



# NEXT IN

An initiative to  
encourage Hoosiers  
to think, read and talk  
about the future of Indiana

presented by **Indiana Humanities**

# INDIANA AT 200: WHAT'S NEXT?

**O**ne of my favorite parts of my job as president and CEO of Indiana Humanities is getting to travel around our state—from the Indiana Dunes in the north to the rolling hills in the south.

So as our team planned for and programmed activities related to Indiana's bicentennial, that's exactly what we did. We went to Gene Stratton-Porter's Limberlost; to the first state capitol in Corydon; to Prophetstown State Park—home to Native Americans thousands of years ago; to Indiana's oldest European-settled city of Vincennes. And along the way, we talked to Hoosiers just like you.

Through a fleet of programs and partnerships under the umbrella theme "Next Indiana" we encouraged Hoosiers to think, read and talk—about our history, but also about our future.

We wanted to know about their dreams for Indiana and how we could get there. We wanted to know what they felt was important to hold onto and what we might be willing to leave behind. We wanted to know about the people, places and ideas that would shape the next 200 years.

That's why we created engaging, thoughtful programs like Next Indiana Campfires, which paired literature and nature. It's why we provided grants to communities to host ALL-IN Block Parties, and it's why we partnered with WFYI for a future-focused episode of *Hoosiers: The Story of Indiana*.

It's also why we enlisted 10 writers to describe their vision for our future. You'll find their answers on the following pages. It's our hope that these essays continue to spark conversations, and who knows? Maybe they'll even be unearthed for our tricentennial.

The road to our bicentennial celebration has been a journey—one that we started with the Indiana Historical Society several years before a commission was even announced—and we are happy to have shared it with partners, donors and friends like you. **We are proud of the work we've done, and it wouldn't have been possible without you.** This program report serves as a thank you for your support, and we look forward to working with you again in the future.

Sincerely,



Keira Amstutz :: President and CEO, Indiana Humanities

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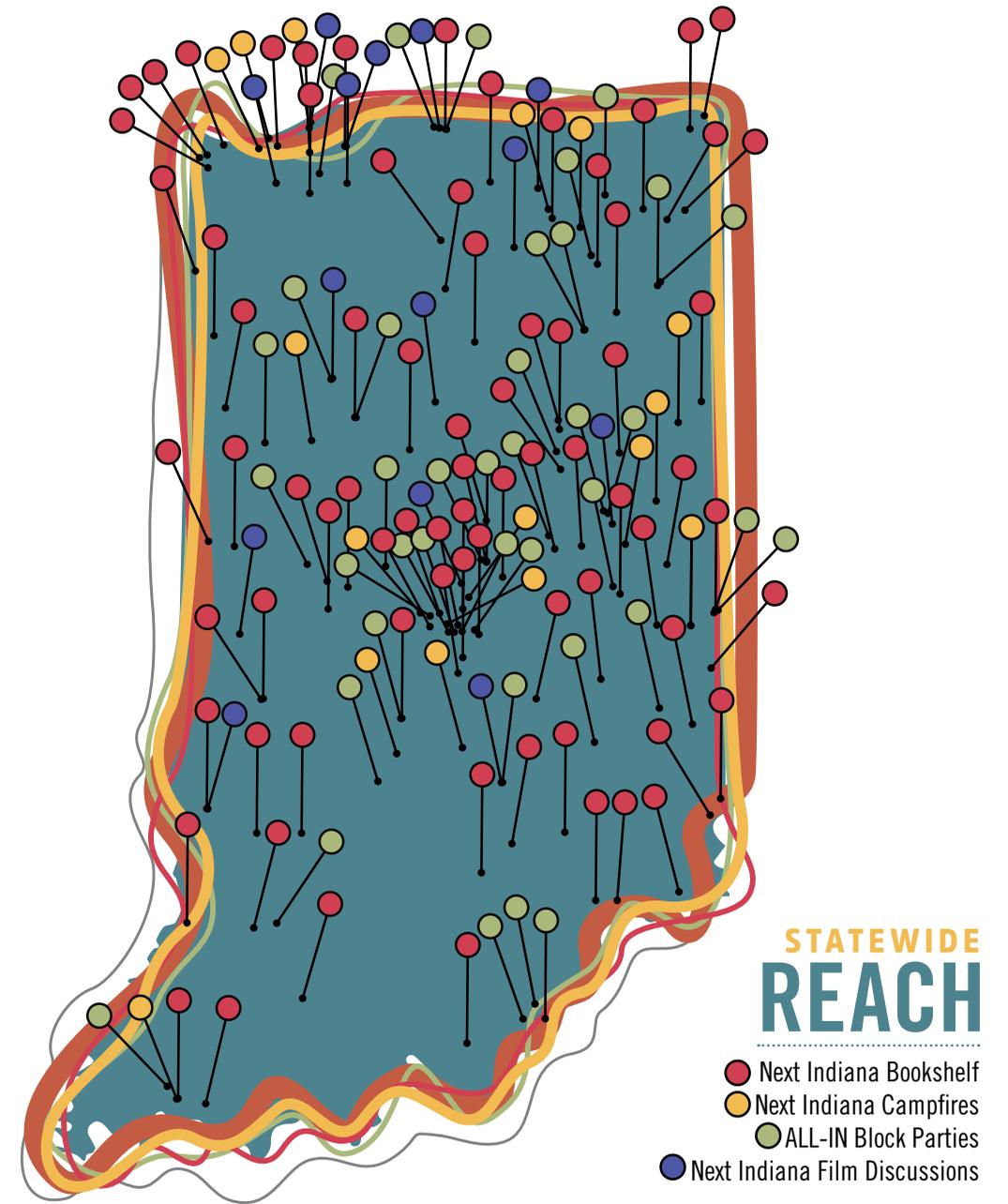
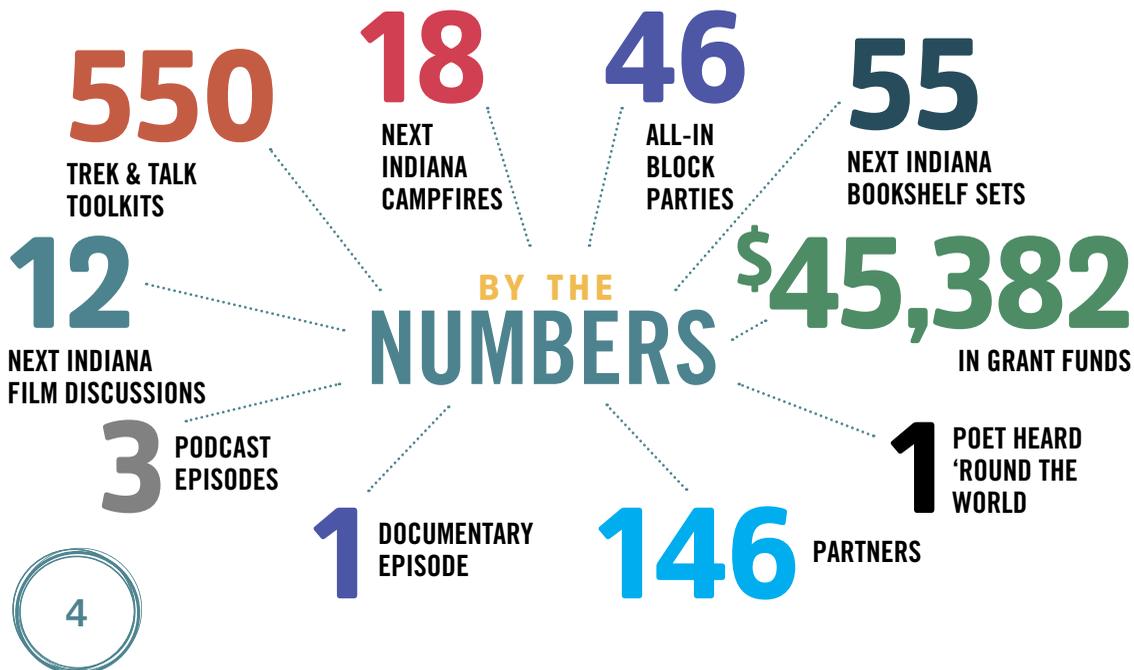
# ABOUT NEXT INDIANA

A MULTIYEAR INITIATIVE DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE HOOSIERS TO THINK, READ AND TALK ABOUT THE FUTURE OF INDIANA.

Indiana Humanities connects people, opens minds and enriches lives by creating and facilitating programs that encourage Hoosiers to think, read and talk. Learn more about our work at [IndianaHumanities.org](http://IndianaHumanities.org).

Using the Next Indiana theme, Indiana Humanities designed new programs and resources (featured in the subsequent pages) and provided grants to nonprofits across the state that created their own bicentennial-themed programs.

As a convener and facilitator for more than 40 years, we used this opportunity to engage thousands of Hoosiers in discussions about our future by campfire, in front of the statehouse and in classrooms.



ESSAY  
**THE HOOSIER IDENTITY**  
BY **NATE DUNLEVY**

**W**hen I was young, not all that long ago, there were still cornfields inside the city limits of Indianapolis.

Indy sits in the middle of the state, a geographical heart with arteries stretching from Gary to Madison and from Auburn to Evansville. While Indianapolis is the literal middle of everything, historically it was not the center of Hoosier identity. That has always resided in the farms and towns. The capital borrowed its life's blood from the rural outskirts, which lent their down-home aura to a wannabe metropolis on the plains.

*Nate Dunlevy was born and raised in Indianapolis where he currently lives with his wife Deborah and their three children. A graduate of Pike High School and Grace College and Theological Seminary, Nate has a master's degree in intercultural studies and spent most of the decade of the 2000s living and working in Argentina. He is the author of two books, Blue Blood: Tales of Glory of the Indianapolis Colts and Invincible, Indiana.*

That heritage is now put to the test. The great urban-versus-rural, progress-versus-tradition, past-versus-future tension that has come to define American politics and culture has come to Indiana. Social issues and resource scarcity force battle lines in a culture war between what modern life demands and how our parents and grandparents lived. City dwellers value the small-town veneer of Indianapolis less and less by the year.

The Next Indiana will be one in which we struggle for a common identity between the country, the suburbs and the city. It's not a new challenge. No, we don't have to forge a home out of the wilderness, but the world is still wild and people still need to feel at home. There's no great Civil War for freedom, but we continue to fight for the rights of all people and for a common national identity. We've long since left the farm for factories, but we must decide if our soul is still with the land. There is no more legal segregation, but we keep working to embiggen the name "Hoosier" to incorporate the experiences of every color and creed.

Once more, we are forced to define who we are and what we value. We inherit our identity, but we also decide it. My prayer for our state is that 50 years from now the word "Hoosier" will still have an emotional resonance and meaning that ties the whole state together beyond just geography.

There are no more cornfields in Indianapolis. But I do hope there are always Hoosiers.



ESSAY

# OUR AGRICULTURAL SENSE OF PLACE

BY DAVID HOPPE

**W**hen Kristin Hess and I assembled the stories that make up *Food For Thought: An Indiana Harvest*, we could see this place was on the cusp of a great transformation.

As more and more people sought out locally produced foods, it became apparent that we were witnessing the beginning of a new way of thinking—not just about what we eat, but about our state.

For generations, Indiana's agricultural identity has been associated with the massive "fencepost to fencepost" farming practices that have led many to associate it with seemingly endless fields of corn and soybeans.

*David Hoppe is a writer, editor and playwright. His books, in addition to Food For Thought: An Indiana Harvest, include Personal Indianapolis and Where We Live: Essays About Indiana. Work produced for the stage includes, After Paul McCartney, Our Experiences During the First Days of Alligators and Sacred Sands: A Play For Voices. Hoppe lives in Long Beach, Indiana; for more of his writing go to Davidhoppewriter.com.*

Now farmers, in search of more sustainable business models, have begun to diversify their crops. And a new generation has come on the scene, challenging the notion that, in order to be profitable, farms must be enormous.

These developments, combined with increasing consumer demands for fresh and local, as well as the need to conserve and protect our natural resources, give

Indiana a chance to reinvent itself as a center for high-quality food production. This much was clear when Kristin and I worked on *Food For Thought*.

Those energies have continued to gather. What we did not see coming was the rapidly burgeoning interest in indoor farming methods. These practices have lowered barriers to entry into farming for entrepreneurs in both rural and urban settings. They hold great promise in particular for the redevelopment of urban properties into farming facilities capable of delivering a wide variety of local produce throughout the year, while significantly reducing the energy footprint associated with conventional farming.

The implications of this new approach could have profound implications for how we think about our food and where it comes from. Soon, for example, Indianapolis residents will be able to buy greens 12 months a year that are produced not miles, but blocks away from where they live.

Indiana's agricultural sense of place may never be the same.



ESSAY

# ETHERIDGE KNIGHT: INDIANA'S ESSENTIAL POET

BY **MODUPE LABODE**

**E**theridge Knight called what he did “poeting,” as if the sedate verb “writing” couldn’t capture the urgency that propelled his work.

In his poems, Knight meditates on themes close to his life: family connections, incarceration, and the situation of being an African American man in the United States, who is both desired and feared. The poems collected in *The Essential Etheridge Knight* have a wide emotional range, encompassing defiance, anger, desire, humor, alienation and regret. In his works, Knight fiercely insisted that the experiences of people like him, people mainstream society often ignored or dismissed as “problems,” were worthy of being commemorated in poetry.

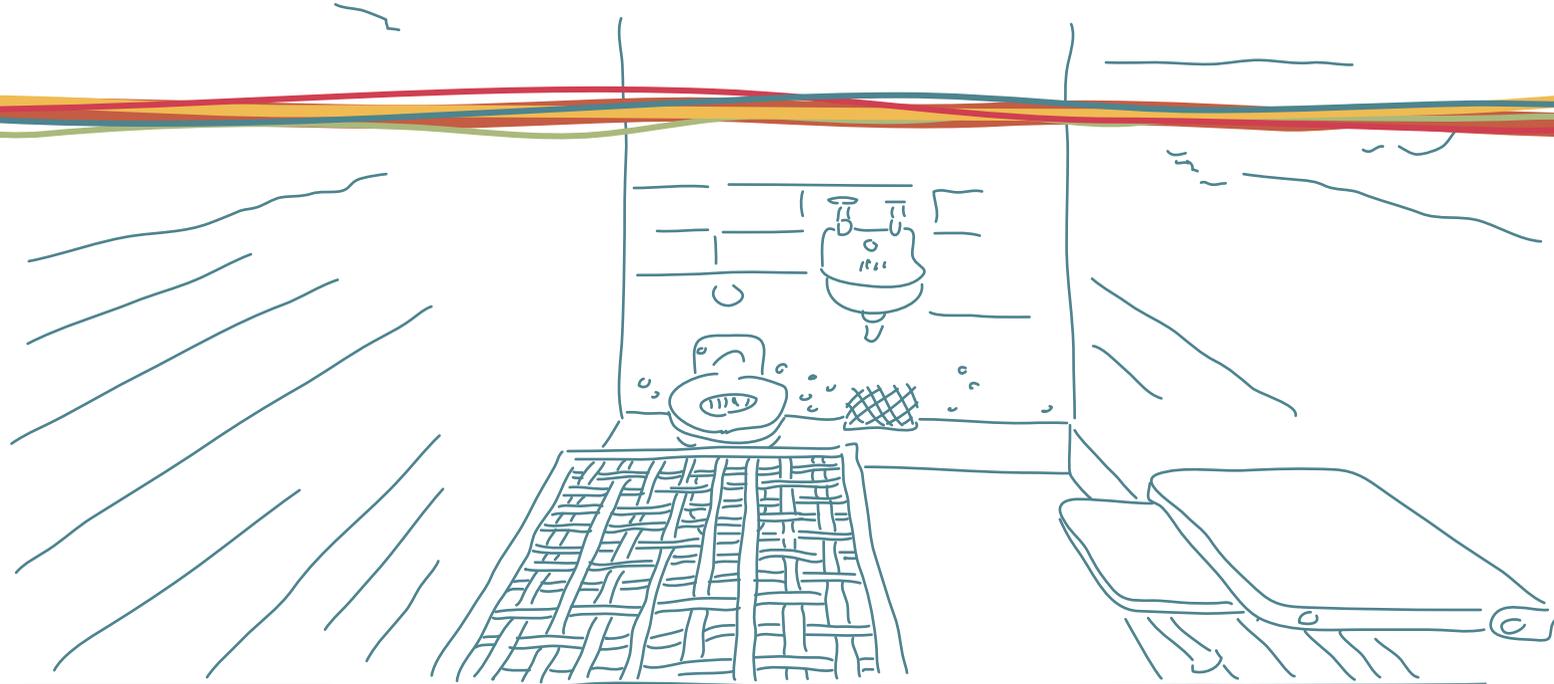
*Modupe Labode is an associate professor of history and museum studies at IUPUI, where she is also a public scholar of African American history and museums.*

Knight was born in Corinth, Mississippi in 1931. Along with thousands of other African Americans, Knight’s family gradually migrated north as part of the Great Migration. They lived for several years in Kentucky, where Knight dropped out of school, enlisted in the Army, and served in the Korean War. He left military service with an honorable discharge and an addiction to drugs that would lead him to crime. By this time his family had moved to Indianapolis. In 1960, he was convicted of robbery and began serving a 10-to-25 year sentence at the Indiana State Prison in Michigan City.

In prison, Knight began to write. He later said, “I died in Korea from shrapnel wound, and narcotics resurrected me. I died in 1960 from a prison sentence, and poetry brought me back to life.” His unsparing poems detail the corrupting violence and loneliness of imprisonment. In an interview, he described prison as “a very oppressive, painful, alienating world. You’ve been, not exiled, you’ve been in-ziled. You’ve been cut off from your community (Steven C. Tracy and Etheridge Knight, “A MELUS Interview: Etheridge Knight,” MELUS 12, no 2, Summer 1985).” Knight’s writing connected with the world outside prison when his poem “To Dinah Washington” appeared in the *Negro Digest* in 1965. Poets Gwendolyn Brooks and Dudley Randall championed his writing and visited him in prison. Randall also ran Broadside Press, which in 1968 published Knight’s first collection, *Poems from Prison*. A short time later, Knight was released on parole.

Knight would call Indianapolis home for the rest of his tumultuous life, even though he spent a great deal of time away from the city. He wrote poetry, married three times, traveled throughout the country for readings and fellowships, and struggled with addiction. In 1991, Knight died of cancer at the age of 59 and is buried in Crown Hill Cemetery.

Today, Indiana contends with many of the issues that Knight wrote about decades ago: racial inequality, drug abuse, and a rising population of incarcerated people. Knight’s work reminds readers that these are not only political and social issues, but involve real people. In his poetry, Knight insists that we acknowledge our shared humanity. His poetry provides a vantage point to consider who is included and who is left out when discussing Indiana’s past, present and future.

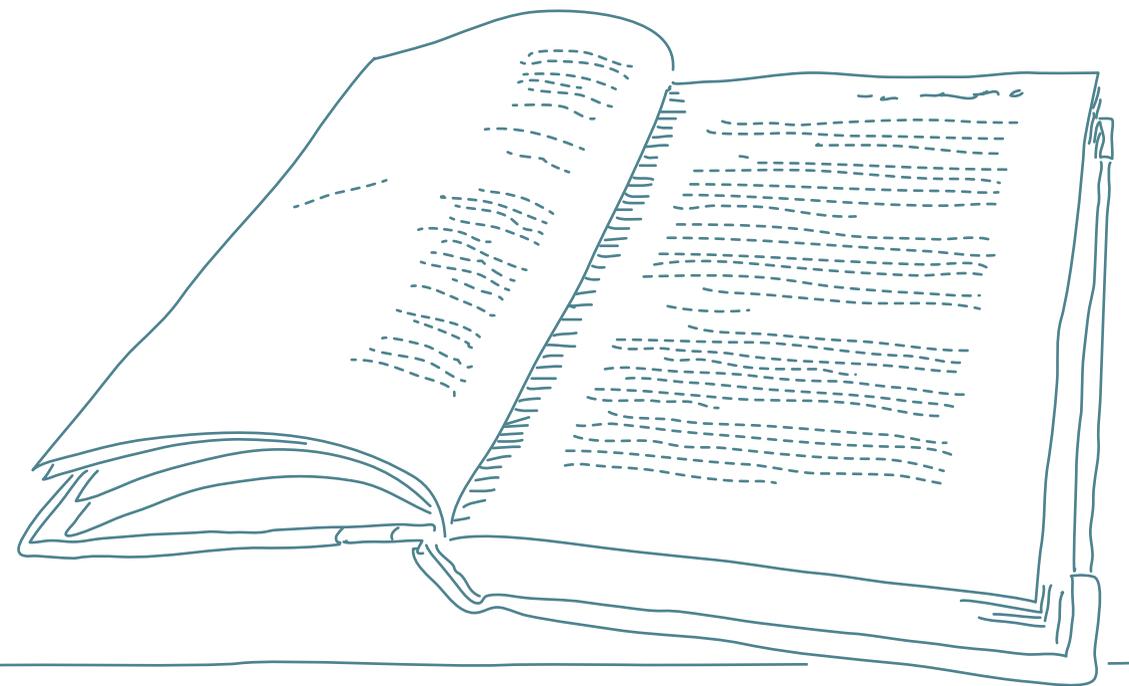


ESSAY

# RAINTREE COUNTY AND THE GREENING OF INDIANA

BY LARRY LOCKRIDGE

In his 1948 novel *Raintree County*, my father Ross Lockridge, Jr., unabashedly attempted to write the Great American Novel, not just the Great Hoosier Novel, but the original setting is, for the most part, Henry County, Indiana.



The protagonist, John Wickliff Shawnessy, is modeled on my paternal great-grandfather, John Wesley Shockley of Straughn, Indiana. Shawnessy spends a modest life as a Hoosier schoolmaster, writing poetry on the side as an idealist who quietly nurses the highest literary aspirations. But he is too mired in his own tragic past to write his way toward a visionary future, to write the epic of America.

In *Raintree County*, Lockridge attempted to write that future for him, as a literary prophet with a strong sense of nostalgia but with a mission also—to restore to American life its fading mythic sense of things, anchored in immediate and celebratory sensate experience. Finishing his novel just as World War II was coming to an end, Lockridge thought this mythic sense of things was greatly imperiled by commerce and industry, by the lack of

what Matthew Arnold called “sweetness and light” and Northrop Frye “the myth of freedom.” As the best-selling novel in the early months of 1948, *Raintree County* seemed for a time to answer to a hunger in the populus for American meaning beyond the banalities of Main Street. Lockridge especially emphasized the values of the landscape and its mythic enhancements. How do we regain a sense of the miraculous and a reverence for the landscape when the ancient river gods are taking flight at the coming of the railroads? Shawnessy asks this kind of question again and again, and *Raintree County* has thus been called the “foremost American environmental novel.”

I feel that *Raintree County* mingles history with prophecy in a way full of implication for “The Next Indiana.” The “endlessly courageous dreamers” whom Ross Lockridge speaks of may not be found in our politicians—and politicians with the exception of Lincoln come off poorly in *Raintree County*. Rather, it is in the rank and file of ordinary Hoosiers where the extraordinary must be found as we take stock of our collective heritage, find the uses of the past, maintain our rivers and lakes, and work toward what Lockridge called “the gigantic labor by which the earth is rescued again and again from chaos and old night.”

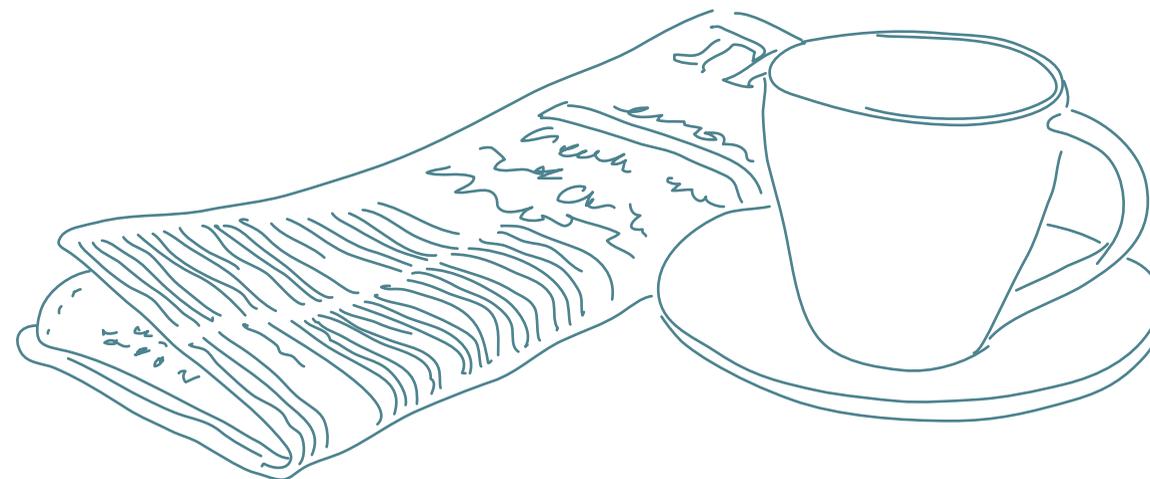
*Larry Lockridge took his undergraduate degree at Indiana University and his doctorate at Harvard. He has taught at Harvard, Rutgers, Northwestern, and New York University, from which he recently retired as Professor of English. A Woodrow Wilson, Danforth, and Guggenheim fellow, he has published books and articles on British Romantic literature and philosophy. For his biography *Shade of the Raintree*, he received the MidAmerica Award from the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature.*

ESSAY

# ON READING TODAY'S NEWS

BY SUSAN NEVILLE

**F**or most of my adult life I've started each day with the *Indianapolis Star*. In that liminal morning space between darkness and daylight, between sleep and wakefulness, I enjoy the warmth and taste of coffee and the daily news.



*This, the paper seemed to say as the caffeine kicked in, is what you'll need to think about, knowledge that may inform your actions on this day.*

At some point the paper stopped speaking to me. The book reviews disappeared. The paper grew smaller. I used to think that Indiana was participating in a discussion that was national, even international, that we had a point of view, something to say,

that there were stories in this state worth digging deeply into, stories with a history.

Anything there? I used to ask my husband, the early riser, as he turned over the paper and his corner of the couch to me each morning. Good Mannweiler column, he'd say. Check out Mike Redmond, Judith Cebula, Dan Carpenter. Check out this investigative piece on the front page, this op-ed column. This is the state with a history of good journalism,

the state that produced Ernie Pyle, editor and writer James Stewart, Janet Flanner, and many other important journalists.

But some mornings now the Indianapolis paper is so thin it feels like a newsletter. Other mornings it feels like an advertisement and entertainment delivery device.

My husband and I still start the day with the paper out of loyalty and habit, but now, I'm ashamed to say, I often turn to my Facebook news feed first. At first I thought it was an addiction. Now I'm sure that it is. But we turn to addictions when the real world seems too complex to bear.

And I have to admit that often I learn more on the web. Admittedly, I have a feed that suits me. While I get the late night talk show clips and videos and for a while was in love again with David Bowie and Prince, I can easily skip things knowing that other more interesting things are waiting to rise up through the web. My morning feed often consists of friends linking to the *New York Times*, to *Salon*, to the *Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, to reviews and paintings and poems. Facebook is often where I find context and history and book reviews and editorials. I get links to pieces written by local columnists I admire—Matthew Tully for instance. I'll read his columns twice,

*Susan Neville is the author of four books of creative nonfiction and two collections of short stories. Her stories have won the Flannery O'Connor Award and the Richard Sullivan Prize, and have appeared in two Pushcart Prize anthologies. She teaches at Butler University in Indianapolis.*

once on a device and again in the paper. The feed takes me to books I might not have read otherwise, and those books take me back to the feed. It's the links to other newspapers that has become my morning paper. Twitter serves the same function for my children.

I have friends who are always liberal and friends who are always conservative and I enjoy the rants and honest voices and sometimes the clarity of argument—a clarity that requires listening to the other side—and the way their words remind me that yes, this is the thing I need to think about today.

After a half an hour of reading articles on my phone, I turn with reluctance to *The Star*.

This blog post is not meant to be a prophecy. I am not saying the Next Indiana will be our Facebook or Twitter feeds (or whatever it is that replaces them) though it may well be. I'm not comparing print news to digital. I don't particularly care how my news is delivered. (OK. That's a lie. I do care, but that's not important.) What I do care about is the story.

I don't trust the algorithms of the feed or the brevity of the crowd-sourced information. Like television news, there's usually a dominant narrative, with people searching for the hook to jazz the narrative up instead of looking

for the hidden story. And my liberal friends seem to be living in an entirely different country than my conservative ones. During this strange election year we've seen the multiplication of faux-online papers that masquerade as conservative or liberal sources of news and we believe they're staffed by journalists. The articles are shared as though they're real news, and every photograph of a candidate is photo-shopped beyond recognition and when you read the article if you agree with it you think it's real news, and if you don't agree, you can spot the fake headline and the unflattering photo. While I get both sides on my feed, I'm simply comparing propagandas and it took me a while to realize this. There's no dialogue. And an algorithm is not an editor.

We've gained in immediacy (the trending stories) but lost variety and depth. My biggest concern, though, is how we've lost that depth in our reporting on the local. This is not the fault of the journalists. It's the fault of corporations that have purchased our local news. It's our fault that we've let that happen. We have to care passionately about our own stories because if we don't no one else will.

I believe in the importance of long-form storytelling. We need journalists and novelists who are willing to dig deeply into local soil. Curious, imaginative people.

When we produce these young people, they often leave—sometimes the state, sometimes journalism, sometimes their idealism. We desperately need young writers who are trained not only in the craft of journalism but in ethics and history and literature and science: writers who respect the way words work and who understand logic and argument and the process of investigation and where we have something to add, as Hoosiers, to the human conversation.

Mostly we need institutions that will give them freedom and time to pursue the stories, time to think and read. We need good newspapers.

Because as Kurt Vonnegut pointed out, 10 percent of the population is cruel and 10 percent kind and the other 80 percent is easily swayed. If I am going to be swayed, I would like to be well informed and to be moved in the direction of justice.

I can't imagine how the news will

be distributed in the Next Indiana. I read the *New York Times* on my Kindle, knowing full well that to the *New York Times* my state and city are invisible.

The deep currents of commerce and politics and human failures and greatness should not be invisible.

We need a local news source with an ethos like the now-defunct *Indianapolis Times*, a local paper that had the courage and the vision to take on D.C. Stephenson and the Ku Klux Klan and by extension the Indiana statehouse in the 1920s. It was a local story with national repercussions, as all well-told stories are. The local is the universal. The paper won a Pulitzer for this work.

I want to trust that corruption will be exposed before it festers. I want the truth. I want it straight on and I want it slant. And I want it fresh each morning, with my coffee. That is what I hope for in the Next Indiana.

**As Kurt Vonnegut pointed out, 10 percent of the population is cruel and 10 percent kind and the other 80 percent is easily swayed. If I am going to be swayed, I would like to be well informed and to be moved in the direction of justice.**

ESSAY  
**THE NEXT INDIANA**  
BY **APRIL PULLEY SAYRE**

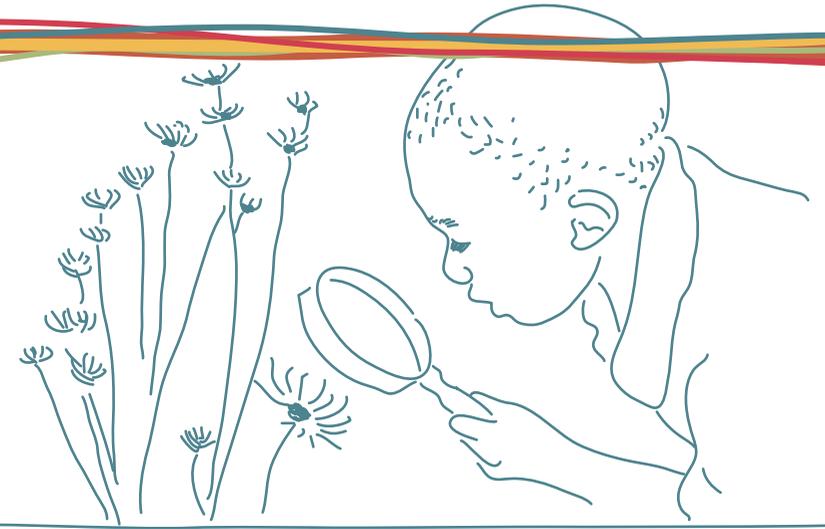
**T**he Next Indiana is right in front of us. It is our preschoolers, our kindergarteners. They are natural scientists, ready to explore.

They are gathering sensory experiences: touching, testing, tasting, smelling, listening to the world we give them. I hope it will be full of beautiful sensory experiences: wildflowers and wild places, delicious fruits and vegetables, songs from our musicians, and loving, intriguing words. Let's fill them with hope and energy and good health. Organizations such as the innovative Unity Gardens in South Bend—with its community gardens, food

forests of fruit trees, native plant gardens, and educational programs—give me hope that this vision can come true.

The Next Indiana is elementary school kids, our preteens and teens. These growing bodies need to move. Perhaps we should all start the day as they did at one elementary school I visited: by marching briskly through the halls to a few fun songs! Those kids were so alive, relaxed, and inquisitive!

*April Pulley Sayre is an award-winning author/photo-illustrator best known for her lyrical, read aloud science. Her 65 books include Raindrops Roll, Best in Snow, and Rah, Rah, Radishes: A Vegetable Chant, which were all photographed in Indiana. She created The Indiana Chant featured on bicentennial posters at libraries around the state. www.aprilsayre.com.*



Then, let's give our kids a ladder of scientific and mathematical experiences and knowledge. Indiana has many terrific educators pouring their hearts and souls, own money, and after-school hours into giving kids opportunities to succeed. These educators, in schools, libraries, and museums, are the future, too. Let's support them in their work and give them leadership opportunities.

The Next natural Indiana is developing, too. There are people planting native plant gardens, designed to feed hummingbirds and butterflies. There are people like the folks of Linton's Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area, who are restoring wetlands for migrating sandhill cranes. There are tiny trees, planted by squirrels, popping up. Why not let some grow? Let's keep our tree lines and windbreaks. Let's plant new ones, to help farmers conserve our soil and reduce the hazards of snow blowing across winter roads.

An excellent future for Indiana lies in our reach. The seeds of that work rest in our words. We need to look around and rediscover what is outstanding already. Let's raise it up by observing closely and pointing out the beauty and value of what is here. Let's write thank-you notes to park boards and fan letters to farmers. Every working hand, whether it is writing new laws or assembling cars or picking vegetables should receive recognition and a fair shake.

Bolstered and enlivened by appreciating this state's treasures, we need to push ourselves to face our failures and areas that need improvement. The world is far bigger than we often recognize and we're not going to succeed by closing in on ourselves. We need diversity of species, of ideas, of people—a varied, beautiful palette—to paint the best possible future for Indiana.

ESSAY  
**WISHES FOR INDIANA**  
BY **SCOTT RUSSELL SANDERS**

**In 1816, most of the land that we now call Indiana was covered by old-growth forest—oaks, maples, hickories, walnuts, sycamores, elms and many other species.**

There were millions of acres in wetlands, and hundreds of thousands of acres in prairies. Wildlife flourished. The rivers were pure and the air was clean. Native peoples had lived here for millennia without diminishing this natural abundance. Then over the past two hundred years, Hoosiers cut down the ancient forests, drained the wetlands, plowed up the prairies. Today, only scraps of that original plenty survive. Wild animals and plants have

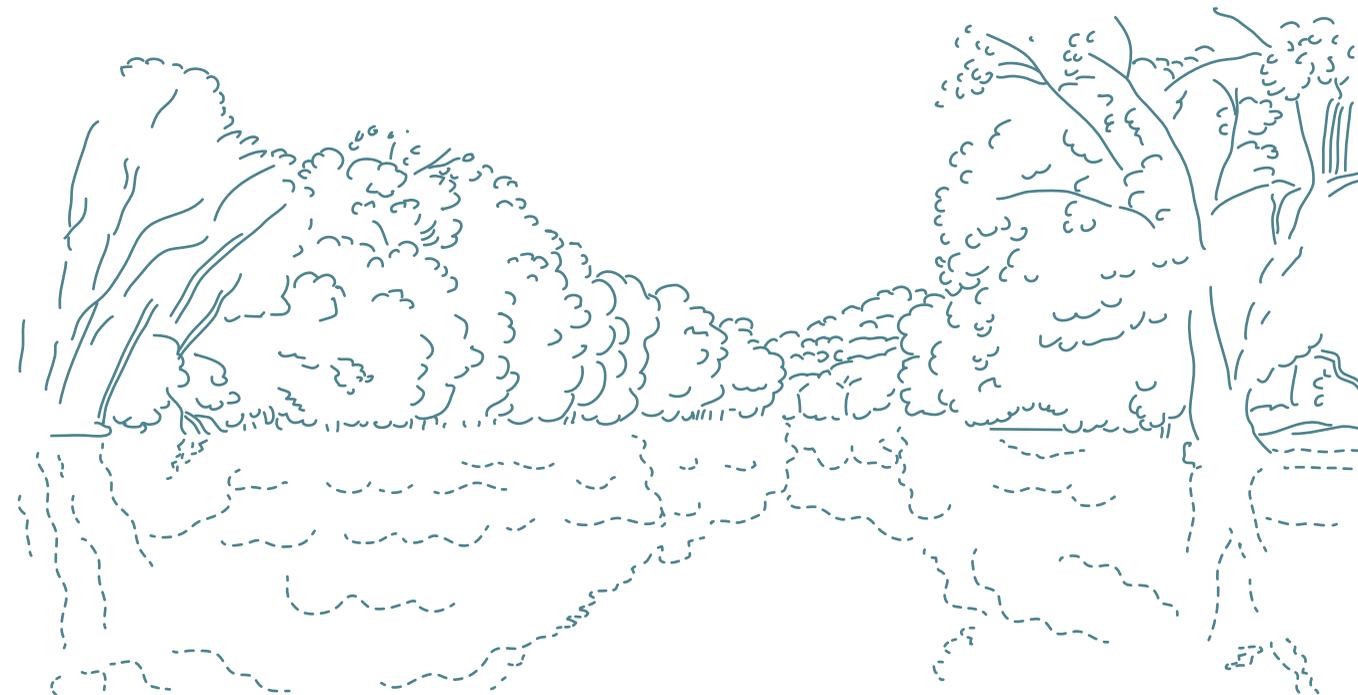
been drastically reduced in numbers and diversity. Our rivers and lakes are polluted. Our air is filled with heavy metals and other poisons. Our unchecked burning of fossil fuels—especially coal—has contributed to climate disruption.

My first wish for the future of Indiana is that we begin to undo that damage to our land and waters and air. Clean up the rivers and lakes. Restore prairies where

they once flourished. Pull up drain tiles in low-lying terrain and allow wetlands to recover. Return marginal farmland to forest, and forbid logging in the oldest portions of our public forests. Protect endangered species. Clean up our air by shifting from a fossil-fuel-based economy to one based on renewable energy, especially solar and wind. We should do all of this not only to provide a healthier home for life, but also to provide Hoosiers a glimpse of what primordial Indiana looked like.

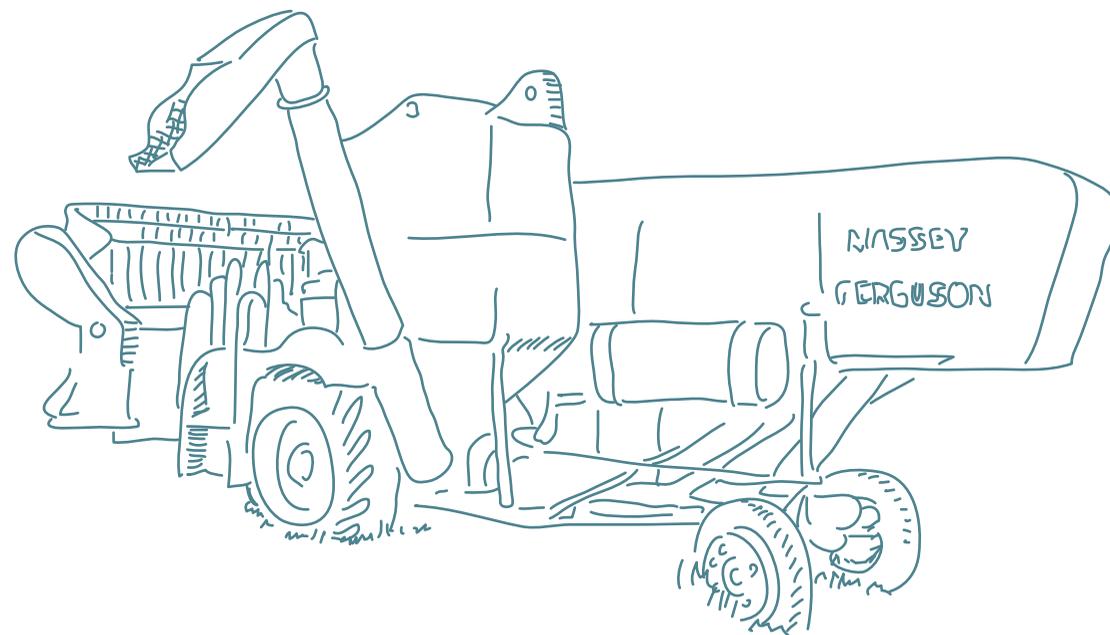
My second wish for the future of Indiana is that we restore a balance between the pursuit of private wealth and the protection of public wealth. We have starved our schools, libraries, parks, museums, courts, governments, police forces, and other shared goods while promoting the accumulation of money and power in private hands. Private wealth matters, of course; but our happiness and well-being depend as much or more on our common wealth.

*Scott Russell Sanders is the author of 20 books of fiction and nonfiction, including Earth Works, Divine Animal, and Dancing in Dreamtime. For his writing, he has won the Lannan Literary Award, the Mark Twain Award, and a Guggenheim Fellowship, among other honors. A distinguished professor emeritus of English at Indiana University, Sanders is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and is active in organizations devoted to social justice and protection of the biosphere.*



ESSAY  
**MY NEXT INDIANA**  
BY **GREG SCHWIPPS**

**think about the Next Indiana quite often these days because it is, quite literally, running around my house in a shark shirt.**



My older son is named Milan, and it was my wife's idea to name him after my basketball-hero hometown. He'll turn five in August.

But how to raise a Hoosier? Or two of them, because Milan has a little brother. When I was Milan's age I spent a lot of time on my grandparents' farm outside of town. My grandfather was a Hoosier by most definitions: he owned over 100 acres, which he farmed, and he kept cattle in the barn and pasture. He owned International tractors, while my dad favored John Deeres. I did a lot of odd jobs for my grandpa, because I was out there

anyway, and he liked making me work. I painted the chicken coop, outbuildings, and the bottom three rings of the silo. I put a new roof on the shop. I knocked dirt off the disc blades and oiled them up for winter. I don't think my grandpa was ever given a dollar he hadn't earned the hard way and I worked harder for the crumpled singles he would push into my hands in those days than I do now.

The rest of the time I spent fishing in the farm ponds and running around in the woods. I sometimes spent the night at their house to make it easier to get up and fish. If Grandpa

had a groundhog clearing out a beanfield we would get up early and go stake the field out in his Ford truck. He would roll down his window, drape his red handkerchief over the side mirror and rest the forestock on the windowsill. When the groundhog appeared on the far edge of the field the sound of the gun firing would fill the truck cab like a bomb exploding.

My grandpa fought in World War II, but it was his Massey-Ferguson combine that took half his leg in 1976. For most of my life, he walked with an artificial leg that he took off at night and set by his easy chair while we watched television. It was a reminder to respect machines and a token of bad and good luck.

He was a proud NRA member who could make meat of everything from a fish to a steer with his own hands. What would he say, though, if he were alive today, if I were to tell him that my biggest fears for my boys are of school shootings, of explosions in malls, of trucks running over people at outdoor parties? What to make of this violence that strikes without warning, without cause?

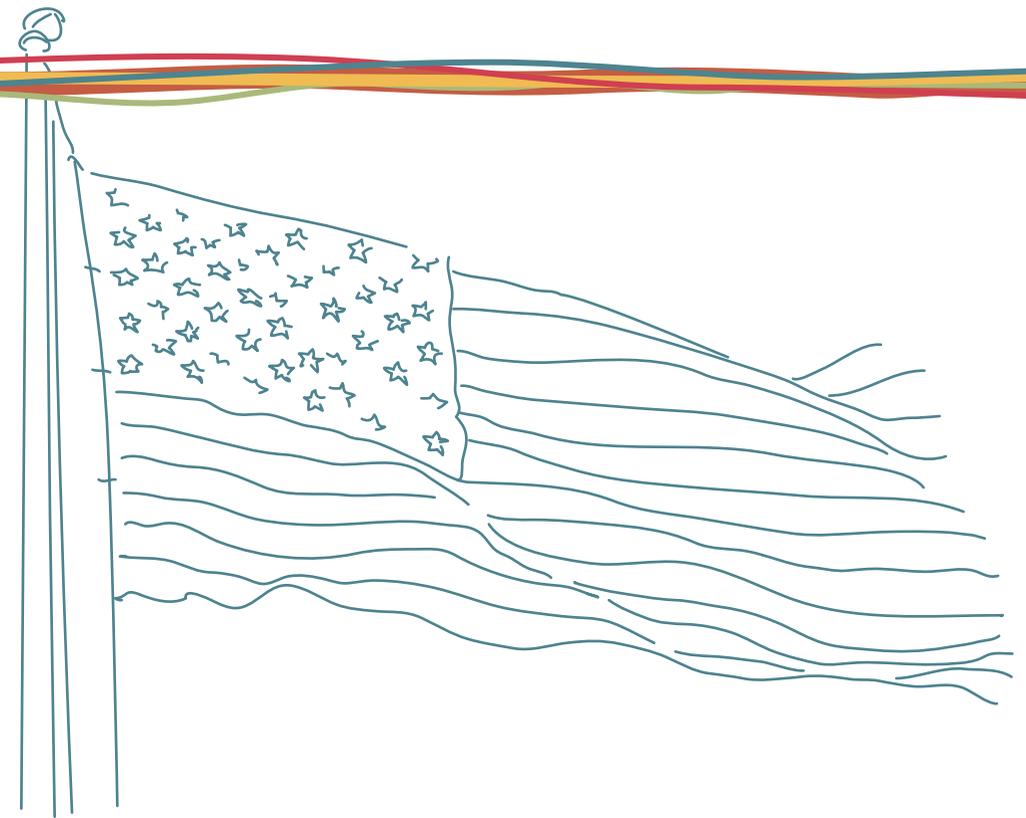
He might tell me to do what my wife and I are doing: giving them the trails of Turkey Run. Turning off the news when they walk into the room. Putting frogs in their hands. Letting them touch caught fish, from shad to sharks. And lifting their little butts up into the seats of their grandpa's John Deeres.

*Greg Schwipps is an English professor at DePauw University. Originally from Milan, Indiana, Greg is the author of What This River Keeps. He lives in Greencastle with his wife and their two sons.*

ESSAY

# A HOME OF UNDERSTANDING

BY HELEN THORPE



**In the years since this country switched to an all-volunteer military force, the division between veteran and civilian cultures has become vast.**

Civilians do not pay attention to faraway conflicts, because they don't have skin in the game. They are not going to receive deployment orders, so they don't need to understand the outcome of some distant battle. They can let somebody else worry about it for them.

What I wish for veterans who have returned after serving a year in Iraq or in Afghanistan

is that they could come home to a country that understood what they have gone through. The lives of veterans would be easier if, when they got home, they met only people who knew the names of the foreign places where they have been posted. If they spoke only with people who could follow a conversation in which they said they had lived in a CHU, and driven an ASV, and dodged an RPG. But usually, that's not the case.

The act of translating military experience for a civilian audience is wearying. When I imagine a better future for the veterans of Indiana, when I envision the next Indiana, I see a place with less division between civilian and military cultures. It was with that goal in mind that I told the stories of three ordinary and yet extraordinary women who served in the Indiana National Guard. All had enlisted before 9/11, and none had foreseen lengthy, multiple overseas deployments. They are still trying to explain to their families and their friends what exactly

happened to them while they were gone. And what they need most, now that they are safely back at home, is for the rest of us to understand. To know what it meant for them to leave their homes and their children, put on uniform, live in a conex, and drive up and down the highways of Iraq, even though they were littered with bombs. It's a hard thing to explain, but this world will be a better place when the rest of us know their stories, when we understand what this country asks of its veterans. Only then can we properly welcome them home.

*Helen Thorpe is an award-winning journalist who lives in Denver, Colorado. Her magazine work has been published in the New York Times Magazine, the New Yorker, Texas Monthly, and 5280. Her first book, Just Like Us: The True Story of Four Mexican Girls Coming of Age in America, was published in 2009. It won the Colorado Book Award and was named one of the best books of the year by the Washington Post. Her second book, Soldier Girls: The Battles of Three Women at Home and at War, was published in 2014 and traces the stories of three Indiana National Guardswomen. TIME named it the number one nonfiction book of the year, and the New York Times said: "Through minute, almost claustrophobic, detail—using military and medical records, as well as therapists' notes and personal correspondence—Thorpe achieves a staggering intimacy with her subjects."*

ESSAY

# WHAT'S NEXT FOR INDIANA LITERATURE

BY DAN WAKEFIELD

**I** believe the “Next Indiana” will continue to be a place where writers and literature flourish, as this state has always been, ever since Lew Wallace published his best-selling novel *Ben-Hur*.

(It sold more than *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in its time, and was revived by a hit movie version in the 1950s and rose to the top of bestseller lists again.) Just as Ohio has produced more than its share of presidents, Indiana has produced more than its share of great authors: Gene Stratton-Porter, Booth Tarkington, James Whitcomb Riley, Theodore Dreiser, Lloyd C. Douglas, Ross Lockridge, Janet Flanner, James Alexander Thom, Susan Neville, and Kurt Vonnegut—and now John

Green, just to name a few. And those that are on the way, that you're just beginning to hear, like Ian Woollen.

Writers in Indiana today are given more sustenance than ever, from places such as the Indiana Writers Center, Indy Reads Books, and Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library. Not only professional writers are encouraged and nourished in their craft, but also people who simply want to express themselves, and

*Dan Wakefield is a novelist, journalist and screenwriter whose books include Revolt in the South, Going All The Way, New York in the Fifties, The Hijacking of Jesus: How the Religious Right Distorts Christianity and Promotes Prejudice and Hate, and many more. Wakefield has been the recipient of a Neiman Fellowship in Journalism, the Bernard DeVoto Fellowship to the Bread Loaf Writers Conference, a Rockefeller Grant for Creative Writing, and an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. He has taught in the writing programs at Boston University, the University of Massachusetts at Boston, Emerson College, The Iowa Writers Workshop, and is presently Writer in Residence at Florida International University in Miami. He has been a staff writer for The Nation, a Contributing Editor of The Atlantic Monthly, a Contributing Writer for GQ, a Contributing Editor of The Yoga Journal, and is on the advisory board of Image: A Journal of The Arts and Religion.*

who have heeded Kurt Vonnegut's advice that “Practicing an art, however well or badly, is a way to make your soul grow, for heaven's sake. Sing in the shower. Dance to the radio. Tell stories.”

Indiana has been producing writers “nearly as regularly as corn and limestone,” said Arthur Shumaker in *A History of Indiana Literature*. There is every reason to believe that history will continue to grow. Indianapolis has come a long way from the 1950s, when it was known as “Naptown,” and one of our great jazz musicians, the trombone player J.J. Johnson, did an album called “Naptown, USA.” We were known as a sleepy kind of semi-city. Now our downtown has come alive with hot new restaurants, art galleries, theatre and music, and we have our own new jazz musician, the brilliant young saxophone player Sophie Faught, who keeps that tradition alive at the Chatterbox, the keystone of the Mass Avenue revival.

Greenwich Village in its heyday had John Coltrane's jazz to inspire its painters and writers; we have Sophie. They had the *Village Voice*, where young innovative writers got

a start; we have *Nuvo*, with a brilliant new arts editor, Emily Taylor. They had the poet Marianne Moore, we have Karen Kovacic. They had the painters Alice Neal and Larry Rivers; we have Ellen Crabb, Rita Spalding, and the innovative graphic artist Pam Fraizer. Their Greenwich Village predecessors went for drinks and talk at the Cedar Bar; we have the Red Key.

When one of the arts bloom, others come to life, and the spirit of creativity reaches into offices, bistros and coffee houses. The back of a building on Mass Ave has the tall painting of Kurt Vonnegut, appropriately larger than life, watching over us with a sparkle in his eyes and a smile on his bushy, mustachioed face. If I stand still and listen I think I can hear his wise words to all who pass by, passing on his message that never gets old, urging us to “Write a poem to a friend, even a lousy poem. Do it as well as you possibly can. You will get an enormous reward. You will have created something.”

Those are sustaining words for a monumental future; that's Next.

“Hold on,” as Vonnegut said—“We may end up miles from here!”



## PROGRAM: NEXT INDIANA BOOKSHELF

A COLLECTION OF 13 TITLES ABOUT THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF INDIANA

The Next Indiana Bookshelf is a set of books—fiction, nonfiction, essays and poetry—all of which have a strong connection to Indiana, either set here and/or written by a Hoosier author.

Following an application period, 55 sets of the Next Indiana Bookshelf were awarded to libraries, schools and community organizations across the state. Communities used the books for year-round book clubs and created engaging displays. They invited authors in for talks, created innovative programs and read *The Indiana Chant* together as groups.

The Bookshelf features contemporary works, interspersed with a few classics, which explore the dynamic forces shaping Hoosier communities today, including returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan, growing ethnic and religious diversity, changes in how we use our land, and new directions in food and agriculture. Several titles explore the complicated yet vital connections between our rural small towns and our rapidly growing suburban and urban areas.

As part of the Bookshelf, we asked 10 writers to pen a short essay about their vision for the Next Indiana. Those essays were featured on our blog, and in the preceding pages. We hope their words will inspire you to dream up your own vision for our future.

*The Next Indiana Bookshelf is a collaboration between Indiana Humanities and the Indiana Center for the Book. It is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services, administered by the Indiana State Library.*



### NEXT INDIANA BOOKSHELF TITLES

- ▶ *Earth Works: Selected Essays* by Scott Russell Sanders
- ▶ *The Essential Etheridge Knight* by Etheridge Knight
- ▶ *Food For Thought: An Indiana Harvest* by David Hoppe, photos by Kristin Hess
- ▶ *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* by Mohja Kahf
- ▶ *The Indiana Chant* by April Pulley Sayre
- ▶ *Invincible, Indiana* by Nate Dunlevy
- ▶ *Kurt Vonnegut: Letters* by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., edited by Dan Wakefield
- ▶ *Paper Towns* by John Green
- ▶ *Raintree County* by Ross Lockridge, Jr.
- ▶ *Running Out of Time* by Margaret Peterson Haddix
- ▶ *Sailing the Inland Sea: On Writing, Literature, and Land* by Susan Neville
- ▶ *Soldier Girls: The Battles of Three Women at Home and at War* by Helen Thorpe
- ▶ *What This River Keeps* by Greg Schwipps

PROGRAM:  
**NEXT INDIANA CAMPFIRES**

A SERIES OF TREKS AROUND THE STATE THAT CONNECT NATURE, LITERATURE AND INDIANA'S BICENTENNIAL

From the sandy dunes in the north to the rolling hills in the south, Indiana's landscapes have inspired generations of Hoosiers.

Hoosier authors have celebrated these landscapes, and 100 years ago our state leaders preserved some of them, creating the state parks system in honor of Indiana's centennial. Today, as we ponder these legacies, we must ask: what will we leave for the future?

That's one of the questions we sought to explore through Next Indiana Campfires.

Through the one-of-a-kind program, we led hundreds of people on scholar-led excursions that paired literature with nature and encouraged hundreds more to "trek and talk" on their own with a do-it-yourself kit.

During each Campfires trek, a humanities scholar led 20 to 60 people by foot, kayak, canoe or bike, pausing to read aloud the

words of important Hoosier authors such as Gene Stratton-Porter, Scott Russell Sanders and Edwin Way Teale. (Teale, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, provided the spark for this program.) Then we gathered around a campfire for a meal and a beer (thanks Upland!) to talk about the ways literature connects us to place and across generations, and to share our ideas for the future of Indiana.

Our DIY Trek and Talk Toolkits included a fold-out map of Indiana with literary quotes, an essay excerpt from Scott

**"The Next Indiana Campfires program is terrific. I can't say enough good things about connecting people to Indiana outdoors and Hoosier writers! Indiana Humanities has hit a home run."**

— Susan Sutton



## SITES / PARTNERS / CITIES:

- ▶ **Oliver's Woods / Central Indiana Land Trust** / Indianapolis (May 11)
- ▶ **Wesselman Woods Old Growth Forest / Wesselman Nature Society** / Evansville (May 22)
- ▶ **McVey Memorial Forest / Red-tail Land Conservancy** / Randolph County (June 7)
- ▶ **Syracuse-Wawasee Trail / Syracuse** (June 9)
- ▶ **Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore / Dunes Learning Center** / Portage (June 18)
- ▶ **Merry Lea Learning Center of Goshen College** / Wolf Lake (July 23)
- ▶ **Eagle Creek Park / Eagle Creek Outfitters** / Indianapolis (July 29)
- ▶ **Prophetstown State Park / Lafayette** (Aug. 5)
- ▶ **Cardinal Greenway and Red-tail Nature Preserve / Red-tail Land Conservancy** / Muncie (Aug. 14)
- ▶ **Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore / Dunes Learning Center** / Portage (Sept. 10)
- ▶ **Cope Environmental Center / Centerville** (Sept. 29)
- ▶ **Trail Creek Watershed / LaPorte County Soil and Water Conservation District** / Michigan City (Oct. 8)
- ▶ **Limberlost State Historic Site / Friends of Limberlost** / Geneva (Oct. 8)
- ▶ **Marian University Nina Mason Pulliam EcoLab** / Indianapolis (Oct. 21)
- ▶ **Glaciers End Nature Preserve / Central Indiana Land Trust** / Johnson County (Oct. 29)
- ▶ **Morgan-Monroe State Forest / Indiana Forest Alliance** / Martinsville (Nov. 5)

Russell Sanders and discussion prompt questions, along with a “card deck” on a carabiner, a special patch and an Indiana-made UGo bar.

Next Indiana Campfires was generously supported by The Efrogmson Family Fund, The Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, Pulitzer Prizes Centennial Campfires and Ball Brothers Foundation. Special thanks to Upland Brewing Co. and UGo Bars, LLC for in-kind support, and to all of our partners for their willingness to do something unconventional and opening these locations to us.

▶ *Read Campfire chatter:*  
[IndianaHumanities.org/campfirechatter](http://IndianaHumanities.org/campfirechatter)

## PROGRAM: INCONVERSATION WITH TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS AND SCOTT RUSSELL SANDERS

AN INTIMATE, THOUGHT-PROVOKING KICK-OFF EVENT TO NEXT INDIANA CAMPFIRES

“What does an old-growth forest offer to the human heart and mind? Science is not set up to answer that question—but art may be.” This observation, by acclaimed Hoosier author Scott Russell



Sanders, was at the heart of Next Indiana Campfires. To jump-start our thinking on this question (and many others), we invited Terry Tempest Williams, one of the nation's foremost thinkers about environmental issues, to join us—and 150 other Hoosiers from across the state—for a special INconversation exploring how writers have shaped our comprehension of nature and awakened us to the need to care for it.

Williams, a Guggenheim Fellow and titan of environmental literature, has been called a “citizen” writer for her fierce advocacy of freedom of speech about environmental literature. The conversation was moderated by Sanders, whose own writing about the hills and forests of southern Indiana continues the tradition of essential Hoosier nature writers such as Gene Stratton-Porter and Edwin Way Teale.

*Special thanks to the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art for hosting the conversation.*

“We both felt at home among the forested hills and limestone creeks; we knew the birdsongs, the burly clouds, the teeth-rattling thunderstorms and sudden snows, the flash of fireflies and rasp of cicadas; we knew the habits of speech, the shapes of churches and barns; we knew the smells of thawing soil in the spring and a hard frost in the hills; and those were all good reasons for moving there.”

—*Scott Russell Sanders,*  
*Words Addressed to Our*  
*Condition Exactly*

## PROGRAM:

# ALL-IN BLOCK PARTIES

A COMPETITION THAT CHALLENGES HOOSIERS TO THINK, READ, TALK AND DO

ALL-IN was a perfect bridge between our previous theme—Spirit of Competition—and Next Indiana. Launched in mid-2014 primarily as an online competition, we quickly found out that the best way to go ALL-IN was in person.

That's why over the past two years we awarded Block Party grants to 46 communities across Indiana, incorporated ALL-IN challenges as part of freshman orientation at the University of Indianapolis, Purdue University and Valparaiso University, and partnered with the Indiana Bicentennial Commission to host a Block Party as part of Hoosier Homecoming.

An ALL-IN Block Party is a community-wide event that builds state and local pride.

Participants circulate among booths run by different community organizations. At each booth, participants complete a short activity that asks them to explore, discover, read, reflect, remember, participate, connect and dream. The goal is to encourage Hoosiers to get to know their neighbors and their state in new ways.

They're thinking, talking, sharing, and doing things that take them just slightly out of their comfort zone. They're having

fun, they're meeting new people and they're learning about Indiana. This, in a nutshell, is an ALL-IN Block Party.

It's a creative and fun way to bring together Hoosiers to inspire new ideas, get involved and make Indiana even better. ALL-IN Block Parties took place across the state for two years leading up to our bicentennial, reaching thousands of Hoosiers and generating tens of thousands of conversations about how we can make our state a better place to live, work and learn.

Host organizations received a stipend and a starter-kit of "swag" for the event, as well as communications and graphic design support, and they were required to attend a special training to help customize the ALL-IN challenges for their local community.

► *Accept the challenge:* [IndianaHumanities.org/allin](http://IndianaHumanities.org/allin)



“This initiative aligned so nicely with our organizational goals to build community acceptance and appreciation for people of all abilities. The support from Indiana Humanities was critical because it gave us an engaging format to involve new community partners, financial support which we used to help leverage additional funds, and tons of training and enthusiasm from the Indiana Humanities office, which transferred into an energetic, inclusive, and civic-minded festival for people with and without disabilities.

Overall, this was such a great initiative and we were so happy to be selected as hosts!”

—Lydia Campbell-Maher, ArtMix

## ALL-IN BLOCK PARTY HOSTS:

► Albion S.T.A.R. Team (Noble County), Albion ► Allen County Bicentennial Task Force, Fort Wayne ► Anderson Public Library, Anderson ► ArtMix, Indianapolis ► Arts Council of Southern Indiana, New Albany ► Athenaeum Foundation, Indianapolis ► Centerville Public Library, Centerville ► City of Bloomington Council of Community Accessibility, Bloomington ► Corning Heritage Center, Montgomery ► Crawfordsville Main Street, Crawfordsville ► Delphi Public Library, Delphi ► Engage Columbus/Heritage Fund, Columbus ► Fairmount Public Library, Fairmount ► Gambold Preparatory Magnet High School, Indianapolis ► Garfield Park Neighbors Assn., Indianapolis ► Gathering, Noblesville ► Huntington City-Township Public Library, Huntington ► Immigrant Welcome Center, Indianapolis ► Indiana Bicentennial 2016 Huntington County Celebration, Huntington ► Indiana Bicentennial-Boone County, Lebanon ► Indiana University East, Richmond ► Irvington Development Organization Green Initiative, Indianapolis ► Jeffersonville Neighborhood Leadership Alliance, Jeffersonville ► Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library, Indianapolis ► La Porte County Bicentennial Committee, La Porte ► Martinsville Rotary Club, Martinsville ► Metamora Performing Arts, Inc., Metamora ► Minnetrista, Muncie ► Monticello Union Township Public Library, Monticello ► Neighborhood Resources Connection, South Bend ► New Castle-Henry County Chamber of Commerce, New Castle ► Nickel Plate Arts, Noblesville ► Northern Indiana Artists, Inc., South Bend ► Northside Middle School, Muncie ► Otterbein Public Library, Otterbein ► Parke County Bicentennial Committee, Rockville ► Peabody Public Library, Columbia City ► Riverside Civic League, Indianapolis ► Southeast Working Class Task Force, Indianapolis ► The Literacy Center, Evansville ► Town of Clarksville, Clarksville ► Wellness Management at Ball State University, Muncie ► Wunderkammer Company, Fort Wayne

**PROGRAM:**

# **HOOSIERS: THE STORY OF INDIANA: “THE NEXT INDIANA”**

A WFYI-PRODUCED EPISODE TO HELP HOOSIERS ENVISION THE NEXT 20, 100 AND 200 YEARS

Indiana Humanities partnered on a WFYI Public Media-produced documentary called *Hoosiers: The Story of Indiana* and developed toolkits to help Indiana communities discuss the film’s future-focused episode.

The four-part documentary explores Indiana’s 200-year history through the descendants of ordinary Hoosiers who lived through extraordinary times, while helping to shape the fabric of our state. Hosted by historian (and Indiana Humanities board member) Jim Madison, it dives into Indiana’s most pivotal moments. Along the way, we discover the lesser-known details of our Hoosier story, and we see how the past, present and future intersect to reveal the Indiana yet to come.

In episode four, which was a special collaboration with Indiana Humanities, we meet Hoosiers who are committed to making their communities better—through service, through entrepreneurship, through education—and they’re hopeful about the future. These creative, hard-working and optimistic people exemplify the qualities it takes to build the Next Indiana; they are taking on today’s biggest challenges so that their communities are more resilient and prepared for the future.

**NEXT  
IN**

# **HOOSIERS: THE STORY OF INDIANA THE NEXT INDIANA**



We thought these remarkable and inspiring stories were particularly worth talking about with our friends and neighbors. So, we created a free discussion guide and posted it on our website. We also provided stipends and resources to 12 communities to host a public screening and discussion.

On Dec. 1, we hosted an INconversation with Jim Madison, moderated by *Hoosiers* producer Eric Halvorson, at WFYI. The two discussed what they discovered on the road for the series and their hopes for the future of Indiana.

► [Download the discussion guide: IndianaHumanities.org/film](https://www.IndianaHumanities.org/film)

PROGRAM:

## EXAMINING ETHICS PODCASTS

A THREE-PART PODCAST SERIES THAT EXPLORED ETHICAL QUESTIONS RAISED THROUGHOUT INDIANA'S HISTORY

*Examining Ethics*, a monthly podcast produced by the Janet Prindle Institute for Ethics at DePauw University, poses ethical questions about issues that people face every day—from voting to parenthood. During our bicentennial year, we partnered to explore the ethical dimensions of three key moments in Indiana history.

The three episodes featured discussions about infrastructure, immigration and incarceration.

The first episode featured interviews with former Governor Mitch Daniels and former U.S. Congressman Lee Hamilton, and the hosts traveled to Delphi, Ind., in order to have a discussion about how an early 19th century infrastructure project turned into an epic failure and led to a change in Indiana's constitution. Hosts and guests explored the

moral and ethical questions surrounding debt, investments and a balanced budget.

In the second episode, we dug deeper into “Hoosier Hospitality” and learned how a group of hospitable Hoosiers who—in the face of tremendous wartime hysteria—helped Japanese American students escape West Coast internment camps and resettle in Indiana during World War II. The story inspired a discussion about courage and the ethics of state-determined borders.



Indiana is home to the first women's prison, and its prisoners were the subjects of many research projects in the 1800s...which led to huge leaps in understanding women's health issues. So, naturally, the conversation in the third episode explored the role of prisons, the ethics of treating prisoners differently and even privatization of prisons.

The 40-ish minute podcasts featured interviews with experts, candid conversations among producers and ethics experts. The goal of the episodes wasn't to provide answers to these historical ethical dilemmas, but instead to give listeners tools to help them think critically about their own every-day moral decisions.

▶ [Listen in: IndianaHumanities.org/podcast](https://IndianaHumanities.org/podcast)

**PROGRAM:**

# CHEW ON THIS: LATINOS & THE NEXT INDIANA

1 NIGHT. 1 TOPIC. 6 LATIN-AMERICAN RESTAURANTS. 75 PEOPLE.

Indiana is home to 314,501 immigrants, and more than half of them are from Latin America. In Indianapolis, the number of immigrants is on pace to double within the next 10 years.

We wanted to discuss those changing demographics and the vital role Latino Hoosiers are playing in the future of Indiana education, business, arts and culture, and civic life. So, we invited people to join us at Chew on This for one of six simultaneous conversations at Latin American restaurants around Indianapolis with 10-15 diners to do just that.

Chew On This is a program designed by Indiana Humanities to use the power of food and drink as a convener of people and catalyst for conversation to inspire thoughtful discussion on engaging topics.

For this event, we partnered with Marian University, which aims to be the largest Latino-serving college or university in Indiana, and the Immigrant Welcome Center. At each restaurant, diners were led

in conversation by facilitators, who included:

- ▶ **Terri Morris Downs, Executive Director of the Immigrant Welcome Center**
- ▶ **Christina Hale, State Representative, Indiana General Assembly**
- ▶ **Doneisha Posey, Administrative Judge, Indiana Rights Commission**
- ▶ **Rafael Sanchez, President and CEO, Indianapolis Power & Light Co.**
- ▶ **Maria Wildridge, Director of Latino Services and Outreach for Marion County Prosecutor's Office**
- ▶ **Jim Walker and Eduardo Luna, Big Car Collaborative**

The conversations sparked connections, ideas and dialogue about the vital role Latino Hoosiers play in the future of Indianapolis and our state.

**PROGRAM:**

# COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

During the past 200 years, Indiana communities have transformed in terms of size, economics and government structure. Along with our partner, the Bowen Center for Public Affairs at Ball State University, we selected three Indiana communities to host a Community Conversation to help them better understand their past and prepare for their future.

These public conversations, held in 2015, served as a catalyst for community

discussions about how their cities and regions can prepare for the next 200 years.

Selected regions and lead partners included:

- ▶ **Johnson County, ASPIRE Johnson County**
- ▶ **Knox County, Knox County Public Library**
- ▶ **Noble County, Noble County Convention & Visitors Bureau**

**PROGRAM:**

# BICENTENNIAL TEACHER WORKSHOPS

The Indiana Historical Society held teacher workshops leading up to the bicentennial in 10 locations across the state, and invited Indiana Humanities to attend and present information about our ALL-INgaged curriculum. The curriculum, created with support from Lilly Endowment, Inc., uses the challenges and ideas from ALL-IN to activate students as change-makers for their communities and to increase their understanding and knowledge about civic health.

**PROGRAM:**

# NEXT INDIANA TRIVIA

From January through August, on the second Monday of the month, we tested Hoosiers' knowledge on all things Indiana as part of the Next Indiana Trivia night series at Sun King Brewing. Each night featured a unique topic—think transit, education, sports—and participants answered questions about our state's past, present and future.

**PROGRAM:**

# OFFICIAL POET FOR THE 100TH RUNNING OF THE INDIANAPOLIS 500



In 2016, there was another iconic milestone celebration—the 100th running of the Indianapolis 500. In partnership with the 100th Running Host Committee, we invited poets everywhere to submit an original poem inspired by the “Greatest Spectacle in Racing.”

The contest revived a tradition from the 1920s, when a poem was included in the race day program.

From the roar of the engines and cheers of the crowd, to the legendary drivers and track lore, down to the special bond between the city of Indianapolis and racing fans around the world, there was much to ignite the imagination of poets and creators. More than 200 poets from across the world (and from ages 8 to 85) submitted an Indy 500-themed poem. Our all-star judges (which included an Indiana poet laureate and best-selling

author John Green) chose internationally touring performance poet Adam Henze of Bloomington, Ind. as the winner. The judges also named a second-place winner and 31 poems “honorable mention” to create a starting field of 33 poems—just like the race itself.

Henze went on to be featured in news media across the country and around the world. He read his poem on NPR, on Indianapolis TV stations and live at Qualification Day at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

▶ [Read the poem: IndianaHumanities.org/500poet](https://www.IndianaHumanities.org/500poet)

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