

Circle City Classic returns

By BREANNA COOPER
BreannaC@indyrecorder.com

After a forced cancellation in 2020 during the height of the pandemic, Indiana Black Expo's Circle City Classic is back. This year, there's an emphasis on a college fair and business networking event.

Bryan Kelley, vice president of marketing for Indiana Black Expo, said students and parents will have a chance to speak with college admission counselors at Lucas Oil Stadium on Sept. 25. Twenty-two colleges will be represented at the fair; six are historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Families can learn more about how to apply for college as well as learn how to apply for financial assistance.

"From my perspective, the importance of HBCUs is the sense of belonging for the students," Kelley said. "They feel like they have a true sense of self-value on campus, and they're met with not only peers that look like them, but professors, instructors and advisors, as well. It's like coming home while they're going to college."

Activities kick off at 4 p.m. Sept. 24 with the Circle City Classic pep rally and Community Day, featuring cheerleaders and bands from Kentucky State University and Benedict College — the two schools that will square off against each other on the gridiron. Attendees will have a chance to win tickets to A Night of Legends con-

See CLASSIC, A9 ▶



CIRCLE CITY CLASSIC EVENTS:

SEPT. 24

4-6 p.m. — Pep rally and Community Day at IBE Headquarters, 601 N. Shortridge Road
7:30 p.m. — A Night of Legends featuring Charlie Wilson and the Isley Brothers at Indiana Farmer's Coliseum, 1202 E. 38th St.

SEPT. 25

10 a.m.-noon — Circle City Classic Parade, starts at North and Pennsylvania streets
11 a.m.-3 p.m. — Circle City Classic tailgate party in front of Lucas Oil Stadium, South Street
Noon-3 p.m. — Radio One Performance Stage, Lucas Oil Stadium, 500 S. Capitol Ave.
Noon-3 p.m. — Circle City Classic Day Parties, Lucas Oil Stadium
12:30-2:30 p.m. — Education Day college fair, Lucas Oil Stadium
3 p.m. — Kentucky State University vs. Benedict College, Lucas Oil Stadium
7:30 p.m., 11 p.m. — Circle City Comedy Jam, Murat Theatre at Old National Centre, 502 N. New Jersey St.

For tickets and more information on Circle City Classic, visit circlecitclassic.com.

Competition, compactness and communities of interest: Weighing priorities in redistricting

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

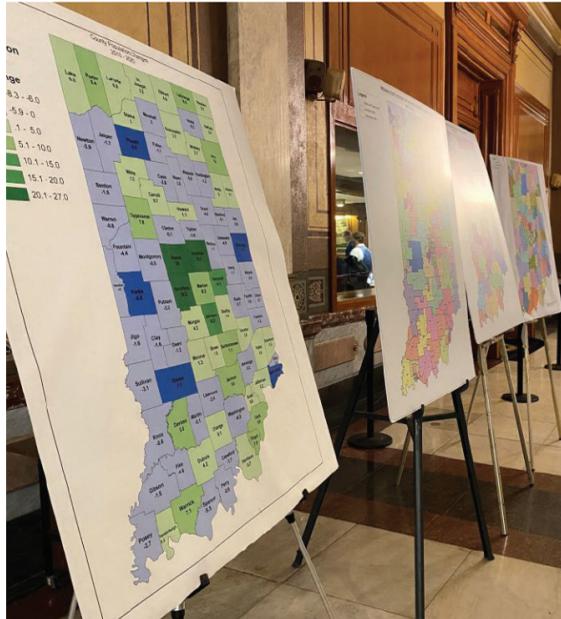
That Indiana's current and proposed district maps are gerrymandered is hardly a debate for many Democrats and redistricting reform advocates. Where it gets tricky is figuring out what exactly they want out of the redistricting process, which is governed more by desire than law.

One of the most common criticisms is many of Indiana's districts — whether it's Congress, the state House of Representatives or the state Senate — aren't competitive enough. Too often, it's a foregone conclusion that one party's candidate will win with little to no resistance from the other party.

But it's far from unanimous that competition should be the No. 1 priority when redrawing districts.

"If your sole goal is competition, that can lead to other issues," said Julia Vaughn, policy director for Common Cause Indiana, a prominent redistricting

See REDISTRICTING, A5 ▶



State lawmakers displayed congressional and state House maps outside of the House chamber before a public hearing Sept. 15, 2021. (Photo/Tyler Fenwick)



'There's a lot of fear, a lot of pain': THE PANDEMIC AND SOBRIETY

By BREANNA COOPER
BreannaC@indyrecorder.com

When Malia started working from home last March, she worried she would relapse.

Malia, whose last name is being withheld for privacy concerns, battled an addiction to heroin for eight years. Now 36, she's been sober for six years. But as it did for many people, the pandemic came with a lot of stress. Malia was afraid of contracting the virus, a fear that heightened after a family friend contracted COVID-19 and died alone in a hospital room.

"There's a lot of fear and a lot of pain," Malia said. "I was afraid to do basic things like go to the grocery store, but I was afraid of being alone at home. I was real afraid I would want to start using again."

Thanks to virtual meetings with support groups and leaning on her faith, Malia made it through last year and this year without relapsing.

"I put it in God's hands," Malia said. "And he got me through it."

See SOBRIETY, A9 ▶

Black men lost more years of life than previous years, and it's not all COVID-19

BY FARAH YOUSRY

The U.S. saw more than 400,000 extra deaths in 2020 compared to the previous two years. Much of this excess death was caused by COVID-19. But new research from the University of Notre Dame suggests around 15% of these deaths are not directly related to the virus.

The study was published in the Proceedings of The National Academy of Sciences of the United States. It looked at nationwide data from the National Center for Health Statistics and found the non-COVID excess deaths happened in Black and brown populations at a much higher rate.

"We're finding that 70% of the non-COVID excess deaths are among Black and brown people. So it's a really, really striking figure," Christopher Cronin, assistant professor of economics at Notre Dame and co-author of the study, said.

According to the study, the country saw 2.8 million deaths last year as of early March 2020. This is more than 17% higher than mortality over the same time period from 2017 through 2019.

Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows Americans overall have lost a year and a half of life during 2020, but Black and brown Americans have lost the most years — a drop of 2.8 years for Black Americans and 3.7 for Hispanic Americans.

The new study did not look at the specific reasons behind

See DEATHS, A9 ▶

Disproportionate Deaths

A new study from the University of Notre Dame found that racial minorities accounted for a higher portion of the non-COVID extra deaths in 2020.

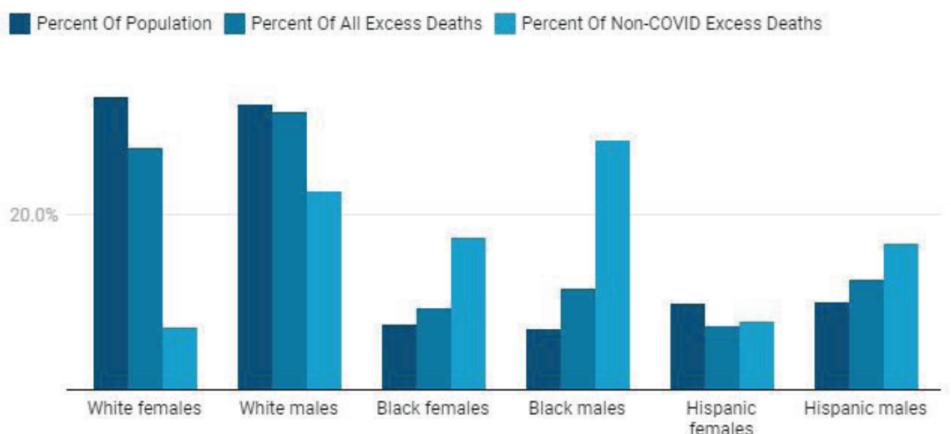


Chart: Lindsey Erdody/WFY1 • Source: University of Notre Dame • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper



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Indiana seeks input on student traits to track as part of new school performance dashboard

By JEANIE LINDSAY
WFYI

Indiana is seeking input on a new tool to better show how schools prepare students for life after high school.

The Indiana State Board of Education is in the process of developing a new school performance data dashboard, after lawmakers approved legislation to create it earlier this year.

The new school performance dashboard has to include some traditional data points, like test scores and graduation rates, but will also focus on students' progress as they develop other skills in K-12 schools.

Bluffton High School Principal Steve Baker has been involved in meetings with the state to figure out how to

integrate different student skills with school performance data. He said it will be a challenge figuring out how to measure some of those, but a worthwhile one.

"Those are things that I think are just at this point more important than a test score," he said.

Per a draft proposal shared at this month's board meeting, the state is considering how to track and monitor things like a student's grit and resilience; communication and collaboration skills; as well as civic, financial and digital literacy. The student skills officials decide to focus on will ultimately help determine what data goes into the state dashboard.

The new law also requires that schools publish a local version of the state's dashboard and allows school

leaders to customize what data to include.

Baker said the state and school dashboards will provide a more thorough look at how schools prepare and educate students, compared to the state's school letter grade system.

"I would describe the dashboard as more of a comprehensive, transparent method of getting a better picture and a more accurate picture of what a school is all about," Baker said.

The board is currently seeking public input on the proposed draft and will discuss next steps at its October meeting.

Contact reporter Jeanie at jlindsa@iu.edu or follow her on Twitter at [@jeanjeanielindz](https://twitter.com/jeanjeanielindz).



Facing influx of child care COVID-19 relief funds, providers say staffing is top of mind

By JEANIE LINDSAY
WFYI

Child care providers from across the state gathered in Indianapolis on Sept. 16 to discuss how best to use a massive influx of pandemic relief funding aimed at early childhood education.

Staffing problems and capacity needs remain top of mind for many of them.

According to Early Learning Indiana, more than \$1 billion in federal COVID-19 relief is coming to Indiana specifically for child care — an amount providers likely won't see again.

Adrienne Johnson owns a child care center in Indianapolis. She said her vision is to expand; she's considering buying the plaza space surrounding her center.

"It is for sale, so I'm like, this is a prime opportunity for us to buy the whole thing — there's no reason that we can't," Johnson said.

Johnson and others at the event said they want to use one-time funding to provide bonuses and higher pay, train existing staff, or grow capacity to gen-



erate revenue and serve more families.

Some providers said they hope to leverage more partnerships with nearby colleges or universities — or other providers — to help manage staffing.

But the challenge is finding qualified people to hire — and keeping them on the job. That's why several said marketing and advocacy is also critical to sustain the benefits of one-time funds.

Maureen Weber is CEO and president of Early Learning Indiana, which organized the event. The nonprofit is rolling out an online hub next month to help connect families with providers more easily, but she said the state's largest opportunity is to build up the field's workforce.

Weber said Indiana has focused largely on getting Hoosiers into high-paying, high-demand careers, but high-quality early learning opportunities also provide lifelong benefits for children and families.

"We know investments here will pay dividends — not just for our existing workforce and the parents we're serving right now, but for the next generation as well," she said.

Weber said it's a top priority to elicit support at all levels of government for the development of the early childhood education workforce.

Contact reporter Jeanie at jlindsa@iu.edu or follow her on Twitter at [@jeanjeanielindz](https://twitter.com/jeanjeanielindz).

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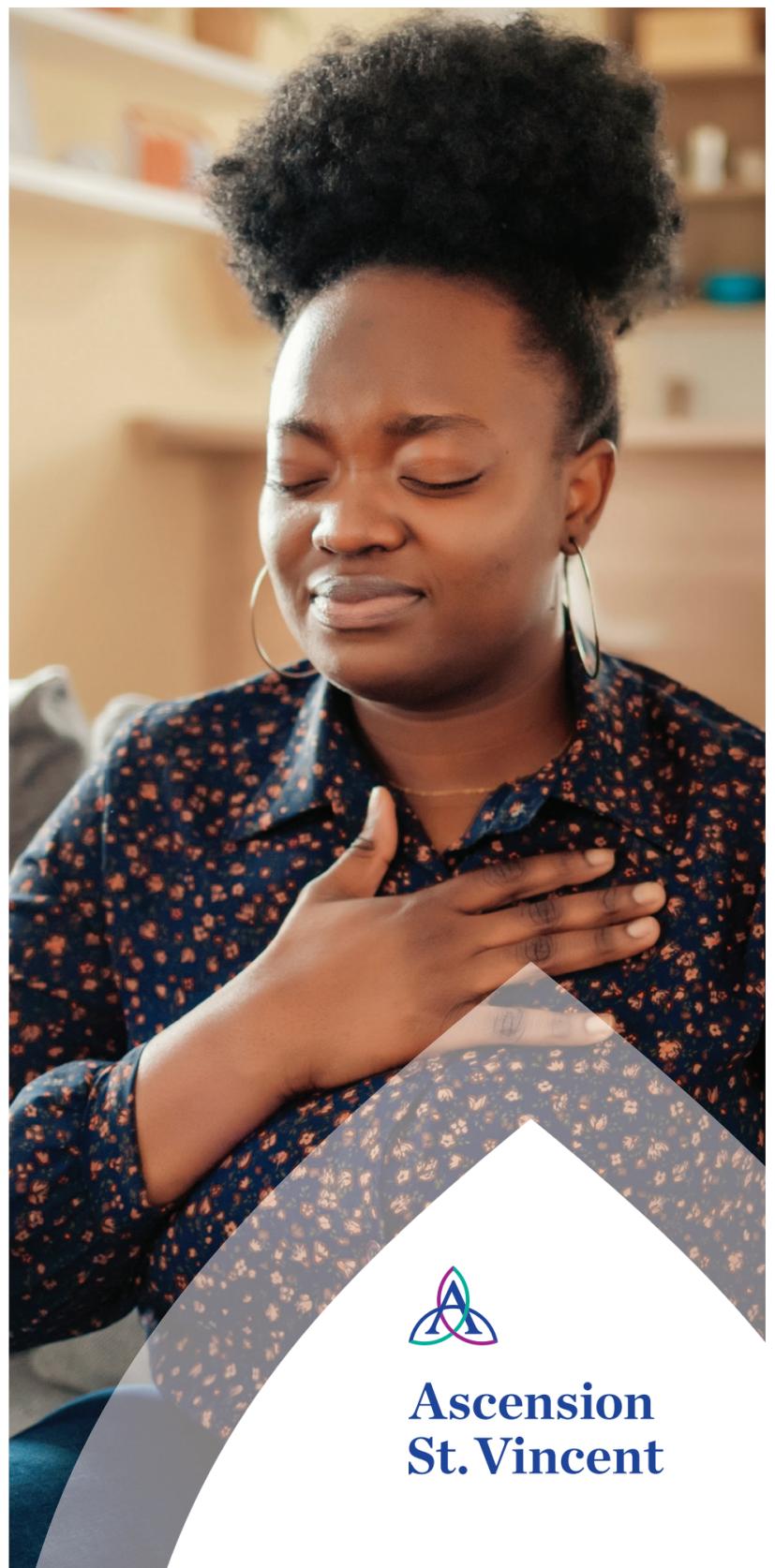
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Redistricting process moving along at Statehouse

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

The redistricting process is in full swing in Indiana. Republicans unveiled their proposed maps that will determine which districts people live in for the next decade, while Democrats and many who showed up to two public hearings said Republicans used a secretive operation to gerrymander the state.

Redistricting timeline

House Republicans released their proposed congressional and state House maps Sept. 14, and



The House Elections and Apportionment Committee held the first of two committee meetings Sept. 15, 2021, at the Statehouse to get public feedback on House Republicans' proposed legislative and congressional district maps. (Photo/Tyler Fenwick)

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Andre Carson, would include most of Marion County, minus approximately the bottom third of the county.

The state Senate map includes one additional district in Marion County, bringing the total to 10. There would be three other new districts across the state, meaning a current lawmaker doesn't live there. The state House map includes six new districts.

Both the Senate and House maps generally follow county lines more closely than current maps.

Christopher Warshaw, a political science professor at George Washington University, said the proposed congressional map represents "one of the most extreme gerrymanders in history" — in large part because of the way the 5th District was drawn.

Using the efficiency gap metric, which measures the number of votes each party "wastes" in an election, Warshaw said the congressional plan is more biased toward Republicans than 97% of the same 50-year set of plans in all 50 states.

The House map isn't as bad as the congressional map, Warshaw said, though it still revolves "artfully" around Indianapolis, where Democratic voters are packed into a smaller number of districts.

Warshaw's analysis, which doesn't include the proposed Senate map, shows Republicans would win 77% of congressional seats and 69% of House seats in the average election despite getting only about 56% of the statewide vote.

What people are saying

People mostly used two public hearings Sept. 15 and 16 to criticize Republicans.

Many brought up that House Republicans didn't release their maps until the day before public hearings started, giving people little time to analyze them.

"This all just seems like you're trying to insulate yourself from critique," said Jacob Schwartz, a

senior at Indiana University who spoke on Sept. 15.

Peg Maginn, from Fort Wayne, said she needed more time to look at the maps.

"I have a life," she said in an interview after addressing the committee Sept. 16. "I'm president of my neighborhood association and we had a board meeting. I had a friend visit from out of town. I didn't have time to go over the maps in less than 48 hours."

What lawmakers are saying

Rep. Gregory Steuerwald, R-Avon, the primary author of the House redistricting legislation, acknowledged the House Republican Campaign Committee consulted on the maps but said there was no other outside influence otherwise.

Redistricting reform advocates had brought attention to House Republicans hiring Washington, D.C.-based attorney Jason Torchinsky, known for his court defense of Republican-drawn maps, but Steuerwald said lawmakers only relied on Torchinsky's legal advice and he did not help draw the maps.

Committee member Matt Pierce, D-Bloomington, said it was difficult even for him to analyze the maps before starting hearings.

"I can't imagine what it's like for the public," he said.

Other than Steuerwald and committee chair Rep. Timothy Wesco, R-Osceola, Republicans were mostly silent during hearings.

Before the House elections committee vote, Rep. Cherrish Pryor, D-Indianapolis, said she would like to see more competition across districts.

"When you have a legislature that has a closer number of both parties, I think that leads to the best public policy," she said.

Contact staff writer Tyler Fenwick at 317-762-7853. Follow him on Twitter @Ty_Fenwick.

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the Elections and Apportionment Committee hosted public hearings the next two days to get feedback. Both of the hearings were during the day and lightly attended considering the weight of the subject. Some said Republicans did that on purpose to minimize criticism.

The committee voted 9-4 along party lines to approve the maps, sending them to the full House for a vote, which will likely happen Sept. 23.

Senate Republicans released their proposed Senate map Sept. 21, and lawmakers added the language to the House bill. That means the elections committee didn't get to see the map before voting or hear public input. The lone scheduled public hearing in the Senate is Sept. 27.

The goal appears to be to have everything done by Oct. 1. Gov. Eric Holcomb will have to sign the bill into law.

Map highlights

The congressional map received the most attention because the 5th and 7th Congressional Districts shifted north.

The 5th District, represented by Republican Victoria Spartz, currently stretches down as far as 38th Street but wouldn't include any of Marion County under the House's proposal. Moving it north is seen as a move to make the district safer for Republicans; Spartz won her election in 2020 by about 4 percentage points.

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REDISTRICTING

► Continued from A1

reform advocacy group.

One potential negative effect is compromising communities of interest — or communities where people have common policy concerns. Making districts competitive could also mean sacrificing the geographic compactness of that district.

As a policy guide from the Brennan Center for Justice puts it: “Redistricting involves making choices among competing interests.”

Rep. Cherrish Pryor, D-Indianapolis, is part of the House committee that hosted two public hearings on Republicans’ proposed maps and approved them, though she and the other three Democrats voted no.

“When you have a legislature that has a closer number of both parties, I think that leads to the best public policy,” she said before the vote Sept. 20.

Pryor said in a previous interview her biggest concern is fair representation for minority communities.

Almost everyone who testified at public hearings Sept. 15 and 16 decried House Republicans’ draft maps. Given the chance, they likely would do the same for the proposed Senate map, but lawmakers inserted the language version of the map into the redistricting

bill before the full House vote Sept. 23, so the elections committee won’t get to see the map or hear public input. The lone scheduled public hearing in the Senate is Sept. 27.

Christopher Warshaw, a political science professor at George Washington University, said the proposed congressional map represents “one of the most extreme gerrymanders in history” — in large part because the 5th Congressional District would be much safer for Republicans than it currently is.

The House map isn’t as bad as the congressional map, Warshaw said, though it still revolves “artfully” around Indianapolis, where Democratic voters are packed into a smaller number of districts.

Asked what role competition should play in deciding district boundaries, Warshaw said it’s important because, ideally, it would incentivize politicians to be more responsive to the public. But the most important thing in drawing maps, he said, is fairness.

“We want a government that represents the preferences of voters,” he said.

Contact staff writer Tyler Fenwick at 317-762-7853. Follow him on Twitter @Ty_Fenwick.



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Black Film Archive shares centuries-old Black cinema

By BREANNA COOPER
BreannaC@indyrecorder.com

Maya Cade has been a lifelong film fan, but always felt Black narratives and voices were missing from widespread conversation. While many movie buffs shared suggestions throughout the Black Lives Matter protests last summer, many streamers didn't have the ability to share many movies.

After sharing a Twitter thread with movie suggestions and seeing the need for a database for Black cinema, Cade — an audience strategist at the video distribution company Criterion Collection — was inspired to create a website dedicated to the promotion of Black cinema.

In June 2020, Cade created the Black Film Archive, a virtual collection of Black-led and created films from 1915 to 1979. Visitors can stream the films and read excerpts from Cade.

Movies available for streaming include the 1967 Sidney Poitier film "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" and "Cabin in the Sky" from 1943, featuring Lena Horne and Duke Ellington.

Cade has watched and researched every film on the website in order to share background information and context for the movies, a process

To subscribe to the Black Film Archive Substack, visit blackfilmarchive.substack.com.

Cade said helped her expand her knowledge of filmmaking.

After the commercial failure of "The Wiz" in 1978, Hollywood's investment in Black cinema dwindled, leaving Black filmmakers to create films on their own. That's why the movies on Black Film Archive stop at 1979.

"The '80s ushered in an era of Black independent filmmaking that makes 1979 feel like a natural stopping point," Cade said.

The website is fully self-funded, and Cade updates the website at least once a month with new films and excerpts. However, Cade encourages film fans to submit movies to the site by emailing her at mayacade@hey.com.

To help sustain and expand the website, Cade is accepting donations to the site's PayPal, @Maya-Cade, and there is a Substack account allowing visitors to be a patron of the website.

Contact staff writer Breanna Cooper at 317-762-7848. Follow her on Twitter @BreannaNCooper.



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SPOTLIGHT

Indy Night Market back with food, music and activities



Indy Night Market, a nighttime food festival, will return 6-10 p.m. Sept. 25. (Photo provided by Growing Places Indy)

By STAFF

Indy Night Market will return from 6-10 p.m. Sept. 25 with food, live music and family-friendly activities. This is the second nighttime food festival to celebrate Indianapolis' diverse food scene and culture.

The event will be in the open lot behind 2955 N. Meridian St. If it rains, it will be rescheduled for Oct. 2.

Indy Night Market is a partnership between Growing Places Indy and the Be Nimble Foundation. The event also gets support from New City Development Partners.

"We believe in Indy's food culture, and this event provides an exceptional experience for visitors of all walks of life and backgrounds," Isaac Bamgbose, president of New City Development

Partners, said in a statement.

The last Indy Night Market featured more than 30 local vendors and drew more than 2,000 visitors. The market will also feature a pet-friendly Kids Corner with family-friendly activities and live entertainment.

The goal is to inspire Indianapolis residents to eat and shop locally by providing a unique food and culture experience that showcases the importance of making local, fresh food accessible.

"By partnering with Growing Placing Indy to create the Indy Night Market, we can also give diverse chefs, restaurateurs, and other entrepreneurs the platform to sell their products both online and in-person," Kelli N. Jones, co-founder of Be Nimble Foundation, said in a press release.



WHO WE ARE
 Founded in 2008, The Independence Academy is the only nonprofit 501c3, state-accredited private school in Indianapolis, Indiana, designed and dedicated to serving families with students in grades 4 to 12 seeking a more personalized approach to education and meeting the specific needs of adolescents on the autism spectrum. Students graduate with a fully-accredited high school diploma.

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- Recognition on event website
- First right refusal for subsequent events

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EDITORIAL

The big lie

By OSEYE BOYD



Breaking news: President Joe Biden won the 2020 election.

For many this isn't breaking news, but I know this comes as quite a shock for some Donald Trump supporters — for those who choose to accept reality, that is.

According to The New York Times, the Trump campaign knew the claims of rigged voter machines weren't true, and they knew the claims were false early enough to make a difference in the events that happened over the next few months. They even circulated a memo to "substantiate or debunk" claims of voter fraud by Dominion Voting Systems and software company Smartmatic. Trump's lawyers Sidney Powell, Rudy Giuliani and others held a press conference two weeks later on Nov. 19, claiming George Soros, the president of Venezuela, Dominion and Smartmatic conspired to hand the election to Biden.

Where's Maury Povich and his lie detector when you need him?

"The court papers, which were initially filed late last week as a motion in a defamation lawsuit brought against the campaign and others by a former Dominion employee, Eric Coomer, contain evidence that officials in the Trump campaign were aware early on

that many of the claims against the companies were baseless."

The New York Times article states the campaign found:

- That Dominion did not use voting technology from the software company, Smartmatic, in the 2020 election.
- That Dominion had no direct ties to Venezuela or to Mr. Soros.
- And that there was no evidence that Dominion's leadership had connections to left-wing "antifa" activists, as Ms. Powell and others had claimed.

Many of us didn't need this confirmation — and die-hard Trump supporters will probably conclude this is just another conspiracy to keep Trump out of the White House — but this information demonstrates just how far Trump's campaign team was willing to go to stay in power. At this point it isn't known if Trump knew about the memo.

They fed America a ginormous lie and allowed that lie to take root in the minds of many. Based on this idea of a stolen election, officials in Georgia investigated suspicious suitcases, investigators who found no evidence of fraud were said to be biased, fake votes were found in some states or some votes were said to be missing or not counted in other states. Arizona underwent a whole audit. Instead of putting an end to this foolishness Republicans like Senate

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell gave Trump the go-ahead to file lawsuits and continue this baseless claims.

"President Trump is 100% within his rights to look into allegations of irregularities and weigh his legal options," McConnell said at one point.

McConnell let weeks go by before he finally admitted Biden won the election.

This big lie — it's really a number of lies rolled into one big one — led to the attempted coup d'état in the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6.

Americans are gullible. The Trump campaign used this to their advantage. The Trump campaign didn't care about democracy. They cared about power. Keeping Trump (and themselves by extension) in power. Again, it's not clear if Trump knew about the memo, but his people were acting in a way they believe he wanted them to. This country elected a narcissist who was willing to do anything to stay in power and not be a loser. Now, we're all paying the price with a country divided over just about every single thing you can think of because a want-to-be dictator couldn't accept defeat.

I was naïve. I didn't think so many could fall so easily for one man. I thought people would see all the lies, but after four years of Trump, I realized people believe what they want. Trump's campaign already knew this.

OPINIONS

Who cares if you're missing?

By LARRY SMITH



The FBI confirmed this week that the human remains discovered in Wyoming's Bridger-Teton National Forest are those of 22-year-old Gabby Petito, who was from

Long Island, New York. Her disappearance and death are presumably at the hands of her fiancé, Brian Laundrie, for whom the FBI is desperately searching. This tragic story is every parent's worst nightmare.

As is the case with millions of other Americans, I have witnessed a good portion of the nonstop news coverage of Ms. Petito. It has been nearly impossible to miss, whether on television or on social media. It's an all-too-familiar pattern of violence against women. Regardless of the women's racial background, the assailant tends to be their intimate partner. Unfortunately, that's where the similarity ends.

Native American, African American and Hispanic American women, who are often in the greatest danger of such violence, rarely receive the level

of news and social media coverage that white women do. While it may seem somewhat odd to view this phenomenon as an example of white privilege, it most certainly is. There is no other reasonable conclusion that one can draw.

The late, highly respected journalist Gwen Ifill coined the term "Missing White Woman Syndrome" to describe the longstanding tendency of the news media's extensive coverage of white women and girls who disappear. (This is especially true when the victims are upper-middle class or wealthy.) This isn't merely a feeling; research has demonstrated that women and girls of color have far less news coverage. To make matters far worse, fewer law enforcement resources (and even volunteers) are dedicated to finding them. The same is true of children and men of color.

Importantly, the images that most of us have in our heads about missing women and girls probably do not reflect reality. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children round that, of the more than 600,000 people who were reported missing in 2018, roughly 60% were people of color. This is compared to the fact that African Americans comprise just 13.4% of the

population and Hispanics comprise just 16.7%. Further, people of color are less likely than whites to be listed in the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System.

The problem goes deeper. According to the Black and Missing Foundation, which is dedicated to finding African Americans who are missing, stereotypes about Blacks regarding crime plays a role in shaping media coverage. The news media frequently will label missing African Americans as criminals who are likely involved in drugs, gangs and theft. We're also assumed to live in places where crime is more common, so we're "naturally" more likely to be victims.

Fortunately, some well-known people are speaking out. Author Don Winslow, whose works include "The Dawn Patrol" and "Savages," recently tweeted, "I am 67 years old. I have never seen a young Black woman's disappearance covered like the #gabbypetito disappearance. Not once. That is horribly wrong." After Winslow's tweet, legendary horror author Stephen King weighed in by simply responding, "Absolutely Correct." Winslow and King are both white.

I encourage you to perform a test. Ask yourself how many of the follow-

ing names are familiar to you: Caylee Anthony, Natalee Holloway, Polly Klass, Chandra Levy, Laci Peterson, JonBenét Ramsey and Elizabeth Smart.

Now, ask yourself how many of these names are familiar to you: Yasmin Acree, Dulce Alavez, Kimberly Ballantine, Mariel Encarnacion, Ashley Guilory, Dawnita Wilkerson and Delano Wilson.

Is there a difference in familiarity? Have you at least heard of the people from the first list? What about the second list? If the latter names aren't familiar to you, why do you think that is the case?

It is important to emphasize that I don't begrudge the coverage that Ms. Petito and other white women have received; it is appropriate and necessary. I'm simply calling for the same type of care, concern and resources to be dedicated to women and girls of color. The tragedy of domestic violence, abductions and murders should not be compounded by disproportionate attention and zeal — or in meting out justice. This message should resonate with those who proudly proclaim that "All Lives Matter."

Larry Smith is a community leader. Contact him at larry@leaf-llc.com.

One in 500

By ANDRE CARSON



As of this month, that's the number of Americans who have died from COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic. By itself, this figure is startling. When you think about all the people reflected in that statistic, it becomes even more tragic. The people we have lost were our family, our friends and our neighbors.

They are the frontline workers who helped keep our communities up and running. They are the teachers who educated our kids amid incredibly difficult

circumstances. They are valued and loved by countless people, and now they are gone.

Among African Americans, this figure is worse. One in 480 of us have died in this pandemic. Once again, we are at greater risk from a serious public health threat because of the health disparities we have long suffered. Now, our country is in the throes of another deadly wave of COVID-19, which endangers all Americans, particularly Black Americans. The delta variant of the virus is extremely contagious and is more harmful to people who previously were at lesser risk, like young people. We are not out of this pandemic yet, and we must continue to take it seriously.

Now, fortunately, we have a tool that can save countless lives — the COVID-19 vaccines. Unfortunately, too many people have chosen not to protect themselves or others by getting the shot. Currently, only a little over half of Hoosiers are fully or partially vaccinated. As the delta variant rages across our state and our country, the data is showing that folks who are vaccinated are overwhelmingly protected from serious complications from the virus. On the other hand, the vast majority of people struggling for their lives in hospitals are unvaccinated.

So many of the people fighting for their lives chose not to get vaccinated, and many regretted it once they realized how dangerous this virus can be. The vaccine only protects you, fully, if you get it before you become infected. If you get sick and take a turn for the worse, it's too late to get the vaccine.

That's why I encourage everyone who is eligible to get vaccinated, because it could very well save your life and the lives of your family and friends. I know that there are a lot of people who are unsure about the vaccine, but I assure you — the facts do not

match up with the rumors and the misinformation. The COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective and the best tool we have to defeat this pandemic.

That's why I got my vaccine, and I'm so glad I did. As a member of Congress, I travel back and forth frequently between Indianapolis and Washington, D.C., and I come into contact with a lot of people. It made sense to protect myself and others. Many of my family members have also gotten vaccinated, which makes me feel much better about spending time with them.

COVID-19 has devastated Black communities. If we don't get vaccinated, especially because we bought into lies and misinformation, we are only hurting ourselves, our neighbors and our loved ones. Getting vaccinated helps keep us healthy to fight another day for the priorities that matter to us, like criminal justice reform, voting rights, better pay and much more.

If that makes sense to you, then what are you waiting for? Now is as good a time as ever to get vaccinated. If you are looking for information about how and where to get the vaccine, please call my office at 317-283-6516 or visit Carson.House.gov — there's a helpful link right on the homepage.

Let's all do our part to end this pandemic.

Rep. Carson represents the 7th District of Indiana. He is a Member of the Congressional Black Caucus and one of three Muslims in Congress. Rep. Carson sits on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the House Intelligence Committee, where he is chairman of the Subcommittee on Counterterrorism, Counterintelligence and Counterproliferation. Contact Rep. Carson at carson.house.gov/contact.

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DEATHS

► Continued from A1

these deaths. But the researchers suggest that delay in seeking health care, social isolation, high rates of unemployment and economic distress caused by the pandemic among Black and brown people was a big reason.

Before the pandemic, Black men were 3.8% more likely to be unemployed. This gap kept growing as the pandemic raged — reaching 7.5% by July 2020 and settling at 5.4% by November 2020.

The study used data on weekly death counts by cause as well as data to quantify life years lost — people dying earlier than they'd be expected to die — from COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 reasons.

It showed that 58% of non-COVID-19 excess life years lost were among minorities. Young Black males were the group hit the hardest among all demographics.

“Fifty percent of the life years lost among Black men are due to non-COVID-19 reasons,” Cronin said.

This means that half of the years lost in 2020 for non-COVID-19 reasons were years shaved off Black men's lives. “So again, that just reflects that folks who were dying for non-COVID

reasons, they're dying at younger ages, and so we're losing a lot more life years,” Cronin said.

For people older than 65, COVID-19 is responsible for nearly all of the excess deaths. But for those younger than 65, excess deaths from non-COVID-19 reasons represented 40% in 2020.

The authors of the study hope that this data will push more researchers and policy makers to look into the factors contributing to this gap.

“I think it's highly likely that some of these non-COVID excess deaths are explained by some of the policies that have led to economic shutdowns,” Cronin said. “The paper just suggests that [this] should be part of the conversation. We have to realize that some of these policies, while they may have had protective effects, there are also consequences that have resulted.”

This story was reported as part of a partnership between WFYI, Side Effects Public Media and the Indianapolis Recorder. Contact Farah Yousry at fyousry@wfyi.org or 857-285-0449. Follow her on Twitter @Farah_Yousrym.

SOBRIETY

► Continued from A1

For many in recovery, though, the pandemic caused symptoms of mental health disorders, including depression and anxiety. Michaelangelo McClendon, director of Drug Free Marion County, said mental health disorders and a predisposition to addiction is a dangerous combination.

“Especially during COVID-19, we're seeing an increase in depression and anxiety which can lead to alcoholism and drug abuse,” McClendon said. “People are turning to drugs just to cope.”

In June 2020, research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found 13% of Americans reported starting or increasing substance use as a way of coping with stress from the pandemic. Overdoses also have spiked over the past two years, in part due to an increase in the use of fentanyl. This synthetic, highly addictive drug is up to 100 times stronger than morphine and is often found laced in other drugs, especially cocaine.

In Indiana, the African American community has seen a heightened risk of overdose since the beginning of the pandemic.

Gina Fears, assistant director of re-

covery and community services at Public Advocates in Community re-Entry (PACE), said the percentage of African Americans using opioids has increased since March 2020.

A report from the Department of Public Health found opioid-related overdose deaths among African American men rose 69% in 2020, the highest increase of any ethnic or racial group.

Throughout September, which is National Recovery Month, PACE has held workshops on how to use naloxone, a medication that can reverse an opioid overdose. The organization offers naloxone year-round in its “Nalox-Box” free of charge. Having naloxone available and training people on how to use it, Fears said, could save a life.

“People who are struggling with addiction don't have it written on their forehead,” Fears said. “You never know who might need naloxone to save their life, it could be the woman sitting next to you at church. Having it on you and knowing how to use it is beneficial to everyone.”

Contact staff writer Breanna Cooper at 317-762-7848. Follow her on Twitter @BreannaNCooper.

CLASSIC

► Continued from A1

cert, featuring Charlie Wilson and the Isley Brothers at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 24 at the Indiana Farmer's Coliseum at the Indiana Fairgrounds.

The bulk of Classic festivities happen Sept. 25 starting with the parade through downtown Indianapolis and leading into a day filled with tailgate activities, concerts and football at Lucas Oil Stadium. In addition to the game between Kentucky State University and Benedict College, the schools' marching bands will perform at half-time during the Battle of the Bands.

“As an organization that's been planning this event for 37 years, we're glad to bring it back after one year off for COVID,” Kelley said. “We want the community to come out and have fun and support.”

An invite-only business networking event will also be held before the game. “As an organization, we're heavily invested in the promotion of Black businesses and entrepreneurs, and we're

partnering with other organizations who are like-minded to bring these groups together,” Kelley said.

In addition to several DJs performing throughout the day several, radio stations Hot 96.3 and WTLC 106.7 will host day parties in an effort to make the event “more festive” this year, Kelley said.

The Circle City Classic events will end with a comedy show featuring Arnez J, Tony Roberts and Guy Torry with co-hosts Da Brat and Black Tony in the Murat Theatre at Old National Center. Show times are 7:30 p.m. and 11 p.m. Tickets are available through Live Nation. Kelley said no proof of vaccination is required, but guests are strongly encouraged to wear masks — especially if they aren't vaccinated — and to socially distance.

Contact staff writer Breanna Cooper at 317-762-7848. Follow her on Twitter @BreannaNCooper.

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Establishing Trust When It Sounds “Too Good To Be True”

By Dewand Neely, Chief Operating Officer of Eleven Fifty Academy (EFA).

In his position, he is focused on EFA's mission of transforming individuals and communities through the discovery of purpose, development of values, immersive and relevant skill training, and thoughtful community programs.

Lately, I've been running into an interesting problem. Our offerings at Eleven Fifty sound too good to be true. For example, when I tell people that the average starting salary for our graduates is \$54,000 (with several starting between \$55k-82k), that number doesn't make sense to people who are currently working jobs in the \$28k range. It becomes even more unbelievable when I tell them that our bootcamps can be part-time and completed in as little as six months, allowing them to continue working while pursuing this career transition.

The Difficulty Of Building Trust

Why is it so difficult to build trust? It's difficult to pin down a single answer, but there are several factors that I see playing into this skepticism.

Educational scams

From financial aid scams to diploma mills, there are a lot of un reputable “educational” organizations out there. There are many online “colleges” offering degrees based on “life experience” or a quick pathway to a degree. This is a serious problem that undermines legitimate educational institutions and creates difficulties in building trust with potential learners.

Historical imbalances of



power—racism, sexism, and classism

The tech industry is seen as a white man's world. Think of all the stereotypes about “nerdy computer programmers” and “computer geeks” that you know, or simply step into a college classroom and observe who is sitting in a programming class. Because this industry is overwhelmingly male and white, people who aren't those things are often disenfranchised and, rightfully so, distrustful of anyone offering them an “in” to this industry.

Exhaustion and burnout

It's a simple fact that the 2020 global pandemic has taken a huge toll on everyone. According to a study by Indeed, burnout is on the rise. 52% of survey respondents are experiencing burnout in 2021—up from the 43% who said the same in Indeed's pre-COVID-19 survey. The pandemic's toll is most apparent in older generations. Baby Boomers show a 7% increase in burnout from pre-pandemic levels (24%) to today (31%), and more than half of Gen-Xers are currently burned out—a 14% jump from the 40% who felt

this way last year. When people are tired and stressed out, it's difficult to seek out different opportunities or to have the energy to vet an organization offering them a solution.

Why does this problem persist?

Another factor that impacts the difficulty of “too good to be true” is that folks don't understand how in-demand software development and cyber security professionals are. The workforce just isn't there, but companies still need to fill roles.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, software development positions are projected to grow 22% from 2019 to 2029, and information security positions are expected to grow 31% in that same period. These job growth rates are much higher than the average for all occupations, and companies simply don't have the people to fill them. At present, there are more than 500,000 computing jobs unfilled, and by 2024, there will be more than 1 million unfilled computing jobs.

This desperation for qualified workers is part of what makes people think that these opportunities aren't real. But in fact, in May of 2020, the median annual wage for software developers was \$110,140, and \$103,590 for cyber security professionals. Companies are willing to pay for employees who can fill their empty positions, and it's important for us to communicate this need so that people understand that this is a viable and potentially life changing opportunity.

What is the solution?

Unfortunately, I don't think there is one easy solution to

this problem. People are right to be skeptical when things sound too good to be true, and there are many factors that influence that skepticism. However, there are a few practical steps that I see as important, especially when attempting to build trust with minority demographics.

The first and foremost step is to seek out relationships with community partners. I've been really excited about our partnership with Martin University, located in the core of the 46218 zip code. Over half of their student population is Black and female—demographics that we are focused on reaching due to the underrepresentation in the tech industry. This partnership is a unique opportunity to build relationships person-to-person, figuring out how we can support each other in the excellent work that is being done.

Additionally, it's important to bring in the human element. People want authenticity and genuine connection. We bring this focus digitally by

highlighting the real people who are learners as well as our partnerships. We are also looking for ways to connect with the community in-person, like organizing a litter pickup or a community event.

One other step is leveraging the real life examples that have actually done it. Getting our alumni and our success stories out and having our alumni speak and talk about their experience and journey. We listen and learn directly from walking, living proof.

Building trust can be difficult, but it's an important step in making a difference. Here at Eleven Fifty Academy, we are dedicated to showing up even if there's only one person in the audience. We know that building trust takes time, and we're in it for the long run because we believe so firmly in the possibilities and impact of our programs. We're here to help, and Eleven Fifty Academy is committed to making a meaningful impact for you, your family, and your community.

Eleven Fifty Academy

ADVANCING TECH IN 46218
FREE INTRO COURSES AT MARTIN UNIVERSITY

BEACHER WARD JR.
CYBERSECURITY GRAD

“My experience was great! I liked how the program was broken up into three checkpoints. The teachers were great and always open to help and answer questions. Everybody here wants to help each other and see each other succeed.”

State health department gives naloxone training during National Recovery Month

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

A group of community members learned about the ongoing opioid epidemic in Indiana and received training on how to administer medicine to reverse an overdose during an event hosted by the state health department Sept. 16.

The Indiana State Health Department partnered with Gov. Eric Holcomb's office and PACE (Public Advocates in Community re-Entry) for the training as part of National Recovery Month in September.

Trainers told the participants naloxone is part of a harm reduction strategy when it comes to opioid use disorder.

"We can't get people into recovery if we can't get them into treatment because they've died from an overdose," said Douglas Huntsinger, Indiana's executive director for drug prevention, treatment and enforcement.

Naloxone works by knocking opioids off of receptors in the brain. It only works for opioids and doesn't have the potential for misuse, so you can use it even if you're not sure the person is experiencing an opioid overdose. Naloxone is safe for children and women who are pregnant.

There are nine naloxone products on the market.



Loni Calhoun, a social worker, practices administering Narcan on a dummy during a training Sept. 16, 2021, hosted by the Indiana State Department of Health and PACE. (Photo/Tyler Fenwick)

The most common is Narcan, a nasal spray, because it's the easiest to use. If you believe someone has overdosed, tilt the person's head back, put the nozzle into one of their nostrils, and press on the plunger. Other products also come in the form of a nasal spray, and some are injected.

Loni Calhoun, a social worker for the Marion

County Public Defender Agency, said many of the clients she works with struggle with addiction, and that's on top of people she sees on the street or in their car who might have overdosed. Calhoun said she attended the training because she's never carried naloxone but knows there are times she could have used it.

"You never know when

you're going to run into it," she said, "and if you can help save a life at that time, I think that's a good idea."

The state has experienced three waves of opioid epidemics dating back to the 1990s. The current wave, which started in 2017, is fueled by synthetic opioids that can be 100 times more lethal than morphine.

Indiana experienced a

33% increase in overdose deaths in 2020, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About three-quarters of all overdose deaths in the state are from opioids.

Contact staff writer Tyler Fenwick at 317-762-7853. Follow him on Twitter @Ty_Fenwick.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE SOMEONE WHO HAS OVERDOSED

These are the steps trainers with the Indiana State Department of Health recommend if you see someone who you believe overdosed.

Step 1:

Try to rouse the person by saying their name. If they don't respond, shake their shoulders and rub your knuckles up and down their sternum to see if they respond.

Step 2:

Call 911.

Step 3:

Administer naloxone.

Step 4:

Try to rescue the person's breathing by blowing air into their mouth.

Step 5:

Put the person into a recovery position by rolling them on their side and bending the top leg at a 90-degree angle at the knee.

Step 6:

Use naloxone again if necessary and if help hasn't arrived. Naloxone typically wears off after about 30 minutes, so the person might start showing signs of an overdose again.



FREE
ONLINE *
DIABETES
EDUCATION CLASSES

OCTOBER

Thursdays • 7, 14, 21, 28
5:30 - 7 p.m.

NOVEMBER

Wednesdays • 3, 10, 17, 24
1:30 - 3 p.m.

DECEMBER

Wednesdays • 1, 8, 15, 22
1:30 - 3 p.m.



Prevent. Promote. Protect.



Avoid Hospital Emergency Departments for COVID-19 Testing

The Marion County Public Health Department joins local hospitals in reminding residents to avoid going to the local hospital emergency department for COVID-19 testing. Hospital staff and resources should be focused on caring for the most critical patients and those in need of emergency treatment. COVID-19 testing is available at locations around the state. A listing of locations is available through the Indiana Department of Health at [Coronavirus.IN.gov](https://www.in.gov/coronavirus).

The Marion County Public Health Department offers free, drive-thru testing in the parking lot of its main location, 3838 N. Rural Street. No appointment is needed and no doctor referral is required.

The weekly COVID-19 testing schedule for this location is:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Wednesday from 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

For those who prefer to make a COVID-19 testing appointment for this testing site and register in advance, please visit MarionHealth.org/indycovid or call 317-221-5515.

The health department also encourages everyone age 12 and older to get the COVID-19 vaccine. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the greatest risk of COVID-19 transmission is among unvaccinated people who are much more likely to get infected and transmit the virus. Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and others. High vaccination coverage will reduce spread of the virus and help prevent new variants from emerging.

Fully vaccinated people get COVID-19 less often than unvaccinated people. A person infected with the Delta variant, including a fully vaccinated person with symptomatic breakthrough infections, can transmit the virus to others.

CDC is continuing to assess

data on whether fully vaccinated people with asymptomatic breakthrough infections can transmit the virus.

On July 27, CDC released updated guidance on the need for urgently increasing COVID-19 vaccination coverage and a recommendation for everyone in areas of high transmission to wear a mask in public indoor places, even if they are fully vaccinated.

CDC issued this new guidance due to several concerning developments and newly emerging data.

The Marion County Public Health Department is strongly urging residents to follow this mask guidance to help slow the spread of COVID-19 and, more specifically, the Delta variant.

To learn about COVID-19 vaccine locations in Indiana near you, please visit OurShot.IN.gov.

Free Online Diabetes Education Classes in October

The ABCs of Diabetes is a free, four-part diabetes education series offered by the Marion County Public Health Department. Topics include eating healthier, increasing activity, and understanding medications.

This program is open to anyone with diabetes or pre-diabetes, family members and friends are also welcome to attend.

Due to COVID-19, classes are held online until it's safe to meet again in-person. Participants don't have to be tech savvy to join. Help is available if needed. Classes in October are on Thursday, Oct. 7, 14, 21 and 28 from 5:30-7 p.m. Participants should plan on attending all four classes during the month.

Registration is required one week before the start of the first class. To register, or to get a schedule of upcoming classes, please visit MarionHealth.org/diabetes or call 317-221-2094.

The ABCs of Diabetes program is accredited by the Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialist.

Plan to attend all four classes.
Registration required 1 week prior to first class.
Register by calling 317-221-2094

* Don't be shy, we will help you with the online part!



Claver Day celebration

The Indianapolis Central Committee, Knights of Peter Claver and Ladies Auxiliary celebrated the annual Claver Day celebration recently at St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church. There are four Knights of Peter Claver Councils and four Auxiliary Courts in Indianapolis, located at St. Rita, Holy Angels, Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral and St. Andrew the Apostle churches.

Northern States District Junior President Marissa Bardo, followed by Northern States District Deputy Marvin J. Bardo, Knights of Peter Claver and Knights of Peter Claver Ladies Auxiliary.

Anderson church celebrates 100th anniversary

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

Henry H. Horton was one of the earliest travelers in what's become known as the Great Migration, when some 6 million African Americans fled the rural South to the North and West. Horton, who left Montgomery County, Alabama, in 1915, landed in Anderson.

It was there, six years later, where Horton started a church in his home at 1920 Park Ave. He called the church Wallace Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church after Bishop Paris Arthur Wallace, the presiding bishop of the Indiana Conference at the time.

Three church buildings and 27 more pastors later, church members and Horton's descendants will celebrate the 100th anniversary of Wallace Temple AME Zion Church with a two-day celebration Sept. 25 and 26. It will include a picnic, morning worship and a centennial celebration event.

Family historian Celena Bostic Perry, Horton's great-niece, is old enough to remember Horton but not old enough to recall many details. She's relied on interviews with family who are in their 70s and 80s to learn more about who Horton was, and the consistent theme is love.

"They spoke of him with reverence," said Perry, who is working on a book about Horton, the AME church and Wallace Temple AME Zion Church.

Horton was born April 5, 1882, in Pike Road, Alabama, which is near the capital of Montgomery. He was the eighth of 13 children. Many followed him to Anderson, but the family still has roots in Alabama.



Rev. Henry H. Horton, founding pastor of Wallace Temple AME Zion Church, stands behind a group of children circa 1950. (Photo provided by family)

Horton was a carpenter who, as Perry wrote in a biography, "not only built buildings and things, but also helped to build the spiritual character of men, women and children." He started the church primarily for his family but soon had to accommodate a growing congregation. A two-story church building and a parsonage were built in 1945, and the current church was built on additional land in 1985.

Pauline Rolling-Davis, another of Horton's great-nieces, took piano lessons as a girl at Horton's house and attended church when he was the Sunday school superintendent. She remembers all of the children would gather in the sanctuary for the last 15 minutes and report what they

learned to the congregation. Horton knew how much she enjoyed doing that, so even if Rolling-Davis didn't volunteer, he would often call on her. "He was just a grand old man," she said.

Rolling-Davis' son, Derrick Wilkerson, is part of the anniversary committee and will emcee the celebration. He was born in July 1963, one month after Horton died at the age of 81.

"He was a legend when I was a kid," Wilkerson said. "Uncle Henry represented excellence."

Horton's great-niece Sharon Hudson, who is Rolling-Davis' sister, said Horton would be proud of the current church, which is pastored by Rev. Antwaun J. Johnson.

Not everyone in the family who lives in the area still goes to Wallace Temple, but organizers hope to bring family back together as part of the 100-year celebration.

There aren't many living family members who can say from firsthand experience what Horton was like, so Hudson and others want to make sure his legacy continues to live on.

"You don't have to be famous, rich or anything," Hudson said. "You don't have to have a Ph.D. Just do what you can to touch lives."

Contact staff writer Tyler Fenwick at 317-762-7853. Follow him on Twitter @Ty_Fenwick.

WALLACE TEMPLE AME ZION CHURCH 100-YEAR CELEBRATION

Wallace Temple AME Zion Church in Anderson will celebrate its 100th anniversary with a two-day event that will also include recognition of Henry H. Horton, who founded the church in 1921.

- When: Sept. 25 and 26
 - Where: Wallace Temple AME Zion Church, 1518 Forkner St., Anderson
- Sept. 25
Noon — Dedication
12:30 p.m. — Church picnic
- Sept. 26
10 a.m. — Morning worship
3 p.m. — Centennial celebration

As COVID-19 vaccine mandates rise, religious exemptions grow

By COLLEEN LONG and ANDREW DEMILLO
Associated Press

An estimated 2,600 Los Angeles Police Department employees are citing religious objections to try to get out of the required COVID-19 vaccination. In Washington state, thousands of state workers are seeking similar exemptions.

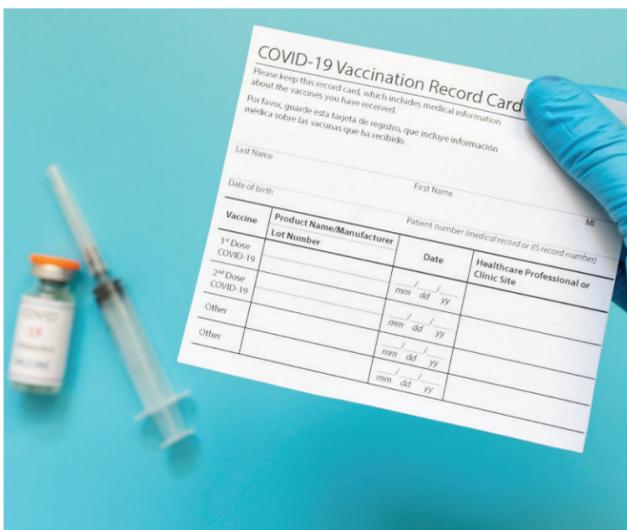
And in Arkansas, a hospital has been swamped with so many such requests from employees that it is apparently calling their bluff.

Religious objections, once used sparingly around the country to get exempted from various required vaccines, are becoming a much more widely used loophole against the COVID-19 shot.

And it is only likely to grow following President Joe Biden's sweeping new vaccine mandates covering more than 100 million Americans, including executive branch employees and workers at businesses with more than 100 people on the payroll.

The administration acknowledges that a small minority of Americans will use — and some may seek to exploit — religious exemptions. But it said it believes even marginal improvements in vaccination rates will save lives.

It is not clear how many federal employees have asked for



a religious exemption, though union officials say there will be many requests. The Labor Department has said an accommodation can be denied if it causes an undue burden on the employer.

In the states, mask and vaccine requirements vary, but most offer exemptions for certain medical conditions or religious or philosophical objections.

The allowance was enshrined in the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, which says employers must make reasonable accommodations for employees who object to work requirements because of "sincerely held" religious beliefs.

A religious belief does not

have to be recognized by an organized religion, and it can be new, unusual or "seem illogical or unreasonable to others," according to rules laid out by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

That puts employers in the position of determining what is a legitimate religious belief and what is a dodge.

Many major religious denominations have no objections to the COVID-19 vaccines. But the rollout has prompted heated debates because of the longtime role that cell lines derived from fetal tissue have played, directly or indirectly, in the research and development of various vaccines and medicines.

In New York, state lawmakers have attempted to make the vaccine mandatory for medical workers, with no religious exemptions. A federal judge blocked the state from enforcing the rule to give a group of workers time to argue that it is illegal because it lacks the opt-out.

Across the U.S., public officials, doctors and community leaders have been trying to help people circumvent COVID-19 mask and vaccine requirements.

In Tulsa, Oklahoma, pastor Jackson Lahmeyer is offering a "religious exemption" form on his church's website for download, along with links for suggested donations to the church. The 29-year-old is running for the U.S. Senate as a Republican.

"We're not anti-vaxxers. We're just pro-freedom," Lahmeyer said.

Some employers are taking a hard line. United Airlines told employees last week that those who obtain religious exemptions will be put on unpaid leave until new coronavirus testing procedures are in place.

In Los Angeles, Police Chief Michel Moore said he is waiting for guidance from the city personnel department on how to handle exemption requests. The city has mandated that municipal employees get

vaccinated by Oct. 5 unless they are granted a medical or religious exemption. A group of LAPD employees is suing over the policy.

In Washington state, approximately 60,000 state employees are subject to a mandate issued by Gov. Jay Inslee that they be fully vaccinated by Oct. 18 or lose their job, unless they obtain a medical or religious exemption and receive an accommodation that allows them to remain employees.

As of Sept. 14, more than 3,800 workers had requested religious exemptions.

In Arkansas, about 5% of the staff at the privately run Conway Regional Health System has requested religious or medical exemptions.

The hospital responded by sending employees a form that lists a multitude of common medicines — including Tylenol, Pepto-Bismol, Preparation H and Tums — that it said were developed or tested using fetal cell lines.

The form asks people to sign it and attest that "my sincerely held religious belief is consistent and true and I do not use or will not use" any of the listed medications.

In a statement, Conway Regional Health President and CEO Matt Troup said: "Staff who are sincere ... should have no hesitancy with agreeing to the list of medicines listed."

SPIRITUAL OUTLOOK

Sacred imagination and the vision of a new UN permanent forum of people of African descent

By **ANGELIQUE WALKER-SMITH**



In his 1967 book “Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?” the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. envisioned a “World House.” In the book, he called us to take the following actions: 1) to transcend tribe, race, class, nation and religion to embrace this vision; 2) to eradicate the triple evils of racism, poverty and militarism, at home and globally; 3) to curb excessive materialism and shift from a thing-oriented to a people-oriented society; and 4) to resist social injustice and to resolve conflicts in the spirit of love embodied in the philosophy and methods of nonviolence. Dr. King also advocated for a Marshall Plan to advance a collective agenda of eradicating global poverty and hunger. He proposed a living wage and a guaranteed minimum annual income for every American family. And he urged the United Nations to experiment with the use of nonviolent direct action in international conflicts.

Through his sacred imagination, Dr. King redressed the traumatic social, economic and political conditions of people of African descent and resisted colonial and neocolonial structures. He exercised resilience, self-determination and agency regarding our rightful place and presence in the global space — acknowledging the grave challenges that have hindered us since the trans-Atlantic journey of enslavement from Africa 400 years ago.

Today, the 1.3 billion African descendants outside of Africa continue to fight alongside Africans living on the continent for a World House with and for all people. Last month, a historic and potentially transformative global decision advanced this vision. The UN General Assembly adopted



Getty Images

a resolution that supports a Permanent Forum on People of African Descent. This was an outcome of the UN International Decade for People of African Descent 2015-2024 and the 2001 World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance held in Durban, South Africa.

The forum, set to launch in 2022, has the potential to create a more visible global space — by and with people of African descent — that is

nonviolent and engages diplomatic approaches. The forum will act as an advisory body to the UN and will partner with civil societies and grassroots organizations around the world to address issues related to anti-Black racism and human rights. These issues include the climate crisis, health, hunger, poverty and the legacies of colonialism and the trans-Atlantic slave trade. In so doing, it will be a space that gives increased direct access to the UN and

its international networks. In sum, it will help the Black diaspora and our African kindred connect, unite and strategize around issues that we face in our respective regions and provide methods to make sure that our recommendations are implemented.

Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith is senior associate for Pan African and Orthodox Church Engagement at Bread for the World in Washington, D.C.

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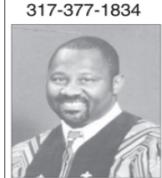


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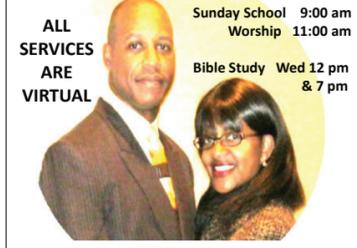
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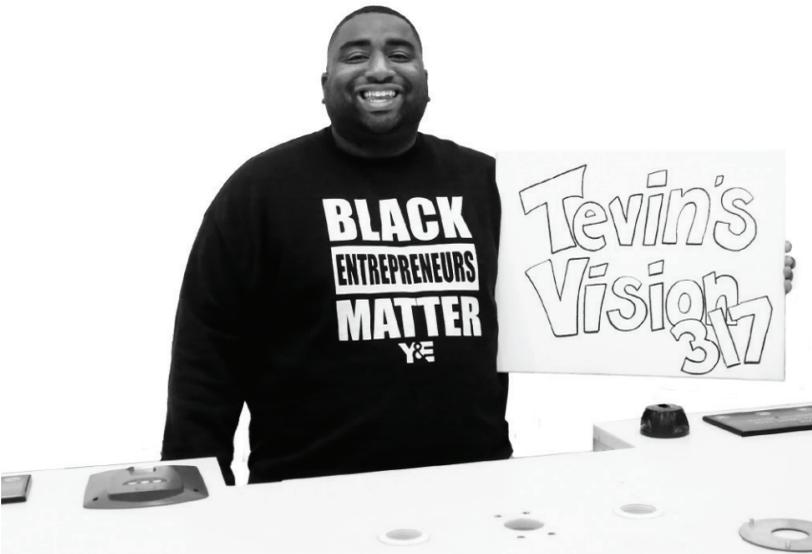
Tevins Vision 317



Tevin Studdard stands with his mother, Lynn Studdard, at the grand opening of Tevins Vision 317 project. (Photos/David Dixon)



Studdard stands with Jerod "Fade-Away Fredo" Williams, one of the entrepreneurs at the grand opening.



Studdard poses with a sign for his project.



Studdard stands with Biyanca Yarbrough of BZ's Kitchen.

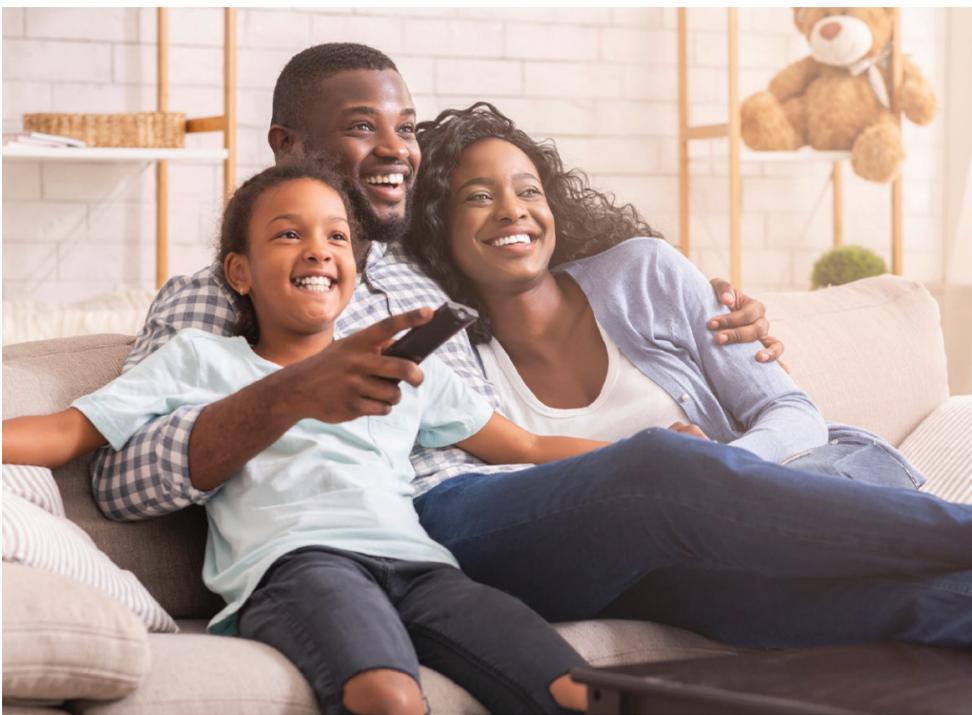
Black Star Network: Roland Martin announces new Black TV network

By Lauren Victoria Burke
NNPA Newswire Contributor

On the evening of Sept. 2, journalist Roland Martin, the host of #RolandMartinUnfiltered, announced an over-the-top media (or OTT) network that will broadcast directly to viewers free via the internet and a phone app. The new Black-owned network, Black Star Network (curated by Roland S. Martin), will feature new shows and live stream Black news and information focused on news, politics, technology and culture.

The first interview debuted on Black Star Network was with legendary civil rights attorney Fred Gray. Gray, 90, was the legal mastermind behind several civil rights victories and an advisor to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin announced his new network on the third anniversary of #RolandMartinUnfiltered, the first daily digital show specifically targeting African American audiences five days a week. The show has enjoyed expansive audience



growth averaging 20 to 30 million views a month.

Unlike several other Black content related news and information platforms, Black Star Network is 100% Black-

owned.

Black Star Network will be available on all platforms including AppleTV, Roku, Samsung, Xbox and Amazon FireTV. The new network's

content will also be carried on a phone app for Apple and Android phones at Black Star Network. The network's website, BlackStarNetwork.com, is also now live.

Even though many other TV networks charge viewers to see content, Black Star Network will not.

"A lot of our people simply cannot afford to pay for a streaming service. We purposely chose to keep this free. We purposely chose for people to be able to access our content — that's what we've done with this show as well," Martin said referring to #RolandMartinUnfiltered. The network will be ad supported.

Martin's show #RolandMartinUnfiltered has been streaming live on YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter with the support of the show's Bring the Funk Fan Club donations which have totaled over \$1 million in the last 18 months.

Martin recently announced the construction of a new studio space in Washington, D.C., close to the White House.

The veteran journalist, who hails from Houston, also has plans to announce Black Star Network's 24-hour streaming channel to be launched during the first quarter of 2022.

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Winless Colts trying to turn around season without Wentz

By **MICHAEL MAROT**
AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Indianapolis started this season with playoff expectations and Super Bowl hopes.

A rare 0-2 start already is threatening to derail those plans.

The Colts have lost two home games, are about to embark on a brutal three-game road trip starting next week-end at Tennessee and will likely need second-year quarterback Jacob Eason to deliver a victory just to avoid their first 0-3 start in a decade.

“The mountain is unforgiving,” coach Frank Reich said after a 27-24 loss to the Los Angeles Rams on Sept. 19. “It’s unforgiving when you’re up there and you make a mistake or two and it’s going to cost you. We’ve got to collectively do better coaching, playing, every aspect of the game. We’ve got to be better against a good football team.”

So far, their best-laid plans have gone awry.

An offensive line considered one of the league’s best each of the past three seasons has struggled early without longtime left tackle Anthony Castonzo.

A defense that thought it would be one of the NFL’s best has allowed 27.5 points per game. Reich’s run-first approach has been mostly grounded, too, and the Colts’ offense in the red zone has produced only three touchdowns in eight trips.

And with the uncertainty surrounding starting quarterback Carson Wentz, who sprained both ankles against the Rams, a bleak picture certainly could get much worse quickly.

“Every week’s urgent and then you add a division game to the mix and that adds urgency to it and then you want to get in the win column to start that trend, too,” tight end Jack Doyle said Sept. 20. “But you don’t press. You go through the process that you know works and everything will fall into place.”

Even amid all the warning signs, the Colts know all is not lost.

Indy is one game out of the AFC South lead and beating the Titans could give them a leg up in the title chase.

The first two losses also came against NFC contenders, which may not be as debilitating in tiebreaking scenarios

and with 15 games left and a potentially easier final two-thirds of a schedule, the Colts know there’s plenty of time to right the season.

“I thought we battled hard, thought we overcame some early adversity,” Reich said referring to the Rams game. “They have a top-five offense, they have a top-five defense and I thought we held our own. We feel like we should win, we just need to make a few more plays.”

WHAT’S WORKING

The passing game. After missing almost all of training camp, the entire preseason and the first week of regular-season prep work, Wentz has appeared increasingly in command of the offense despite being under an unusual amount of pressure.

WHAT NEEDS HELP

Offensive line. The return of two-time Pro Bowler Eric Fisher provided a major upgrade at left tackle, but the Colts missed injured right tackle Braden Smith (foot). Wentz has been sacked six times and taken 21 quarterback hits in the first two weeks and the ground

game has been terrible in short-yardage situations.

INJURIES

Wentz’s injury is the most significant heading into Week 3. But getting Smith back would give the Colts their projected starting offensive line for the first time this season. It’s also unclear how much more time receiver Parris Campbell will miss because of his abdominal injury.

KEY NUMBER

3.96. Reich takes great pride in being a run-first team. But so far this season, the Colts are averaging just 3.96 yards per carry and their top back, Jonathan Taylor, has 107 yards on 32 carries for an average of 3.34.

NEXT STEPS

Now that the Colts know Wentz’s injury status they must figure out what’s wrong with the offensive line, the offense in the red zone and a defense that has underperformed through the first two weeks.

Fever lose to Lynx



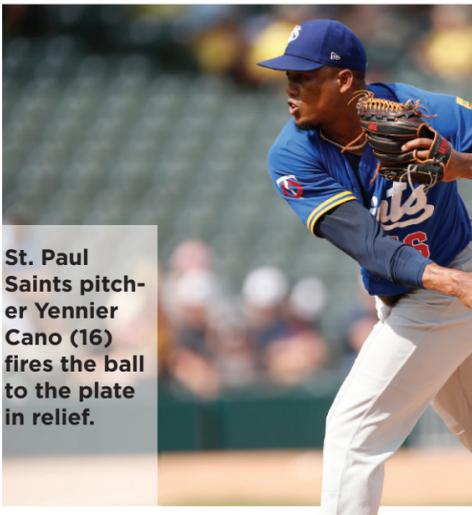
Fever guard Kelsey Mitchell (0) scores over Lynx forward Napheesa Collier (24).



Fever center Teaira McCowan (15) defends Lynx center Sylvia Fowles (34). (Photos/Walt Thomas)

The Indiana Fever came up short in a 92-73 loss to the Minnesota Lynx on Sept. 17 in the final home game of the season. The Fever finished the season last in the league at 6-26.

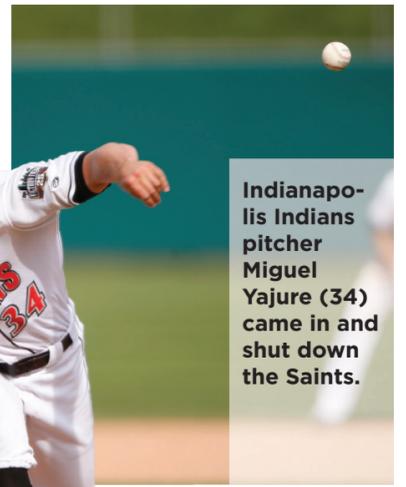
St. Paul Saints vs Indianapolis Indians



St. Paul Saints pitcher Yennier Cano (16) fires the ball to the plate in relief.



Indianapolis Indians infielder Tucupita Marcano (7) avoids the tag by St. Paul Saints infielder Drew Stankiewicz (63). (Photos/Jeff Brown)



Indianapolis Indians pitcher Miguel Yajure (34) came in and shut down the Saints.

Colts lose to Rams, start 0-2 for 1st time under Reich



Colts QB Carson Wentz (2) took many hits during a 27-24 loss to the Rams on Sept. 19.



Running back Jonathan Taylor (28) rushed for 51 yards.



Iconic Colts RB Edgerrin James stands with his Hall of Fame bust. (Photos/Walt Thomas)

Legendary Colts QB Payton Manning stands with his Hall of Fame bust.