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CONNECT
December 11, 2024 • vol. 30 • connecthendricks.com

The Joy of the Season

Two families in collaboration rather than competition p.4

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Publisher's Note

Be Present

By Todd Travis

With all the presents being distributed during the holidays, don't forget about your presence. Yeah, I'll be corny and say it... your presence is better than all the presents! The holidays come with some of the biggest dichotomies imaginable. On one hand you have the joy of the season, the family visits, the tasty treats, and the brightly lit streets. On the other, you have the loneliness, the overcrowded stores, the poor in need, and the tragic memories. Sometimes we experience a combination of these simultaneously. It's especially easy at this time to get stuck in the past or to ache for a better future. Unfortunately, we have no control over either. With that being said, don't miss this moment. That doesn't mean you can't grieve a loss or hope for a better future. You should absolutely do both of these. Honor your lost loved ones, plan your big dreams, but do it with respect to the now. You are not defined by your past, nor are you less than who you hope to be in the future. Your life is happening now, not then, and not when...

Whether the holidays are the most magical time of year or the most difficult time of year, remember to be present. Don't wish away the moment, because when you add all the moments together, that is your life. We wish the absolute best for every one of our readers, no matter who you are. This is our community. We want to be a part of every moment with you. As we look to the end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025, your presence is our present. Let's continue to CONNECT and strengthen our community together! Happy Holidays!

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CONNECT media

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Cover: The Bradley family light show. ***(Photo submitted)***

Yippee-Ki-Yay

An expression of great joy!

This expression first became known as the sign-off for the King of the Cowboys, Roy Rogers.

For our readers, we would like to see if you can spot **YIPPEE-KI-YAY** in the publication. Once found, text 317-520-1215 with a description of where this expression is located. This enters you to win!

One winner will be chosen to win a pass for Winter Wonderland.

(All entries will be cleared each week.)

Hendricks County Community CONNECT

Cover Story

The Joy of the Season

Two families in collaboration rather than competition

By Peg McRoy

Two Danville families have created impressive and delightful pixel light shows on their properties with only one purpose in mind: to bring more joy to the community during the holiday season.

This is the second year for the Stephen Bradley family and the fifth for the Jim Price family. The Bradley's show consists of 11,000 lights and the Price family has 20,000.

"Jim is my mentor and has basically held my hand through this because it is a very complicated process," said Stephen. "Jim is the reason we have this show. It is so complicated that for someone to just pick it up without any help would be nearly impossible. It is crazy complicated to program. You don't just buy it. You buy the pieces and build it yourself."

Each pixel light bulb has a computer chip in it that can do 50,000 different colors. Through a computer program these lights are synchronized with music creating a sophisticated holiday lights experience.

The Bradley family, L-R Baby Zayden, Mom Brooke, twins Zoey and Zella, Dad Stephen. ***(Photoby Peg McRoy)***

Stephen and his wife, Brooke, have three children, twins Zoey and Zella who are ten years old and five-month-old Zayden. The whole family, with the exception of the baby of course,

The Price family, L-R in the back, Amy, Jill, and Jim. In the front L-R Noah and Elijah. Jim Price has mentored Stephen Bradley on the creation of a Christmas light show. ***(Photo submitted)***

worked an entire year to bring their show to fruition.

Each light needs to be individually pushed into place by hand, a process known to create sore hands and maybe even a blister or two.

"There is a wire diagram that is numbered and shows you which light goes where," said Brooke. "We all work on it together throughout the year and in various locations like the dining room, living room, office, or barn."

They are most proud of the Mega Tree. The Mega Tree has 32 strands of lights equaling 5,000 lights that are programmed in synchronization with music. If watched 100 times, 100 different programs will be shown. Zoey and Zella both agree that working on the Mega Tree is tedious but so much fun to watch when completed.

Other items to take note of at the Bradley home include Santa and his reindeer on the roof of the house, a mailbox for letters to Santa, a German Shepherd made of lights and wire that provides the music play list, a sign with a QR code to access online information, 14 Grinches placed throughout the property for families to

The Price Family Lights show has a nativity scene as large as their garage door. ***(Photo submitted)***

hunt, and a singing tree named Chris Mystery who narrates the show.

Audio is through radio station 89.3 that can only be accessed while on the Bradley property.

Although this is the fifth year for the Price show, Jim began learning the process and working on his show eight years ago. He is a disabled Army combat veteran from Operation Iraqi Freedom who began building their Christmas light show as a side hobby.

"I was deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom twice," said Jim. "I was

Continued on next page...

Bradley and Price Christmas Light Shows

What to Know and What to Expect

Bradley's Winter Wonderland of Lights
1241 N. CR 200 West
Danville, IN 46122
The show run Thurs-Sunday from 6 p.m. until 10 p.m. including the week of Christmas
It is approximately 2 miles west of Danville and north on CR 200 West and located on the east side of the road. A sign designates the road that leads to the light show. Plastic statues of Santa and two of his reindeer offer a welcome greeting. Five to six parking spots directly face the show. More parking is available beyond those parking spots and down by the barn. Their Facebook page is Bradley's Winter Wonderland of Lights.

Both shows are free.

Expect a steady flow of traffic at both locations.

Price Family Lights
507 Abbywood Circle
Danville, IN 46122
The show runs Thurs-Sun from 6:30 p.m. until 10 p.m.
Th Bradley and Price homes are 1.3 miles apart and west of Danville. Price Family Lights are south of US HWY 36 and off Creekside Drive. The home is located in a cul-de-sac in the Clear Creek subdivision. Their Facebook page is Price Family Lights.

A mailbox is available on the Bradley's drive to send letters to Santa. Don't forget to put a return address on a letter. Santa has been known to write back! ***(Photos by Peg McRoy)***

Santa and his reindeer greet visitors to Bradley's Winter Wonderland of Lights.

Zella and Zoey Bradley offer candy canes to those who come watch the Bradley's Winter Wonderland of Lights. The Grinch bucket of candy canes holds all sorts of flavors of candy canes.

injured while we were taking Baghdad. I am almost completely deaf. Learning how to create the show was a way I could stay active and share the Lord with the community."

Jim and his wife, Jill, have three kids. Amy is 17, Elizah is six, and Noah is four. It's an entire family project for Prices as well.

"When it comes to putting it all out, we do that as a family," said Jill. "The boys work in the yard putting out props. Amy paints the props. We like sharing the joy and sharing the Lord."

Eight years ago, before he had a cochlear implant, Jim synchronized the lights and music by watching time codes. Since the implant he can hear better but it's still challenging. He calls on his family to help him if timing seems a bit off.

"One thing we added last year is a vibration speaker for people who are hard of hearing or deaf," said Jim. "From kids to adults we had some people use it. It was really cool. We try to be inclusive. That is what the Lord does."

The vibration speaker, while implemented for those who are hearing impaired, adds to the experience for everyone. It is a way for people to feel and experience the music.

The Bradley pixel show pays homage to the holiday season with some family history. The Santa in a sleigh being pulled by reindeer atop their house has been in their family for 30 years.

The Price pixel show is more Christian centered.

"We have a manger scene with Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus," said Jill. "We added a four-foot cross this year and a big star. That is the point of our show."

While their central themes vary, the motivation for both families is in sync with the desire to bring more happiness and joy to the community.

Hendricks County Community

2025 CONNECT Pet Contest

Send us your Favorite Pet Photos

Enter your pet in the 2025 Hendricks County Community CONNECT Pet Contest!

There will be 3 categories with a prize basket of goodies going to the top winner in each one!

- **Cutest Pet**
- **Best Dressed**
- **Best Friends**

Send a photo of your pet to:
Todd@connecthendricks.com
Please indicate in the subject line of the email which category you wish your pet(s) to be entered. If entering your pet in the best friend(s) category, photo must include pet/pets with owner or other pet.

Deadline to send in photos is January 6 and voting by the community will begin in the January 8 issue. Winners shall be announced in our January 22 issue.

On the Net

Sound of Brownsburg Selected for Rose Parade

By Brittney Dial

Congratulations to the Sound of Brownsburg marching band, who was just selected to be a part of the Rose Parade! The Rose Parade, which has an extensive application process, has hundreds of bands from around the world apply each year. This annual parade is one of the largest in the United States, along with the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and the Indy 500 Parade, which the Sound of Brownsburg has recently marched with. The Rose Parade, also known as the Tournament of Roses Parade, is an annual parade in Pasadena, California that takes place on New Year's Day. The Sound of Brownsburg will be marching in 2026. The parade begins at 8am and features flower-covered floats, marching bands, and equestrian units, and is followed by the Rose Bowl, one of the major bowl games in college football.

"This is a huge honor for the band program" said Chris Kaflik, the director of the Sound of Brownsburg, "The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York and the Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena are like the Super Bowl of parades for band programs, both at the high school and collegiate level. When you look at the list of bands that have performed at the Rose Bowl Parade, you will see a list of the best bands in the world. Brownsburg's marching band to be included with that list of names is incredible. It's a true testament to what these students have accomplished of the years and the hard work and dedication they put into their performances and their craft."

Congratulations, Sound of Brownsburg!

(Photos submitted)

YIPPEE-KI-YAY!

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS
celebrating our community

Making the season special - Rocky Walker

By Amie Scott

If there's anywhere in Hendricks County one might expect to see Santa Claus out and about, it's Danville. With the square brightly lit, festive windows, and historic buildings, it has all the makings for a Christmas movie. One special Danvillian, Rocky Walker, has been helping Santa out since 2006. Starting the weekend after Thanksgiving you'll find him at the corner of Washington and Main in Danville, waving at cars in the iconic red suit with a large sack and his elf, Ezzmoid, in tow. He's there every Saturday between 6 and 8 p.m.

Adults and children alike, may stop and chat, snap a photo, and reach into the sack for a present. There's no age discrimination with Santa. Over the years miracles have happened with a child seeking a very unusual stuffed animal and lo and behold pulling out exactly what they wanted. It's all part of the Christmas spirit. Being out in the community has also afforded Rocky the opportunity to share his faith from time to time as well.

In his words, "kids are more mellow these days and seem to be looking for something to believe in and are amazed to get a free toy and candy cane."

Walker's goal is to bring joy to the community that has become his home. He and his wife, Mary, have been a part of the Danville community for the past 20 years. Walker knows memories are important. Growing up in West Virginia without much money, Christmases were sparse, but the memory of receiving a bottle of Coca-Cola and a marshmallow Santa one Christmas morning lingers to this day.

Rocky greeting passers-by and spreading cheer. ***(Photos submitted)***

Left: Pups love Santa, too! Right: Hopeful young one sends a letter to Santa. ***(Photos submitted)***

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Hendricks

Take that, Mr. Grinch

By Amie Scott

We've all met a Grinch or two in our lifetime. Dylan Poulton isn't one of them - even if he does play one for children. Dylan, along with his wife Jennifer and Mom, Susan put together a Christmas spectacular at their home every year.

With 48,350 lights blazing on wintry evenings throughout December and six (6) 20 foot inflatables, and an arch over the driveway with over 12,000 lights many of which were hand-wrapped by Mom (Susan), it's clear the Poulton's have brought their Christmas "A" game to Brownsburg.

This isn't just a light display. Jennifer makes homemade cookies and cocoa to share on select nights, while Dylan dons the Grinch costume along with some Whoville cast members. Of course, the big guy himself, Santa, makes an appearance too. With the chill in the air they have fire pits for a quick heat-up and Christmas music piping through the air. New to the display this year is Santa's chair all the way from Frankenmuth, Michigan which was brought to Indiana on the roof of Poulton's Jeep.

What motivates the Poultons' to devote their time and money to this endeavour? Like so many projects of this magnitude, it's a labor of love. Dylan has fond memories of his Mom driving him around to see the lights. During the pandemic they knew that people were struggling being stuck at home and many off work without income, so they decided to offer this as a way for families to get out of the house and enjoy an activity without cost.

Are you ready to visit?

Here are the details:

1501 Winding Creek Trail, Brownsburg

Lights are on daily between approximately 5:30 and 9:30 p.m.

Visit Saturday, December 7, 14, or 21 to see Santa and the Grinch. Enjoy free cookies and hot chocolate and snap a photo or two!

This is a free event to all. "And what happened, then? Well, in Whoville they say – that the Grinch's small heart grew three sizes that day."

Community Calendar

December

Now through December 28

Winter Wonderland

Sunday through Thursday 6- 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday 6 - 10 p.m. Monday - Thursday $5/ weekends $10 per car. Visit website for Santa land schedule Danville Chamber.org at Ellis Park in Danville.

13, 14 & 15

Trees of Plainfield

6-9 p.m. Dazzling Trail sparkling Christmas trees indulge and . tasty treats from local food vendors enjoy a variety of festive activities that are sure create lasting holiday memories for the whole family. Al and Jan Barker Sports Complex/Recreation/Sports Facilities, 451 S. Vestal Rd., Plainfield

13

Sip & Savor

4-6 p.m. Soups, crusty bread and seasonal cocktails Meet artist. Bring soup or pantry item to support Active Grace Food Pantry. Camp Camby10740 E. CR 700 S. Camby

13 & 14

Photos with Santa

4-8 p.m. Stop by Eaton Hall for a jolly photo with Santa AND a lighted firetruck from Brownsburg Fire Territory! Photos are self-taken. FREE registration required at: https://www.signupgenius.com/.../30E084AA5A82EA1F85...4-5 PM open for photos with pets. / 5-8 PM open for photos with children. Donations for Riley Children's Hospital requested. Eaton Hall

14

Christmas with the Ponies

4 - 8 p.m. Reindeer games, time at Santa's workshop and visit with horses and ponies. The event is $25 per family. Strides to Success, 1350 Teri Drive Plainfield

14

Hometown Holiday

4 - 8 p.m. Reindeer games, time at Free event includes photos with Santa train rides around the trail horse wagon, rides pony rides petting zoo, ice- skating cookies, hot chocolate music and prize giveaways Hummel Park, 1500 South Center St. Plainfield

14

Candy Cane Hunt with Santa

10-11 a.m. or 1:20-3 p.m. Visit with Santa Claus outside, snacks and a pony ride. ALL of this event is outdoors so dress appropriately! Price: $15 per child 2 years and up in advance / $17 per child day of event $5 per adult in advance / $5 per adult day of event Natural Valley Ranch, 6310 E. CR 350 N., Brownsburg

14

Second Saturdays are for Crafting

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.Create a sock snow family/ $10 Contact: 317-797-2795Camp Camby10740 E. CR 700 S. Camby

14

Christmas in the Park

2-6 p.m. Ring in Christmas with a craft bazaar, food trucks, visit and take pictures with Santa and the town Christmas tree lighting! Scamahorn Park, US 136, Pittsborro

14

Christmas Under the Stars

5-9 p.m. Vendors, food trucks, train rides, reindeer petting and arrival of Santa Eel River Township Community Building, 6 Main St, North Salem

14

Breakfast with Santa

Breakfast with Santa 7:30 – 10 a.m.. Games * Face Painting * Photos All you can with Eat $8.00 Children 12 and Under FREE at Avon American Legion, 4812 E. Main St., Avon

17

Blue Christmas

6 p.m. A short candlelight service that creates space for anyone living through dark times. The service shares scripture, soothing music and quiet meditation where you can find healing and hope while accepting the truth of your circumstances. Everyone is welcome to attend this peaceful reflective service. Avon Christian church, 7236 E CR 100 S in Avon. Contact: danielle.cox@avonchristian.org 317.839.6231

21

Winter Solstice

5-7 p.m. Join the naturalist for our Winter Solstice program. We'll be learning fun facts about the changing of the seasons, different traditions, and enjoy some hot apple cider! This year will be learning about legend of the holiday spider, an Eastern Europe, story that teaches us even spiders can offer gifts to those who are kind to others. We'll be making a holiday spider ornaments while we learn about the story of generosity. Price $5 Pecar Nature Center, 5203 E. 150 N., Avon

Community Updates

Hendricks Live! in Plainfield Announces An Evening with Jennie Devoe

Hendricks Live! announces Jennie DeVoe will take the stage in Plainfield on Saturday, February 15, 2025. Ticket prices start at $10, and they go on sale on Wednesday, December 4 at 10am at hendrickslive.org/events.

For the first time, Hendricks Live! will be offering patrons the opportunity to enjoy "dinner and a show" with a pre-show dinner in the venue's sophisticated event space. The ticket price is $95/person for both the 5:30pm dinner and 8pm performance.

Jennie DeVoe is a fiercely independent singer/songwriter with a unique personal style of Americana-Soul-Roots and Blues music that has earned her loyal fans of all ages and from all musical genres. Purist fans loyal to folk, blues, jazz and soul music all find something to love in Jennie's music which is not an easy feat. She's shared stages with John Hiatt, Patty Griffin, Lucinda Williams, Joe Cocker, Edwin McCain, Gregg Allman, and played mega-side stages for the biggest stars including Sting, Lyle Lovett, Bruce Springsteen, Bonnie Raitt, Fiona Apple, and more.

DeVoe's live shows are, to quote Ann Arbor, MI DJ, John Bommarito simply "Magic." No matter the venue, DeVoe makes you feel like you're in your living room with old friends – "Until," says NUVO's Rob Nichols, "she knocks you flat with her amazing voice, and you forget where you are entirely." Adds Blues Revue Magazine's Hal Horowitz, "DeVoe's melodic, gutsy songwriting--pushed by a vibrant, multi-hued voice that can shift from a catlike purr to a gospel wail and a snarling rasp within seconds--this under-the-radar singer has the talent to be a major force on either side of the Atlantic."

TICKETS: Tickets go on sale on Wednesday, December 4 at 10am at hendrickslive.org/events. For questions about purchasing tickets, please email info@hendrickslive.org.

Quotations

"If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change."

— Wayne Dyer

CONNECTING with our Hendricks County ROOTS

Christmas Fruit

By Martha Carter

Did you know that cranberries once grew in Indiana? Wild cranberries were native to the wetlands of northern Indiana. It is said they were once called "craneberries" because when the plants bloom the flowers resemble cranes. Over time, "craneberries" became "cranberries". Whether served with dinner or used in decorations, cranberries have a special place in this season from Thanksgiving to Christmas.

Indiana once had a law stating when and where cranberries could be gathered. Abraham Lincoln knew about Indiana cranberries. On the question of whether federal laws had to apply to every state he said, "It would be foolish for us to insist upon having a cranberry law here in Illinois where we have no cranberries [just] because they have a cranberry law in Indiana where they have cranberries."

And consider the apple. If Indiana had a state fruit it might well be the apple. Indiana has approximately 4,000 acres of apples, producing around 1.2 million bushels a year. The apple's connection to Christmas dates to the Middle Ages when Europeans used evergreens in celebration of the winter solstice as it meant the beginning of longer daylight hours and came to symbolize everlasting life. Apples began to be added to the greens and eventually decorated early Christmas trees. They are believed to be the inspiration for the ball shaped Christmas ornaments still used today.

Oranges, of course, never grew in Indiana, which made them a special treat, and once a cause for delight if found in your stocking on Christmas morning. Finding an orange in your stocking perhaps came from an ancient legend of St. Nicholas in which he met a poor man with three daughters. The man was so poor that he could not provide doweries for his daughters, and so they could not marry. St. Nicholas came to the rescue on Christmas Eve by dropping three gold balls (some say gold coins) down the man's chimney, which landed in the girls' stockings drying by the fire. That is also one version of the custom of hanging Christmas stockings by the fireplace.

As many things change, including holidays, Christmas remains a sacred and magical time. Looking back, even at simple things, can provide threads connecting us through centuries of change with people and times past in ways we never knew.

(Photo submitted)

Hendricks County Historical Museum is at 170 S. Washington Street in Danville, one block south of the courthouse. The building was the sheriff and family's residence from 1866 to 1974, with the jail attached. It is furnished as it would have been in the late 1800s. It is open Fridays and Saturdays, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm, mid-March through mid-December and for groups by appointment.

hendrickscountymuseum.org | 317-745-6158

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Another Winter Visitor

White-throated Sparrow migrates to a feeder near you

White-throated sparrow Zonotrichia albicollis standing amongst some scattered seed on a stone surface with beautiful autumn colors in the background

(Photo by Annette Buchkowski/Adobe Stock)

By Todd Travis

Look closely at the sparrows sitting on or under your feeders, you might find a new visitor during the winter months! The White-throated Sparrow leaves its summer home in Canada to come enjoy beautiful Indiana. If you listen, you can hear them singing the song of their home country "Oh-Sweet-Canada" as they playfully jaunt around your yard.

Coming in two color forms, the tan crowned and the white crowned, you can enjoy their variety. The white crowned form has black and white crown stripes, a yellow spot between the eye and bill, and of course a white throat patch on its gray throat and breast. The tan crowned form has a lower contrast of color with brown stripes on its head instead of white.

Interestingly, the color variety of this bird has and will continue to remain due to their mating patterns. This is because the birds almost always mate with the opposite color form than their own. Even though both forms of the female actually prefer the tan crowned male, the white crowned females are more aggressive, and outcompete the tan crowned for those mates. I never thought I would describe a bird as "catty" but it seems appropriate in this case!

The White-throated Sparrow is quick to visit a feeder and will be happy to eat sunflower seeds and millet either from the feeder or from the ground. If you leave a brush pile out in your yard, it will allow them a place to take cover in between trips to your feeder. You will likely see both color varieties traveling together.

One surprising note about this bird is that they typically nest on the ground. Are Canadian animals that much more friendly that they just leave these nests be? And when the sparrows fly back to Canada, do you think they sing "On the Banks of the Wabash?" for a while? All these questions and more can be answered at Wild Birds Unlimited in Avon, but don't be surprised if they give you a sideways look when you ask them that last one! Happy birding!

WEATHERING THE STORM

TIPS FOR STAYING SAFE BEFORE & AFTER A STORM

Create a clear communication plan for your household to help ensure everyone is informed. Keep your phone charged, and consider getting a power bank. Plan who to check in on, loved ones and neighbors.

Gather items for your emergency kit before the storm arrives. Stores and roads may close after the weather worsens. Stock up on essentials like water, non-perishable food, and batteries in case of power outages.

Preparing an emergency kit is essential to ensure you have the supplies needed to stay safe. Include non-perishable food, water, medicine, flashlights, blankets, a battery-operated or hand-crank radio, medicine/first aid, and extra batteries. Also, remember your pet's needs.

If someone in your home uses a life-sustaining medical device that requires electricity, alert your electric cooperative now. Plan to have a battery or emergency generator before an outage occurs.

Don't touch or drive over downed power lines or anything in contact with them. Call 911, as they could still be energized.

If a power line falls on your vehicle, stay inside and call 911. Only exit if your life is in immediate danger. Then shuffle away, keeping your feet together at all times.

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The Tale of Two QB's

A story of rivalry, friendship, and glory

By Todd Travis

Fighting for a spot

Coming into the 2024 season, Brownsburg High School had two quarterbacks battling out for the starting spot. Senior Iosua (pronounced yo-SUE-uh) Stephens and sophomore Oscar Frye were temporarily in competition with one another to decide who would represent the Bulldogs at the quarterback position. As each player fiercely pursued the starting spot, it became clear to the coaches that both of them had the ability to help the team in a unique way. In an unorthodox manner, the decision was ultimately made to let the two of them split time at the position throughout the season.

Oscar Frye ***(Photo submitted)***

"I wasn't very fond of it at the beginning. Being a senior, I wanted to have the starting job and take on the pressure that comes with it. But I'm glad the way it worked out. We started getting a feel for things as the year went on and I was able to be utilized in the right moments to help get the wins we needed," Stephens shared.

"We're both pretty competitive people, but we also had a common goal to win as a team. As the season went on, we grew as friends and got closer and closer, which is something I'll value forever," Frye mentioned.

Teammates and friends

The two quarterback approach that the Bulldogs utilized proved to be a winning combination. The team was piling on the wins and both Frye and Stephens were able to rise to the occasion when their number was called. When running a two quarterback offense, one risk can be a disruption from the rhythm of the game, an important factor in keeping momentum for a team. The maturity that these two young men possessed helped them overcome that obstacle. They both trusted each other, their team, and their coaches to step up when the moment called for it.

One of the biggest examples of this came in the regional championship vs. Lawrence North. With less than a minute to go, Frye followed Stephen's earlier touchdown drive with a touchdown drive himself, setting up the team to go for the win or the tie. After drawing the defense offsides on a hard count, Frye came out for Stephens to go for the two point conversion. Stephens ran it in to put the Bulldogs up and to clinch the game.

"That game was the beginning of history being made. It was special to see, especially at home as a senior, seeing all the fans and people in the community, it was great," Stephens remembers.

Achieving glory

After that win versus Lawrence North, nothing could stop the Bulldogs from getting the state championship victory they had been pursuing all year, not even the dynasty of Westfield high school. The Bulldogs didn't steamroll anyone, but they had the focus and discipline to get the job done when it really counted. Coach Hart talked about grit when it came to this team. The same grit that Frye and Stephens showed before the season when they battled for the starting spot is the same grit that they showed in every game when everything was on the line. In the end, they brought home the state championship together, as a team, and as an entire organization.

Stephens plans to continue his football career in college and also pursue business and major in finance. Frye will be looking forward to two more years ahead of him. His parents are both educators, and he places a high priority on his studies as well as his time on the field. As these two part ways, their state championship season together will be in cherished memory forever.

Iosua Stephens ***(Photos by Dorian McDaniel)***

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CONNECT

LOCAL CRAFTSMAN SHARES CHRISTMAS MAGIC YEAR AROUND

Joe Staysniak, local radio personality, creates woodworking pieces for Santa's Pit Stop

Business Cover Story

Local Craftsman Shares Christmas Magic Year Around

Joe Staysniak, local radio personality, creates woodworking pieces for Santa's Pit Stop

By Brittney Dial

When Joe Staysniak was young, he started woodworking projects with his dad. He grew up creating and fixing things, which turned into a lifelong appreciation for the art of woodworking. As he developed his skill, he spent time with master craftsmen at TimberCreek Wine Sellers in Indianapolis. Now, he specializes in woodworking projects that are for sale at Santa's Pit Stop, a new, year-around Christmas shop located in Speedway.

"I've always been a fan of everything that goes on at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The way they conduct business, the way they honor tradition and our military, and the value you get when spending your hard earned dollars on their events" said Staysniak, "I try to do the same thing with my woodworking projects in a space just a stone's throw from the Yard of Bricks.

Santa's Pit Stop offers unique Christmas decor and locally produced gifts. Staysniak, a Brownsburg resident and former Colts football player, produces high quality products and engravings, including Christmas themed decor and gifts. Some of his favorites are pizza peels and charcuterie boards. Staysniak also provides custom engravings on the gift.

"Most cities that rely on tourism have a year-around Christmas store" said Staysniak, "People love to collect ornaments reminding them of their travel destinations, and this store fills that void and a whole lot more."

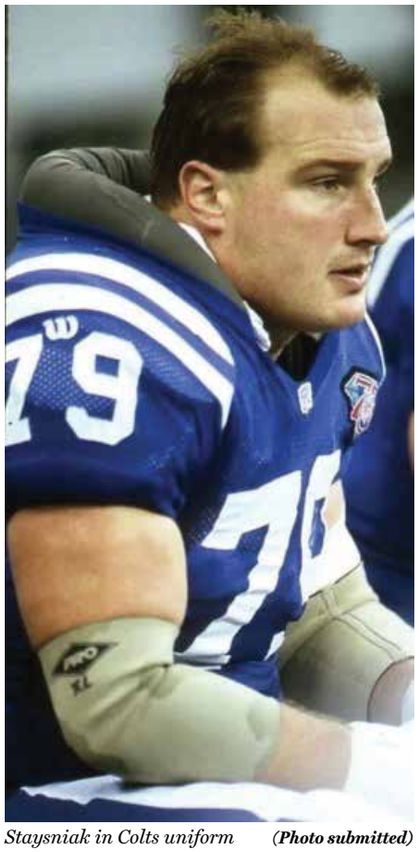
Every live-edge ornament made by Staysniak comes from Indiana tree limbs that have fallen to the ground. He designs the engravings around the size and shape of the wood, which allows for additional creativity. He also engraves leather, acrylic, slate, and some stones, providing personalization of special gifts.

In addition to displaying his woodworking projects and engravings, Staysniak also helped the owners, Dave and Becky Wilson, build out and decorate the space. He also built the check-out counter and redwood planter boxes that serve as a decorative wall.

Dave and Becky Wilson are lifelong friends of the Staysniaks and dreamed of having a Christmas store to spread cheer throughout the year. The Wilsons often dress up as Santa and Mrs. Claus and send personalized videos all over the world to encourage children. Dave Wilson also runs one of the North Pole locations at Sullivan Hardware when the Christmas trains are running between November and December.

""Probably the most satisfying job of all for me, outside of my work with Santa's Pit Stop, has to be creating baptismal stones for newborns. My sister's church has a practice of placing the stones with the child's name on one side and a cross on the other in the baptismal font after every baptism. God provides the medium and I do the personalization. I think my parents knew something when they named me Joseph," expressed Staysniak.

Santa's Pit Stop is located at 1515 North Main Street, Suite 102. For more information on their offerings, visit their website at https://santaspitstop.net/.



Staysniak in Colts uniform ***(Photo submitted)***

Santa's Pit Stop ***(Photos submitted)***

Strategies for Success

What your decision-making style says about you – Part 2

Gut Instincts: The Power (and Peril) of Intuitive Decision-Making

By William Gulley

In part 1, we introduced four different styles of decision making, Analytic, Intuitive, Dependent and Avoidant. We all utilize each of the styles in certain situations where they're needed. Today, we explore the Intuitive style and its strengths and challenges.

We've all been there—faced with a tough decision, and instead of overanalyzing the data, we just *know* what to do. That's the magic of intuitive decision-making. Intuitive decision-makers trust their gut, relying on feelings or that intangible "something" to guide their choices. And hey, it's pretty efficient. No long deliberations, no complex spreadsheets, just a quick, confident call.

This can be a real superpower in certain situations—like when you're short on time, or when too much information threatens to overwhelm you and your team. Intuition can cut through the noise and get you to a decision faster than you can say "analysis paralysis."

However, (and there's always a "however"), relying solely on gut feelings can be risky. Without logic or data to back up your choices, there's a chance intuitive decisions will miss key details or lead to unsubstantiated conclusions. You could end up making a move that feels right in the moment but falls apart upon closer scrutiny.

> When intuition and logic work together, that's when the magic happens.

The key? Balance. When intuition and logic work together, that's when the magic happens. Trust your gut, but don't forget, a little data along a long way.

Stay tuned for part four, where we'll explore the Dependent style and how it works in the decisions you need to make.

William Gulley has been a leadership development facilitator, speaker and business coach for 8 years and currently owns Perpetual Development, LLC, a coaching firm in Hendricks County

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TsT Construction, Inc.
Tip of the Month

By Tom S. Truesdale

Bath Renovations - Part 2

Last month I described a wide range of ideas regarding renovations and updates to the Bathroom and how investment in these projects will pay back immediately with the value and resale appeal of your home.

This month I would like to discuss some of the planning strategies and logistics involved with completing Bathroom update and renovation projects.

Below I have listed some details that if addressed prior to start of construction will help your project be a success.

Planning/Design

- Invest time and thought into both layout and scope development prior to beginning your project.
- Think about layout refinements, accessibility and carefully review the overall scope of the project, look at options that will add long-term value to your home.
- In many cases piping updates are necessary depending on the age of the home. Consider this during the scope development phase and if needed include this update in your project.
- Consult with an experienced Planning and Construction Professional to provide guidance and advise.

Think about logistics and interruption

- The Bathroom is obviously one of the most used rooms in the home, even a small update or renovation will cause interruption that needs to be understood prior to the start of the project. Even the simplest renovation usually takes a minimum of 5 to 7 days to complete.
- If your home has multiple Bathrooms, make plans to use others rooms during the renovation.

Define and detail your budget hand in hand with scope development.

- Consult with an experienced Planning and Construction Professional to provide guidance and advise.
- Products and materials can greatly impact cost, once your scope/budget is developed cost savings can be explored simply by choosing alternate products and materials.

SAMPLES, SAMPLES, SAMPLES

There is a very wide variety of products, materials colors and levels of quality to review before purchase of materials.

For example:

- Type of vanity tops
- Lighting fixtures
- Sinks/Tubs/Shower units - custom or factory
- Flooring products
- Plumbing fixtures
- Wall coverings and protection
- Accessibility, location type and function

The Bathroom can potentially be an extremely complicated room to renovate, a good deal of thought and planning needs to take place before beginning your project, hopefully the points I have provided give you a good foundation of where to start. Of course never hesitate to contact TsT Construction to provide development and delivery services for your Bathroom Renovation project.

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Community Leadership

Are Challenges to Your Decisions Good for Your Business?

By Karl Zimmer

In most organizations, there are some people at all levels who will play the politically safe game of agreeing with leadership and the company line. They will "toe the line" and follow the leader with not a whimper or peep, so to speak.

That makes it easier for leaders because they don't have to deal with challenges to their decisions, challenges that would take time and energy away from the business at hand. If you are the leader of your organization, you have likely felt frustration over having to deal with issues not directly related to moving your organization forward but rather the ancillary issues of trying to justify or further explain your decisions. In reality, some explanation is appropriate, because you owe it to your people to help them understand the "why" of decisions so that they can better carry out the appropriate and requisite tasks of implementation.

> ... you owe it to your people to help them understand the "why" of decisions ...

Some challenges or questions about decisions are actually quite good for the business, because it makes us, as leaders, approach things from different angles, different points of view. Our perspective is our reality, and that is true for everyone. It can be quite helpful to view things from different perspectives so we can better understand the impact our decisions may have. In that way, diversity of viewpoint, of background, of culture, and of experience can be invaluable to a leader, as long as the leader is listening and open to considering disparate views.

But, what happens when someone is just determined to disagree with you for the sake of disagreeing? I believe most people, regardless of background or culture, want to do what is right. The question is more about the definition of what is right. What may be "right" for one, may not be "right" for another, and therein lies the real challenge. When someone challenges your decision, strive to understand the reason for the challenge. The best decisions are based on what is best for all concerned and are not made in a vacuum. That said, leaders must lead, which is best done when those who follow trust and respect that the leader will do what is best based on having listened to all concerned, having considered the ramifications of his or her decisions, and then standing firm in every decision with confidence. Looking beyond the status-quo and moving outside of ones "box," even when forced by a challenge, can be a very good thing.

This column is dedicated to sharing experiences, research, and ideas about great leaders, for great leaders, and to explore how best to inspire and motivate the highest performance and satisfaction at work. Please send in your comments, questions, and suggestions.

Karl is the author of, "The Boy Who Grew Up to RULE® the World...," a speaker, Board Certified Hypnotist, and successful CEO. Contact him at Karl@iRULEtheWorld.com. RULE® and Profit in Harmony® are Registered Marks of Karl R. Zimmer III

LEADERSHIP HENDRICKS COUNTY, INC.

Hendricks County Business CONNECT

Leaning into Leadership

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Each month, we focus on how Leadership Hendricks County equips professionals with the tools and techniques to lead and strengthen our communities.

CONGRATULATIONS TO LHC'S CLASS OF 2024!

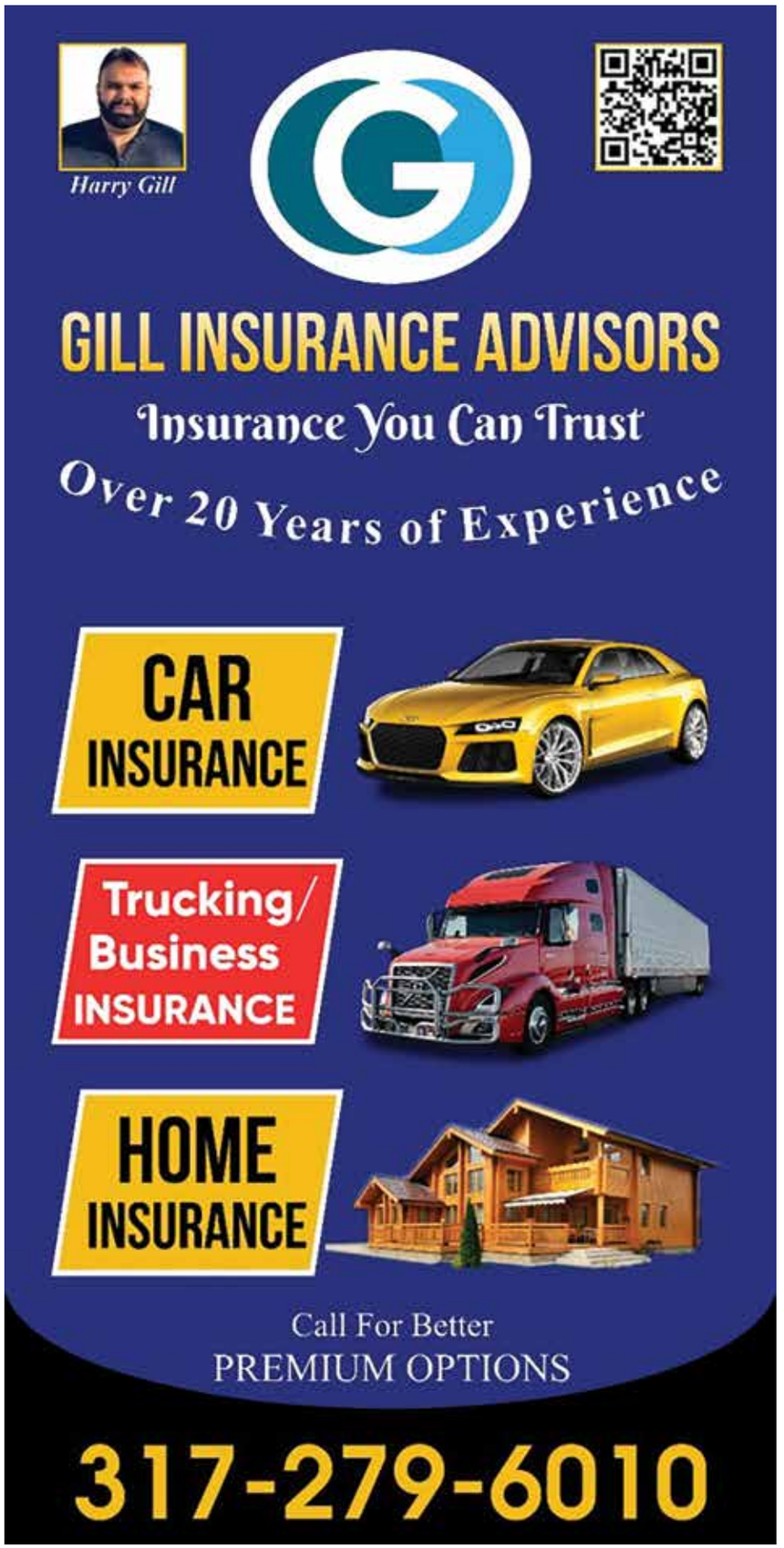
Austin Adams, Seth Cromer, Lisa Dulcich Suyeyasu, Sheila Glass, Joel Harbaugh, Joseph Jasin, Jennifer Kinnaman, Kimberly Kiritschenko, Michelle Knight, Scott Larsen, Tina Lear, Robert Maar, Amanda Marciano, Jessica Morris, DeAnna Murphy, Eric Reynolds, Trista Ristau, Amanda Inman, Rebekka Sage, Melissa Schirmer, Mark Shayotovich, Kaitlyn Smith, Kathy Spangler, Nicole Walker, Rebekah Whiteley, Kimberly Woodward, Andrew Wray ***NOT PICTURED:*** *Troy Eutsler*

Last month, Leadership Hendricks County's newest class gathered for its closing retreat. Each of the Capstone Project groups presented its findings and recommendations, and the class received a charge to take what they'd learned and bring it back to their workplaces and the larger community before participating in their graduation ceremony.

Eleven months earlier, this diverse group of leaders met for the first time. The transition from complete strangers to lifelong friends and colleagues happened remarkably quickly. They'll continue to draw upon those relationships in the coming months and years. In addition, the class members are now part of LHC's network of leaders, including hundreds of graduates from 31 classes, as well as the speakers and sponsors who supported their quest for knowledge.

Their class year may have ended, but the hard work is only beginning. We can't wait to see the ripples of change they'll create in Hendricks County, making our home an even better place to live, work, pray, and play!

Leadership Hendricks County, Inc. is a 501c(3) not-for-profit organization serving the people and corporate citizens of Hendricks County and west central Indiana by offering top-notch leadership and engagement programs for current and emerging leaders who then apply those skills to strengthen their community. Learn more at www.leadershiphendrickscounty.org



The Personal Touch

You may fool search engines, but not people

By Scott Flood

Alchemists struggled to brew gold by combining all sorts of items in mysterious ways. In today's peculiar world of search engine optimization (SEO), modern alchemists combine meta tags and content with the occasional newt's eye to land websites at the top of Google's rankings.

Many of the companies who twist and turn every element of their websites in an effort to capture a top-three Google rank lose sight of something very important. Ultimately, your site will be viewed by people, many of whom are your prospective customers.

I'm convinced far too many companies never stop to think about that simple fact. They overload their site with keywords and odd phrases that they believe will stop the search engines at their online doorsteps -- and often, they succeed.

But they don't think about what happens next. The prospective customer arrives at their website and will develop an impression of their company within seconds.

If the copy on the site has been overstuffed with keywords, that impression will be of an incoherent salesperson.

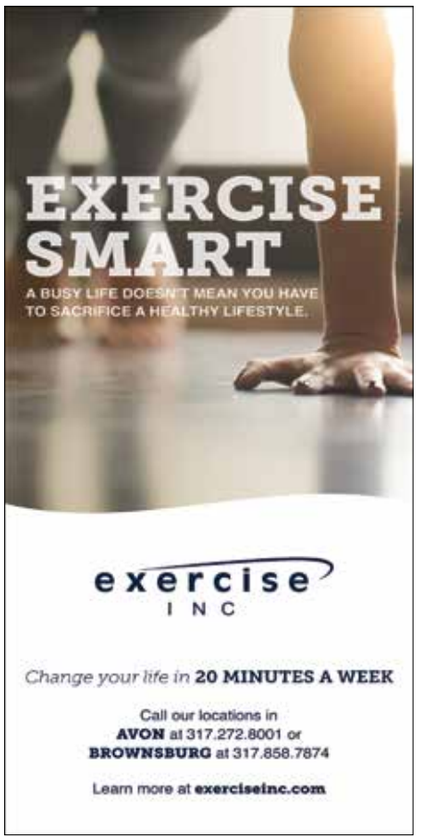
Instead, focus on the reason people visit websites. They're seeking content, not keywords. They want information. They want it well-organized, and they want it presented in ways that convince them you know what you're talking about.

People do business with other people, not with keywords. If your website copy sounds like your most effective salesperson at their best, you'll be far more likely to turn that prospect into a customer. Besides, Google prefers real content written for human eyes.

Gimmicks to fool search engines work only until the sites catch on and adapt their algorithms. Well-developed content will continue to create effective and lasting connections, ensuring that your prospect's first impression is positive.

After all, you may be able to fool the search engines some of the time, but don't expect those tactics to fool your prospects anytime. And that's what really matters.

Scott Flood creates copy that works. See more at sfwriting.com. *©2024 Scott Flood All rights reserved.*



Open 4 Biz

Square Burger

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Jordan and Stephanie Yant & Stephanie and Trevor Bernhardt
(Photo by Catherine Myers)

Local entrepreneurs who have a shared passion of serving a superior product while serving our community. This was how Square Burger was born. As Danville residents and regulars, we consistently saw the need for a delicious, fun, and family friendly burger spot and knew the community needed it as well! The vision quickly became a reality and we have decided to open Square Burger December 4, 2024 on the historic Danville Town Square. Our goal is to create a unique and delicious menu and a place for people to gather while tying in the rich history of the Square and Danville.

Our desire is to provide stellar customer service, phenomenal food, a vibrant gathering place, and a truly locally owned restaurant that cares about our community. Thank you for choosing Square Burger and choosing to support local! We are grateful for this opportunity to serve you!

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GRANT:
Pottery Wheels & Tools
at West Middle School

In an effort to provide similar pottery experiences for all students who attend middle school, BEF purchased four pottery wheels for West Middle School last school year. East Middle School had eight working pottery wheels, but West's current pottery wheels were over 30 years old, broken and did not spin consistently. They had not been able to teach wheel throwing in over 12 years. The older wheels also could not be taken apart to clean. With the construction, the new art classrooms at West were designed for eight pottery stations. By providing these new pottery wheels at West Middle School, students can learn the skill of wheel throwing and create functional ceramic pieces.

"West Middle School was awarded a BEF Grant to purchase four new pottery wheels. For the first time in over 12 years, West has been able to teach wheel throwing to their students. For many students, this is a new experience a pottery wheel and creating a functional container. The students really enjoyed the novelty of working on the pottery wheel. We are grateful to BEF for expanding our ceramics program."

MEGAN KENDALL

Enhancing Education Together
BROWNSBURG EDUCATION FOUNDATION

BEF is proud to award over $200,000 in grants and scholarships this year.

To learn more about the grant projects funded by BEF in the 2023-2024 school year, visit
brownsburgeducationfoundation.org

Community Updates

Hello Oratorical Enthusiasts!

The Avon Optimist Club announces that their 2025 Oratorical contest will be held on February 25 (Tuesday) 2025 at Barlett Chapel Methodist Church, 4396 E Mail Street, Avon, IN 46123. Registration will begin at 6:00 PM with the contest beginning soon thereafter. The doors will open at 5:30 PM.

We respectfully request your help in making the contest yet again a wonderful opportunity for students to demonstrate their oratorical skills. Last year, our club winner won the District contest and was awarded a $2500 scholarship. Our winner also won the International Contest and was awarded an additional $20, 000 scholarship. First time ever for our District. I think we can do this again.

The 2025 topic is:

"How Optimism Has Guided Me Through Trying Times"

Please email a completed application AND a copy of the speech in Word format for the contestant no later than Friday, February 14th, 2025 to djpaulpe@ameritech.net. The application as well as Rules may be downloaded from https://www.optimist.org/documents/2025/programs/Guidelines_for_Oratorical_Contest_Perticipants.pdf or you may email djpaulpe@ameritech.net and one will be emailed back. Please READ all the rules. One year a contestant was disqualified because of a rules violation. Each contestant should bring to the contest a copy of their speech and a copy of their birth certificate (to verify age) to advance to the next level.

The next level will be a local semi-final contest to be held in March or early April 2025. Local semi-final winners will compete in the District finals to be held April 26th, 2025 at a location TBA in the Jasper, Indiana area. Each of the winner of the District level contest will receive a scholarship for use at a college, university or trade school only. There will be three winners awarded scholarships of $2,500, $1,500 and $1,000 respectively for first, second and third place. The winner of the District contest will be invited to a Regional contest with the chance to win a $5000 scholarship.

The winner of the Regional contest will compete in the World Championship for a chance to win a first, second, or third place scholarship of $15,000, $10,000, or $5,000 respectively. The World Championship Contest will be held in July 2025 at Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri.

The contest is open to Youth under the age of 19 as of October 1, 2024 (and is not enrolled as a degree seeking student of a post-secondary institution). There is no minimum age.

Medals will be awarded to the top three (3) contestants. Our contest winning speaker will advance to the semi-final. Home schooled students are also encouraged to enter the contest.

The Avon Optimist Club is accepting entrants now via email to djpaulpe@ameritech.net. All applications should be in no later than Friday, February 14th, 2025.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Darrel J. Paul at 317.313.1701 (or thru email). If there is no answer, please leave a message and you will be contacted.

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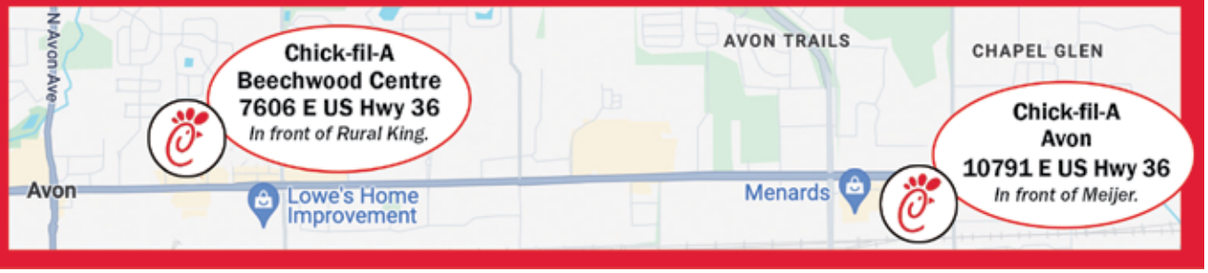

Community Updates

Christmas for People Who Feel Sad

Christmas and the holidays can be painful for people dealing with the loss of a loved one, life after divorce or separation, the loss of a job, or any other human hardship. If that's your situation, Avon Christian Church is holding a safe space for you to process Christmas differently at Blue Christmas at 6 p.m. on December 17.

"The emphasis on joy at Christmas actually makes some people feel worse than they already do," says Rev. Dr. Kathy Bird De Young, a member of Avon Christian Church and director of spiritual care and chaplaincy at IU Health West. "We want people who are sad for any reason to have a welcoming place to participate in Christmas without feeling like they have to pretend to be happy."

Blue Christmas is a short candlelight service that creates space for anyone

living through dark times. The service shares scripture, soothing music and quiet meditation where you can find healing and hope while accepting the truth of your circumstances. Everyone is welcome to attend this peaceful reflective service. Avon Christian church is located at 7236 E CR 100 S in Avon.

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Obituaries

Avon

Robin Lynette (Little) Clendening
Robin Lynette (Little) Clendening, 50, passed away on Nov. 22. She was born on May 20, 1974. Services were held on Nov. 27 at Westbridge Church in Danville. Contributions can be made to the Avon High School Choral Boosters.

Betty S. Hall
Betty S. Hall, 88, passed away Nov. 27, 2024. She was born on Nov. 14, 1936. Services were held on Dec. 3 at Conkle Funeral Home, Avon. Contributions can be made to the Eagle Valley Church of Christ.

Brownsburg

Gloria Kay Barker
Gloria Kay Barker, 84, passed away on Nov. 22, 2024. She was born on Aug. 10, 1940. A memorial visitation was held on Dec. 7 at Matthews Mortuary, Brownsburg. Contributions can be made to Life's Journey Hospice, Avon.

David A. Brown
David A. Brown, 55, passed away on Nov. 26, 2024. He was born on Oct. 28, 1969. Services will be held on December 16 at Connection Pointe Christian Church, Brownsburg.

Regina Lee Caldwell
Regina Lee Caldwell, 70, passed away on Nov. 20, 2024. She was born on Nov. 30, 1953. Matthews Mortuary, Brownsburg, has been entrusted with arrangements.

Matthew A. Davis
Matthew A. Davis, 35, passed away on Dec. 1, 2024. He was born on July 21, 1989. Services were held on Dec. 6 at Matthews Mortuary, Brownsburg.

Lois Day
Lois Day, 96, passed away on Nov. 26, 2024. Services were held on Nov. 30 at Matthews Mortuary, Brownsburg. Contributions can be made to the Gospel Grace Baptist Church, Lebanon.

Stephan Lee Hunt
Stephan Lee Hunt, 77, passed away on Nov. 24, 2024. He was born on March 1, 1947. Services were held on Dec. 3, 2024, at Conkle Funeral Home, Speedway. Contributions can be made to the Alzheimer's Foundation or St. Jude Hospital.

Claude J. Jackson
Claude J. Jackson, 83, passed away on Nov. 28th, 2024. He was born on Oct. 6, 1941. Services were held on Dec. 4 at Matthews Mortuary, Brownsburg.

Kenneth Ray McFerron
Kenneth Ray McFerron, 93, passed away on Nov. 29, 2024. He was born on April 6, 1931. Services were held on Dec. 3 at Matthews Mortuary, Brownsburg.

C. Thomas Rhudy
C. Thomas Rhudy, 93, passed away on Nov. 25, 2024. He was born on Dec. 10, 1930. Services were held on Dec. 3 at St. Christopher Catholic Church, Indianapolis.

Clayton

Dave Mitchell
Dave Mitchell, 69, passed away on Nov. 27, 2024. He was born on Sept. 21, 1955. Services will be private. Contributions can be made to HVAFofIndiana.org.

Coatesville

Nancy Ann Mobley
Nancy Ann Mobley, 80, passed away on Nov. 20, 2024. She was born on May 21, 1944. Services were held on Nov. 26 at Bousley Funeral Home, Coatesville.

Danville

James Franklin McIntire
James Franklin McIntire, 84, passed away on Nov. 27, 2024. He was born on Aug. 13, 1940. Graveside services were held on Dec. 3 at K of P Cemetery in Lizton.

Myrna Smith
Myrna Smith, 78, passed away on Nov. 23, 2024. Arrangements have been entrusted to Eric MD Bell Funeral Home and Cremation Services, Pittsboro.

Lizton

Rochelle Anne Banziger
Rochelle Anne Banziger, 88, passed away on Dec. 1, 2024. She was born on Oct. 30, 1936. Services were held on Dec. 4 at Helton & Harris Funeral Home, Clayton.

Pittsboro

David Allen Fraker
David Allen Fraker, 74, passed away on Nov. 28, 2024. He was born on Sept. 7, 1950. Services were held on Dec. 6 at Matthews Mortuary, Brownsburg.

Sandra Marsh
Sandra Marsh, 81, passed away on Nov. 21, 2024. She was born on Sept. 24, 1943. Services were held on Dec 2 at Eric MD Bell Funeral Home, Pittsboro. Contributions can be made to Phi Beta Psi Sorority.

Andrea L. Myers
Andrea L. Myers, 79, passed away on Nov. 20, 2024. She was born on Sept. 22, 1945. Services were held on Nov. 26 at Eric M.D. Bell Funeral Home, Pittsboro. Contributions can be made to Agape.

Plainfield

Hildreth Anita Bagwell
Hildreth Anita Bagwell "Hiddy 93, passed away on Nov. 24, 2024. She was born on Oct. 27, 1931. Services were held on Dec. 3 at Plainfield United Methodist Church. Contributions can be made to Plainfield United Methodist Church.

George Burgan
George Burgan, 66, passed away on Nov. 29, 2024. He was born on June 4, 1958. Hampton-Gentry Funeral Home, Plainfield, has been entrusted with arrangements.

Christopher A. Grady
Christopher A. Grady, 41, passed away on Nov. 27, 2024. He was born on Aug. 29, 1983. Services were held on Dec. 6 at Hampton-Gentry Funeral Home, Plainfield. Contributions can be made to support his family at https://gofund.me/4beb18f5.

Darleen Himmelheber
Darleen Himmelheber, 91, passed away on Nov. 26, 2024. She was born on Oct. 15, 1933. Services were held on Dec. 3 at Hall-Baker Funeral Home, Plainfield.

Juliana "Julie" M. Hummel Mitchell
Juliana "Julie" M. Hummel Mitchell, 83, passed away on Dec. 2, 2024. She was born on June 20, 1941. Services were held on Dec. 6 at St. Susanna Catholic Church, Plainfield. Contributions can be made to St. Susanna Catholic Church.

Obituaries are printed free of charge up to 50 words. Funeral directors are encouraged to send obituaries and photos to catherine@connecthendricks.com

Obituaries

Mims "Mitch" Roberts Jr.

Mims "Mitch" Roberts Jr., 63, was born on Nov. 27, 2024. He was born on Nov. 20, 1961. Services were held on Dec. 4 at Connection Pointe Christian Church, Brownsburg. Contributions can be made to the American Heart Association or the Humane Society of Indianapolis.

Charles Richard Sibley

Charles Richard Sibley, 82, passed away on Nov. 25, 2024. He was born on Jan. 13, 1942. Arrangements have been entrusted to Hampton-Gentry Funeral Home, Plainfield.

Sally Jean "Hall" Sutherlin

Sally Jean "Hall" Sutherlin, 85, passed away on Nov. 22, 2024. She was born on Feb. 10, 1939. Services were held on Nov. 26 at First Baptist Church of Plainfield. Contributions can be made to the First Baptist Church of Plainfield.

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Devotional

We are the Champions!

By Pastor Rashad Cunningham

I graduated from Brownsburg High School in the year 2000. Recently, the Brownsburg Bulldogs won the STATE CHAMPIONSHIP for high school football (I couldn't wait to type those words for this devotion!!) in the state of Indiana!

Although it's been 24 years since I attended Brownsburg, I still consider myself part of their victory. Like many others, I watched the game from home cheering loudly for the Bulldogs, but I found it even more amazing seeing how many alumni, local business owners, and residents showed up even if they didn't have a student playing in the game.

A community that was divided in its politics three weeks earlier was able to look past their political differences, cultural differences and any other differences for the sake of a common goal. BEAT WESTFIELD and bring home the state title.

At the end of the game there were so many of us from our community posting on Facebook in solidarity. Congratulating the team and celebrating the victory as if we played in the game ourselves.

In Hebrews 12, the writer of Hebrews, after speaking in chapter 11 about the "alumni" of believers who lived by faith, writes "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

Before the state championship game, a "hype" video was made and shown on social media. In the hype video homage was paid to the 1985 Brownsburg football team that also won the state championship 39 years ago. That team along with all of the Brownsburg alumni since then represents the "cloud of witnesses" in this metaphor. Those who have played, rooted, cheered, and been "faithful" to Brownsburg long before this team "ran in their own race".

Much of the battle cry for the this year's Brownsburg football team was built on "doing what had been done before" by the old alumni and now after the victory of the 2024 Brownsburg Bulldog team, they become the newest "alumni" that surrounds the teams who will come after them, leaving an example for others to follow!

I pray those of us who have given our life to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior will mimic both the players and alumni spiritually. Cheering, as Team Jesus alumni, for ALL saints to finish the race, while also living lives as Team Jesus players that can be mimicked by "future players" that will follow after them!

Jesus was the ultimate example of this and He invites ALL people to believe in Him as Lord and Savior and join TEAM JESUS! As a member of His team I can assure that in Christ WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS!

LOVING YOU and FULLY DEPENDENT on HIM,
Pastor Rashad Cunningham

Want to link up? Connect with me by scheduling at https://calendly.com pastorrashad/meetingwithrashad

Have ideas or questions? Contact Todd Travis at todd@connecthendricks.com

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