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# Winfield American

Vol. 24, Issue 1,160

Serving Winfield, Lakes of the Four Seasons, and Winfield Township since 2002

February 7, 2025

## St. Mary's Wildcats make the right moves in chess tournament: 15 qualify for state

The St. Mary Catholic Community School Chess Club competed in the Scholastic Chess of Indiana Regional tournament at Hammond Central High School on Saturday January 4th. Twenty-seven SMS students represented the school in the nine-hour tournament with 200 region chess players. "All the students were exemplary models of hard work and good sportsmanship," said Coach Lisa Mullally.

Fifteen SMS Wildcats performed well enough to qualify for the state tournament at the end of January. Nine of the

fifteen qualifiers were in the middle school division. Four of those were in the top ten.

Andrew Myers performed nearly perfectly with 5 wins, achieving third place in the region. Joey Mullally was just behind him in fourth place with 5 wins as well. James Raggs and James Wong both had 4.5 wins, landing in seventh and tenth place respectively. Rounding out the middle school state qualifiers were Nathan Ford, Gabriel Rosado, Joey Shea, Luca Trajkovski, and Ayumi Artis.

In the elementary division, the state qualifiers were

Lukas Vicari and Kameron Williams. In the third grade and under division, SMS rising stars who qualified for state were Matteo Gutierrez, Kai Newtoff, Mariella Ables, and Jacob Abramowicz.

St. Mary Catholic Community School in Crown Point offers grade levels Junior Pre-Kindergarten (for three-year-olds) through grade eight. St. Mary's offers numerous clubs and activities for students of various interests. To learn more about St. Mary School's upcoming Open House events on January 22 from 6 p.m. to 8



Joseph Mullally and James Raggs

Mateo Gutierrez and Mariela Ables

Alfonso Gutierrez and Jonathon Patton

p.m. and January 26 from 10 a.m. to noon, visit [www.school.stmarycp.org](http://www.school.stmarycp.org).



## St. Mary's WSMW TV crew learns from the professionals at Lakeshore PBS

The WSMW news crew from St. Mary Catholic Community School in Crown Point, recently visited their local PBS station. WSMW is St. Mary's very own in-house student-run TV news program that is viewed by the entire school every morning. The news team, both student-directed and produced, received the opportunity to tour the Lakeshore PBS station in Merrillville to learn more about the technical and professional side of news broadcasting. This trip allowed students to see what it looks like behind the scenes of a successful radio and television broadcast.

Russell Brodhacker, Communications Coordinator at St. Lakeshore PBS, and his team of engineers



Lily Huffman

and technicians enthusiastically received the students and provided them with a hands-on field trip that offered a vast amount of knowledge. Students were also given a fantastic opportunity to record voiceovers in the sound booth with the

guidance of Dee Dotson, the host and producer of Regionally Speaking. Sixth-grade WSMW news anchor Lyla Finn said it was "very interesting how easily the radio producers can edit their work when a mistake is made while recording." She also



Front Row: DeSean Torres, Abby McDonald, Emily Ebersberger, and Anna Alspach; Middle Row: Gabriel Rosado, Sara Cooley, Sophia Karwatka, Cassidy Tran, Lily Huffman, Izzy McDonald, Ellie Clarke, Gavin Eggers, and J'Nylah Burley; and Back Row: Jaidyn McWilliams, Eleni Ploutis, Nina McCain, Danielle Flemming, Lyla Finn, Genevieve Abad, Bethany Cox, Regina Andras, Sommer Branigin, and Maeve Scott.

enjoyed seeing herself on the TV screen as she recorded a commercial for school. "We are grateful to the staff at Lakeshore PBS and their eagerness to share their talents with our students. We look forward to more field trips

in the future!" said WSMW moderator, Mrs. Megan Henry.

St. Mary Catholic Community School in Crown Point offers grade levels Junior Pre-Kindergarten (for three-year-olds) through grade eight.



Sophia Karwatka, Lily Huffman, and Lyla Finn.

St. Mary's faculty teaches a rich curriculum supported by cutting-edge technology. To learn more about St. Mary School visit [www.school.stmarycp.org](http://www.school.stmarycp.org).

## Crown Point Community Foundation awards over \$140,000 in grants to south Lake County

The Crown Point Community Foundation announced the awarding of \$142,070.87 in grants during its most recent 2024 Grant Cycle. These 21 grants are set to enrich the lives of residents across South Lake County, benefiting communities such as Winfield, Crown Point, Cedar Lake, and Lowell (Tri-Creek Townships). The grants cover a range of impactful projects, from supporting Northwest Indiana Symphony Society to expand its 83rd season, to supporting the TradeWinds Community Pantry.

Included in the funding of the September Cycle, the

CPCF awarded a \$5,000 proactive grant (\$2,666 Unrestricted Fund + \$2,334 Community Literacy Fund) to the Crown Point Community Library for hosting all three Nonprofit Academy events and Board of Directors meetings in 2024.

Community grants are made possible by donors who create Unrestricted Endowment Funds to support South Lake County causes and entrust the CPCF to allocate those funds to a broad range of community projects and needs.

Here are the recipients of the September Grant Cycle:

Alpha Family Resale - \$12,000.00; Funds to assist with one year of their Gift Card Program to help families in need.

Alzheimer's Association Of Greater Indiana - \$2,000.00; ALZ CARES (Community Alliances for Risk Reduction, Education and Support) exists to develop and leverage alliances with local community leaders, influencers and organizations to open doors, identify community needs, and meet and mobilize volunteers.

Best Buddies Indiana - \$2,500.00; Friendship programs build one-to-one friendships for people with

and without intellectual and developmental disorders (IDD), helping people to form meaningful connections,



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partners. gain self-confidence and self-esteem, and improve inclusion for all.

Bethel Church - \$10,000.00; Repair and remodel a newly purchased

building to serve as a community counseling center, video recording studio, and office space for not-for-profit

transportation services for veterans, ensuring they can access VA medical appointments, thereby improving their health outcomes and supporting their overall well-being.

Girls on the Run of Northwest Indiana - \$2,000.00; By providing scholarship assistance to girls in South Lake County, they can be a part of their Girls on the Run team to be joyful, healthy and confident through social-emotional learning and physical activity. Golden Hope Ministries - \$5,100.00 (\$4,789.00 Unrestricted Fund + \$311.00 (See CPCF Pg. 7)

## You can put more into your 401(k) this year

Once you retire, you'll likely need to draw on a variety of financial sources — and one of the most important ones may be your 401(k). And for 2025, you can put even more money into your plan than ever.

You can invest in your 401(k) in one of two ways, depending on your employer's plan. With a traditional 401(k), you contribute pre-tax dollars, which can lower your taxable income, and your money can grow tax deferred. If you have a Roth 401(k) option, you can contribute after-tax dollars, which aren't deductible, but your eventual withdrawals will be tax-free if you've had your account at least five years and you're at least 59½.

For either a traditional or Roth 401(k), as well as similar plans such as a 457(b) (for government employees) or a 403(b) (for educators and

employees of some nonprofit groups), the contribution limit has increased by \$500 for 2025, to \$23,500. If you're 50 or older, you can contribute an additional \$7,500, for a total of \$31,000. And under the SECURE 2.0 legislation, if you are between 60 and 63, you have a higher catch-up contribution — \$11,250, instead of \$7,500, for a total of \$34,750.

If you can afford to contribute the full amount to your 401(k) or similar plan, consider doing so. Of course, not everyone is in that position. If you're a younger worker, you may well have other financial obligations, such as paying off student loans. And even if you've been in the workforce for a while, you may be putting away money for other things — such as your children's education — as well as your own retirement. But even if you can't "max out" on your

401(k), try to contribute at least enough to earn your employer's matching contribution, if one is offered.

Regardless of how much you contribute to your 401(k), consider these suggestions on managing the money within your plan:

- Create a portfolio that fits your risk tolerance. Most 401(k) plans offer up to a dozen investment options, while some plans offer many more. You obviously want to increase your 401(k) balance as much as possible, but that doesn't necessarily mean putting all your 401(k) dollars into the most aggressive funds available. Instead, consider spreading your 401(k) contributions among a range of investments, which can help you lower your risk level while still giving you opportunities for long-term growth. Everyone's risk tolerance is different, though, so you'll

want to evaluate yours when constructing your 401(k) portfolio.

- Adjust your portfolio as needed. It's a good idea to review your 401(k)'s investment mix at least once a year to see if it's performing as you'd hoped. But be patient — one "down" year doesn't necessarily mean you must make changes. However, as you approach retirement, you may want to lower the risk level of your 401(k) by moving some of your dollars into more conservative vehicles. Still, even when you're retired and have started drawing money from your 401(k), you might want to keep some growth potential in it to help you stay ahead of inflation.

By contributing what you can afford to your 401(k), and by carefully managing the investments within your plan, you can help maximize the value of this powerful retirement savings vehicle — and give yourself a key asset to help you enjoy your retirement years.

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Pat Hedge, 219-662-5999; 10618 Randolph St. Winfield, IN 46307*

*Edward Jones, Member SIPC*

## Indiana Conservation Officers urge Hoosiers to practice ice safety: 'No ice is safe ice'

Indiana Conservation Officers advise being mindful of the potential hazards of frozen lakes, ponds, rivers and streams.

It's also important to keep a watchful eye on neighborhood retention ponds, lakes and other waterways for others who may venture out and find themselves in trouble.

Every winter, thousands of Hoosiers safely enjoy fishing, skating, hiking, or just sliding around on frozen ponds and lakes. And every year, people drown after falling through ice.

Just like driving differently on snow versus clear roads, some may need to re-learn how to safely have fun on ice.

Put safety first. The best rule of thumb is, when thinking about getting on the ice, believe it is thin ice unless proven otherwise.

Here are a few tips to remember when considering standing on or walking on a frozen lake or pond:

- No ice is safe ice.
- Test the thickness of the ice with an ice auger. At least 4 inches of ice is recommended for ice fishing; 5 inches is recommended for snowmobiling.
- If you don't know the thickness of the ice, don't go on it.
- Wear life jackets or flotation coats.

- Carry ice hooks and rope gear.
- Before going on the ice, leave a note of your whereabouts with a friend or family member.
- Don't test the thickness of the ice while alone.

Wearing a life jacket is especially important when on the ice. If you fall through, a life jacket will keep your head above the water until help arrives.

Snow can insulate ice, causing it to freeze at a slower rate. When snow and rain freeze into ice, it is never as strong as solid, clear ice.

If you see a pet or other animal in distress on the ice, do not go after it. Doing so can often end in tragedy. Instead, contact your local emergency response personnel, who are equipped to make a rescue.

Some bodies of water will appear to be frozen solid but actually can have thin ice in several potentially unexpected areas. Flowing water, such as rivers and streams, should be avoided when covered by a layer of ice. Water that is surrounded by sand may freeze with inconsistencies in the thickness of the ice.

Underground springs, wind, waterfowl, and other animals can also keep areas of ice thin.

## IDEM invites teachers to sign up for free Earth Day classroom presentations

To help Indiana schools celebrate Earth Day 2025, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) is offering free hands-on classroom presentations again this year to elementary students across the state. Every year, IDEM staff visit schools to talk about their careers and share STEM-based lessons on air, land, water, and recycling.

Classroom Earth Day presentations are available for elementary schools and vary in length from 30 to 50 minutes. IDEM professionals throughout the state conduct

these presentations, sharing their experience and types of careers offered through IDEM. Teachers can choose from several interactive presentations focusing on recycling and reducing trash, how long trash lasts in landfills, watersheds and the water cycle, and air quality.

In-person classroom presentations are available on a first-come, first-served basis throughout the month of April, and each school may request up to four presentations. Registration ends February 21.

For more information on specific programs offered

and to request a classroom presentation visit [www.idem.IN.gov/iee](http://www.idem.IN.gov/iee).

Educators may direct questions to IDEM's Environmental Education & Outreach Coordinator at [education@idem.IN.gov](mailto:education@idem.IN.gov) or 317-234-3165.

IDEM ([www.idem.IN.gov](http://www.idem.IN.gov)) implements federal and state regulations regarding the environment. Through compliance assistance, incentive programs and educational outreach, the agency encourages and aids businesses and citizens to protect Hoosiers and the environment.

## Franciscan Health Crown Point accredited for geriatric emergency department care

Franciscan Health Crown Point recently earned the bronze standard Level 3 Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation (GEDA) from the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP).

The program recognizes emergency departments that provide excellent care to older adults. The voluntary program provides specific target criteria and goals for emergency clinicians and administrators.

Accredited geriatric emergency departments are better suited to cater to the needs, dispositions and presentations of older adult patients. The accredited departments provide standardized, integrated care that can reduce system costs and drive better, healthier outcomes, often via the integration of best practices for older adults into an existing emergency department.

Franciscan Health's work on GEDA accreditation has been years in the making, after a multidisciplinary team met to discuss their desire to enhance the care of the hospital's growing geriatric patient population in the emergency

department.

"It is a partnership that involves input from nursing, physicians, pharmacists, physical therapy, trauma services, social work and case management to provide a myriad of resources tailored to each individual patient," said Franciscan Health Crown Point Vice President of Medical Affairs Ryan Misk, DO, FACOEP, FACEP. "We want our community to know that the

emergency department at Franciscan Health Crown Point is focused on the highest standards of care for our community's older citizens."

Franciscan Health Crown Point is located at 12750 Saint Francis Drive at the intersection of Interstate 65 and U.S. 231. More information about services offered at the hospital is available at [www.franciscanhealth.org](http://www.franciscanhealth.org) or by phone at 219-738-2100.

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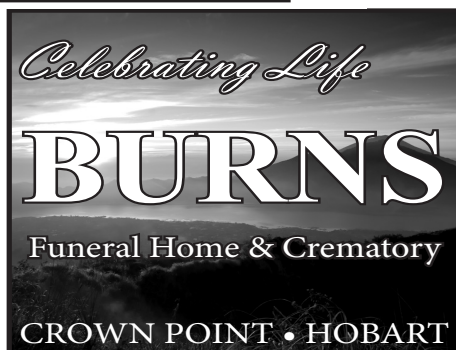
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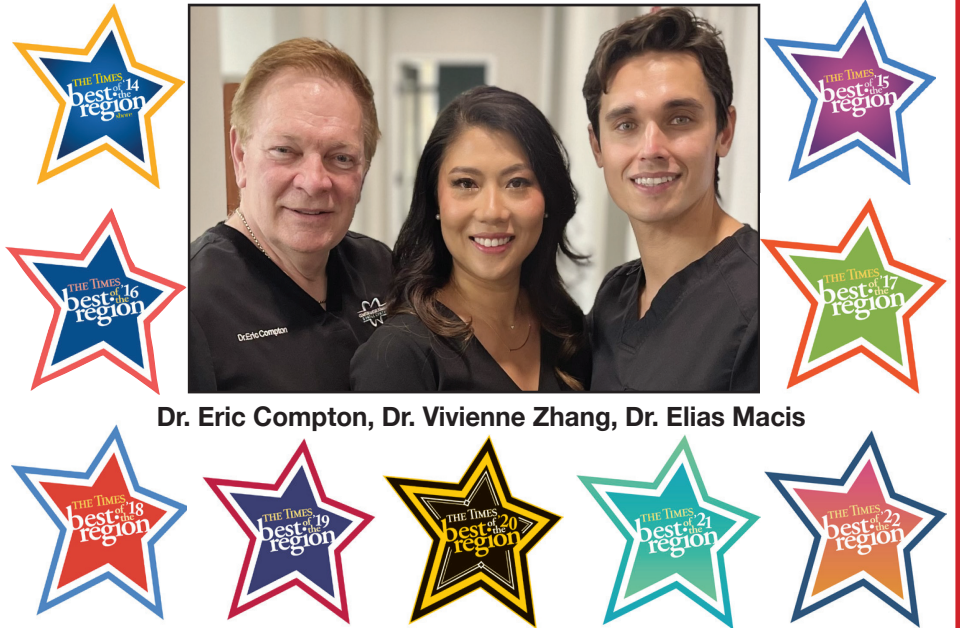
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## The status of the monarch butterfly in the U.S. is listed as threatened or endangered

The monarch butterfly, known for its awe-inspiring migration across North America, has become a symbol of both ecological wonder and environmental decline. Once abundant across the continent, their numbers have plummeted in recent decades, raising concerns about the species' long-term survival.

In 2014, the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), a leading conservation group, petitioned the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) to list the monarch as "threatened." FWS launched a review of the butterfly's status, concluding six years later that listing was warranted

although other species took priority. In 2022, CBD filed a federal lawsuit and won a settlement calling for the government to decide whether to list monarchs by late 2024, which FWS did in December, finally granted "threatened" status to the species.

The monarch's eastern population, which migrates from the U.S. and Canada to central Mexico for the winter, has experienced a staggering 80% drop over the past 20 years, largely due to habitat loss, especially the destruction of milkweed—the sole food source for monarch larvae. The widespread use of herbicides and pesticides kill both milkweed and other

pollinator-friendly plants. Climate is compounding the issue by altering the availability of suitable habitats, affecting migration patterns. The monarch's western population migrates along the U.S. West Coast to winter in California, and has also seen a drastic decline. It has not yet been listed as threatened or endangered by FWS, but the western monarch is still considered to be in serious jeopardy, with some estimates suggesting a 99% decline since the 1980s.

Being listed as "threatened" means that while monarchs are not yet in immediate danger of extinction, their populations are at significant

risk. This status has prompted federal agencies to prioritize monarch conservation, leading to a variety of initiatives aimed at halting or reversing the decline. FWS has created a recovery plan, which includes restoring migratory and breeding habitats, reducing pesticide use and raising public awareness about the importance of monarchs and pollinators in general.

Despite official recognition of the problem and action, habitat destruction continues at an alarming rate, exacerbated by logging and urban sprawl. In response, conservation and governmental agencies and researchers are all working



toward restoring monarch habitats and promoting the planting of milkweed.

Everyone can play a role in helping the monarchs. Readers can help by planting milkweed in your garden, backyard or community space. You can also reduce pesticide use in your yard

and choose organic gardening practices. Support organizations working to protect monarch habitats and advocate for policies that protect pollinators and raise awareness about their decline can also create broader change.

## Purdue University Northwest's Social Work program earns re-accreditation

Purdue University Northwest's (PNW) Bachelor of Arts in Social Work (BASW) program has earned re-accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), reaffirming PNW's high-quality undergraduate social work curriculum and commitment to preparing students for licensure in the professional field.

"The social work program at PNW ensures students gain the knowledge and skills required to engage, enrich and advocate for the communities they serve" says Shreya Bhandari, professor of Social Work at PNW. "Our program has an outstanding reputation in the community and re-accreditation underscores our commitment to maintaining

the highest standards in social work education."

PNW's BASW program is an applied, license-eligible, professional degree program with a 25:1 student-to-faculty ratio. The curriculum aligns with the nine core competencies outlined by the CSWE and provides students with skills that are transferable to different settings, population groups and problem areas. PNW Social Work faculty members bring a wide range of cultural, research and professional perspectives to the classroom, enriching the learning experience. Students also engage with the local community through practicums, field trips, service learning and student organizations.

Accreditation qualifies graduates to sit for the social work licensure exam, opening doors to professional practice. Graduates of PNW's accredited BASW program may also be eligible to skip certain foundational courses typically required in PNW's Master of Social Work graduate program, providing the opportunity to earn an MSW in one academic year through the Advanced Standing Program starting Summer 2026.

"Our BASW program equips students with the foundational knowledge needed for entry-level positions in mental health, education and other social service sectors," says Bhandari. "By addressing regional needs

and preparing students for graduate level education, we help retain talented individuals who are ready to contribute and make a difference in our communities."

The re-accreditation process involved a rigorous,

comprehensive review of PNW's BASW program, including an extensive self-study, site visit and evaluation by the CSWE Board of Accreditation. During the three-year process, the program was evaluated on cur-

riculum, faculty qualifications and student-to-faculty ratio. PNW's re-accreditation is valid through June 2031.

For more information on social work programs at PNW, visit [www.pnw.edu/behavioral-sciences](http://www.pnw.edu/behavioral-sciences).

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## DIRECTOR SPOTLIGHT

ANTHONY GEISEN

The 6th Generation from the Geisen family to serve funeral families, Anthony is a graduate of Purdue University and Worsham School of Mortuary Science. He lives in Crown Point with his wife Mackenzie and their son Lincoln.





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## Happy Valentine's Day!



O.K., O.K. so I'll be your pal.

I'll jump through hoops...er, hearts, if you'll be my Valentine!

"Read" the picture and letter clues to fill in my puzzle. Use the sounds of the pictures to help. What is my secret message to you?

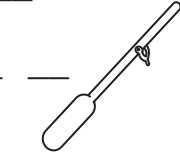


M +



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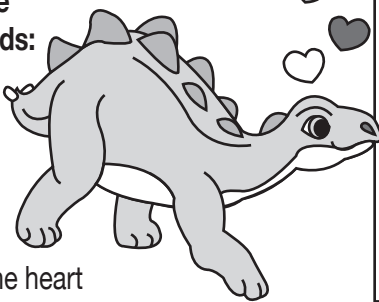


### Hearty Puzzle!

Read the clues to fill in the crossword with "hearty" words:

- 1. sweetheart
- 2. central land area
- 3. full of sorrow
- 4. floor of fireplace
- 5. deeply felt; sincere

- 6. body's most important muscle; pumps blood
- 7. has no feelings; cruel
- 8. cheering
- 9. strong; in good health
- 10. a single pumping of the heart



The heart is the organ that pumps blood throughout the body. It is so important to our lives that we use the word "heart" to talk about feelings or warmth.

By 'snail mail', email or video chat - get your Valentine message to friends or family.

It'll bug us if you won't be our Valentine.

Have a big heart!

**'Hearty' Fun Fact**  
Blue whales have the largest hearts of any living things on Earth. Some hearts could weigh up to 400 pounds!

Parties, poems, cards, flowers, candy and kind words are all part of this fun day. It is a day to share feelings of friendship or love. It is a day named for a person who was very kind to others.

### Through Wind, Snow or Rain!

Mr. Turtle is the mail carrier in his neighborhood. He delivers the mail through all kinds of weather!

SAINT

Fit the words below into the puzzle to see the name of the person this fun day was named after!

- HEARTS PINK CANDY FLOWERS
- RED CUPID PARTY LOVE POEM

Can you fill the blanks with letters that match the code? Then you will know what some cards say!

Slow and steady I deliver cards and Valentines. Some have funny poems. Some have just a line:

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I |
| • | □ | △ | × | ○ | ▽ | □ | L | T |
| J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R |
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| S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z |   |
| ? | ○ | ! | ☹ | × | ○ | ☹ | ☹ |   |

### A Sweetheart of a Flower!

This is a very popular flower. Its scent is used in soaps and perfumes. It comes in many colors: yellow, white, pink and red. Gardeners grow this flower and enter it into contests. It is a symbol of friendship and love.



I'm stuck on you!



Finish the dot-to-dot puzzle to see this flower. Next, unscramble the letters to spell its name.

O S R E

### NIPSCO shares tips about the 'Silent Killer' – Carbon Monoxide

NIPSCO urges customers to beware of the "Silent Killer" that claims the lives of hundreds of Americans each year. Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, tasteless, and non-corrosive gas that is produced when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, natural gas, propane or oil) burn incompletely. While natural gas does not contain CO, it can be generated when there is insufficient oxygen for fuels to burn correctly.

NIPSCO shares tips to protect families from CO poisoning:

- Get a CO detector. The most reliable way to determine whether you have a CO

leak is to have fully functional CO detectors in your home on every level and in every room where someone sleeps. Remember to test and replace your detector batteries regularly.

- Know the symptoms. With CO poisoning, you may experience flu-like symptoms, including headaches, dizziness, nausea, vomiting and irregular breathing. You may feel tired at home but fine when away from home. Don't ignore the warning signs. Carbon monoxide can be fatal within five minutes at high concentrations.

Know the prevention measures. Follow these basic guidelines to prevent the build-up of CO in your home or business:

- Have fuel-burning equipment, like your furnace, inspected annually by a qualified technician to ensure appliances run and use energy efficiently. For a list of qualified natural gas contractors, visit [www.NIPSCO.com/contractors](http://www.NIPSCO.com/contractors).
- Keep vents and chimneys clear of debris or other blockages
- Use space heaters in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines, and never use a

stove or oven as a source of heat in your home.

Know what to do if you detect a leak. If you think carbon monoxide is present or your CO detector sounds, leave the area to get fresh air, call 911 and DO NOT GO BACK until repairs are made and it is safe to reenter. As always, if you smell the rotten-egg-like odor of natural gas, leave the area and from a safe distance call 911 and the NIPSCO emergency line at 1-800-634-3524.

To learn more about how to stay safe from Carbon Monoxide, please visit [www.NIPSCO.com/co](http://www.NIPSCO.com/co).

### Indiana's men among the best dressed in America, finds poll of women

America's diversity isn't just reflected in its food, music, and dialects - it's also reflected in the way people dress all across the country. Each region has its own distinct style, shaped by climate, culture, and tradition. Take Hawaii, for instance, where men's fashion emphasizes comfort and color, from aloha shirts with floral designs to casual shorts and sandals that suit the tropical vibe. Contrast this with Indiana, where Midwestern sensibilities merge with sports culture, creating a look of practical jeans, plaid shirts, and team apparel, especially during game seasons. Then there's Texas, where the iconic Western aesthetic shines through cowboy boots, hats, and jeans, with cities like Austin infusing eclectic, trendy twists. But what regional style do women find most attractive when a man wears it?

DatingAdvice.com wanted to find out which states earn the title of 'America's Best Dressed' when it comes to men's fashion and surveyed 3,000 women to find out what they thought. Will the relaxed, casual look win them over, suggesting an easy-going, laid-back kind of guy? Or do they like the preppy, clean-cut

look, which might suggest an Ivy League education and a job in finance? What about someone who looks like they spend their days up a mountain and is fit, healthy, and outgoing? Or the romantic Western, cowboy style?

Well, the overall winner was the 'Urban Edge' style popularized in New Jersey. Blending street style with urban chic, New Jersey fashion includes fitted jeans, designer sneakers, and leather jackets. Influenced by proximity to NYC, it has a trendy, polished look, feeling cutting edge, and like the man who wears it has his finger on the fashion pulse. Also popular, in 3rd place, was Oklahoma's 'Cowboy Classic' look: think cowboy hats, jeans, and button-downs for a lifestyle spent on the ranch (perhaps it indicates that the man wearing it actually has a horse) with a touch of rustic charm.

And of course, you can't go wrong with the Classic Americana look, which was made popular in Pennsylvania. A mix of preppy and practical, with jeans, polos, sneakers, and sportswear, it combines Northeast polish with a touch of blue-collar roots, so there really is

(See Best Dressed Pg. 8)

(CPCF from Pg. 1)

The Manis Family Fund); A national speaker with expertise on grief and bereavement will present two seminars to the Lake County community informing professionals in Education and Human Services on how to support the bereaved population.

Hanover Community School Corporation (Middle School) - \$485.87; Providing options for students who prefer to sit on the floor and work at tables with a small group instead of at a traditional desk.

Hanover Community School Corporation (Red Cedars Social Work Dept.) - \$3,050.00; Providing necessities for students in need through the Hanover Schools Caring Closet.

Hearts In Motion - \$3,000.00; The New Directions Program helps family transition from a traumatic event into a new home with necessary life essentials and follow up supportive services.

Holy Spirit / St. Vincent DePaul Society - \$20,000.00; The Holy Spirit / St. Vincent

DePaul Food Pantry & Housing Assistance Programs continue to provide supplemental food and offer emergency assistance with rent, mortgage and utilities to our neighbors in need.

Humane Indiana - \$7,500.00; Enhancing TNR efforts in South Lake County by providing free spay/neuter, vaccinations, and flea treatment for community cats, supported by essential medical equipment.

Indiana Plan for Equal Employment - \$8,600.00; Creating opportunities for the under-represented, minorities and women in the construction trades by providing basic construction awareness training to prepare them for the apprenticeship application process.

Indiana Youth Group (IYG) - \$6,250.00; IYG is launching an LGBTQ+ Youth Center in Northwest Indiana to establish safe and affirming spaces for LGBTQ+ young individuals within a one-hour drive, ensuring accessibility and support for them, regardless of their geographical location.

Junior Achievement of Chicago - \$5,000.00; The JA Town combines in-class learning with a day-long visit to a simulated town, allowing students to operate banks, manage restaurants, write checks and connect what they learn in school with the real world.

New Leash on Life - up to \$11,250.00 (\$1 for \$1 Match); By creating three-dimensional renderings for a new animal welfare facility, it will inspire donor enthusiasm and enable community members to fully visualize the future facility.

Northwest Indiana Symphony Society - \$10,000.00; The Northwest Indiana Symphony will produce and expand its 83rd season to five full Symphony concerts, two small ensemble matinees, and one standalone Symphony Chorus concert.

South Shore Arts - \$5,000.00; Providing free elementary school arts & literacy outreach program and support for the annual exhibit celebrating high school & middle school artists.

TradeWinds Services -

\$10,000.00; The TradeWinds Community Pantry serves Lake & Porter County residents in need of a helping hand due to food insecurity.

Visiting Nurse Association of NWI - \$5,000.00; Providing hospice and palliative care and support to seriously or terminally ill patients and families in the South Lake County region.

The Crown Point Community Foundation (CPCF) awards grants from the CPCF Unrestricted Endowment Funds three times a year. The three application cycles close on February 1, June 1 and September 1. Only one grant application per organization or agency will be eligible within a 12-month period. The CPCF Grant Committee reviews all applications. The Crown Point Community Foundation is accepting grant applications online. To apply for a grant, visit: [www.cpcfgrants.communityforce.com](http://www.cpcfgrants.communityforce.com). For more information about the CPCF, visit the Crown Point Community Foundation's website at [www.thecpcf.org](http://www.thecpcf.org).

## General Classifieds

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## Organic insect pest control in your vegetable and flower gardens

Submitted by Melinda Myers

You can have a beautiful, productive garden while working with nature to manage insect pests. As you incorporate various eco-friendly pest management strategies, you will encourage songbirds, beneficial insects, and pollinators to visit your gardens.

You will find slight variations of definitions, but most organic gardeners agree the focus is on cultivating a system that supports and sustains all its members. This includes plants, soil microbes, and other beneficial organisms.

As with any garden, it starts with creating a healthy soil foundation, selecting the plants best suited to the grow-

ing conditions, and providing them with proper care. When you do these things, you will be able to grow healthier plants that are more tolerant of pest attacks and more resilient when damaged.

Removing weeds from garden beds is an important pest management strategy. These uninvited plants compete with your desirable plants for water and nutrients. Many also attract and harbor plant-damaging insect pests and disease organisms in the garden.

No matter how well you plan, plant, and care for your gardens, insect pest problems can arise. Include nature's pest managers in your organic garden approach. Ninety-six percent of terrestrial North

American birds rely on insects for part of their diet. They also add color, motion, and entertainment to our landscapes.

Many beneficial insects eat or parasitize insects. Lady beetles, green lacewings, young and old, eat hundreds of aphids a day. Parasitic wasps, depending on the species, can attack specific or a variety of insects including caterpillars like the tomato hornworm, aphids, leafhoppers, scale, beetles, and true bugs.

Attract more beneficial insects, both pollinators and pest managers, to your gardens with plants. Grow plants like sweet alyssum, columbine, thyme, lavender, goldenrod, sedum, asters, and other plants that attract ben-

eficial insects to your garden.

Be proactive by regularly monitoring your gardens. Look for emerging pest problems and the good guys stopping by to dine on them. You will need to tolerate some damage so there will be food to attract and feed the predators in the garden.

If intervention is needed, look for the most eco-friendly control options. Barriers of lightweight floating row covers protect against cabbage worms, Japanese and bean beetles, cucumber beetles, squash bugs, and squash vine borers on susceptible plants. Just cover the plantings with row covers immediately after seeding. Since basil and beans do not need

to be pollinated to produce the harvest, leave them covered for the season. Uncover squash, pumpkins, melons, and cucumbers when they begin flowering so pollinators have access to the blossoms. Research found vine crops in this manner limited damage by squash bugs, squash vine borer, and the cucumber beetles that can infect and kill cucumber plants with bacterial wilt.

If you forget to cover your cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts, enlist the help of a naturally occurring soil bacterial called *Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki* (Btk) found in Summit<sup>®</sup> Biological Caterpillar and Webworm ([www.SummitResponsibleSolutions.com](http://www.SummitResponsibleSolutions.com)).

It only kills true caterpillars and webworms and can be applied to edible plants right up to harvest.

A strong blast of water is a great first step in managing mites and aphids. It knocks them off the plant, helping minimize the damage. If needed, apply lightweight horticulture oils, like organic Summit<sup>®</sup> Year-Round<sup>®</sup> Spray Oil according to label directions. It kills a wide variety of soft-bodied insects in all stages (including eggs) on contact and poses few risks to beneficial insects that land on the treated plant.

Over time these eco-friendly strategies become part of your gardening routine. And the more we work with nature, the better it is for you, your plants, and the environment.

## What's the connection between climate change and an increase in so-called atmospheric rivers?

Submitted by the Editors of E - The Environmental Magazine

Atmospheric rivers are narrow bands of water vapor that form in the mid to high latitudes. These can span several miles and carry immense amounts of water - up to 27 times the flow of the Mississippi River. They primarily transport water from tropical oceans toward the poles, causing heavy precipitation during landfall. Their formation begins with evaporation over warm oceans,

and then moves to cooler latitudes, with the moisture then falling as rain or snow when it reaches coastal regions. A common example of this is the Pineapple Express, which carries tropical moisture from Hawaii to the U.S. West Coast.

These have both positive and negative effects. They are necessary and they contribute to 50 percent of California's annual precipitation which prevents severe droughts and replenishes water supplies. On the down

side, they can be destructive through flooding, landslides and ice shelf melting. In January 2023, California experienced a series of atmospheric rivers that caused widespread flooding, power outages and landslides, causing over 20 deaths and billions of dollars in damages. California and other parts of the West Coast have since experienced additional storms, highlighting their recurring impact on the region.

Climate change has amplified the intensity and

frequency of atmospheric rivers, because warmer air holds more moisture. Daniel Swain, a climate scientist at University of California, Los Angeles, estimates that due to the effect of climate change, atmospheric rivers currently carry 5-15 percent more precipitation now than they would have before. Research led by scientists at NSF NCAR have also estimated that by 2100, the Pacific Northwest could experience such severe atmospheric rivers that would

temporarily raise ocean levels up to three times higher, creating a significant flooding risk. Regions up and down the West Coast will be at the forefront of these impacts, with California especially vulnerable to intense swings between drought and heavy precipitation. The Pacific Northwest can expect to face severe flooding and coastal impacts as well.

Individuals can be part of the solution. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is essential, from adopting

personal sustainability practices to supporting policies that address climate change, you can help mitigate the frequency of atmospheric rivers. Advocating for investments in flood infrastructure, water management systems, and forecasting technologies is also critical to improve resilience to disasters. Furthermore, educating others about the potential risks and factors can increase awareness.

## Powers Health brings advanced testing equipment to Northwest Indiana

A new system at Powers Health laboratories reduces time in analyzing and processing tests, giving patients and their healthcare providers answers more quickly.

Powers Health teamed up with Roche Diagnostics to bring groundbreaking, conveyor-system testing equipment to Community Hospital in Munster, St. Catherine Hospital in East Chicago and St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart.

Roche Diagnostics' Total Solution is only the second

clinical laboratory automation system in the country that allows patient samples to be transported up and down, with no reduction in speed or intake.

"We are so excited to have this impressive, lifesaving equipment at our hospitals," said Elizabeth Yee, vice president of Clinical Ancillary Services for Powers Health. "Every second counts when a patient is experiencing a medical crisis. This equipment gets answers to physicians and our medical teams

faster so they can treat patients efficiently for the best possible outcome."

Total Solution brings together the Roche's cobas p612 pre-analytical and p701 refrigeration systems to automate many manual tasks, such as sample receipt, centrifugation, aliquoting, sorting and storage of all samples. This automation is combined with Roche's newest analytical testing solution, the cobas pro system, for the majority of clinical chemistry and immunochemistry test-

ing done in the laboratory.

Total Solution also offers one of Roche's newest innovations, the CCM Vertical, as part of the sample transportation line. This innovation allows for samples to travel not only at ground level, but it also moves samples on an elevated section above the operators. This allows for better workflow with employees being able to walk under the line - instead of around - to save time.

The CCM Vertical, its elevator and overhead com-

ponents help low-, mid- and high-volume laboratories optimize space, productivity and patient care. Sample transportation moves up to 1,400 samples per hour and ensures timely results with less blood required from patients.

Community Hospital's CCM Vertical is the second installation to date in the United States and has the longest span, with an elevated line at over 16 feet.

"Powers Health is proud to

offer this technology to our patients," said Alan Kumar, MD, chief operating officer. "Our ultimate goal as a healthcare provider is to bring the most advanced and effective technology to the patients we serve. The addition of Roche Diagnostics' Total Solution is a perfect example of how we strive to better the quality of life for those who turn to us for help."

(Best Dressed from Pg. 7)

something for everyone here.

Indiana men's 'Midwestern Comfort' look was also recognized among the most stylish in the country, in 7th place overall. Practical and relaxed, Indiana's style showcases plaid shirts, jeans, and cozy work boots, with a touch of sports culture—team jackets are a must. This laid-back approach reflects the state's easygoing vibe, and women adore the dependable, no-frills image it conveys, hinting at a man who's loyal and hardworking.

DatingAdvice.com also asked a few more fun questions, including the key one of which men's fashion faux pas women would ban forever if they had the chance. The clear winner was socks with sandals: over a third of women (35%) can't tolerate such sartorial hideousness. A close second was over-the-top bling (23%) - it's flashy and showy, and perhaps sug-

gests that the man in question is a bit shallow. 18% of women said low-rise jeans should have been left where they belong - in the early 2000s - while 14% feel oversized sports jerseys should only be worn on game day.

As for the men's style trend women would happily 'retire', the clear winner (or rather, loser) was neon gym wear - over a quarter (27%) feel this trend should have stayed in the 90s. 24% feel that men should never wear flip-flops as everyday shoes, while 20% think big belt buckles belong at the rodeo and nowhere else. Loud, colorful Hawaiian shirts were a no-no for 18% of women, while 11% thought edgy leather jackets were only suitable for rock stars.

The survey also asked what women consider a 'dealbreaker' look on a first date, and men should take note that they must NEVER wear head-to-toe camo. A

third of women (32%) said it looked 'too rugged' but surely it also looks as if a man has just come back from a sweaty deer hunt. 19% felt jeans and sneakers were just too casual and signified he hadn't made an effort, while 18% felt sandals and shorts were even more laid-back. 15% felt cowboy boots should probably be

best left to actual cowboys.

"It's obvious that men's fashion is a bit of a minefield," says Amber Brooks, senior editor. "There are so many unspoken rules about what women find attractive, so even if men think they're looking good, their date might not agree!"



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## This week in history

February 8, 1587

After 19 years of imprisonment, Mary Queen of Scots was beheaded for her complicity in a plot to murder Queen Elizabeth I.

In 1542, while just six days old, Mary ascended to the Scottish throne upon the death of her father, King James V. Her mother sent her to be raised in the French court, and in 1558 she married the French dauphin, who became King Francis II, but he died the following year. After Francis' death, Mary returned to Scotland to assume her designated role as the country's monarch.

In 1565, she married her English cousin Lord Darnley in order to reinforce her claim of succession to the English throne after Elizabeth's death. In 1567, Darnley was mysteriously killed in an explosion at Kirk o' Field, and Mary's lover, the Earl of Bothwell, was the key suspect. Although Bothwell was acquitted of the charge, his marriage to Mary in the same year enraged the nobility. Mary brought an army against the nobles, but was defeated and imprisoned at Lochleven, Scotland, and forced to abdicate in favor of her son by Darnley, James.

In 1568, Mary escaped from captivity and raised a substantial army but was defeated and fled to England. A major plot to murder Elizabeth was reported, and Mary was convicted for complicity and sentenced to death.

[www.history.com](http://www.history.com)