Samples from The Budget

All of nature seems to be at ease, and a friendly disposition in the enjoyment of nice fall days before the onset of winter. But I am thankful for the long, drawn out fall compared to up north. Not so much corn to harvest through this area, so the farmers have a period of being more relaxed. But about all of them have a sideline for another source of income, so there is no true rest for the weary.

With these nice, still warm days, we will usually find the buzzing of bees wherever there is something blooming. Being used to them, we tend to forget what a truly marvelous little flying machine they are. Their brain is so tiny that we need a magnifying glass to even see it. Yet, what a great source of wisdom lies therein. University researchers wanting to study them, placed a food source 150' away from the hive. In less than a minute the bees had found it. Then it was moved another 150' in the same direction. Again it took less than a minute to find it. They done this 2 more times, always exactly the same distance. Moving it the 5th time, the researchers already found the bees waiting for them at another 150'. The wisdom of such a tiny brain defies all natural explanation.

The drywall in our house will be installed next week. I've been painting basement blocks the last few evenings. Designing and planning our house and property is the most fun I've had in a while.

We'll use the greenhouse as a barn for now to save money for important things like a pond, our garden and flowers, apple, trees, hazelnuts, peaches, pears, plums, cherrys, almonds, walnuts, hicans, mulberries, blueberries, raspberries.... We'll have a real jungle.

We dug a pond last winter. It catches several acres of run-off as its water source. It's fascinating to watch nature. This spring it was loaded with toad tadpoles. A green frog has made its home there, and the numerous water skaters... the pond is a ¼-mile away from any other water source. How did they find the pond this quick? Cattails are growing along the edge. How did cattail seeds find the pond edge less than a year after the pond was dug?

A lot of people have wondered why we built our house next to the road. You want to know why? Because I wanted to! We'll spend summer evenings on the porch enjoying the sunset and waving at all the jolly folks traveling along.

It’s a chilly, foggy fall morning. The hills appear peaceably scenic, overtoned with orange; you’d never guess that they’re populated by a crowd of poor obsessed hunters.

C-- would give you her boots for free. She recently poked her foot inside one, and found there was something there, possibly a wadded-up insole. So she put her hand inside that boot, and if you have ever found sudden, slimy lengths of shake unfolding out of your boot at very close range, you will know exactly how she felt (and looked). She has not been able to wear those boots since.

S-- S--, a brilliant, loquacious local gentleman, recently unearted a 350 gallon kettle and with it, a longing to make soup. So he invited some of the community men and boys to join him. They came, dubiously, with their cabbages and carrots and carving knives, and they made soup. If you do not mind occasional whole tomatoes and pepper stems and other foreign objects, it is very good soup.

Example letter from me:

BEDFORD, INDIANA

October 15, 2026 -- With October, fall weather arrived in Bedford. There were a couple of hot days early in the month but nothing like those last two months of summer when the heat index was always above 100 degrees. I've been off work this past week and the weather has been truly glorious. Cold mornings followed by warm days and plenty of sunshine. It's been a good week to mark items off my to-do list, which had grown quite a bit through that hot stretch.

We had the first fire in our new woodstove this week. It hasn't really been cold enough for it but we wanted to cure the paint on a day when we could keep the doors and windows open. And it *was* stinky. The fumes, which they assure me are nontoxic, set off every smoke alarm in the house, one after the other.

Rachel has been busy gathering seeds from the garden, pulling a few plants, and topping up spots with garden soil. I'm going to do one final check for beans dried on the vine before pulling them up. I experimented with growing a few Doyce Chambers and Pine Mountain pole beans this year but I need to reconsider their placement because the yield was not great.

Several nights ago I went into our detached garage to lock up and discovered a well-fed raccoon in the bird seed. We scared each other and both froze for a moment before I stepped out of the way and said, "Come on out." He obliged and ran off into the night. He must have gotten in by way of the cat door we put in for our neighborhood cat Ralph.

Halloween preparations have begun in our neighborhood. It's a major event here! We live a couple blocks off the historic district which is the real heart of it. I bought one of those click counters in 2024 to keep track of how many kids came to our house. The total for 2024 was 694 and for 2025 it was 724. We have to start buying candy in mid-summer!

Halloween night in the historic district is something to see--like a scene from an 80s movie. Most houses participate by decorating and handing out candy from the porch. Lines of kids up and down the sidewalks, yelling and squealing and high on candy. The Episcopal church plays organ music. The Baptist church has apple bobbing. Based on our daughter's past experience, every year someone hands out whole cans of Coke and someone else hands out tracts. We have a fog machine and a music playlist I've named "Nightmare on M Street." So much fun.

Jeremy Abel