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TODAY'S VERSE

O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

Meet Walter



MUST LOVE FETCH!! Walter is an 8 year old (senior) chocolate labrador retriever available for adoption from AWL since 8/5/24. Walter loves playing fetch, going out for walks, frolicking in a fenced yard, and will gladly sit for treats. Walter is a LOVER!! Walter will follow you around and even bring you gifts (like a tennis ball) to try to get attention. Walter's love language is quality time! Come spend time with this snuggly senior hunk!! Walter is looking for his best friend. Could that be you?



Don't know about you, but I LOVE Butch Dale's Flashback and Back in the Day features!

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Boomer Bits

Ask Rusty – Should I Wait until 70 to Claim Social Security?



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.

Dear Rusty:
I am a married woman, at my full retirement age, and the primary earner in my marriage. How do I know if I should take my Social Security now or wait till 70? I will lose quite a bit if I take it now. How will it affect my taxes if I take it now while still working a full-time job?
Signed: Undecided

"average," then waiting until age 70 to claim is usually the right choice. But if you urgently need the money, or your life expectancy is less than average (mid-80s for a woman your current age), then claiming before age 70 is usually prudent.

Dear Undecided:
As you apparently already know, waiting until you are 70 to claim Social Security will result in you getting your maximum possible monthly SS retirement benefit. After your full retirement age, you get about 8% more each year you delay claiming up to age 70. But deciding exactly when to claim should consider both your financial needs and, importantly, your life expectancy. If you don't urgently need the money now and your life expectancy is at least

Regarding taxation, Social Security benefits may be taxable if your combined income from all sources exceeds the threshold for your IRS filing status. If you file taxes as "married/jointly" and your combined income (including your work income) exceeds \$32,000, then half of the SS benefits you received during the tax year becomes part of your taxable income. But if your combined income is over \$44,000, then up to 85% of your SS benefits becomes taxable income (the thresholds are lower

Tips to Spring Clean Your Budget

(StatePoint) With flowers blooming and birds chirping, you may be in a spring-cleaning mindset. As you spruce up your home, you can also channel that energy into getting your finances in tip-top shape!

According to CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNING® professionals, here's how to clear away the cobwebs in your budget:

Sort expenditures: If you've ever sorted your clothes and other items into piles during a spring clean, this budgeting principle will be familiar to

➡ See TIPS Page A3

Boomers Beware: Scammers Have A New Trick

Identity theft is an ever-evolving crime. As credit bureaus and individuals catch on to the schemes of identity thieves, the con artists simply modify their tactics. Scammers are now combining information from multiple individuals to invent a false identity, a technique called "synthetic" identity theft. It's so hard to detect, you might be a victim and not even know it. The Deloitte

➡ See NEW Page A3

MEETING DETAILS:

Wednesday, March 19, 2025
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

3rd Floor, Fusion 54 | 101 W. Main Street, Crawfordsville

The meeting facility is wheelchair-accessible.

Input Needed for Local Transportation

Local residents are invited to participate in a community input meeting on the development of public transportation in Crawfordsville and Montgomery County. The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday on the third floor at Fusion 54 beginning at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting is part of an ongoing needs assessment in partnership with Sunshine Van and public transportation planning consultant RLS & Associates. It is being led by the city, county and League of Women Voters.

The goal is to determine best answers for public transportation in the city and county. Recognizing that the lack of public transportation is a barrier for some residents. The assessment being done then aims to identify service gaps,

➡ See INPUT Page A3

TODAY'S HEALTH TIP

Are you a "shoveler?" - put down your fork in between bites of food and chew your food thoroughly.

Today's health tip was brought to you by Dr. John Roberts. Be sure to catch his column each week in The Paper and online at www.thepaper24-7.com



TODAY'S QUOTE

"When Irish hearts are happy, all the world seems bright and gay. And when Irish eyes are smiling, sure, they steal your heart away."
Bing Crosby

THREE THINGS You Should Know

- 1 Indiana Newspapers are having a rally day at the Indiana Statehouse Wednesday and would love for you to come along. State lawmakers are trying to take legal notices out of newspapers and put them on a government website. Not only would that be like the fox guarding the henhouse, but it will cost taxpayers more than they are currently spending. It will also hurt, perhaps severely, some Hoosier newspapers. At 11 a.m. Wednesday, newspapers and supporters from all over Indiana are going to the Statehouse to show our opposition to the move. Newspapers are a part of Indiana history and an important part of an open government. The Founding Fathers thought so and put it in the First Amendment. We'd love it if you would help us preserve that!
- 2 Our friends at sleepjunkie.com commissioned a survey of 3,018 people to find out who spends the most time outdoors in the winter. Idahoans led the pack, averaging a hearty 3 hours and 57 minutes per week with Nebraskans lowest at a measly 1 hour and 18 minutes per week. For we Hoosiers, we averaged 2 hours 33 minutes per week in the natural light. Overall, the findings were eye-opening: those soaking in the brightest daylight hours had a 17 to 34 percent lower risk of dying early compared to those stuck in dim, shadowy routines. But it's not just about sunshine - it's about light itself, emerging as a surprising player in our health and longevity. Could our modern indoor lives be quietly costing us more than we realize?
- 3 The Indiana Department of Environmental Management has extended the application/nomination deadline 2025 Governor's Awards for Environmental Excellence. Applications or nominations are due by 11:59 p.m., Sunday. This marks the 32nd year the awards have been given to celebrate innovative projects with measurable environmental benefits. Nomination forms and instructions are available at idem.IN.gov/partnerships/governors-awards-for-environmental-excellence.

TODAY'S JOKE

Never iron a four-leaf clover. You don't want to press your luck!

MONTGOMERY MINUTE

We have free tickets to the Indiana Flower & Patio Show ready and waiting for YOU! All you have to do is take a selfie with you and our front page (print or online doesn't matter) and email it to news@thepaper24-7.com. If we publish your picture (and we will!), you win two to four free tickets - valued at \$15 each! The Show is one of the oldest flower shows in the U.S. and goes on March 15-23 at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. Don't pass up the chance for free tickets and a great day! Snap that selfie and email it to us today!

The Paper appreciates all our customers. Today, we'd like to personally thank **MARCIA DESMET** for subscribing!

Community Forum With Mayor Set

Crawfordsville Mayor Todd Barton has scheduled his monthly Community Forum for Thursday from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. in Fusion 54 on the fourth floor.



Mayor Todd Barton

This will be Barton's 141st Community Forum since taking office. Holding a monthly community forum was something Barton pledged to do during his campaign and he has continued to do so every month - except during the COVID pandemic.

This event is designed to allow the public to come ask questions, discuss concerns, interact with the mayor and learn more about anything regarding the city.

Fusion 54 is located at 101 W. Main St. in beautiful downtown Crawfordsville.

➔ OBITUARY

Esteleen McDonald

May 5, 1928 - March 9, 2025

Esteleen Bowman McDonald, 96, passed away on March 9, 2025 at 8:52 p.m. surrounded by family.



Esteleen was born on May 5, 1928 in Danville, Illinois to Mode and Virgie (VanKirk) Bowman. She married Homer C. McDonald, her husband of 65 years, on September 17, 1950 at Attica United Methodist Church. They resided happily for 65 years on their family farm south of Hillsboro. Homer passed away on July 28, 2015.

Esteleen's passion was her husband and family. Survivors include their children Marsha McDonald Orr (Fred Kinderman), Covington; Alan McDonald (Rhonda), Hillsboro; Kevin McDonald (Mary), Dayton, Ohio; and Sally McDonald (Rich Levin), Lake Forest, Illinois.

She is also survived by grandchildren Adrienne Holt Hoagland (Brian), Carmel; Allison Holt Thacker (Mike), Westfield; Alan Holt (Lindsay), Westfield; Ross McDonald (Ashley), Westfield; Morgan McDonald Sweet (Chris), Glen Ellyn, Illinois; Molly McDonald, Brooklyn, New York; Grant Levin, Lake Forest, Illinois; Kyle Levin, Boston, Massachusetts; and Andrew Levin, Chicago, Illinois. Also surviving are great grandchildren Ethan, Ryan and Drew Hoagland; Taylor and Jackson McDonald; Emily and Megan Holt; Kate Thacker; and Esti and Sia Sweet. She will also be missed by her loving nieces, nephews and extended family.

She was preceded in death by her husband Homer, older brother Dr. Harold E. Bowman, younger sister, Patricia Van Bowman, sisters-in-law Sally Merica Bowman and Virginia McDonald Fee, brother-in-law Leland R. Fee and sons-in-law Steven Holt and Dr. Leonard Orr.

Esteleen graduated from Attica High School in 1946 and Indiana University School of Nursing in 1950. She received the outstanding student award while in the School of Nursing and loved maintaining a life-long friendship with three of her fellow nursing graduates. For many years while her children were in school, she was employed as a school nurse at Southeast Fountain School Corporation.

Esteleen enjoyed helping Homer on the family farm where they raised Registered Shorthorn cattle. She was a devoted member of the Hillsboro United Methodist Church for over 75 years. She taught Sunday School, was a member of the adult choir, United Methodist Women and served for several years as a delegate to the Indiana United Methodist Church Annual Conference. As a member of the church and the community, Esteleen provided hospitality through her love of baking and serving others.

Esteleen was a charter member of the Fountain County Community Foundation and served on the Fountain County Welfare Board. She was a member of Delta Kappa Gamma, Tri Kappa, and the Hillsboro Harmony Club. Esteleen was passionate about U.S. history, especially U.S. presidents, beginning when she and her brother memorized them in chronological order as children. She loved learning about and collecting early antiques and was an avid reader.

In later years, she worked with Homer as co-owners of Rivercrest Golf Club in Covington. Esteleen and Homer also spent time volunteering in Indianapolis when Homer served on the Indiana State Fair Board. They spent many winters at The Legends in Fort Myers, Florida and enjoyed more time for travel following retirement.

Friends will be received at the Hillsboro United Methodist Church, 107 East Market Street, Hillsboro, Indiana on Monday, March 17th from 10:00 am until the service at 1:00 pm with Rev. Eileen Bowman Stoffan and Rev. Kate Walker officiating. Burial will follow in the Rose Hill Cemetery, Hillsboro. Memorial contributions may be made to the Southeast Fountain Community Foundation (Homer and Esteleen McDonald Unrestricted Fund) or the Hillsboro United Methodist Church.

Keeping Notifications in Newspapers Benefits Public as Well as Journalism



KONRAD LAPRADE
 Guest Columnist

Imagine this scenario: You awake one morning to see huge spaceships hovering over your neighborhood. In your front yard, someone from another planet is holding a clipboard as he gives orders to a demolition crew.

Demolition? Yes — his job is to demolish the Earth to make way for a galactic highway. (This scenario comes from one of my favorite novels, Douglas Adams' "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.")

Naturally, you protest. What right does he have to demolish your home? But before you can get far, he quickly shuts you down:

"There's no point in acting surprised about it. All the planning charts and demolition orders have been on display at your local planning department in Alpha Centauri for 50 of your Earth years, so you've had plenty of time to lodge any formal complaint and it's far too late to start making a fuss about it now . . . What do you mean you've never been to Alpha Centauri? Oh, for heaven's sake, mankind, it's only four light years away, you know. I'm sorry, but if you can't be bothered to take an interest in local affairs, that's your own lookout."

Seem far-fetched? In this country things just don't happen without due process, without alerting those who will be affected and asking for their input. And for the past 200 years, local newspapers have been the conduit used to alert the public.

But, if House Bill 1312 passes the Indiana Senate, governments, businesses and individuals will no longer be required to use newspapers to alert you about issues that can affect your life.

Instead, they'll be able to place public notices on a state-run website.

You may not have personally filed a public notice, but it plays a crucial role in due process and our democracy. Public notices ensure that citizens stay informed about government activities. In every state, taxpayers and residents must be legally notified — through newspaper announcements — about the actions of government entities and courts.

In Indiana this could include minutes of government meetings, annexations, delinquent payments, foreclosures, budget approvals and many other vital official matters of government entities.

So how does this work in practice?

Currently, when a government wants to do something such as annex land for a highway, it would contact its local newspaper and contract with it to produce a notice, just as any other advertisement. The newspaper creates the notice, provides proof that it was published and ensures that it ran far enough in advance to satisfy the legal requirement.

To be clear, we get paid for publishing these notices; they provide essential support for our industry. But this isn't just about the money. I'm writing this column because public notices protect your right to stay informed about your government's actions.

I believe there is significant power in the printed word. There is finality in having tens of thousands of copies of a notice go out to the community.

Do we really want a system where no independent third party oversees the legal process? Where public notices are confined to a single government website — one that could go down or be inaccessible in areas with limited internet access? Should we trust the government to report on its own activities without oversight?

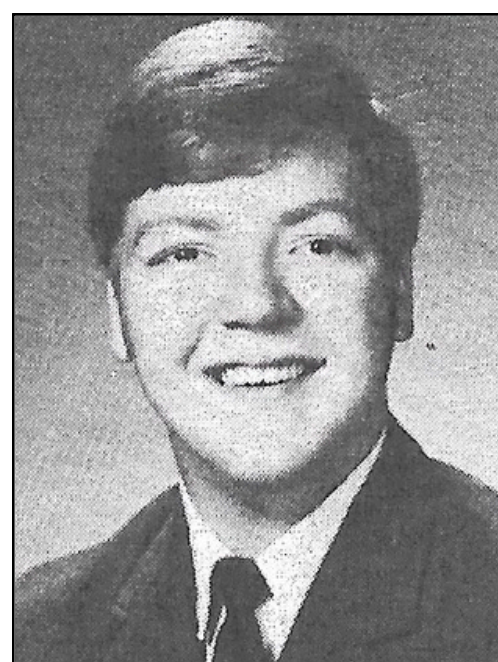
In a country where due process and public input are vital to the health of democracy, it is crucial that we continue to ask government entities to employ newspapers to administer the public notice process.

Besides — who wants to travel four light years away to check up on things?

If you agree with me, I hope you will contact your local representatives and encourage them to vote "no" on this bill. If you have questions about this or anything else, feel free to contact me at klaprade@fortwayne.com.

Konrad LaPrade is president and CEO of Fort Wayne Newspapers, business agent of The Journal Gazette.

Butch Dale's Flashback Trivia



Do You Recognize This 1972 North Montgomery Grad?

HINT: He joined his father and brother in the family trucking business.

Answer on Page A3

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↓ RUSTY From Page A1

for those who file as a single). So, your full-time work income will likely affect how much of your Social Security benefits are subject to income tax by the IRS.

In the end, only you can decide when you should claim Social Security. Taxation of benefits may be a factor to consider since you are still working full time (thus more of your SS benefits will be taxable). But waiting longer to claim results in a higher benefit for the rest of your life (your SS retirement benefit will be .667% more for each month you delay, up to age 70). If the "rest of your life" is a long time and you don't urgently need the money, waiting is often the right choice. If not, claiming earlier may be

wiser.

If you want to get a more personalized estimate of your life expectancy, I suggest you use the tool we use here at the AMAC Foundation: www.socialsecurityreport.org/tools/life-expectancy-calculator/.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. Russell Gloor is the, National Social Security Advisor at the AMAC Foundation, the non-profit arm of the Association of Mature American Citizens. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

Student Math Skills Bill Passes House

Recently, the Indiana House of Representatives unanimously advanced legislation Rep. Mark Genda supported aimed at improving math skills among Hoosier K-12 students.

House Bill 1634 is a comprehensive effort to improve math education in the state by addressing the needs of advanced learners, at-risk students and educators alike by implementing an individualized, results-focused system for math education.

This legislation follows previous legislative efforts to improve reading among Hoosier students. In 2023, Genda supported a law to implement science of reading standards and provide targeted support for Indiana students experiencing the greatest reading challenges.

According to the recently released 2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress results, Indiana made significant gains in reading, jumping to sixth in the nation for both fourth and eighth grade reading scores. On the same assessment, Indiana ranks ninth and 13th

for fourth grade and eighth grade math respectively.

HB 1634 would automatically enroll middle school students meeting specific proficiency criteria in advanced math courses to better prepare them for higher-level math courses and STEM opportunities. Parents would retain the ability to opt their children out of these courses. To support students at risk of falling behind, the legislation would require state-approved numeracy screenings for students in kindergarten through second grade to identify learning gaps earlier and provide targeted support.

Additionally, the Indiana Department of Education would review teacher preparation programs to ensure they're meeting rigorous standards, with those falling short losing their accreditation after a referral process.

House Bill 1634 now moves to the Senate for further consideration. For more information, or to watch session and committee meetings live, visit iga.in.gov.

↓ TIPS From Page A1

you: Review your expenses and categorize them into needs, wants and expenditures you're ready to part with. Whether you do this on paper or electronically, use a color-coded system to visualize where your money is going.

Review your streaming services: Electronic subscription bloat is common, as is paying for forgotten subscriptions after free trials end. For example, you may be subscribed to several of the most common entertainment streaming services, such as Netflix, Max and Hulu. Do you really need all of them? Whether it's an online newsletter or a music streaming service, cancel unused subscriptions.

Avoid bank fees: Review your bank statements. Are you getting dinged with fees? Consider switching to a bank that doesn't charge an account maintenance fee. You can also set up notifications to avoid having your account get hit with an overdraft. If you do get charged, contact your bank to explain your situation — you may be able to have some fees waived.

Switch insurance

carriers: Periodically review your insurance rates, and shop the market to see if better rates are available for home, automotive and other forms of insurance.

Reduce debt: If your debt is costing you a pretty penny, it's time to act. A CFP® professional or credit counselor can help you craft a plan for consolidating debt into lower-rate credit card accounts, refinancing your mortgage and reducing your overall debt burden. You should also automate credit card payments (and other bills) to ensure you aren't paying late fees.

Pay yourself first: Earmark a portion of your budget to savings and investments each month. This will leave you with more money for your important goals and less for frivolous spending.

To work with a CFP® professional who can help you roll up your sleeves and get to work on cleaning up your finances, visit letsmakeaplan.org.

This spring, go beyond dusting the baseboards and mopping the floors. Refresh your finances for a fresh start to the season.

↓ INPUT From Page A1

evaluate actual demand and develop recommendations for a potential public transit program in the city and county.

The project will conclude in the summer with implementation planned for 2026.

The community input meeting will be facilitated by RLS & Associates, which will provide an overview of public transit options in small cities and rural areas. Residents and stakeholders will have

the opportunity to share their needs, concerns, and ideas to help shape the future of public transportation in the area.

As part of this collaborative effort, an online public survey is available for residents to provide input. To participate, visit surveymonkey.com/r/Montgomery_Co_Transportation. A Spanish version of the survey is available at surveymonkey.com/r/Encuesta_transporte_MontgomeryCo.

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↓ NEW From Page A1

Center for Financial Services projects that synthetic identity theft fraud will generate at least \$23 billion in losses by 2030.

How the scam works

Scammers pull together a stolen social security or social Insurance number (often belonging to a minor or someone with no credit history), the address of an abandoned property, and a fake name and birth date. Using this information, the scammer applies for a credit card. Initially, they will be declined since they don't have a credit profile, but this creates a record of a "person" that doesn't actually exist.

Next, the scammer adds that "person" to one or more legitimate accounts. Over time, the scammer builds up a credit history. They may even make charges and payments over several years. until they can qualify for large lines of credit. Once they are approved for a high line of credit, they do what is called a "bust-out." The con artist charges their credit cards to the limit, pays nothing, discards the identity and disappears.

If your social security number has been used in synthetic identity theft, it will be difficult to detect. Negative credit reports will be tied to your social security number, but not your name, phone number and address. This means fraud alerts, credit monitoring and credit freezes won't stop the scammers or alert you to what is happening. However, unpaid debts left by the scammer can affect your ability to take out loans or credit. Also, jilted creditors will eventually track the debts back to the social security number and, ultimately, its real owner.

How to protect yourself from synthetic identity theft

- **Minimize your exposure.** Don't give out your social security number if it isn't absolutely necessary. When a business, medical office, or individual asks for this information, don't be afraid to ask them why they need it and how they will protect your personal information.
- **Protect your child's personal information.** A child's identity is appealing to scammers due to their clean, blank slate. See these BBB tips for more advice on protecting your child's identity.
- **Keep an eye on your communications.** Monitor any mail, phone calls, email, or other communications you receive. Be alert if something arrives out of the blue or doesn't make sense. If you receive any mail or phone calls regarding you or your child that seem like a red flag, follow up right away.

For more information You can find valuable information on spotting and avoiding identity theft of all kinds on the Federal Trade Commission website. Also, read BBB Tip: Identity Theft for more tips and advice.

If you know or suspect you or your child have been the victim of synthetic identity theft, visit the Federal Trade Commission's identity theft page to file a report with the FTC and create a personalized recovery plan. Also, report your experience on the BBB Scam Tracker to help increase consumer awareness about this serious crime.

Butch Dale's Flashback Trivia

Answer:
Jack Anderson

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Braden Smith Deserved Top Honors; Painter Shows Frustration



KENNY THOMPSON
Columnist

Sometimes it feels good to be wrong. When the Purdue men's basketball team wilted down the stretch, falling from first place to a share of fourth, I figured Big Ten Player of the Year honors would go to someone whose team finished ahead of the Boilermakers and not preseason favorite Braden Smith.

Credit the league coaches and media for getting it right Tuesday, when it was announced that Smith was a unanimous choice. The award allows Purdue to become the first Big Ten school to have three consecutive Player of the Year winners as voted upon by the coaches and media.

It would not be surprising if that achievement is extended to four in a row when Smith is a senior in 2025-26. Don't underestimate the chances of teammate and fellow first-team All-Big Ten selection Trey Kaufman-Renn to push Smith for the honor.

A good week for Smith continued on Wednesday when he earned first-team All-America honors from The Sporting News. The publication is one-fourth of the entities that comprise consensus All-America recognition. The National Association of Basketball Coaches, Associated Press and United States Basketball Writers Association will announce their All-America teams later this month.

Only Kansas has had as many first-team All-

Americans since the 2016-17 season. Smith joins Caleb Swanigan (2017), Jaden Ivey (2022) and Zach Edey (2023, 2024) on the list. Smith's award gives Purdue its seventh Big Ten Player of the Year winner since the honor was first presented in 1984. Smith is the first non-big man Boilermaker to win, following the footsteps of Stephen Scheffer in 1990, Glenn Robinson in 1994, JaJuan Johnson in 2011, Swanigan in 2017 and of course, two-time National Player of the Year Edey.

Junior guard Fletcher Loyer earned honorable mention status from the media. Senior center Caleb Furst was selected the team's Sportsmanship Award recipient.

A closer look at Smith's statistics reveals why this was an easy vote for the coaches and media. His scoring average increased from 12.0 as a sophomore to 16.3. Smith cruised past the previous Big Ten record for assists in conference play only with 175, 18 more than Michigan's Cassius Winston.

Smith also breezed past Bruce Parkinson's 48-year-old Purdue career assists record, handing out 717 in 105 career games.

Speaking of assists, only Big Ten legend Magic Johnson has also recorded 450 points, 250 assists, 125 rebounds and 60 steals in a season. Smith has now done it twice.

Not bad for a player ranked No. 198 out of Westfield High School whose only offers before Purdue came from Belmont, Appalachian State, Montana and Toledo according to 247 Sports.

Interviewed by the Big Ten Network's Rick Pizzo, Smith thanked coach Matt Painter for believing in him.

"I think having a coach that truly trusts in his players . . . he's never lived to me," Smith said. "He has always stuck with his word. Having somebody like that, it builds trust for me. He threw us in the fire at a very young age when a lot of people could have went other ways. He trusts us and we gained that trust. That's gotten me to where I'm at today."

Smith also gives Painter the assist for being more aggressive offensively.

"I get yelled at by 'Paint' all the time for not shooting," Smith said. "I think that's the biggest thing. I always want to include everybody and get them the ball, put them in spots to be successful. I believe that's my job. I think (it's) understanding when to score and not score and when it's time to take over a game and when it's time not to."

Kaufman-Renn missed by four points of winning the Big Ten scoring title, averaging 20.5 points in league play and 19.7 for the season. His 246 two-point field goals made leads the nation. The 6-9 forward-center surpassed 1,000 career points (1,020) in the regular season finale at Illinois.

Kaufman-Renn is the 12th player in the Painter era to earn first-team All-Big Ten honors. The others are Carl Landry (2007), Robbie Hummel (2008, 2010, 2012), E'Twaun Moore (2010-11), JaJuan Johnson (2009, 2011), A.J. Hammons (2016), Caleb Swanigan (2017), Carsen Edwards (2018-19), Trevion

Williams (2021), Jaden Ivey (2022), Zach Edey (2023-24) and Smith (2024-25).

The All-Big Ten honor probably felt satisfying to Kaufman-Renn after being left off the finalists list for the Karl Malone (power forward) and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (center) awards. To be fair, voters probably couldn't decide where to slot Kaufman-Renn.

A few weeks ago, Smith expressed his displeasure with the Malone and Abdul-Jabbar voters.

"We're back to this BS again, excuse my language," Smith said. "You see what he's doing, the numbers he's putting up."

Loyer led the Big Ten in 3-point percentage, making 46.5 percent (46 of 99) behind the arc. Entering the postseason, Loyer has shot 59.2 percent from 3-point range during the past 11 games. He averaged 14.4 points and joined Smith and Kaufman-Renn as a member of the Purdue 1,000-point club this season.

Smith's Big Ten Player of the Year honor might also help him become Purdue's first winner of the Bob Cousy Award, presented annually to the nation's top point guard.

Smith's numbers (16.3 ppg, 8.8 assists, 4.7 rebounds, 39.7 shooting from 3-point range) compare favorably to the other four finalists.

Mark Sears of Alabama has the edge in scoring (19.2 ppg) but has handed out just five assists a game, averages 3.1 rebounds and is a 35.2 percent shooter from 3-point range. In Purdue's 87-78 victory against Alabama earlier

this season, Sears had 15 points, six assists and four rebounds. Smith put up 17 points, 10 assists and six rebounds.

Kam Jones of Marquette earned unanimous first-team All-Big East honors with 18.9 points, 6.1 assists and 4.5 rebounds per game. Jones shot just 30.6 percent from 3-point range.

However, Jones was spectacular against visiting Purdue earlier this season. Jones' triple double of 17 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists paved the way for a 76-58 victory. Smith had 11 points, nine assists and four rebounds against the Golden Eagles.

Zakai Ziegler of Tennessee is averaging 13.1 points, 7.5 assists and 3.0 rebounds while shooting 31.9 percent behind the arc.

Walter Clayton Jr. of Florida averages 17.2 points, 4.3 assists and 3.8 rebounds per game. He's also a high volume 3-point shooter, making 36.4 percent on 231 attempts.

There's no doubt in Painter's mind who is the best point guard in college basketball. Painter, who is maturing into a major voice in the game, recently expressed his frustration at persuading others to see Smith's greatness.

"There were two different point guard camps last year where they invited 15-16 point guards – coming into college, in college – and I couldn't get Braden Smith in either one of those," Painter said. "I'm not saying he's a top 15 point guard in the country. I'm saying he's the best point guard in the country."



Braden Smith

"It makes no sense. You have non-basketball people making basketball decisions. They stereotypically look at somebody who's 5-11 like he's not a player. He's one of the best passers ever. He could end up being the best passer ever. "The same holds true for Trey. What's he supposed to do? You can't make up the numbers that he has. To each their own. That's on them. They are showing they don't understand the game and what matters."

Did you know?

When Purdue defeated UCLA 76-66 on Feb. 28 in Mackey Arena, it was the Boilermakers' first victory against the Bruins since Dec. 18, 1959. UCLA's eight-game winning streak in the series had been the longest active losing streak against a Purdue opponent.

The victory also completed a sweep of the newest Big Ten members (Oregon, Washington, USC, UCLA), the four wins coming by a combined 46 points. Michigan was the only other Big Ten school to go 4-0 against the West Coast schools.

Kenny Thompson is the former sports editor for the Lafayette Journal & Courier and an award-winning journalist. He has covered Purdue athletics for many years.

FOR THE RECORD

For The Record is a public service and regular feature in The Paper of Montgomery County. It is designed to tell you what is scheduled to happen and what actually does happen in meetings paid for with your tax dollars. The Paper encourages all citizens to take an active role in being involved in local government.

NORTH MONTGOMERY SCHOOL BOARD

March 17

Regular Meeting 5 p.m.

480 W 580 N, Crawfordsville

1. Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance
2. Public comment
3. Consent agenda
 - a. Minutes
 - b. Monthly claims
 - c. Personnel, extra-curricular, field trips, facilities usage, contributions, gifts, superintendent stipends
 - d. Other
 - e. Consent vote
 - f. Introduction of the new Food Service Director
4. Sugar Creek Spotlight
5. Honorary Board Member
6. Spotlight
7. Action items
 - a. Hear second reading and approve 2026-27 School Year Calendar
 - b. Approve the Policy 6250 – Required ADM Counts for the purpose of state funding and verification of residency for membership annually.
 - c. Approve High School Outside Lighting Replacement.
 - d. Approve High School Greenhouse Roof Replacement.
 - e. Approve the Switch Gear for the High School and Elementary Buildings.
8. Other
9. Adjournment

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Thank you for reading The Paper!

Sen. Deery Shares Update



Vermillion County leaders stopped by the Senate chamber this week to meet with Sen. Deery.



SPENCER DEERY
Guest Columnist

Most working Hoosiers get their health insurance through their employer, which is a significant financial investment for the employer.

In an effort to help lower health care costs for Hoosiers, Senate Republicans are prioritizing a bill that would ensure businesses in the health insurance industry are acting in the best financial interest of their customers – the employers who provide health insurance for Hoosiers.

By legally requiring these companies to act in the plan sponsor's best financial interest, we can remove bad financial incentives that drive up the cost of health insurance. This would ultimately help ensure Hoosiers get access to more affordable health care.

Senate Bill 3 passed the Senate unanimously and now moves to the House for further consideration.

VERMILLION COUNTY
Leaders Visit the Statehouse

I'd like to thank this

group of leaders from Vermillion County for stopping by the Senate chamber this week.

They enrolled in the Purdue Extension Community Leadership Program that is preparing them to maximize how their leadership can make a difference in their communities.

The group, as well as other leaders from across the state, were honored Tuesday with Senate Resolution 36, which recognizes the program for its work to develop leaders in Indiana.

PURDUE FINANCIAL
Credit Union Hosts E-Waste Day for 2025

There is an opportunity for spring cleaning this year at the upcoming Electronics Recycling Day at Tippecanoe County Fairgrounds on March 29 from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Sponsored by Purdue Federal Credit Union (PFCU), this event allows locals to safely and sustainably dispose of their electronic or electric waste, from TVs and computers to vacuum cleaners and printers.

Volunteers from the PFCU will be available to help unload electronics straight from your car, along

with an on-site paper shredding truck and the Tippecanoe County Sheriff's Department to take any unused or expired medicines.

Please note this event is free and available to Tippecanoe County residents only. Large appliances such as washing machines or stoves will not be accepted.

2025 FISHING
Licenses
Now Available

Fishing licenses valid April 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026 are now available for purchase.

Licenses can be bought through the new Indiana Department of Natural Resources' Fish and Wildlife Activity Hub at GoOutdoorsIN.com, via the mail or at certain in-person retailers.

Anyone who holds a license can also participate in the Indiana Record Fish program and submit their catches for possible prizes and title of Fish of the Year.

State Sen. Spencer Deery (R-West Lafayette) represents Senate District 23, which includes Fountain, Parke, Vermillion and Warren counties, and portions of Montgomery and Tippecanoe counties.

Leslie Jordan Performing at Masonic Hall April 19

Join Leslie Jordan for an evening of music and storytelling as she shares The Agonist, her debut solo Americana album at the Masonic Cornerstone Grand Hall and Event Center on April 19 at 7 p.m.

The Agonist is the story of Jordan's grandfather Robert S. Gott – whom she never knew – and the characters he personified. Gott fancied himself 'The Agonist,' a hapless wanderer chasing fulfillment and redemption through a peripatetic existence, which never quite led to the understanding he so desperately craved.

All families have mysteries, or at least

forgotten stories. When a box of writing showed up on Jordan's mother's doorstep a few months after Gott died, she didn't know what to expect. Inside, she found a trove of writing from her father (Jordan's grandfather): poetry, short stories, and journals comprising some 30 years of his life.

Up until that point, her father, who left when she was little, had been the villain of many family stories, and she barely knew him. But digging into the box and his writing, a far more interesting and complex story unfolded. When she shared the writing with her daughter years later, Jordan knew she wanted to write an album about her grandfather's story.

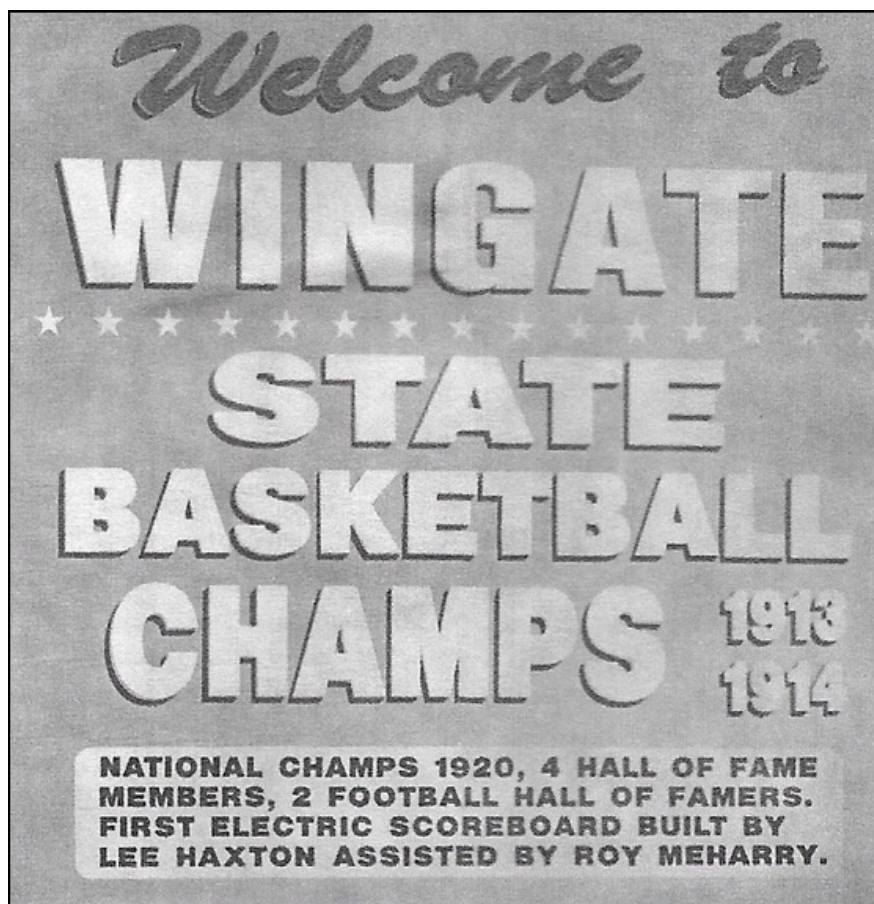


Leslie Jordan

Working with producer Kenneth Pattengale of The Milk Carton kids, was surreal and gratifying for Jordan, who's admired his work for a long time. "He kept pushing me into being that best version of myself," she says.

After years of working in Nashville, Jordan said that recording an album so connected to California in Far Cry Studios in Los Angeles felt right.

Back in the Day with Butch Dale



Wingate doesn't have much of a population, but they have one thing that very few small towns have . . . a claim to fame in the history of Indiana basketball!

March is National Nutrition Month: Food Connects Us



MONICA NAGELE
Guest Columnist

As March rolls in, so does National Nutrition Month—a time to focus on making informed

food choices and developing healthful eating habits. This year's theme, "Food Connects Us," highlights how food brings people together across cultures and communities. With spring break just around the corner, it's the perfect time delve into diverse culinary traditions. Whether traveling or staying local, consider trying recipes from different cultures. This not only broadens your palate but also fosters appreciation for global communities. Cooking a meal from another culture or hosting a themed dinner night with friends and family can be a fun way to celebrate how food shapes traditions and relationships.

Use this time to strengthen bonds by cooking and sharing meals with loved ones. Collaborative cooking can reinforce relationships and create lasting memories. Planning a potluck where each person brings a dish significant to their heritage can be

both educational and unifying. Take a break from the usual routine to refine your cooking skills. Experiment with new ingredients, learn basic techniques, or challenge yourself with meal planning. If you're traveling, consider preparing healthy snacks and meals in advance to stay balanced while on the go.

Nutrition plays a key role in health from childhood to older adulthood. Learn how nutrient needs change with age and how to incorporate a variety of healthful foods from all food groups. Focus on balanced and sustainable eating habits to support lifelong well-being and help build a strong foundation for future generations.

Understanding where food comes from can enhance appreciation and decision-making. Visit a local farmers' market, tour a farm, or research the origins of your favorite foods. Knowing more about your food sources helps build a stronger connection to what you eat and supports sustainable choices.

Food access is an essential part of nutrition. Take time to learn about community resources such as SNAP

(Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), WIC (Women, Infants, and Children), and local food banks. Whether you need support or want to volunteer, engaging with these resources strengthens communities and ensures everyone has access to nutritious food.

As you celebrate National Nutrition Month and head into spring break, remember that food is more than just nourishment—it's a powerful connector. Embrace new experiences, build cooking skills, explore food origins, and support community food initiatives.

Looking for expert guidance? Ask your doctor for a referral to a Registered Dietitian. Not ready for a personal consultation? Tune in to my podcast, "Bite by Bite: Nutrition for Life," where we debunk popular nutrition myths and trends!

Monica Nagele MS/RD, is the Purdue Extension Montgomery County Extension Director, Health and Human Science Educator

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Lawmakers Talk About Matching Grants



State Rep. Beau Baird



State Rep. Mark Genda



State Rep. Jeff Thompson



State Rep. Matt Commons

Indiana's Community Crossings Matching Grants that were awarded to local communities for local road and bridge projects, were talked about by legislators representing Montgomery County.

"Investing in our local roads and bridges is essential for keeping our communities connected and well-maintained," said State Rep. Beau Baird (R-Greencastle). "These funds will go a long way in improving infrastructure and fostering economic growth, ensuring Hoosiers can travel safely and efficiently for years to come."

The Community Crossings Matching Grant Program provides local communities funding for road reconstruction, bridge preservation, intersection improvements and other projects. This year, 245 Indiana communities will receive more than \$200 million in state matching grants.

Indiana was recently ranked as the best state in the nation for overall road conditions by Consumer Affairs, noting our low rate of traffic fatalities and

quality of roads.

"Road updates, maintenance and projects are essential for keeping our roadways safe and functional for Hoosiers," said State Rep. Mark Genda (R-Frankfort). "With the help of the Community Crossings Matching Grant Program, our smaller communities can tackle these large, necessary projects."

Area grant recipients include Crawfordsville (\$688,176), Montgomery County (\$1.5 million) and New Market (\$290,187).

"Hoosiers and visitors alike rely on our roads to safely reach their destinations," said State Rep. Jeff Thompson (R-Lizton). "Programs like Community Crossings are why our state is considered one of the best for infrastructure."

State Rep. Matt Commons (R-Williamsport) said to qualify for funding, smaller municipalities must provide a 25 percent match in local funds, while larger communities must provide a 50 percent match. The state requires 50 percent of available matching funds be awarded

annually to communities within counties with a population of 50,000 or less. Since 2016, Community Crossings has awarded more than \$2 billion to improve local roads and bridges.

"Not every area has the resources or funds to take on major road and bridge projects that could bring economic growth," Commons said. "Community Crossings grants give communities and towns the additional support needed to attract new business and opportunities to rural areas."

Baird represents House District 44, which includes all of Putnam County and a portion of Montgomery County. Genda represents House District 41, which includes portions of Boone, Clinton, Montgomery and Tippecanoe counties. Commons represents House District 13, which includes all of Benton and Warren counties, and portions of Fountain, Jasper, Montgomery, Newton, Tippecanoe and White counties. Thompson represents House District 28, which includes portions of Boone, Hendricks and Montgomery counties.

TASTE of Tippecanoe Tickets on Sale

Hey there, food and fun lovers! Get ready for the event of the summer: TASTE of Tippecanoe 2025! Join in on June 21 from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. for an amazing evening packed with delicious local bites, wonderful art and the best of community spirit.

You won't want to miss this fabulous experience, and the good news is—tickets are available for pre-

sale at HALF PRICE! What a deal! But hurry, this offer won't last long.

To grab your tickets, just download our app, where you can also stay in the loop with live updates and notifications about the event. So gather your friends and family, come hungry, and get ready for a night to remember!

So, mark your



calendars for June 21 and get ready to indulge in some of the best food and music that Tippecanoe has to offer. Don't wait, grab your tickets now and join us for an evening of fun and festivities!

LETTER TO EDITOR

PETA: Ditch Animal Agriculture

Dear Editor,

As a lifelong resident of Northwest Indiana, it breaks my heart to see avian influenza tearing through local bird populations. I recently watched a video of a crane suffering from the neurological effects of the virus—it is a terrifying and painful way to die.

I grew up admiring cranes, raptors, and waterfowl. Now,

they're dying across the state, with cases confirmed in 30 counties and suspected in dozens more.

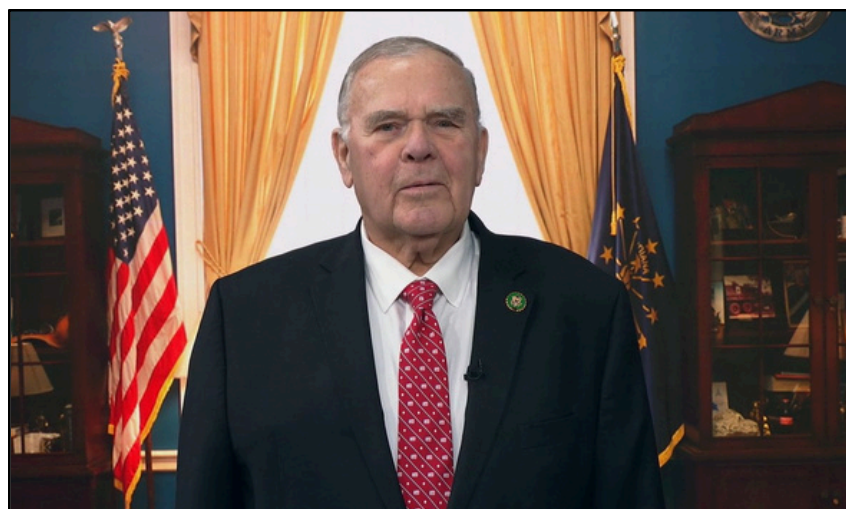
But we can't act surprised. Experts have warned us for years that cramming animals together on filthy, crowded farms creates the perfect breeding ground for viruses like H5N1. From farms, it spreads to animals in nature, companion animals,

and humans. No one is safe.

If we want to protect birds and prevent the next pandemic, we must stop fueling the system causing it. That means ditching animal agriculture and going vegan. The compassionate solution is right in front of us—and it starts on our plates.

*Rebecca Libauskas
Climate Research
Specialist
The PETA Foundation*

Baird Votes to Keep Government Funded



Earlier this week, Congressman Jim Baird (IN-04) voted for H.R. 1968, the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act of 2025. "While this bill is not perfect, I voted for this Continuing Resolution because it freezes spending levels, prevents a costly shutdown and ensures critical programs and services such as Medicare, Social Security and Veterans' benefits can continue without disruption. This CR provides real results for Hoosier families, including historic tax cuts, securing our borders, and rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse in our federal agencies. House Democrats are playing absurd political games and voted to shut down the government to thwart the President's successful America First agenda. House Republicans are unlocking the ability to make lasting changes to Washington, D.C. so that the government works for the American people, not the other way around."

Looking for a part-time job that does not involve the words:

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Catch Casey every Monday in The Paper!