



The Torch

The official newsletter for Indiana state employees

WHEN AGE IS A HEADLINE: Surveyor stays on job as century mark looms

By Bill McCleery

Amid other historic milestones for the Hoosier State of recent note, here's one that's not gotten quite as much coverage as, say, Indiana State Parks' centennial.

DNR surveyor Robert Vollmer turns 100 years old on May 20, 2017.

"I didn't aim to stay on this long," said Vollmer, who joined DNR in 1962, and is, of course, the state's record holder as its oldest full-time employee. "But it kind of stays in your blood, you know?"

On a routine basis, Vollmer drives to DNR properties in every corner of Indiana and tromps into woods and weeds, many times alone, to perform topographic, site and property-line surveys. He collects technical field data for the DNR's Division of Engineering and provides boundary lines and other site information for the DNR landholding divisions—State Parks, Fish & Wildlife, Forestry, Nature Preserves, Outdoor Recreation and Land Acquisition.

Asked when he might retire,



Vollmer says he intends to hang it up when he feels too old to drive or too weary of enduring bites from ticks and mosquitoes during a day's work.

"Some days I feel I'm getting very close to retirement," he said.

But he loves his job too much to walk away. Duty has taken him to 90 of Indiana's 92 counties—all but Dearborn and Switzerland.

Continued on page 8

In this issue

- 2** • THE ARTIST BEHIND THE ARTWORK: Jerry Williams' story
- 3** • Historic Preservation Month photo contest
- 4** • Vehicle safety tips
- 5** • Healthy resolutions this New Year
- 7** • Ready. Set. Go365.

The Torch is published monthly by the State Personnel Department and is available online at www.in.gov/spd

Got a story?

Submit your story ideas to: spdcommunications@spd.in.gov



Like
Invest In Your Health



Follow
@INSPDBenefits



Follow
Invest In Your Health

THE ARTIST BEHIND THE ARTWORK: Jerry Williams' story

By Rachel Zajac, executive assistant at SPD



Every month in *The Torch* we feature a piece of artwork by your State of Indiana colleague Jerry Williams. Over the years many have come to adore him through his work, but less have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Williams.

If you have had this pleasure, Jerry has more than likely greeted you during a visit to the State Personnel Department (SPD) or helped you navigate PeopleSoft as an applicant before you even began your career with the state.

A longstanding SPD employee, Jerry first began his work with the state in October 1992 as an intern. Making an impression quickly, he was asked to fill an interim role that November and began full time the following May as a clerical assistant. In 1994, he took his current position as SPD's receptionist.

This January marks the 16-year anniversary of the inclusion of Jerry's drawings in *The Torch*. So, it seems a formal introduction is long overdue, not to mention requested by his many fans.

AND NOW, I AM A PUBLISHED ARTIST
Jerry first began drawing for *The*

The Torch

Torch, then titled *The Interchange*, when SPD's former Communications Director Jeff Sullivan approached him after seeing some of his artwork. Jerry recalls, "He had asked if I would try to draw something. My first submission was the New Year's Eve Baby and Father Time. It was released in January 2001."

The printing of his first piece in *The Interchange* was an event and accomplishment very close to Jerry's heart.

"My mom always wanted me to be a published artist, and now I am. I am a published artist and have a whole portfolio," he said. "As a baby, Mom would stick a pen in my hand as I sat in the highchair and I would start to draw."

Though she wanted him to be published, he never wanted to make a career out of it.

"I could never do it for money. I have to be in the mood and I have to be inspired. I think people who get paid do it for a different reason. It is something I do because I want to do it - not because I have to do it."

Along with his mother, one other mentor made a significant impression, molding Jerry's love for drawing. He fondly remembers his high school art teacher who helped encourage his interest in art, "A.

Jean Demegret. She was so neat and had such a passion for art."

Jerry has continued to find support and friendship through his artwork. Before each publication in *The Torch*, he runs his work by SPD colleague Joyce Crull.

"Joyce is a fellow artist and always gives me wonderful feedback. I make sure to show her every drawing before submitting."

IT STARTS WITH ONE SIMPLE LINE

When asked how he thinks up his submissions, Jerry responded in true artist form. "To tell you the truth, I don't. Sometimes I'll just sit and think of what I want to do, and it starts with one simple line and just keeps building out from there. You have to start somewhere, so I start with one simple line. I sit and let my imagination go. Usually I can tell if a drawing is no good. If I get to a point and keep going, I know it's the one."

His favorite picture to draw is one with flowers, and he creates these much the same. However, Jerry



THE ARTIST BEHIND THE ARTWORK (continued)

admits not all drawings are easy for him, especially flags. Capturing the windblown fabric and including every star often present a minor challenge for him. He also doesn't enjoy drawing people.



February 2014 submission

Jerry's favorite drawing for *The Torch* pictures a rose and four bleeding heart flowers published in February 2014. His other favorite subjects to draw include animals and fruit for Thanksgiving issues.

Jerry's most favorite drawing he has ever done did not begin as a drawing

for *The Torch*, though.

"It originated as an outlined drawing I did in the 80s for my mother's birthday," he said. "I later colored it in for *The Torch* and it was published in July 2012."

THAT'S ALL I'VE EVER USED

Most impressive of all are the tools Jerry uses to create his drawings.

"I use a BIC Round Stic medium pen and I color them in with Crayola colored pencils," he said. "That's all I've ever used."

He says the pen allows him to highlight certain areas and make them stand out, providing a stained glass window effect.

"It makes everything look so much better and adds depth instead of leaving a drawing flat."

Jerry offers one important tip to the aspiring artist: "Always shade in a circular

movement- you don't get the same effect if you use a straight line. Circles are better for blending colors and lines don't tend to want to merge."



July 2012 submission

Historic Preservation Month photo contest in 2017

Did you get a new camera over the holidays? Trying to figure out what it can do? While you're testing it out, find an old building, bridge, cemetery, or landscape and snap a few photos to submit to the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology's (DHPA) annual Historic Preservation Month photo contest.

Make sure it is in Indiana and 50 years old (what is generally considered "historic"-it is a historic preservation photo contest after all).

If you are having trouble coming up with a subject, consider round/polygonal barns. Our poster for Historic Preservation Month in 2017 is going to feature round/polygonal barns. If you live near one or see one out on your adventures, snap a photo and send it in.

The basic requirements are:

- Images must be 8x10 prints, mounted or matted on or with a white 11x14 matte board.
- The registration form must be

attached to each photo.

- Limit of three photos per person.

For a complete list of guidelines and the registration form, go to <http://www.in.gov/dnr/historic/3994.htm>

Photos must be submitted by April 7, 2017.

Questions? Contact Amy Borland at aborland@dnr.in.gov.

These tips keep you safe if your vehicle becomes disabled

Courtesy of Indiana State Police and the Department of Transportation

Every motorist has the responsibility to be safe. Safe driving includes behaviors while operating a vehicle as well as properly maintaining a safe vehicle and knowing what to do in an emergency.

Because highways can be dangerous for pedestrians, motorists involved in crashes and breakdowns need to be knowledgeable about how to safely respond. Most drivers are likely to experience this kind of situation at some point, and it is impossible to establish recommendations for all conditions. However, it is important that all motorists make good choices to prevent tragedy.

What to do if your vehicle is disabled

If removing a vehicle from traffic is not safe or possible, or if people are injured, immediately call 9-1-1.

The safest place is off the roadway - especially on busy interstates. If possible, safely attempt to reach an exit ramp or shoulder and get as far away from moving traffic as is safely possible.

- Stay in the vehicle,
- Remain buckled up,
- Turn on flashing lights, and
- Call for help.

If anyone decides to exit the vehicle,

- Stay as far away from traffic as possible,
- Put your parked car between you and moving traffic,
- Do not turn your back to oncoming vehicles, and
- Always be aware of your surroundings.

If you and your passengers decide to leave the vehicle, leave a note on the dashboard explaining what happened and include contact information.

The Torch

Fender bender? Move vehicles to the shoulder

INDOT and the Indiana State Police want motorists to be safe and keep traffic moving smoothly on busy highways. When crashes block traffic, it increases the risk of secondary crashes. If possible, move minor collisions off the roadway or to the shoulder.

Indiana law states that drivers involved in crashes that do not result in injury or death shall not obstruct traffic more than necessary. Off the roadway or on a shoulder is a much safer place to exchange information or wait for help. Don't worry - your insurance coverage will not be compromised if you move your vehicle to the shoulder.

Move over for emergency vehicles

To protect lives, Indiana's Move Over Law requires motorists to approach cautiously when an emergency vehicle is stopped with emergency lights flashing. Change lanes away from the emergency vehicle if you can do so safely. If not, reduce your speed 10 mph under the posted speed limit and proceed with caution. Emergency vehicles include:

- Police vehicles
- Ambulances
- Fire trucks and rescue equipment
- Highway incident-response vehicles
- Highway maintenance vehicles
- Utility service vehicles
- Vehicle recovery equipment (tow trucks)

Violating the law can result in a fine and your license will be suspended up to 2 years if you cause damage to emergency equipment, injury or death to an emergency worker.

Even though Indiana's Move Over Laws state that motorists must move over and yield for only emergency vehicles, drivers should always be courteous to those who are broken down on the shoulder. Give them room so that they can safely repair their vehicles. Be an attentive and courteous driver and help prevent tragedies.

Crashes are no accident!

Each year, more than 800 people lose their lives in crashes on Indiana roadways. Most of those crashes were caused by impaired driving, speeding, and aggressive or distracted driving. The following safety tips can help prevent the most common fatal errors drivers make and help drivers reach their destinations safely.

- **Buckle Up!** Make sure you and your passengers are properly restrained.
- **Never drive impaired.** Avoid alcohol and drugs. Use a designated driver.
- **Avoid distractions:** Smartphones, audio devices and radio, and food and beverages.
- **Drive defensively.** Aggressive drivers take unnecessary risks and often cause crashes.
- **Share the road.** Look out for pedestrians, bicycles, motorcycles, and commercial trucks.

For more safe driving tips, visit www.YouHoldTheKey.in.gov.

Find regional INDOT media contacts at <http://www.in.gov/indot/2364.htm>.

Find regional Indiana State Police Public Information Officer contacts at <http://www.in.gov/isp/2365.htm>.

#INDOTDrivesINDIANA

Make successful healthy resolutions this New Year

Every year, Hoosiers make New Year's resolutions. Losing weight, eating healthy, getting fit and quitting tobacco all make the top of the list. But, by the end of January, the majority of those goals have been abandoned, leaving many feeling discouraged and disappointed in themselves.

It doesn't have to be this way. Sometimes healthy resolutions can be unrealistic or too broad to actually accomplish. So think of several small, more achievable goals that can eventually lead you to your ultimate goal - living a healthier life.

The first step to success with your New Year's resolutions? Don't think of them as just "New Year" resolutions. View it as a healthy lifestyle change you are committed to work at throughout the year. Your health is worth it.

- 1. Move more throughout the day.** This doesn't have to involve hitting the gym for 45 minutes every day, although that can certainly help. This can be as simple as walking up the escalator or taking the stairs. Park farther away in parking lots. Go for a stroll around the office once an hour. Get outside for ten minutes a day. Stretch while watching TV. The little things all add up. Do squats while brushing your teeth — make use of those two minutes!
- 2. Be more thoughtful about what you eat and drink.** Drink a glass of water upon waking in the morning. Drink your coffee or tea without sweetener. Focus on chewing all the food in your mouth before taking another bite

and savor the taste. Ditch soda for a day, or a week. Take healthy snacks to work – a homemade trail mix is easy and requires no cooking. Make a list for the grocery store and stick to it. You'll save money and ignore any last minute cravings.

- 3. Take care of yourself.** Feel stress coming on? Focus on your breathing. Stay off of social media for 24 hours and see how it feels not being "connected." Read a book – it's good for your mind. Plan a vacation — little or big. Taking a break from the "norm" helps you feel replenished and rejuvenated. Give yourself an at-home spa day — a bath can help you relax and wind down after a long day. Spend more time with family and friends – pick up the phone and call a friend you haven't talked to in a while.
- 4. Sleep more.** This one is always hard, but try these simple tips to be more restful. Turn off all electronics 20 minutes before you go to bed. Put the alarm in a location where you're forced to get up to turn it off. You'll be less likely to hit the snooze button. Speaking of the snooze button, resist the urge to use it. That eight extra minutes of sleep may seem really appealing, but it disrupts your circadian rhythm and can make you more tired during the day.
- 5. Quit tobacco use.** Did you know it can take a former smoker as many as seven quit attempts before they are successful? If you're a tobacco user, the best thing you can do in 2017 is to make a quit plan. **Quit plans** can improve your chances

of quitting tobacco for good. They combine quit smoking strategies to keep you motivated to quit, and they also help identify challenges you might face and ways to overcome them. A trained Quit Coach at 1-800-Quit-Now can help create the right quit plan for you.

Tips for success:

- Make the decision- Set a quit date and stick to it. Think about your reasons and motivations for quitting.
- Build a support system- Tell your family, friends and co-workers that you plan to quit. Get the professional help you need to succeed.
- Ask for medication and use it correctly- Talk with your health care provider about nicotine replacement therapy or other options.
- Learn new behaviors and skills- Change your daily routine and remove triggers of using tobacco.
- Be prepared to fight- Relapse or difficult times may occur, but don't let small mistakes discourage you or make you give up altogether.

You can get free, confidential help by calling 1-800-Quit-Now or QuitNowIndiana.com.

Resolutions can be hard, but be patient. It can take some time to make a complete lifestyle change. Remember, it's OK to slip up sometimes – just remember to get back on track before you lose your motivation. You can make 2017 your healthiest and happiest year yet.

Thank you to the Indiana State Department of Health for this submission.

Ready. Set.



Log in to Go365 now

HumanaVitality is now Go365. Use the same login credentials created for HumanaVitality to access Go365 at Go365.com. If you changed your password after January 1, 2017 when the new system was offline to state employees, please use the updated password to login.

QUESTIONS ABOUT GO365? ASK YOUR AGENCY'S WELLNESS CHAMPION

Volunteers known as Wellness Champions are colleagues within your agency who are committed to helping navigate your wellness related questions. Many changes are coming in 2017 with the new Go365 program, and these are the people you can lean on for assistance - conveniently located right in your office.

Wellness Champions regularly receive updates from the State Personnel Department and Corey Nelson, the State's Go365 representative. They also:

- Answer any questions about the program.
- Help you achieve your wellness goals.
- Help you and/or your family qualify for the 2018 Wellness CDHP.
- Ensure your location, agency, office or team has the resources available to tailor the wellness program to what is happening locally.

Wellness Champions also share your comments, concerns and suggestions regarding the program. This direct connection between you and the Invest In Your Health team allows your suggestions to be heard and discussed. Get to know your Wellness Champion, seek their guidance and possibly share a story about your involvement.

[Check the list to find your agency's Wellness Champion.](#) If your location is not represented and you wish to volunteer, e-mail spdcommunications@spd.in.gov to discuss joining our Wellness Champion network.

Remember, tune in for Go365 and other wellness updates by visiting the [Invest In Your Health website](#) and reading our other publications. Stay connected by liking [Invest In Your Health](#) and [Go365](#) on Facebook, as well as following [@INSPDBenefits on Twitter](#).

Wishing you the best health in 2017,
The Invest In Your Health team

Start 2017 earning Go365 points with Elements Financial

Each month state employees have the opportunity to earn 35 Go365 points by attending financial wellness seminars hosted by Elements Financial.

Seminars are hosted in-person as Lunch and Learns on the Indiana Government Center campus or online as modules.

Check the ["Upcoming Events" calendar](#) on the Invest In Your Health website to RSVP for in-person sessions. Earn points online by visiting the [Elements Financial Education Center](#).

Read *The Torch* and Invest In Your Health online to see which financial wellness topic is featured each month. (Find this month's topic on page 7.)

Take steps forward each month toward improving your financial wellness and reaching your personal financial goals. Remember, the financial decisions you make today, even the small ones, have a long-term impact on your life.

*Participation is tracked and Go365 points are awarded the following month.



Elements Financial talks budgeting for January's financial wellbeing seminar

It's the beginning of the new year, which, for many, inspires fresh starts and the opportunity to focus on self-improvement. If you are among that group, let Elements Financial help you make your financial wellness a priority in 2017.

Kick-off the year by attending "Budgeting: Spend, Track and Save," on Jan. 25, the first of many financial wellness workshops hosted by Elements Financial this year.

In this workshop, learn tips and suggestions to help build a budget, reduce and eliminate debt and save money through a goal-oriented approach. Also learn about various expense trackers at your disposal and the importance of adopting a household/family strategy to improve your ability to succeed in building a sustainable plan.



Best of all, earn points toward your Go365 goals (up to 35 points monthly) by attending one workshop during the month.

Reserve your spot for either of the two sessions on Jan 25 via Invest In Your Health. Sign up for [Noon session](#) | [1:15 session](#). Space is limited and available on a first come, first serve basis. Alternatively, you can earn your monthly points via the [online financial wellness tutorial](#).

For more information, [visit us online](#) or stop by the Elements Financial Credit Union Branch, located next to the IGC-South cafe.

-Ron Ellis, Financial Wellness Manager

2017 state holidays

New Year's Day: Sunday, Jan. 1**
 New Year's Day: Monday, Jan. 2*
 MLK, Jr. Day: Monday, Jan. 16
 Good Friday: Friday, April 14
 Memorial Day: Monday, May 29
 Independence Day: Tuesday, July 4
 Labor Day: Monday, Sept. 4
 Columbus Day: Monday, Oct. 9
 Veterans Day: Friday, Nov. 10*
 Veterans Day: Saturday, Nov. 11**
 Thanksgiving Day: Thursday, Nov. 23
 Lincoln's Birthday: Friday, Nov. 24
 Christmas Day: Monday, Dec. 25
 Washington's Birthday: Tuesday, Dec. 26

* Operations regularly scheduled Monday – Friday.

** Operations regularly scheduled on Saturday/Sunday.

New and improved ChildCare finder website now available

The Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning recently launched an improved [ChildCare Finder website](#). This new site represents a major step forward in helping Hoosier families find child care and early education providers for their children. The website allows families to perform detailed searches to help them find child care options that meet their specific needs.

Families are also able to search licensed centers and home providers, registered ministries and exempt providers by location, type of provider, hours, licensing status and whether



or not the provider participates in [Paths to Quality](#). In addition, families can find inspection reports and any validated complaints or enforcement actions for each provider.

[Click here](#) to find a short video providing detailed instructions on how to use the new site.

WHEN AGE IS A HEADLINE: Bob Vollmer story (continued from page 1)



"I don't care where I go," he said. "It's not the area, it's the people you work with who make the difference in whether you enjoy it or not. And I've worked with a lot of good people."

SECRETS TO A LONG LIFE

Vollmer partly attributes his longevity to genes. His mother lived to 108. But he also credits staying active and making sensible choices.

"Your body is similar to an automobile engine," he said. "You must treat it accordingly. Keep it running to circulate your blood and keep the vital parts well-oiled by staying in motion.

"I've always managed to breathe plenty of fresh air along with some of the filthy stuff. I never have smoked or used tobacco. I always thought it was stupid to

intentionally inhale something that you knew was harmful."

Keeping one's mind active is as important as physical exercise, he added. Vollmer enjoys staying up with the latest technology, working from his laptop in the field and employing high-tech surveying tools. He described a robotic instrument called the Trimble S6 total station that swivels on its tripod from a stationary location to follow him wherever he ventures with a handheld GPS device.

"That handheld GPS enables us to get our position on Earth," he added. "It communicates with satellites in space, both U.S. and Russian. They let us use theirs, and we let them use ours. I used to have to work out geolocation using trigonometry. It might take me hours

whereas now I just take my finger and, pow, instantly I've got it right in front of me."

Vollmer's supervisor marvels at the man's energy.

"He never wants to be idle," said DNR Engineering director Dale Gick. "He's always on the go, always moving. He works all the time, nights and weekends, everything. His institutional knowledge is incredible."

Sometimes his boss worries the surveyor will overdo it.

"I try to get him to be cautious when it's too cold or too hot out," Gick said. "And I try to get him to take someone with him, such as a property manager, at whatever site he's working. But he always says they were busy and he didn't want to bother anybody."

Vollmer is a valuable mentor to younger employees, Gick added.

"It's amazing how someone at 99 years old can be so excited and get up to speed quickly on new technology," he said. "We actually haven't had training yet for that new GPS unit, but Bob's already out using it."

Gick is less than half his employee's age.

"I'm 46," he said. "I can't imagine what it would be like to work another 50 years."

According to Ashley Hungate, communications director for the State Personnel Department, the record for seniority accumulated by a state employee belongs to Louis Douglas, who retired on Oct. 19, 2012, after 65 continuous years with the Department of Health. Douglas, however, was 89 at the time.

WHEN AGE IS A HEADLINE: Bob Vollmer story (continued)

Vollmer was already 45 when he joined DNR in 1962—and he had already worked for more than a quarter-century in other roles, including (like Douglas) serving in World War II.

EARLY YEARS

Growing up in Washington, in Daviess County, the future DNR staffer worked his first job as a gas station attendant while still in high school. It was in this role, he says, where he regularly encountered Matthew Welsh, who would become governor by the time Vollmer became a state employee. He chuckled at his first recollections the state's future leader.

"He was just a snot-nosed kid going to law school and was dating a girl who went to my high school," he said. "He drove his dad's big Cadillac and always had to get just enough gasoline to get his dad's car home. One time he held his hand out with a dime and asked for a dime's worth. When he became governor, I told him about that."

Like many in his generation, Vollmer enlisted in the armed services in 1941 upon hearing about Pearl Harbor. But he did so for three branches—the Army, Navy and Marines. He served with the Navy, the first one to swear him in.

"I was all over the Pacific," he said. "My first tour of duty was on the last island in the Aleutian chain, about 700 miles from Japan. I was a machine gunner."

During his wartime service, he survived an avalanche on the island of Attu that took the lives of several others. He did so by carving out an open space while buried under the snow and then dropping handfuls of it on his face and seeing in which direction it fell. By determining which way gravity carried the snow, he knew to dig in the other

direction to reach open air.

Perhaps his most difficult wartime stint occurred in the Philippines.

"We had to get used to mosquitoes in the jungle. They were so bad," he said.

"We had mosquito patrols when we were fighting around those swampy areas and jungles. We had guys who would spray Johnson's Baby Oil wherever water was standing to kill all the larvae."

To this day, Vollmer takes medication prescribed for malaria. He might be fine without it at this point, he says, but a doctor told him it would help keep the disease at bay, so he continues with the regimen.

Another memento he keeps from his wartime service is his prized 1942 Willys military jeep that, like him, also saw action in the Philippines with U.S. forces. He acquired the combat-damaged vehicle shortly after war's end and refurbished it. He still drives it as often as possible, sometimes leading parades and participating in other military and veterans' events.

"I've had it 70 years, and it runs like a sewing machine," he said, adding that he once rebuilt the engine. "I told my wife that if I pass away first, make the grave big enough for myself AND the jeep, and put me behind the steering wheel."

BACK TO INDIANA

Upon his return from military service, Vollmer lived in California for several years. While there, he married his hometown sweetheart, Helen Roberta Burress, and, at her encouragement, studied surveying and related subjects at the University of California at Berkeley.

He and his wife moved back to Indiana, and he transferred to Purdue. With

the couple's first child on the way, they purchased property in the Happy Hollow area of West Lafayette, near the Wabash River, and began building the couple's first house.

"I worked all summer building that house. That was a rough semester, going to school and trying to build a house," he said.

The months passed faster than he had anticipated, and the Vollmers were forced to move into the house before he had even added the roof.

"Here I was, my wife was pregnant and the snow was about to fly," he said. "So I went across the river in Lafayette to a bar and hired me a couple drunks who said they were carpenters. I asked them if they could read a carpenter's square, and they said they could."

He says he believes in giving people a chance to prove themselves.

"I figured they might be winos, but if they're not drinking on the job and they know what they're doing, I'd sign them up. So I hired those two guys and in about a week I had my roof on."

After he graduated from Purdue in 1952, he moved his family to a farm near Loogootee, in Martin County.

His oldest daughter remembers growing up with a father who loved telling stories, playing pranks and sharing his love of nature with his four children, activities he continues to enjoy.

"My siblings and I think he is the best dad," said Theresa Spurgeon, 66. "He's amazing the way he still enjoys his work. I just retired from teaching last year at age 65 so I feel like the slacker in the family."

WHEN AGE IS A HEADLINE: Bob Vollmer story (continued)

Vollmer provided his children memorable experiences, Spurgeon said.

“Our farm was right there near Hindostan Falls on the East Fork of the White River,” she said. “Our dad used to take us down there in his Jeep. When the water level was low, he would put a picnic table out in the middle of the river, and we would eat lunch with the water running between our feet.”

Her father has the heart of a teacher, she says, adding that he helped inspire her career choice.

“He could tell you any tree that’s in the forest. I remember he helped me with a leaf collection when I was a freshman at Loogootee High School where you had to identify them with their regular names and Latin names. Daddy took me to special parts of the county so we would have a ginkgo leaf or something no one else would have.”

Helen died in 1967. In 1984, Vollmer married Katrina Jo Schuler of Nashville, in Brown County, an area to which the couple soon moved.

‘I NEVER GROW UP’

He has plenty of stories from his 54 years with the DNR.

There’s the time he confronted a man who installed a fence that encroached upon Bass Lake Beach, which was a state property at the time. Only after aggressively pressing his point did he learn the person to whom he was talking had been a top lieutenant of gangster Al Capone.

“This guy was very polite, and I got along with him really well,” Vollmer said. “But I had no idea who he was at the time.”

He still recalls one detail of the fencing the man used: small aluminum tags woven into the chain-link labeling it “Property of the City of Chicago.”

Another incident still troubles Vollmer many years later. Working in a remote area, he and a colleague stumbled upon a toddler, alone, wearing a soiled diaper and covered by red ants. They cleaned up the girl as best they could and called emergency responders. Rescue personnel and child protective services took over from there. He still wonders what happened to her.

Over the course of his career, Vollmer became known for a “trademark” customization of state-owned vehicles. After often forgetting or misplacing pencil sharpeners, he began removing hood ornaments from state vehicles assigned to him and, in their place, bolting crank pencil sharpeners.

“I never had to look for them after that,” he said. “I knew right where they were.”

Vollmer eventually discontinued his practice as technology reduced the need for pencils and changes in vehicle design



DNR Surveyor Bob Vollmer receives the Sagamore of the Wabash award Tuesday, Dec. 20 from Lt. Gov./Gov.-elect Eric Holcomb on behalf of Gov. Mike Pence. Pictured from left to right are DNR Deputy Director John Davis, Lt. Gov./Gov.-elect Eric Holcomb, Bob Vollmer, DNR Director Cam Clark and DNR Division of Engineering Director Dale Gick.

WHEN AGE IS A HEADLINE: Bob Vollmer story (continued)

made it less practical to mount pencil sharpeners on their hoods. Chuckling, he suggested he might resume his tradition before he retires.

Coworkers may be impressed by his longevity at his job, but Vollmer says his neighbors probably just know him as the guy who hosts huge Independence Day celebrations.

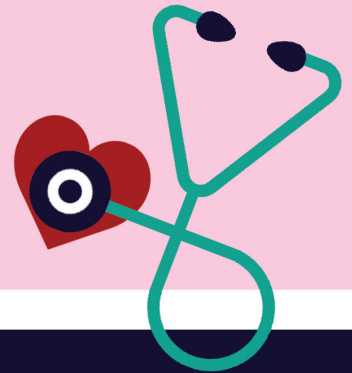
"I get the loudest fireworks I can get," he said. "I like it. I never grow up, I guess. I'm 99, but I still like to shoot firecrackers."

For the most recent display, his children and four grandchildren gathered at his home. Before the fireworks, the group pledged allegiance to the flag as Vollmer's 35-year-old granddaughter, Erin Spurgeon, dressed as the Statue of Liberty, held a torch above her head. She and the three other grandchildren caught lightning bugs in jars, which represented lanterns. Keeping an annual tradition, Vollmer recited "Paul Revere's Ride," the poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow that includes the lantern imagery of "one if by land, two if by sea."

Before heading back to their homes that week, Vollmer's children and grandchildren began making plans for another big celebration—a looming 100th birthday party.

Bill McCleery is the deputy director of communications for the state's Office of Technology, email WMcCleery@iot.IN.gov.

Indiana POWER Women's Caucus HEALTH FAIR



Wednesday, January 18
10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Second Floor, South Atrium of the Statehouse

Open to all POWER members, state employees, legislators and their spouses

Learn about women's wellness issues, making healthy choices, and planning for your physical and financial future

FREE HEALTH SCREENINGS



For more information, contact PowerCaucusIN@gmail.com



PERKS FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES!

Be rewarded with Great Wolf Perks. You're going to love winding down our water slides, dining in one of our Northwoods-themed restaurants and building great family traditions.

State of Indiana

Great Wolf Lodge® amenities include:

- 84-degree colossal indoor water park
- Daily Wolf Walk™ and Story Time
- Spacious Northwoods family suites
- Fantastic specialty-themed restaurants – and much more!

So clear your calendar, pack the swimsuits and head to Great Wolf Lodge.

For more information or reservations, visit greatwolf.com or call 800.905.WOLF (9653).

USE CORPORATE CODE: INDI462B

Save up to 30% OFF

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------|--|
| Charlotte/Concord, NC | Kansas City, KS | Southern California/
Garden Grove, CA |
| Cincinnati/Mason, OH | New England/Fitchburg, MA | Traverse City, MI |
| Colorado Springs, CO | Niagara Falls, Canada | Williamsburg, VA |
| Grand Mound, WA | Pocono Mountains, PA | Wisconsin Dells, WI |
| Grapevine, TX | Sandusky, OH | |
| Georgia/La Grange, GA
(Opening Spring 2018) | | |



Valid through December 30, 2017.

Includes water park admission the day you arrive through the day you depart.

Must present valid membership ID or documentation at check-in.



Offer valid at the properties and dates listed above. Valid on a per night basis and must be mentioned at time of reservation based on 2017 standard rates. Limited number of rooms available for each date. May not be valid during holiday and blackout periods or combined with any other discount or promotional offers. Multiple night minimum stay may apply. Offer based on 4 guests per room and must have one individual 21 years of age or older staying in each room. Offer may be terminated at any time without notice. Offer is not transferable and is not redeemable for cash. Must present valid work ID or documentation at check-in. Limit of 2 rooms per valid ID. Additional charges may apply for themed and premium suites, weekends, and/or holidays.