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# The TIMES

Hamilton County's Own Daily Newspaper

NOBLESVILLE, INDIANA

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## Boomer Bits



### Ask Rusty – I'm Returning To Work; What Should I Do About Social Security?

**Dear Rusty:** I started collecting Social Security at age 62 earlier this year. I had an opportunity to partner in a new business this year that will allow me to earn about \$200,000 in 2024. Because this is significantly above the allowed earnings when collecting early benefits, I need advice on how I handle this with the Social Security Administration. Am I supposed to call them and advise them of my change in income for 2024? If so, am I going to be penalized in any way? I expect they will stop all payments in 2024 once I alert them to the change. Will I be eligible for Social Security payments when I retire again? This is planned to take place before I reach full retirement age of 67. For information, my 2023 income will not exceed the 2023 allowable income limit. Signed: Un-retiring Temporarily.



ASK Rusty  
Social Security Advisor

#### Social Security Matters

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

significantly more than the 2024 earnings limit of \$22,320.

The first is to simply contact Social Security and tell them you are returning to the work force and tell them your anticipated 2024 income. They will suspend your SS benefits for all of 2024 (to avoid overpaying you and making you return those 2024 payments later). If you plan to continue in your new business beyond 2024, you can advise them of that as well and they will continue the suspension of your benefits, until such time as you either discontinue working or reach your full retirement age (the earnings test no longer applies after you reach your FRA). At that time, SS will resume your monthly Social Security payments and, at your FRA,

will give you time credit for all months your benefits were suspended, providing you with a higher monthly payment after your full retirement age is attained (with an adjustment for benefits already paid).

Your other option is to contact Social Security soon and request that your recent application for Social Security benefits submitted earlier this year be withdrawn. You have 12 months from the date of your application to do this, but you will need to repay Social Security all money which they paid to you or on your behalf (including your monthly payments, any income tax you had withheld from those payments, and any dependent benefits

➔ See RUSTY Page A4

### BBB Scam Alert: Think Twice Before Buying From These Social Media Ads

Social media advertising is an effective way for small businesses to get the word out about their products. Unfortunately, the same goes for scams. BBB Scam Tracker has received thousands of complaints about misleading Facebook and Instagram ads. In fact, the 2022 BBB Online Scams Report found that online purchase scams were the most common cons reported to Scam Tracker and the category with the most victims. Here is some information about how the scam works:

1) Products that claim to support charity: As you scroll through your Facebook or Instagram feed, you see an ad from a small business selling adorable jewelry, t-shirts, or other merchandise. The best part? Some of the proceeds from the sale will go to a charity that helps rescue animals, foster children, or support another worthy cause. Some consumers even report getting direct messages from sellers promoting the products and asking them to spread the word to friends and family.

You make your purchase. But when your merchandise never gets delivered, the doubts start to build. When you contact the company about your purchase, they are suddenly unreachable or reply with an autoresponder. In reality, the product never existed. It was all a ploy to get

your money.

2) Free trial offers: Many of these misleading advertisements tout celebrity endorsements and promise a trial of the hottest new skincare or nutritional supplement for a minimal investment of shipping fees. Consumers report that once they agree to the terms and conditions of these offers, they realize they have agreed to multiple monthly shipments for products over \$70-\$100 each.

Before you sign up for these "limited time offers," research the company online, see if there are any other consumer complaints, and read the terms and conditions you agree to carefully. That is a red flag if you can't find any terms and conditions. Watch out for pre-checked boxes and ensure you know who and where the company you are purchasing from.

3) Counterfeit merchandise: Name-brand goods are prime targets for unauthorized duplication, from sporting goods to designer apparel and handbags. If you purchase any of these products, you may risk not only receiving a poor-quality product, but it may not meet environmental and safety regulations either.

Look out for red flags. This includes items priced significantly lower than other

➔ See SCAM Page A4

### Resolving To Feel Better In 2024? Consider Adding An Iron Supplement

(StatePoint) New Year's is upon us once again, a time when nearly everyone vows to do better, be better and feel better. Anyone looking to dramatically and easily improve their overall health and wellness would be wise to consider adding an iron supplement to their diet.

\*\*\*

#### A Common Problem

Although few people ever think about their iron intake, assuming eating enough leafy greens or taking a multivitamin will suffice, iron deficiency is the most common nutritional shortfall globally, including in the United States, where it is estimated that 1 in 5 people need more iron to function properly. This holds true across all age ranges and physical conditions, from senior citizens to infants to performance athletes, but most notably this is the case for women of childbearing age.

\*\*\*

#### Why Your Iron Levels Matter

Without sufficient iron, the body cannot produce enough hemoglobin – the substance in red blood cells that enables them to carry oxygen to tissues

➔ See IRON Page A4

### TODAY'S VERSE

Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ



### FACES OF HAMILTON COUNTY

People who call our community their own. What makes Natalie Piggush smile? "Making other people laugh," said the 27-year-old Fishers resident. Born in Indianapolis, she was raised in Fishers and graduated in 2014 from Guerin Catholic High School in Noblesville and in 2018 from Purdue University with a degree in public relations. She is a senior account manager and internship coordinator for Dittoe Public Relations in Broad Ripple, working there since graduation. "We work with clients to get their stories in local, national and trade media." She was found rehearsing for Carmel Community Players' next production, "Moon Over Buffalo," a comedy opening at The Cat in Carmel. "I play Rosalind, the daughter of famed former Broadway stars Charlotte and George Hay - she's come back to show off her new fiance who she loves (or does she?) and has sworn off theater forever (or has she?)," said Natalie, a newlywed herself. "Yes, I'm a newlywed. After nearly six years of dating, my husband, Nate, and I got married this July at Holy Spirit at Geist followed by a beautiful reception at Daniel's Vineyard. It was the happiest, best, most wonderful day of our lives! We will remember it forever." Natalie's previous shows, as cast member Natalie Weber, include "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" (as Joanna Drayton), "A Little Christmas Spirit" (as Mona), "The Chronicles of Narnia" (as Lucy) and "Our Town" (as Emily Webb). She thanks Nate for running lines with her and keeping the house in order as she runs off to rehearsal every night. She's also done improv comedy for many years as well (shoutout to her former troupe at Purdue, The Crazy Monkeys). She and Nate consider themselves "foodies." She said, "We love trying out new restaurants throughout the city. We love The Nesst in Noblesville, but we also make tacos together at least once a week at home." CCP's "Moon Over Buffalo" continues through Dec. 17. "Can't wait for audiences to come out and see this hilarious show. There's so much chaos and physical comedy and costume changes and so much more ... You'll laugh out loud, I can guarantee it."

### And Another Thing...

#### 1.Immediate Opening!

The Times has an immediate opening for someone who is good with computers and creative to help build our daily pages. The job pays between \$12 and \$15 an hour, depending on experience. If interested, please send resume to ttimmons@thetimes24-7.com.

### INSIDE TODAY

- Service Directory.....A5
- Home.....A6
- Travel.....A7

### TODAY'S HEALTH TIP

Eating whole grains instead of refined white starches results in less belly fat.

Today's health tip was brought to you by Dr. John Roberts. Be sure to catch his column each week in The Times and online at www.thetimes24-7.com



### OBITUARIES

Melvin Allen McCorkle

The Times appreciates all our customers. Today, we'd like to personally thank **KERWIN & CHERYL KAUFMAN** for subscribing!



### The Daily Almanac

Sunrise/Sunset  
RISE: 7:56 a.m.  
SET: 5:23 p.m.



High/Low  
Temperatures  
High: 61 °F  
Low: 54 °F



#### Today is....

- Christmas Card Day
- National Llama Day
- World Techno Day



#### What Happened On This Day

- 1979 Smallpox declared eradicated. The World Health Organization officially certified that after a number of concentrated vaccination campaigns around the world smallpox had been eradicated.
- 1965 Charlie Brown Christmas makes air for the first time on television. The popular animated musical special about Christmas was based on Charles M. Schulz's comic strip called Peanuts. The special was critically acclaimed as a telling commentary on the loss of the spirit of Christmas among Americans. It is now screened every year at Christmas time around the world.
- 1893 Auguste Vaillant bombs the French Chamber of Deputies. Auguste Vaillant, a French anarchist, bombed the French Chamber of Deputies. No one was hurt in the attack, but Vaillant was sentenced and executed for his actions.



#### Births On This Day

- 1934 Dame Judi Dench English actress
- 1608 John Milton English poet

#### Deaths On This Day

- 2012 Patrick Moore English astronomer, television host
- 1998 Archie Moore American boxer

### TODAY'S QUOTE

"I want to become small again this Christmas so that I can feel again the entire joy of Christmas without the worries of the world on my mind." -Unknown

### TODAY'S JOKE

What do snowmen wear on their heads? Ice caps!



7 DAY FORECAST						
58 WARM & WINDY FRI	54/61 BACU BREWET SAT	32/38 WINDY COLD SUN	26/39 SUNNY BUT COOL MON	28/46 MAINLY SUNNY TUE	29/44 RAILY SUNNY WED	28/48 SEASONAL THU

## OBITUARIES

### Melvin Allen McCorkle

June 12, 1960, Friday, December 1, 2023

Melvin Allen McCorkle, age 63, passed away unexpectedly at his home in Westfield, Indiana, on Friday afternoon, December 1, 2023. Born June 12, 1960, in Noblesville, Indiana, he was the son of the late Loren E. "Mac" McCorkle and Alverta Jane "Janie" (Favors) McCorkle-Cooper.



After graduating from Sheridan High School with the Class of 1980, Melvin proudly served his country in the United States Marine Corps.

Many of the residents of Boone and Hamilton County probably remember when the more rural areas were served by independent waste and trash haulers. Melvin had one of those routes, providing top notch service for many years. He later explored a brief career change in southern Indiana; he farmed around the Mt. Vernon area for several years and had the time of his life doing it. In addition to farming, he also worked as a stocker for Meijer until his health started to decline.

Melvin loved pitching horseshoes and managed to bring home a trophy or two over the years. He made many great memories and friendships during his years pitching with the Sheridan Horseshoe League.

Melvin was a collector of both Native American memorabilia, including dream catchers and anything having to do with eagles, and Coca Cola collectables of all kinds. He liked his oldies music and never tired of watching action movies, but when NASCAR season kicked into gear, that's where his attention would focus. He was a Dale Earnhardt, Sr. fan through and through, and watching races was just never the same after he was gone.

Melvin is survived by his brother, Darel McCorkle (Debbie) of Kokomo; many nieces and nephews; and by his feline furbaby, Thunder. He really loved that cat.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Loren E. "Mac" McCorkle and Alverta Jane "Janie" (Favors) McCorkle-Cooper; his maternal and paternal grandparents; as well as several aunts and uncles.

Visitation will be held from 2:00 - 4:00 pm on Sunday, December 10, 2023, at Kercheval Funeral Home, 306 E. 10th Street, Sheridan, Indiana.

Graveside services are being planned for a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be presented to the American Lung Association, of to Kercheval Funeral Home, P.O. Box 42, Sheridan, Indiana 46069, to help defray funeral costs.

## Hamilton County Sheriff's Christmas Express

On December 12th & 13th 2023, the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office Community Foundation will help save Christmas for 48 children around Hamilton County!

Santa's little helpers shopped for gifts at Target and collected warm winter coats. HCSO staff filled personalized stockings and wrapped the presents. The next step will involve the Hamilton County Sheriff's Christmas Express! Santa Claus, Deputy Justice (mascot), patrol deputies, correctional officers and family members will be loading large red bags full of toys into police vehicles. The jolly group will then hand deliver the gifts on the front doorsteps of the participating families.

A special thank you goes out to the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office Citizens Academy Alumni Association, Target, Hamilton County Youth

Assistance Program, and many contributions from the community for helping to make this event possible each year!

The Hamilton County Sheriff's Office Community Foundation's is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization, and their goals involve:

- Provide financial aid and help for those in need in our community, particularly children.
- Support our hard-working employees at the Sheriff's Office.
- Build stronger relationships between our deputies, corrections officers and staff with all members of the community.

ALL ABOARD!!!!!! The Hamilton County Sheriff's Christmas Express is coming to a neighborhood near you! News media outlets are invited to attend the joyous departure from HCSO at 5:15PM.

**Dreaming of a new home?**

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Photo courtesy of Noblesville Schools

**Noblesville Schools Supt. Dr. Daniel Hile visits with White River Elementary students who demonstrated an interactive traveling STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) museum.**



The Times photo by Betsy Reason

**North Elementary Hand Chimes Choir directed by Janene Krent performs Wednesday during the Noblesville Chamber of Commerce Holiday Luncheon.**



The Times photo by Betsy Reason

**Noblesville High School NHS Singers mixed varsity show choir perform holiday favorites at Wednesday's Noblesville Chamber of Commerce Holiday Luncheon and State of the Schools at the Noblesville Schools Community Center.**



Photo courtesy of Noblesville Schools

**Noblesville High School NHS Singer soloist Lauryn Kinzie sings "Silent Night" with the NHS Singers varsity mixed show choir at Wednesday's Noblesville Chamber of Commerce Holiday Luncheon.**



The Times photo by Betsy Reason

**Noblesville students and Hamilton East Library staff enjoy hands-on activities at Noblesville Schools' interactive traveling STEAM museum at Wednesday's Noblesville Chamber of Commerce Holiday Luncheon.**



The Times photo by Betsy Reason

**Noblesville Schools Supt. Dr. Daniel Hile, before taking the podium to deliver his State of the Schools presentation this week, answered the callout from NHS Singers choral director John Neubauer seeking a baritone to sing with the choir.**

## Chamber Holiday Luncheon Is All About Noblesville Schools



**BETSY REASON**  
From The Editor's Desk...

Last Wednesday's Noblesville Chamber of Commerce Holiday Luncheon was one of the best-ever Chamber luncheons.

I may be biased. Our daughter, a Noblesville High School senior, is a member of the NHS Singers 60-member mixed varsity show choir, directed by John Neubauer. The choir performed after lunch.

Plus, our daughter is an alum of North Elementary music teacher Janene Krent's 11-member Hand Chimes Choir, which performed before lunch.

From the moment that the 200 guests arrived at the Chamber's sold-out event, it was obvious that the luncheon would be all about Noblesville Schools.

This year, the Chamber's Holiday Luncheon moved to the Noblesville Schools Community Center, where the NHS Miller Man greeted guests just outside the entrance. By the way, this year's mascot position is chosen by audition, is played by two students, and their identity isn't divulged. Just inside the entrance, the award-winning NHS Cheerleaders in uniform, pompoms in hand, greeted and cheered arriving guests.

Students and guests had the opportunity to visit an interactive traveling STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) muse-

um set up in the edge of the room.

"It will travel to all of the elementary schools so that all of the kids get the chance to do all of the activities," said Abbi Yiesla, a 2014 NHS graduate and one of the STEAM teachers at White River Elementary. Two of eight different STEAM stations were on display, including a giant marble run and a wind blower, created by Wes Dicken, Elementary STEAM lead teacher for Noblesville Schools. He assembles K-5 STEAM curriculum for district elementary schools and in 2018, while teaching full-day kindergarten, was named Innovative Teacher of the Year for Noblesville Schools. The STEAM museum will further the district's interactive learning options for students and was funded thanks to Noblesville Schools Education Foundation (NSEF), according to district spokesperson Marnie Cooke.

District Supt. Dr. Daniel Hile, before taking the podium to deliver his State of the Schools presentation, answered the callout from NHS Singers choral director John Neubauer seeking a baritone to join the Singers performance of "Silent Night." Hile's surprise performance was the former high school choir director and former Indiana University Singing Hoosier falling into the back row, singing next to NHS junior Ehren Knerr. Just moments earlier, NHS Singers performed "Ring Them Bells" with soloist Soren McLaughlin, "Mary, Did You Know," with soloist

Hannah Ropte, and the highly popular "Sleigh Ride." NHS Singers' Lauryn Kinzie was the soloist for "Silent Night."

On the tables, guests found literature with fun facts about Noblesville Schools -- total enrollment of 10,379 students (NHS is over capacity with more than 3,200 students), 50+ home languages spoken, 27 percent of students receive free/reduced lunch, 18 percent are high ability -- and a giant QR code to sign up for the superintendent's new district newsletter and a beautiful "Happy Holidays" snowman card with art design by Noble Crossing Elementary student Bentley Hackman.

Noblesville Schools has about 1,800 employees, 10 schools, three district buildings, 17 athletic fields and serves about 50 square miles.

A new sixth-grade Civics course focuses on community issues and duties and rights as Americans, and a new national grant for innovative civics education comes in 2024. Of the \$160,796,047 district budget, \$73.6 million goes to education. Beginning in 2024, teachers' starting annual salary will be \$48,000, with new dependent leave, enhanced retirement and two-year contracts. There is new dedicated space for multilingual family support, and a new adult education initiative is coming in 2024.

Hile also provided interesting trivia, including that Noblesville High School has won 23 state championships and 13 of them in the past four



The Times photo by Betsy Reason

**Beginning this school year, the Noblesville High School Miller Man mascot position is chosen by audition and is played by two students, and their identity was not divulged. The mascot greets guests to Wednesday's Noblesville Chamber of Commerce Holiday Luncheon and State of the Schools at the Noblesville Schools Community Center.**

years. Noblesville is one of only two schools to win five state championships in one day.

He shared updates on two high school construction projects, the first to expand athletic facilities, and the second to begin in January to add STEM classrooms and expand performing arts spaces due to significant student demand for these programs.

*-Betsy Reason writes about people, places and things in Hamilton County. Contact The Times Editor Betsy Reason at betsy@thetimes24-7.com. Save the date: Miller-Palooza to benefit Noblesville Schools Education Foundation on March 15, 2024. Read Noblesville Schools' press release with State of the School highlights and rundown of the district's achievements in Thursday's edition of The Times.*

**Thanks for reading The Times!**

# The Coming Showdown Over American Democracy



**BRIAN HOWEY**  
POLITICS

On Tuesday evening, Fox News host Sean Hannity lobbed a softball question at Donald J. Trump.

He tried to get Trump to tamp down fears he would install an authoritarian dictatorship if he wins a second term in 2024.

Did Trump have "any plans whatsoever, if reelected president, to abuse power? To break the law? To use the government to go after people?" he asked. Trump deflected. Hannity tried again: "You are promising America tonight, you would never abuse this power as retribution against anybody?"

"Except for Day 1," Trump replied. He added later, "I said, 'No, no, no — other than Day 1.'"

That underscored what President Biden had said earlier in the day. "Trump's not even hiding the ball anymore," he said. "He's telling us exactly what he wants to do." Trump is

"determined to destroy American democracy."

The 81-year-old Biden made news himself that day, saying at a Massachusetts fundraiser that the only reason he's seeking reelection is because Trump is seeking a comeback. "If Trump wasn't running, I'm not sure I'd be running," Biden said.

For the third consecutive presidential election, Americans will most likely be choosing from two wildly unpopular nominees in Biden and Trump. President Biden is vastly unpopular, with ABC News/FiveThirtyEight's polling composite revealing 55.2% disapprove of his job performance while 38% approve. But Donald Trump is just as unpopular, with FiveThirtyEight on Tuesday showing that 57.9% disapprove and 38.6% approve.

Biden, multiple public opinion surveys suggest, is too old the continue in the world's toughest job, which has been constantly stressful due to wars in Ukraine, Israel/Gaza, and as well as the porous

southern border. His vice president, Kamala Harris, is even more unpopular than he is.

The 78-year-old Trump is facing 91 criminal indictments — self-inflicted offenses that he is now using to discredit the American rule of law. When you hoard top secret documents detailing Iran invasion plans and U.S. nukes near your resort toilets, you're going to face charges.

By the time Trump is expected to be nominated at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee next July, he could be the first former president to be convicted of a felony.

The oft-lament of voters in 2023 strikes a similar refrain I heard in 2016, which was: Out of 330 million Americans, are these really the best two candidates we have to choose from?

When Trump launched his third Republican presidential campaign last March, he chose Waco, Tex., as his backdrop. It was loaded with fringe right significance, coming 30 years after the siege between the U.S. government and the Branch Davidian religious

cult that resulted in 86 deaths.

"In 2024 is the final battle — that's going to be the big one," Trump said in Waco. "I am your warrior, I am your justice. I am your retribution."

In a November "War Room" podcast, Trump advisor and self-described "Leninist" Steve Bannon declared, "We are the Trump Davidians."

Stuart Stevens, a Republican media consultant who has in the past advised the Indiana campaigns of U.S. Sen. Dan Coats and Secretary of State Sue Anne Gilroy, has written a book published in October, "The Conspiracy to End America: Five Ways My Old Party is Driving Our Democracy to Autocracy."

Stevens claims that Donald Trump has changed the GOP, in a way that Republican National Committeeman John Hammond III suggested to me in 2015 that there was an appetite in some GOP quarters for a "strongman."

"In Ronald Reagan's America, conservatives believed that to be born

in the United States was to win life's lottery," Stevens writes. "The Reagan optimism was defined by opposition to the bleak totalitarianism of the Soviet Union. In Donald Trump's world, to be an American was to be a victim of powerful forces, globalist conspiracies and wealthier countries," he continued. "In the Republican view, the long trek from Ronald Reagan to Donald Trump traveled from a 'shining city on the hill' to a dark and frightening place of 'carnage.' Electing Donald Trump was an act of grievance, a way to settle the score.

"Americans have long possessed innate optimism, the conviction that they live in the greatest country in the world, and it will always be such," Stevens writes. "In Russia, as in the Soviet Union, any hope for positive change has proven illusory. Do not expect your leaders to make your life better because this is your fate.

"It is exactly that shared sense of victimhood that has defined the MAGA movement and driven the Republican Party toward

autocracy," Stevens continues. "It reflects a complete collapse of the values that the Republican Party once espoused."

"In Trump world, the domestic terrorists of Jan. 6 are heroes," Stevens adds, with Trump saying in 2022, "I mean full pardons with an apology to many." Trump has described the nearly 600 Jan. 6 insurrection convicts as "hostages."

"Autocrats win when they master the freedoms of a democratic society to kill democracy. That is the path we are on today," Stevens said.

"The collapse of American democracy is like the pandemic: Whatever you say at the beginning will sound alarmist but likely prove inadequate by the end. In 1864, (President Abraham) Lincoln wrote, 'You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.'" Stevens adds, "We should listen and act accordingly."

*-Brian Howey is senior writer and columnist for Howey Politics Indiana/State Affairs. Find Howey on Facebook and X @hwypol.*

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# Quick Thinking School Bus Driver Saves Student

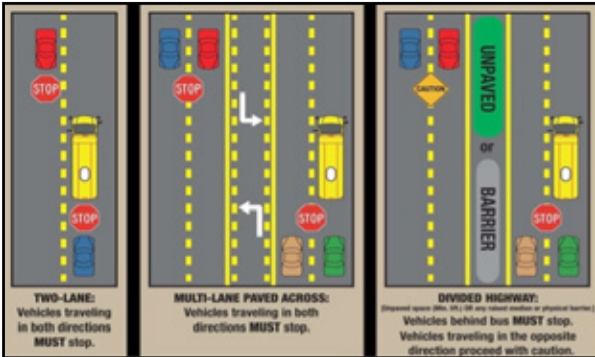


Photo and graphic courtesy of Noblesville Schools

**Shout out to Noblesville Schools bus driver Walt Edwards, whose quick thinking stopped a student from crossing the street just as a car blew past the school bus stop arm. The driver was caught on camera and will be prosecuted. Our 100+ drivers travel over a million miles a year and have extensive training to ensure students are transported to and from school safely. To learn more about when to stop for a school bus look at the accompanying graphic.**

## RUSTY From Page A1

which might have been paid based on your record). That will effectively “wipe the slate clean” with Social Security and will be as though you had never claimed, allowing you to simply wait until you stop working, or until your FRA, or even beyond your FRA, to re-apply for Social Security at a higher monthly amount. The advantage of this option is that when your benefit restarts there will be no adjustment (reduction) for past benefits paid.

What I suggest you not do is simply wait to see what happens. That

would result in Social Security catching up after the IRS informs them of your 2024 earnings, resulting in you receiving an Overpayment Notice from the SSA demanding repayment of 2024 benefits paid. In that case, you would need to quickly repay Social Security in a large lump-sum or have your SS benefits withheld until the debt for exceeding the earnings limit was repaid. In a nutshell, I suggest you call Social Security and tell them you are returning to work, what your earnings are expected to be, and for how long.

## SCAM From Page A1

retailers are charging, spelling and grammatical errors in the advertisements, and poor-quality images. These are all signs that the advertisement may be for a counterfeit product.

4) Engaging ads and poor customer service: This category covers a broad spectrum of complaints that BBB receives, from ads for beauty products to trendy clothing to kids' toys. The advertisements look great, and the products are often inexpensive. This means that consumers purchase without researching the website or the company behind it. However, weeks pass, and the products never arrive. When the buyers reach out to customer service, they get a vague answer or don't hear back.

Before buying, do a quick online search. Google the website name with the words “complaints,” “reviews,” and “scam” to see what other customers are saying. Check the “About Us” or “Contact Us” information on the company's website to see if they contain actual

contact details for the business. If the only way to contact the company is through a form, this is a red flag.

5) Apps of unknown origin: While scrolling through your feed, you may feel compelled to download the latest “free” app. Beware! By downloading this app, not only are you opening up your device to these unknown entities, but you could be signing up for recurring subscription fees. Victims report being charged fees as high as \$99 every seven days.

Before you enter your username and password, read the reviews. Also, read the app's description carefully and look for spelling and grammatical errors. Check that the developer's website is working and read the terms and conditions carefully (\$99 every 7 days adds up quickly).

Here are some ways to protect yourself from social media scams:

Do your research. Before making a purchase, quickly search for the business in question. Do they have valid contact

information? Don't be fooled by professional photography or consumer reviews on their website. These can be lifted from other sites. Check BBB Scam Tracker to see if others have been duped.

Search for previous complaints. Do a Google search of the business name followed by “complaints,” “reviews,” or “scam” and see what pops up. If you find this business has cheated other people, steer clear.

Use good judgment. Many con artists play on consumers' desire to help those in need. Remember this and use your head, not just your heart, when supporting charitable causes. Go to Give.org to research organizations before giving.

For more information and to learn how to protect yourself, Google “BBB 10 Steps to Avoid Scams”. If you spot a scam, whether you have lost money or not, report it to BBB's Scam Tracker at BBB.org/ScamTracker and the FTC at Report-Fraud.ftc.gov. Your story can help protect consumers from similar scams.

## IRON From Page A1

and organs, which can impact nearly every system in the body, even leading to death in the cases of extreme anemia. Iron deficiency can also exacerbate many health conditions, especially cardiac, pulmonary and circulatory problems, and it plays a critical role in conditions like restless leg syndrome, ADD/ADHD, celiac disease, and Crohn's disease.

That said, the symptoms of less severe iron deficiency can be harder to pinpoint. They include:

- Tiredness or lethargy
- Weakness
- Irregular heartbeat or shortness of breath
- Headache, dizziness, lightheadedness
- Unusual food cravings and appetite changes
- Appearance issues like thinning hair, pallor, dark circles, or brittle nails
- Behavioral issues like excitability, inability to focus, or irritability, especially in children

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### Choose Wisely

Adding an iron supplement is an easy way to

address a host of pressing issues, but buyer beware – not all iron supplements are created equal. Even those who know they need iron may not take supplements because they are notoriously bad-tasting and can cause significant gastrointestinal distress, essentially trading one problem for another. The supplement market is also largely unregulated, resulting in many companies producing inferior products or making unsubstantiated claims about the effectiveness of their products.

So how can you find the best supplement for you and your family? The short answer is to ignore the marketing hype and trust medicine. Follow your doctors' advice and look for an iron supplement that has been clinically proven to be safe, effective and well-tolerated in all age groups.

One such product is NovaFerrum, which offers a range of iron supplements for all age groups. Founded by a father whose preemie daughter refused

to take the supplement she needed, NovaFerrum features a distinct chemical composition formulated to nearly eliminate the gastrointestinal side effects common in other iron supplements, a patented taste-masking technology and great-tasting flavors made from natural ingredients, like raspberries and monk fruit. Available in pharmacies and on Amazon, NovaFerrum is widely recommended by pediatricians, hematologists, gynecologists and general practitioners and has earned more than 10,000 five-star reviews. For more information, visit novaferrum.com.

From enhancing your appearance and providing an immune system boost to giving you the stamina and focus you need to complete tasks with confidence, adding an iron supplement is one of the best ways to improve your overall health and wellbeing. It might also just be the silver bullet to helping you keep all those other resolutions you've made.

Thanks for reading The Times!



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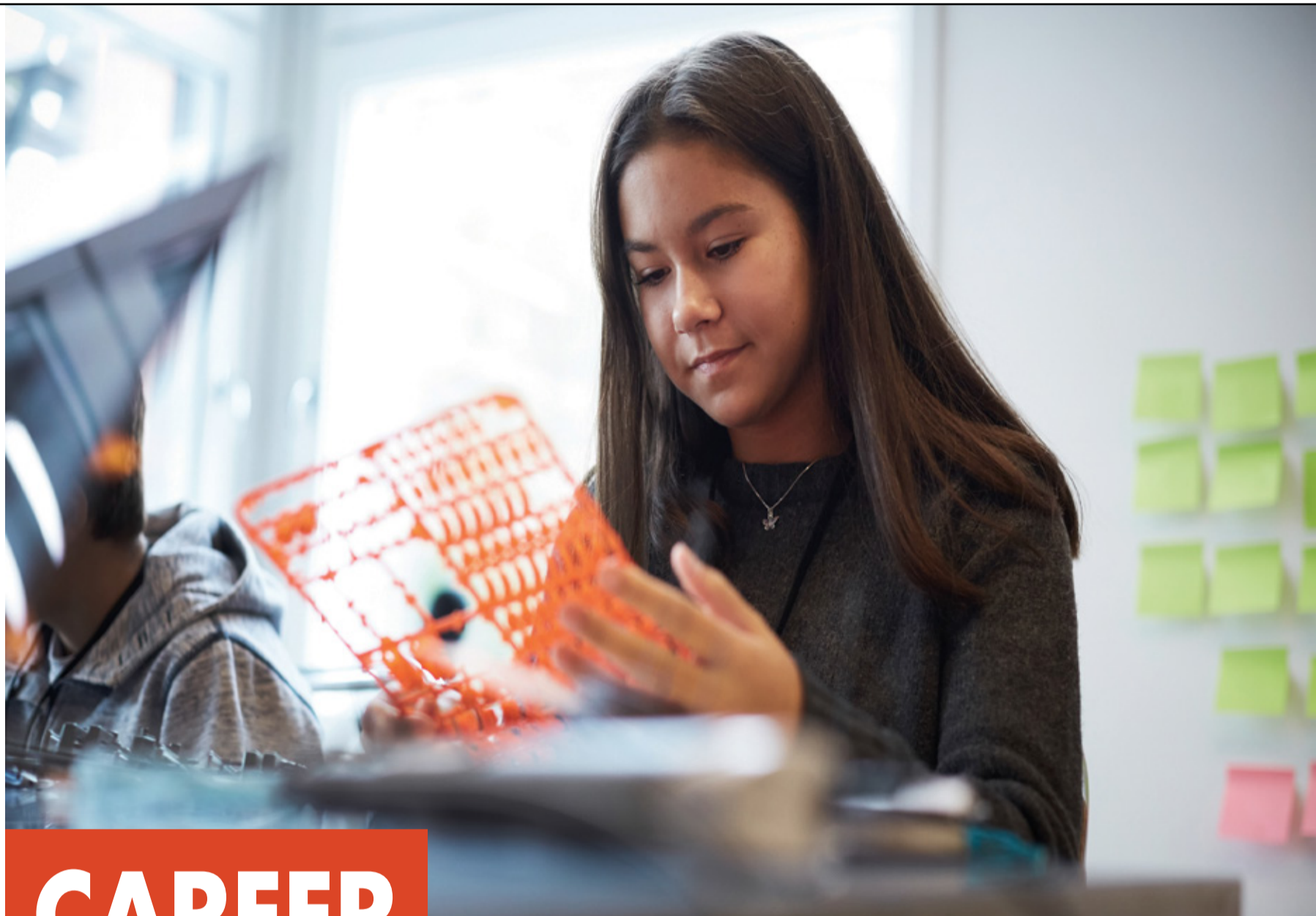
# WEEKEND

## In The Home

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Weekend, December 9-10, 2023

TIM TIMMONS, Publisher @ JOE LARUE, Vice-President of Readership @ MELISSA MEME, Account Executive @ BETH HEDGE, Business Manager



Photos courtesy of Getty Images

## CAREER READY

## 3 strategies to prepare teens for life after school

### FAMILY FEATURES

For some time, heading to college or joining the workforce have been the standard choices for teens upon high school graduation. Today, in part due to technology and social media, students have access to myriad career paths that are all but traditional.

With an increasingly dynamic career landscape creating an awareness of jobs that didn't exist even 10 years ago and a shortage in the workforce, there's a willingness for both potential employees and employers to look at careers and young talent from a whole new perspective.

"There isn't a 'typical' career anymore," said Dr. Lorna Bryant, Gen Z career expert and head of career education for Pearson Virtual Schools. "With the perfect storm in the workforce of boomers retiring, many people still not returning to work in the wake of the pandemic and a population that has declined for the last 50 years, this generation (ages 11-26) is positioned extremely well. Employers want and need them. In short, the scales have flipped to the supply side and demand is causing many employers to remove barriers to work entry. Whether high school grads go to college or work, developing in-demand skills early will help them secure and succeed in the jobs of the future."

Consider these tips from Bryant to help students explore the many options in front of them and prepare for the possibilities that await after high school.

### Help Kids Cultivate Durable Skills

While technology has transformed the world of work, an increasing number of careers prioritize durable skills over technical or hard skills. Durable skills (also known as "soft" or "human" skills) include collaboration, leadership, communication and attention to detail, along with traits like empathy, grit and resilience. According to Pearson's Power Skills report, these are some of the most in-demand skills for employers. In addition, research from America Succeeds found employers seek durable skills 3.8 times more frequently than the top five technical or hard skills in every location, industry sector and educational attainment level. Possessing these skills is not only attractive to employers but colleges and universities, too. One of the best ways to prepare for the jobs of tomorrow, which don't exist today, is to focus on timeless durable skills.

Many students already possess or are actively developing these skills in high school. The key is to raise awareness of their importance, seek ways to boost them and showcase them on college and job applications or resumes. For example, teens can display their leadership skills by captaining sports teams or starting a club at school. They can showcase collaboration and communication abilities by holding and thriving in student government positions, volunteering or working part-time jobs.

### Bridge Passions and Hobbies to Careers

Beginning conversations with children as early as middle school that expose students to job roles, responsibilities and salaries connected to areas of interest is important for setting them up for long-term success. Nurturing interests – rather than dismissing them as flights of fancy – and finding paths to explore that align with those hobbies or interests in real-world applications can open doors to potential careers that may not have previously been considered.

For example, Lake Liao, a 2023 Lighthouse Connections Academy grad, is attending Princeton University on a pre-law track. The flexibility of online school enabled him to dig into his passions for political and community organizing and activism in high school, including activism around climate and environmental policy. It was through joining local nurses in their fight for a fair contract he realized he wanted to be a lawyer and make a difference in the labor rights cause.



To help students align their values and interests with potential careers, ask questions such as:

- What is it, specifically, you enjoy about your interests? What jobs rely on related skills (working with your hands, serving others, being creative, etc.)?
- Do you have the skills to do those jobs? If not, what research and training do you need to acquire the necessary skillset?
- Are there related jobs available in the geographic location you want to live?
- Can you make enough money to live the lifestyle you want doing this job?
- Can you envision enjoying this type of work for 8 (or more) hours per day?

### Get a Head Start on Credentials or College Credit

As earning college credits, career-ready credentials and specialized training for future careers is becoming more accessible for high school and middle school students, it's important to research available options. From online resources, workshops, career counselors and accelerated career readiness programs that allow students to enter college or the workforce "job-ready," there are more options available now than ever before.

One example, Connections Academy, a K-12 online school program, has expanded its slate of college and career readiness initiatives for middle and high school

students to offer an innovative tri-credit approach where courses can deliver high school credit; industry-recognized micro-credentials (to help qualify for careers in data analytics, UX design, software development, cybersecurity and more); and eligibility for college credit toward more than 150 bachelor's degree programs at partner universities in the United States. In addition, the Career Pathways program delivers curated learning experiences in fields such as IT, business and health care, allowing students to connect with employers, internships and clubs, and take advantage of specialized classes that transition seamlessly to higher education or nationally recognized, industry certifications.

Taking advantage of program offerings, aspiring paramedic Maeson Frymire, a 2022 Inspire Connections Academy graduate, became certified as an EMT before graduating high school. After graduation, he became a firefighter and is now working toward becoming an advanced certified EMT, carving out a career path toward flight paramedicine.

Or consider Abigail Sanders, also a 2022 graduate, who completed her bachelor's degree by the time she graduated high school. Now in the second year of her doctorate program in medical school, she aspires to be a doctor by the age of 22 and uses her love of learning and passion for science to advance her career while seeking to become an oncologist.

For more information on online schools and career readiness programs for teens, visit [ConnectionsAcademy.com](https://ConnectionsAcademy.com).