to you! Enjoy it, savor it, and share a little with your friends, as my great friends have.

Next time, we’ll come back down to earth and discuss a wonderful little distillery right here in Indy. Until then, cheers!

Jon Smyrnis is a lifelong Indianapolis area resident. He enjoys traveling, hiking, biking, kayaking, dining out, and, of course, fine cocktails and great bourbons.

Taylor Gee named Assistant Director of Transportation at Westfield Schools

Submitted by Westfield Washington Schools

Westfield Washington Schools (WWS) has announced Taylor Gee as the district’s new Assistant Director of Transportation. Her appointment was approved by the WWS Board of School Trustees during its Oct. 13 meeting.

“We look forward to Taylor officially joining the team and we are very confident in her ability

to help us keep moving forward with our work in transportation,” said WWS Assistant Superintendent Dr. Greg Hunt.

Gee joins WWS with experience in school transportation operations, staff leadership, student support, and family communication. She most re-



Gee

cently served as Transportation Manager for MSD Washington Township, where she helped oversee transportation services supporting more than 11,000 students and supervised a team of 113 employees, including drivers, assistants, and office staff. In that role, Gee sup-

ported daily transportation operations, employee training and development, route coordination, and communication with families and school administrators. Her experience also includes improving departmental procedures, supporting students with specialized transportation needs, and helping staff respond to operational challenges.

See Gee . . . Page 13

Buy from St. Christopher’s Pumpkin Patch, help Hamilton County Harvest Food Bank

Submitted

Fall is here, and St. Christopher’s Episcopal Church has brought back its annual Pumpkin Sale.

Come choose from hundreds of pumpkins and gourds in all shapes and sizes – star gourds, swan gourds, and elf houses – perfect for decorating your home for fall. Everything will be available through Halloween on the side lawn of the church.

St. Christopher’s is located at 1402 W. Main St., Carmel. The pumpkin sale has something for everyone, from the perfect porch pumpkin to colorful gourds for fall decorating.

Even better, 100 percent of the proceeds benefit the Hamilton County Harvest Food Bank, which provides food to more than 30 local



Photo provided by St. Christopher's Episcopal Church

food pantries serving neighbors throughout Hamilton County.

Right now, \$3,000 has been raised for HCHFB, but the people of St. Christopher’s would love to get that

number to \$7,000 to have an even greater impact.

St. Christopher’s loves that this simple fall tradition directly helps to put food on the tables of neighbors right here in Hamilton County.

Pick a pumpkin and make a difference.

Pumpkin patch hours

- Monday to Friday: Noon to 8 p.m.
- Saturday: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Sunday: 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S
PUMPKIN SALE
Supporting Hamilton County Harvest Food Bank

OCTOBER 8-31

St. Christopher's Episcopal Church,
1402 West Main Street, Carmel, IN 46032

Over 600 pumpkins of all shapes and sizes!
Swan Gourds, Star Gourds, and Elf Houses.
Perfect for decorating your home for fall.

All proceeds benefit

**HAMILTON COUNTY HARVEST
FOOD BANK**

which provides food to more than 30 local
pantries serving neighbors in need.

**Pick your pumpkin. Share the
harvest. Make a difference!**
Scan to learn more.

When weather is unpredictable, you can trust
Your Hometown Weatherman!



PIONEER FALL FEST

Morris Homestead Barn

Taylor Center of Natural History
12308 Strawtown Ave., Noblesville, IN 46060

Saturday, October 17 1:00–4:00 PM

Our historic Morris's red barn will be opened for a day of pioneer fun! Join our "quilting bee," make a corn husk doll, fresh butter, and learn all about pioneer plants with community herbalist, Greg Monzel.



For more information call 317-774-2574
or visit myhamiltoncountyparks.com



Blackhawk Wall of Fame nominations now open

Submitted by Sheridan Community Schools

Sheridan Community Schools (SCS) launched the Blackhawk Wall of Fame this past year. This new tradition was created to honor the individuals who have dedicated themselves, led, served, and left a lasting impact on the SCS community.

The Wall of Fame recognizes both alumni, employees, and dedicated community members who have demonstrated outstanding achievement, support, and commitment to SCS and the values of being a Blackhawk. These individuals can be students, educators, coaches, or just Sheridan supporters.

SCS has had a long tradition of excellence, which is built on the hard work and passion of students, educators, alumni, and, of course, the community. SCS puts “community” in its name for a reason. Community is what drives this school system because community is what brings everyone together.

Individuals inducted into the Wall of Fame are passionate leaders with an unwavering commitment to students and the community. SCS invites everyone to continue the



tradition by submitting future Wall of Fame nominations. This tradition honors those who have served, supported, achieved, or contributed to the school community and overall success of SCS.

To submit a nomination, [click here](#). SCS wants to continue to celebrate those who continue to make a difference and embody what it truly means to be a Blackhawk. The next class of inductees will be honored at the Hardwood Homecoming festivities, held in January.

Denny’s is looking for the real hometown heroes

The REPORTER

Denny’s, “America’s Diner,” has opened nominations for “Denny’s Heroes: A Grand Slam Thank You,” a nationwide search for stories of generosity, resilience, leadership, and service that have changed lives or made communities stronger.

Every town has a hero who never stops showing up: the teacher who keeps snacks in her desk because she knows which kids come to school hungry; the coach who always finds room for one more child who needs somewhere to belong; the volunteer who keeps coming back every Saturday because they know their neighbors are counting on them.

If someone immediately came to mind, Denny’s wants to hear their story and celebrate it.

Nominations are open now through Oct. 30 at [dennysheroes.com](#).

“Every day in our restaurants, we see what it means when someone remembers your name, notices when you need something or makes room for you,” said Chris Bode, president and chief executive officer of Denny’s.

“A Grand Slam Thank You carries that same care beyond our doors. Together with our franchise owners, we’ll bring the diner to 30 hometown celebrations honoring individuals who keep showing up for others. Denny’s was built one hometown at a time, and we want to bring communities together to celebrate the people who make those hometowns stronger.”

A nomination may recognize one individual. Nominees may include educators, caregivers, first responders, coaches, veterans, volunteers, community supporters, or anyone who is always the first to step forward when something needs to be done.

From the stories submitted, Denny’s will select 30 heroes to receive a “Grand Slam Thank You,” a Denny’s-catered hometown celebration for up to 50 guests hosted by a local franchise owner.

The celebration also looks ahead to an important milestone for America’s Diner. In May 2027, Denny’s will mark 50 years



since the Grand Slam was first added to the menu in several Atlanta, Ga., restaurants in celebration of baseball legend Hank Aaron. As that anniversary approaches, “Denny’s Heroes: A Grand Slam Thank You” carries the spirit of an iconic meal created to honor a hometown hero forward by recognizing a new generation of people making a difference in communities across the country.

“The people we hope to honor will never call themselves heroes. They are too busy making sure someone is fed, safe, seen or given another chance,” said Fasi-ka Melaku, chief people, enterprise communications and social impact officer of Denny’s. “We’re asking people to stop for a moment and think about someone who has made a difference in their life, their family’s life or their community, and then tell us their story. No one should have to become famous to hear the words, ‘We see you. We see the need you noticed, the care you gave and the people who are stronger because you showed up. What you did mattered.’”

Nominate your hero today at [dennysheroes.com](#).



Bode



Melaku

Start a new Christmas tradition with the Songbook Foundation

The REPORTER

This December, start a new tradition with the Songbook Foundation.

In partnership with Allied Solutions Center for the Performing Arts, you are invited to experience the return of the classic film *White Christmas* on the big screen at the Payne & Mencias Palladium.

The screening will take place at 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 7. [Click here](#) to get your tickets.

Featuring the timeless music of Irving Berlin and memorable performances



The Great American Songbook Foundation
Michael Feinstein, Founder

AT THE CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

es by Rosemary Clooney, Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, and Vera-Ellen, *White Christmas* has brought generations together through music, laughter, and Christmas cheer.

Whether you’re revisiting a longtime favorite or introducing the film to someone seeing it for the first time, we hope you’ll

join for an evening of classic music, Christmas nostalgia, and memories worth making year after year.

With tickets starting at just \$10, and a special VIP experience available, now is the time to make this the year *White Christmas* becomes part of your traditions.

GEE

As WWS continues working to improve transportation operations, strengthen team culture, and recruit and retain school bus drivers, Gee will play an important role. Her responsibilities will include working alongside transportation leadership and staff to improve routing efficiency, strengthen communication, and provide consistent, reliable service to students and families.

“I am honored to be named Assistant Director of Transportation for Westfield Washington Schools and grateful for the opportunity to join this community,” Gee said. “I look forward to working alongside

the Transportation team to build on its ongoing efforts to provide safe, reliable, and efficient service to students and families. My priorities include understanding the needs of our transportation staff and ensuring they have the support and resources necessary to serve our school community effectively. I also aim to improve routing efficiency so students arrive at school safely and on time, while strengthening consistency in transportation services and communication with families, community members, and district staff.”

In addition to her transportation leadership experience, Gee holds both

a bachelor’s and master’s degree in social work from Indiana University. Her background includes working with students, families, and multidisciplinary teams to address barriers to educational access and provide individualized support.

Gee’s appointment comes as WWS works to improve its Transportation Department, including betterments to daily operations, employee recruitment, and the opening of its new Transportation Center.

WWS looks forward to welcoming Gee to the district and supporting her work to strengthen transportation services for students, families, and staff.

from Page 11

Upcoming Broadcasts

Tues Oct 13 - Government
6:00 pm **Noblesville City Council** | Noblesville Council Chambers | HCTV

Fri Oct 16 - Football
6:45 pm Carroll (Flora) vs **Sheridan** | Football | Bragg Sports
6:50 pm **Fishers** vs Zionsville | Football | Indiana SRN
6:50 pm Benton Central vs Covenant Christian | Football | Indiana SRN
7:00 pm Avon vs **Noblesville** | Football | HCTV Sports
7:00 pm West Lafayette vs **Hamilton Heights** | Football | Husky Sports Network

Sat Oct 10 - Volleyball, Freshman Football & College Football
10:00 am Zionsville vs **Fishers** | Freshman Football | Fishers Sports Network

Girls Basketball broadcast begins on Hamilton County TV - Wed Nov 4

NEW!!
Check out Hamilton County TV's 24/7 Channel at [www.HCTV1.com](#)
Sports, Classic TV, Classic Movies and Entertainment

Available on the Web [www.HCTV1.com](#)

On your Roku TV or Roku Device Search for HCTV1

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[NICKELPLATEEXPRESS.COM](#)



Save the date for WYAP’s 2027 Masquerade Ball

The REPORTER

The Westfield Youth Assistance Program (WYAP) announces the return of its annual Masquerade Ball from 6 to 10 p.m. Saturday, March 20, 2027, at Westfield Washington Public Library, 17400 Westfield Blvd. Please plan to attend this unforgettable evening featuring live music, Creole-inspired cuisine, festive ambience, and an opportunity to support Westfield youth. Early Bird tickets are now available. Get your tickets by Jan. 15 for just \$100 per person. Grab them now at tinyurl.com/WYAPMasquerade2027.

Interested in becoming a sponsor? Businesses and individuals can also support WYAP through a variety of 2027 Masquerade Ball sponsorship opportunities. Payment for sponsorships can be found at [this link](#). If you have questions, email klogan@westfieldyap.org. **Your support makes a difference** Proceeds from the Masquerade Ball directly benefit WYAP, allowing the organization to continue connecting youth with mentoring, tutoring, mental health counseling, camps, enrichment activities, and more. Learn more at WestfieldYAP.org.

Upcoming Fall Festivals & Halloween Events

Harvest Festival at Stuckey Farm Orchard and Cider Mill
Every Saturday and Sunday through Nov. 1

A full-blown Harvest Festival with corn mazes, hayrides, pig races, apple cannons, and Adventure Acres are all part of the fun, along with fresh cider, caramel apples, and apple cider donuts.

The Arts in Autumn
Oct. 17

A free, family-friendly festival filled with creativity, laughter, and unforgettable memories. Enjoy hands-on craft stations, face painting, balloon artists, an outdoor movie, and charming fall photo opportunities.

Trunk-or-Treat at Bierman Autism Centers of Westfield
10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Oct. 17

Kids can move through decorated trunks, play simple games, and get their face painted, all in a setting built around their needs. The event is free and sensory-friendly, designed specifically for children with autism and other developmental needs, while welcoming siblings, caregivers, and the broader community. Bierman Autism Center is located at 16414 Southpark Drive, Westfield.

Carmel Clay Parks’ Sensory Friendly Trick-or-Treat Trail
1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24

A not-so-spooky Halloween celebration is returning with Carmel Clay Park & Recreation’s (CCPR) Sensory Friendly Trick-or-Treat Trail. Individuals with disabilities and their families are invited to enjoy an afternoon of fun at River Heritage Park, 11813 River Road.

Headless Horseman Festival at Conner Prairie
Thursdays to Sundays through Oct. 25

Wander through carnival-themed fun with activities for all ages, plus mesmerizing live performances of music and magic. As the sun goes down, be immersed in storytelling across the grounds. Dare to take a hayride into Sleepy Hollow and learn about Ichabod Crane’s fate while encountering the Headless Horseman.

Boo Bash at the Nickel Plate District Amphitheater
Oct. 31 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Fishers’ biggest Halloween celebration, a free event featuring live, interactive stage entertainment, themed costumes and costume parades across the AMP stage, decorated booths from local businesses and organizations handing out Halloween goodies, food trucks and more.

Have a safe Halloween at Christ Lutheran Church

Christ Lutheran Church will hold a fun, safe, family-friendly Trunk-or-Treat in the church parking lot from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 31. The church is located at 10055 E. 186th St., Noblesville.

Noblesville Celebrates Day of the Dead
Nov. 1

A rich cultural experience honoring traditional Mexican heritage. Visitors can explore community-curated ofrendas (altars), shop an artisan market featuring authentic Mexican artists, enjoy live music and dance, and sample traditional foods.

Indiana National Guard closes out federal fiscal year strong

Submitted by Office of Gov. Mike Braun
The Indiana National Guard (INNG) closed out the federal fiscal year with strong force structure, increased combat readiness and continued modernization across its Army and Air components, building on Governor Mike Braun’s focus on ensuring Indiana maintains a ready, capable, and modern military force.

“Our force strength is important, but what matters most is what that strength allows us to do,” said Maj. Gen. Larry Muennich, Indiana’s adjutant general. “This year, we put that strength to work – training for combat, modernizing our facilities, strengthening our partnerships and preparing our Soldiers and Airmen. We are proud of where we finished this year, but our focus remains on what comes next – building a force that is ready to deploy, fight and win, whenever and wherever our nation calls.”



The INNG continues to demonstrate its readiness overseas. Indiana Guardsmen participated in training alongside Slovak forces in Slovakia, reinforcing the state’s more than three-decade State Partnership Program relationship with our NATO ally.

The INNG continues to make tremendous progress with both state and federal support. This support has allowed for the modernization of infrastructure and investment in the future of INNG facilities in Terre Haute, Fort Wayne, and armories across the state. With the Air Guard reaching 105 percent strength, the Indiana Air National Guard enters the next fiscal year with a strong foundation for continued modernization and mission readiness.

Recruiting remained a critical component of the INNG’s success throughout the year. Tech. Sgt. Brent Walker of the Indiana Air National Guard recruited 50 new Air Guardsmen, demonstrating the impact individual recruiters can have on building a strong and ready force. The INNG continues to offer Hoosiers the opportunity to serve their state and nation while building leadership skills, resilience and valuable experience that translate to civilian careers and communities.

A highlight of 2026 was the INNG hosting the 148th National Guard Association of the United States conference in Indianapolis this past August. This conference allowed Indiana to showcase the INNG and provided an opportunity to give long overdue recognition to the Indiana Rangers. During the opening ceremony, former members of Company D, 151st Infantry Regiment – the Indiana Rangers – received the Presidential Unit Citation, the U.S. military’s highest unit award, for their extraordinary service during the Vietnam War. The Indiana Rangers were the only National Guard ground maneuver unit to deploy to Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War, and their service helped demonstrate the ability of reserve forces to integrate alongside active-duty forces in combat. For the Indiana National Guard, the recognition served as both a tribute to the legacy of those who served before them and a reminder of the standard today’s Soldiers and Airmen are expected to uphold. The results of fiscal year 2026 reflect a force focused not simply on being bigger, but on being ready, relevant, and capable of winning in an increasingly complex operating environment. The Indiana National Guard enters the next fiscal year with a stronger force, modernizing capabilities, enduring partnerships, and a clear focus on warfighter readiness.

At the close of fiscal year 2026, the Indiana Army National Guard reached 103 percent of its authorized strength, while the Indiana Air National Guard reached 105 percent. The INNG’s combined strength represents one of its strongest positions in more than a decade. These results reflect a year of focused recruiting, retention, training, and force modernization across the INNG. “It is critical that our National Guard stays at the ready and that we are doing everything we can to support them so that when the call is made, no matter what it is, they are prepared to answer it,” Gov. Braun said. “The importance of that readiness was abundantly clear after August’s severe weather when National Guardsmen were called to help in the cleanup. Our National Guard is among the strongest in the nation. I’m committed to ensuring they have the training and resources they need to continue building on their strength, and always remain ready.”

ON-LINE ONLY PERSONAL PROPERTY AUCTION for GEORGE & CONNIE CLARK and Others

BIDDING OPENS: Tuesday, October 6th @ 2pm
SOFT CLOSE BEGINS: Saturday, October 17th @ 6pm
PREVIEW DATE: Thursday, October 15th from Noon - 6pm
PICK-UP DAYS: Monday, October 19th from Noon - 6pm
& Tuesday, October 20th from Noon - 6pm

1979 Volkswagon Beetle Convertible 1996 Ridgeline 16' x 7' Deck Trailer 2004 Haulette Enclosed Trailer	Dryer, Soft Goods, Kline 1869 Noblesville Coverlet, Paper Goods, Longaberger, Furs, Vintage Toys, Cast Iron, Coin Banks, Home Decor, Pet Crates, Holiday Blow-Molds, Budweiser & Avon Steins, Milk Bottles, Fruit Jars, Jewel T Dishes, Musical Instruments, Pictures & Wall Decor, Mirrors, Vtg. Hardback Books, Fur Collars, Marbles
Yale 2-Ton Spur Geared Block Chain Hoist Schuck Cushion Hitch	Solid Wood Outdoor Rocking Chairs (NICE), Patio Furniture
JD Z720E Zero Turn 60” JD X749 Diesel 4x4 4 Wheel Steer Mower Yard Tools & Equipment, Dump Carts, Utility Carts, Tillers, Aerators	Fishing Poles, Trolling Motors, Sporting Goods, Fold-Up Rolling Ping-Pong Table, Punching Bag, Schwinn Bicycles, Reese Hitch-Mount for Bike Rack
Coins & Paper Money, Arrowheads & Artifacts, Advertising, Antiques & Uniques, Jewelry, St. Clair, Joe Rice, Fenton, Westmoreland & Depression Glass, Murat Shrine Items, Household, Small Appliances, Canning Supplies, Quilting, Crafting & Sewing, Sewing Machines, Spool Cabinets, Crocks, Pottery, China, Very Nice Furniture, Boone Cabinet By Campbell Smith Ritchie, Grandfather Clocks, Custom-Made Rolltop Desk, Electric Washer &	Troy-Bilt 5500 Generator, Cummins Onan P2500i Digital Inverter Generator (needs pull cord), Pressure Washers, Mi-T-M Hotsy, Hand Tools, Power Tools, Rolling Tool Chest, Continental Shophoist 4000, Air Compressors, Farmhand 60-Gallon Air Compressor

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Danny Lee Baitz

August 30, 1964 – October 14, 2026

Danny Lee Baitz was welcomed into Heaven by his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on October 14, 2026, following an illness. Danny was born on August 30, 1964, to his parents, Eugene (Bud) and Phyllis Gunning Baitz. He was the baby brother of three older siblings and was treasured by his family. Dan was a graduate of the Tipton High School Class of 1983 and was very proud to be a Blue Devil! He always wore a smile and was a friend to all he met.

After high school, Dan began working for Janus Developmental Services, where he faithfully served for many years at their workshop. His favorite role was when Janus sent him to work for several years at the canteen in the lower level of the Hamilton County Judicial Center. He loved waiting on customers and bringing a spot of joy to people's day. In 2000, he was honored by Janus as Client of the Year.

Outside of work, Dan competed in bowling through Special Olympics of Indiana and also enjoyed attending summer camp for many years. Dan grew up on the family farm and loved spending time with his dad and his brother Denny, riding in the tractor and combine, or joining Denny in the grain truck for trips to the elevator in Ekin during harvest, until the family's retirement from farming. He dearly loved the animals on the farm throughout the years – dogs (Abby, Callie, and Phoebe); cats (Puff and Casey); and even “Mr. Rooster”!

Dan was a lover of music; his favorite artists ranged from Elvis, to The Beatles, to Dolly Parton, to Carrie Underwood and many more. He even visited Graceland with his parents as a young man, a treasured memory for him. He was also an avid sports fan, cheering on the Colts, Purdue, and IU, depending on who was winning at the time! For many years, Dan had a “steel trap” memory – he knew the birthdays and anniversaries of many extended family members by heart! If you needed to know a date, he was the person to ask. He deeply valued relationships in his life – both friends and family.

Surviving him are his brother and sister-in-law, David and Tammy Baitz; niece, Leslie (Chris) Robinson; nephew, Andy (Andrea) Baitz; great-nieces and great-nephews, Brittney (David), Olivia, Grant, Tanner, Patton, and Rylynn; aunt, Phyllis Baitz; close family friends, Perry and Kathy Williams; and many beloved cousins.

Dan was preceded in death by his parents, Bud and Phyllis; his brother, Denny; and his sister, Linda.

The family wishes to express gratitude and thanks to the care teams at Riverwalk Village, Riverview Hospital, and Paradigm Health for taking excellent care of Dan.

Visitation will be held from noon to 2 p.m. Monday, October 19, at Hartley-Dunnichay Funeral Home in Cicero, with funeral service held at 2 p.m.

Condolences: hartleyfuneralhomes.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.



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TODAY'S BIBLE READING

THE GOLDEN CALF

Remember this and never forget how you aroused the anger of the Lord your God in the wilderness. From the day you left Egypt until you arrived here, you have been rebellious against the Lord. At Horeb you aroused the Lord's wrath so that he was angry enough to destroy you. When I went up on the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that the Lord had made with you, I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water. The Lord gave me two stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God. On them were all the commandments the Lord proclaimed to you on the mountain out of the fire, on the day of the assembly.

At the end of the forty days and forty nights, the Lord gave me the two stone tablets, the tablets of the covenant. Then the Lord told me, “Go down from here at once, because your people whom you brought out of Egypt have become corrupt. They have turned away quickly from what I commanded them and have made an idol for themselves.”

And the Lord said to me, “I have seen this people, and they are a stiff-necked people indeed! Let me alone, so that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven. And I will make you into a nation stronger and more numerous than they.”

So I turned and went down from the mountain while it was ablaze with fire. And the two tablets of the covenant were in my hands. When I looked, I saw that you had sinned against the Lord your God; you had made for yourselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. You had turned aside quickly from the way that the Lord had commanded you. So I took the two tablets and threw them out of my hands, breaking them to pieces before your eyes.

Deuteronomy 9:7-17 (NIV)

Meeting Notice

The Clay Township Board will meet at 9 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2026, at the John W. Hensel Government Center, 10701 N. College Ave., Carmel.

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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Listed at \$299,900



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18532 ORIENTAL
OAK COURT
NOBLESVILLE

Beautiful 4BR, 2BA 2 half baths in Oakmont of Noblesville. Situated on over half an acre (.68) wooded lot featuring a screened porch and finished basement along with a three -car tandem garage. Move-in ready property awaits you.
Listed at \$559,900



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