

Proverbs 3: 5-6

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.

■ AWL LESSIE



Lessie is a 9 year old (senior) female American Pit Bull Terrier available for adoption from AWL since 12/16/2025. Lessie loves going out for walks, playing fetch, and being showered with love/attention. Lessie is looking for her best friend! Could that be you? Lessie is available for adoption, to foster, or simply going out for walks. AWL is open Monday-Friday from 12:15p-5p and Saturday's from 12-3p. Come snuggle cats in a community cat room, walk dogs, or lend a helping hand!

■ MONTGOMERY MINUTE

The second Saturday of each month is the perfect chance to stock your home library. That's the monthly book sale at the Crawfordsville District Public Library. It takes place every month on the lower level from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Hardcover books are 50 cents, paperbacks are a quarter, magazines 10 cents, CDs 50 cents, single DVDs \$1 and deluxe DVD sets \$3 a season. There are some special items that may have individual pricing. If you are downsizing and want to donate some books, the library will take gently used hardcover and paperbacks, DVDs and Blu-Rays, audiobooks and music CDs and complete puzzles and games. They cannot accept items with water or mildew or other damage, broken bindings, missing or items with strong odors like cigarette smoke.



It's Friday the 13th again! Forget superstition! This is going to be a good day, dagnab it!

■ QUOTE OF THE DAY

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant."
Anne Bradstreet

■ JOKE OF THE DAY

What is the easiest way to burn 1000 calories?
Leave the pizza in the oven.



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BOOMER BITS...Tips and Advice from Boomers to Boomers

Why Is My SS Retirement Benefit So Small?

Dear Rusty: Can you help me understand? I have paid into Social Security since I started working in 1978. I did have a lot of tax deductions, but I don't understand why I only receive \$350 a month from Social Security.
Signed: Befuddled Senior



ASK RUSTY
Social Security Advisor

Dear Befuddled Senior:
Your Social Security benefit is based upon your average monthly earnings for the 35 years over your lifetime that you earned the most while contributing to the Social Security program (however, your benefit isn't based on your contributions to SS). Your average lifetime earnings amount is called your "AIME" or "Average Indexed Monthly Earnings," which are ad-

justed for inflation for years before you turn 60. Your earnings (your net earnings if self-employed) are provided to the SSA by the IRS. Your average lifetime earnings number (your "AIME") is subjected to a formula which calculates your "Primary Insurance Amount" or "PIA," which is the SS benefit you receive if you start benefits in the month you reach your full retirement age. Your per-

sonal full retirement age (FRA) depends on the year you were born which, if you were born in 1960 or later, is age 67. However, if you claim Social Security before reaching your FRA, you will get only a percentage of your PIA (reduced from what you would get if you claimed at your FRA). For example, if you claimed at age 62, you

See Rusty Page 2

IRS Releases Dirty Dozen Tax Scams for 2026

The Internal Revenue Service recently announced its annual Dirty Dozen list of tax scams for 2026 that threaten the tax and financial information of taxpayers, businesses, and tax professionals.

The Dirty Dozen is part of a broader campaign conducted through the Security Summit, a partnership among the IRS, state tax agencies, and the nation's tax industry, and reinforced by outreach efforts tied to National Slam the Scam Day on March 5. These initiatives educate taxpayers about identity theft schemes and other forms of fraud, particularly during filing season.

"Today, Slam the Scam Day, provides a great opportunity to remind everyone to remain

vigilant and watch out for scams because thieves continuously adjust the

taxpayers should watch out for."

A notable change to this year's list is the addition of abusive undistributed long-term capital gains claims as item #6, replacing prior fuel tax credit concerns, as the IRS sees an increase in overstated or fabricated claims tied to Form 2439, Notice to Shareholder of Undistributed Long-Term Capital Gains. The IRS advises all taxpayers to remain cautious year-round, as criminals will always be on the lookout for new ways to obtain money, personal identifiable information, and data.

The 2026 Dirty Dozen: 12 key scams to watch for

See Scams Page 5

How to protect yourself and what to do if you get a suspicious message or call

Don't click unexpected links or open unexpected attachments.

If you get a suspicious IRS-related call, hang up. The IRS provides guidance on what to do next, including how to report scams.

To report suspected IRS-related phishing emails or messages, send them to phishing@irs.gov and follow IRS reporting instructions.

If you think your tax identity has been compromised, visit [IRS.gov/idtheft](https://www.irs.gov/idtheft) for steps to protect your account and recover.

pitches they use to take advantage of honest taxpayers," said IRS Chief Executive Officer Frank J. Bisignano. "For more than two decades, the IRS has used the Dirty Dozen list to flag emerging scams that

■ THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

1. INDOT has activated its worksite speed control pilot program, known as Safe Zones, in Hancock and Jasper counties. Starting on March 23, Safe Zones enforcement will resume in the I-70 construction zone between mile markers 104.9 and 109 in Hancock County near Greenfield. Also on March 23, Safe Zones enforcement will begin on I-65 between mile markers 210 and 219 in Jasper County near Rensselaer. The program is currently active and will continue in the Clear Path I-465/I-69 work zone on the northeast side of Indianapolis. Once active, vehicles traveling 11 mph or more over the posted speed limit will receive a violation notice via mail. The first violation results in a zero-fine warning, followed by a \$75 civil fine for second violations, and a \$150 civil fine for third and subsequent violations.

2. With rising prices all around, Kroger is offering a little relief. The grocery giant is having Customer Appreciation Week from now through March 17. Shoppers can enjoy the low prices on seasonal favorites and great deals on Kroger's Our Brands favorites and popular national brands across the store. In addition to great savings, each day from March 11-17, Kroger will reveal new Daily Deal Drops, available to clip for one day only at [Kroger.com](https://www.kroger.com), the Kroger app or by requesting the discount at checkout through March 17. All offers must be redeemed by March 20. Visit [kroger.com/appreciation](https://www.kroger.com/appreciation) to learn more. Daily Deal Drops will remain a surprise until the day-of.

3. OK, good, bad or indifferent we're all adjusted to springing forward earlier this week. But did you use the opportunity to replace the batteries in smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors? Our friends at CenterPoint remind us that with spring approaching, customers can also use this season reminder to perform energy saving and safety tasks around the home, such as: Changing filters in HVAC systems, cleaning dryer vents, sealing air leaks by caulking and weather stripping, installing hot water saving measures and checking and restocking emergency kits. Daylight Saving Time is a great reminder to check that emergency supplies are up to date. For additional efficiency tips, visit [CenterPointEnergy.com/SavingsTips](https://www.CenterPointEnergy.com/SavingsTips).

AARP Indiana Applauds Law Protecting from Crypto Kiosk Scams



AARP Indiana expressed its support for Gov. Mike Braun's signing of House Enrolled Act 1116 (HEA 1116), landmark legislation designed to protect Hoosiers from cryptocurrency kiosk scams.

Cryptocurrency kiosks, also known as "crypto ATMs," can be found in supermarkets, convenience stores, and gas stations. Today, there are more than 45,000 crypto ATMs nationwide, with nearly 900 located across the state. Increasingly, criminals have been using the machines to quickly extract money from their victims, who disproportionately are older adults.

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) 2025 Annual Report, fraudsters used virtual currency kiosks to steal more than \$333 million in 2025 alone. These financial losses are mounting, and many incidents go unreported.

HEA 1116 bans the operation of these machines in Indiana, representing a major step forward in consumer protection.

"Indiana families deserve strong protections from fraud, especially as criminals adapt their tactics to new technologies," said Ambre Marr, AARP Indiana Legislative Director. "When it comes to these kiosks, Indiana now has the strongest protections in the country. We greatly appreciate the work of Rep. Wendy McNamara, Sen. Scott Baldwin, and the rest of the Indiana General Assembly for their commitment to making it harder for scammers to take advantage of Hoosiers, and we want to thank Governor Braun for signing the bill into law."

"This legislation also wouldn't have been possible without the local work of Sergeant Detective Nathan VanCleave of the Evansville Police Department and the Evansville City Council. The 2025 ordinance that the city passed played a key role in building momentum for this statewide law."

To learn more about AARP Indiana's work across the state, visit [aarp.org/IN](https://www.aarp.org/IN), and for more information about AARP Fraud Watch Network, visit [aarp.org/fraudwatch](https://www.aarp.org/fraudwatch).

About AARP Indiana
AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to

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The Paper

OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

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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 16
Regular Board Meeting 5 p.m.
480 W 580 N, Crawfordsville
Call to Order
Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance
Public comment
Consent agenda
Minutes
Monthly claims

Personnel, extra-curricular, field trips, facilities usage, contributions, gifts, superintendent stipends
Other
Consent vote
Welcome New Director of Curriculum
Spotlight Sugar Creek
Honorary Board Member
Spotlight
Action items
Approve High School Textbook Language Arts Adoption
Approve Summer Swim Program 2026
Approve Sommer Oven Replacement
Purchase
Approve Middle School Dishwasher Replacement Purpose
Approve 2026 Asphalt Drive Work
Other
Facilities Update
Adjournment

AARP

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empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With a nationwide presence, AARP strengthens communities and advocates for what matters most to the more than 100 million Americans 50-plus and their families: health and financial security, and personal fulfillment. The Indiana office has

been involved in issues affecting Hoosiers ages 50-plus, including providing more assistance for family caregivers, encouraging retirement savings, and encouraging local leaders to make their communities more livable. To learn more visit www.aarp.org/IN and follow @aarpindiana on Twitter and Facebook.

Congressional Candidate Reacts to Iran War

I woke up early on February 28 and was shocked to discover the United States and Israel had initiated Operation Epic Fury, a military action against the nation of Iran. My immediate response was astonishment with no clear picture being offered of what exactly was happening or why. Over the past nine days, however, we Americans have begun to understand the irresponsible, and irrational actions of two deranged national leaders. We now know we have been lied to, manipulated, and coerced, yet we still have no clearer picture of rationale consistent with cause for military action. We have no idea of the end game because it is clear there is no plan. One minute it is a war, the next it is not. One minute it is an invitation to “take back your country” the next it is a demand for “unconditional surrender.” There is no indication on the part of the president or his cabinet that this is a well-orchestrated military operation with a clearly defined purpose and end. In fact, the plan is so informal that the executive office informed right-wing media influencers before Congress or the American people, and the President chose to

wear a baseball cap to receive our first American fatalities in their flag-draped coffins.

While Trump and Netanyahu are brandishing swords and puffing their chests, we are beginning to see the humanitarian and economic effect on Americans and the rest of the world. A strike on a girls’ school killing 168 people – most of them children - is a war crime. An attack on five oil refineries, raining oil on Teheranian citizens and creating an ecological crisis is a war crime. A torpedo attack on an Iranian warship returning from a naval exercise in international waters with 180 unarmed sailors is a war crime. Add to that no rescue operation for survivors – that is a clear violation of the Geneva Conventions. The strike left 148 confirmed dead with 87 bodies pulled from the water by Sri Lankan recovery teams. Is this who we have become as a

Human costs will continue to escalate because the price of oil - up 66% in a little over one week - from \$67.02 to \$111.24 per barrel - will precipitate a global crisis of immense economic magnitude. Global recession, hyperinflation on goods and services, job losses, homelessness,

Joe Mackey

4th Congressional District Candidate

Guest Columnist



starvation - all paint a broad and bleak picture of our immediate future.

And here at home, in their effort to reduce the deficit with the “Big Beautiful Bill” last summer, Republicans justified dramatic cuts to government programs that support American people including healthcare and supplemental nutrition assistance. Apparently, Republicans have no problem cutting essential and life-sustaining services to support Trump’s unauthorized vanity war. Operation Epic Fury is estimated to cost the American people \$1 billion each day – almost \$3 a day for every American.

This is a moral crisis, and Americans should be outraged by this pointless display of power. Every Republican in government has betrayed their supporters, reneged on their promises, and created hardships that will take years to correct. I have not seen nor have I heard anything that justifies

these atrocities – not from the president, not from the Cabinet, not from Congress, not from our own Congressman. Jim Baird has done nothing but echo the party line. He is complacent. He is complicit in this crisis – complicit in his support for an authoritarian who has said the only thing that can stop him from using American military power is his own mind - his own version of morality. As we have seen, that is a deeply flawed morality.

This election is not about political parties; this election is about sanity, integrity, morality, democracy, the rule of law, the Constitution, and restoring our government to the people. If WE THE PEOPLE cannot throw them out, it is imperative that WE THE PEOPLE VOTE THEM OUT!

Joe Mackey is a candidate for Indiana’s 4th Congressional district. Attached is his statement condemning the US/Israeli initiated conflict in Iran.

Montgomery County Retired Teachers Association Meet

President Steve Frees welcomed members to the March 9th Montgomery County Retired Teachers Association meeting held in the Crawfordsville Public Library. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the invocation was given by Brenda Lovold. Table decorations were provided Alicia MacIsaac and Brenda Lovold. Lunch was provided by Ashley from Sunshine in a Box.

Kathy Steele introduced Janet Covington from the Through the Gate program. Through the Gate is a “faith-based women’s recovery home helping women overcome addiction, homelessness, and life-controlling issues through the power of Christ.” It is an 8-month program. It is funded primarily through donations and grants and is available to women of all backgrounds.

President Steve called the business meeting to order. The minutes which were sent to members were approved. Barb Foster gave the treasurer’s report. A motion to approve the report was made and seconded. The motion passed.

Nancy Bowes from the Community Service committee read a thank-you note from the Family Crisis Shelter for our donation. She mentioned that our basket donation today will go to the Through the Gate program. Nancy reminded the group to keep track of volunteer hours.

Susie Minch asked members to let her know if we can’t open attachments that she forwards.

Nancy Buckles sent 4 thinking of you/get well cards, 1 sympathy card, and 2 congratulations cards this month.

Kathy Steele mentioned that we will need a treasurer for the

2026-2027 year. She would love to have someone volunteer for this position. Kathy sent a slate around asking for program ideas for the 2026-2027 year.

President Steve asked the group if we would be willing to support the General Lew Wallace “Archicamp” - a program for children ages 8 through 12. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to give \$75.00.

The next meeting will be held on April 13, 2026 at the library. The table decorations will be provided by Sheila Hodges and Barb Foster. Barb will give the invocation. The program will be Disability Services on the University Level given by Allison Frees-Williams. Our basket donation will go to the Achaius Ranch.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 pm.

RUSTY

Continued from Page 1

would only get 70% of the amount you would have gotten had you waited until age 67, or if you claimed at age 63 you would get 75% of your age 67 benefit. The reduction is less as you get closer to your FRA; if you claimed at age 65, you’d get about 87% of your full retirement age amount.

You can see your lifetime Social Security earnings record at your personal “my Social Security” online account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount (you will need to first create that online account), or you can call Social Security at 1.800.772.1213 to request an “Earnings Statement” be sent to you. That statement will show your lifetime

earnings by year, the 35 highest of which were used to calculate your PIA (your Social Security benefit at your FRA). Generally, your Social Security FRA benefit will be about 40% or less of your average indexed monthly earnings.

So, to recap, your SS retirement benefit isn’t based on your contributions to the program; it’s based on your average monthly lifetime earnings. If you had less than 35 years contributing to the program, SS would still use 35 years in the benefit formula by using zero dollars in earnings for some number of years, which would result in a smaller AIME. Thus, if you claimed before your full retirement age of 67, your SS bene-

fit was reduced because you claimed early. And if you had less than 35 years of SS-covered employment, your AIME was less, resulting in a smaller PIA. And that is likely why your monthly Social Security retirement benefit is low.

One other thought to consider: if you are married and your spouse’s monthly SS benefit is considerably more than yours (e.g., more than twice as much as yours), you may want to explore your options for spouse benefits.

I hope this explains how your SS benefit is calculated, but if you still question your monthly SS retirement amount, I suggest you first obtain your “Earnings Statement”

to review the lifetime earnings SS has on file for you. If there are any discrepancies in your Social Security’s earnings record, there are correction remedies available to you. If that is the case, please feel free to contact us again for more information.

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.

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Have a great weekend!

AG's Office Lists Nearly 50 Items Recalled in February

Attorney General Todd Rokita today alerted Hoosiers to a surge in consumer safety threats, with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announcing nearly 50 products recalls in February — many involving children's toys, clothing, furniture, baby products, and household items that pose choking, burns, drowning, poisoning, and other serious risks.

“Hoosiers deserve protection from faulty products — especially when they put our children at risk,” Attorney General Rokita said. “If you own any of these recalled items, stop using them immediately and contact the manufacturer for a refund, repair, or replacement.”

The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports the following products were recalled in February:

Clothing:

HALO Dream Recalls Magic Sleepsuits Due to Choking Hazard: The zipper head can detach from certain sleepsuits, posing a choking hazard to infants.

Unique Brands Com Recalls Forever 21 Pajama Pants Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Burn Hazard; Violates Mandatory Flammability Standards for Children's Sleepwear: The recalled children's pajama pants violate the mandatory standards for flammability of children's sleepwear, posing a burn hazard and risk of serious injury or death to children.

Meijer Recalls Lullaby Lane and MCS Children's Sleepwear Due to Burn Hazard; Violates Mandatory Standard for Children's Sleepwear: The recalled sleepwear violates the mandatory flammability standard for children's sleepwear, posing a risk of burn injuries to children.

Dresbe LED Christmas Headbands Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Battery Ingestion; Violate Mandatory Standard for Consumer Products with Button Cell Batteries: The recalled headbands violate the mandatory standard for consumer products with button cell and coin batteries because the button cell batteries in the headbands can be accessed easily by children, posing an ingestion hazard. Additionally, the packaging and product do not have the warnings required under Reese's Law. When button cell or coin batteries are swallowed, the ingested batteries can cause serious injuries, internal chemical burns, and death.

Lola Plus The Boys Recalls Youth Clothing with Drawstrings Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Strangulation Hazard; Violates Federal Rule for Children's Upper Outerwear: The drawstrings in the recalled clothing can get caught on objects and cause death or serious injury to children due to the strangulation hazard. The clothes are in violation of the federal rule for children's upper outerwear and present a substantial product hazard.

Health and Beauty Products:

Tomum Minoxidil Hair Serum Spray Bottles Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Child Poisoning; Violates Mandatory Standard for Child-Resistant Packaging; Distributed by Belleka: The hair serum contains minoxidil, which must be in child-resistant packaging as required by the Poison Prevention Packaging Act. The hair serum's bottles are not child-resistant, posing

a risk of serious injury or death from poisoning if the contents are swallowed by young children.

Zan International Trading Recalls Lotus Joy Sweet Birch Essential Oil Bottles Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Child Poisoning; Violates Mandatory Standard for Child-Resistant Packaging: The essential oil bottles contain methyl salicylate, which must be in child-resistant packaging, as required by the Poison Prevention Packaging Act (PPPA). The bottles are not child-resistant, posing a risk of poisoning if the contents are swallowed by young children.

Organic Zing Birch Essential Oil Bottles Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Child Poisoning; Violates Mandatory Standard for Child-Resistant Packaging; Sold on Amazon by Linkers: The essential oil bottles contain methyl salicylate, which must be in child-resistant packaging, as required by the Poison Prevention Packaging Act (PPPA). The bottles for the products are not child-resistant, posing a risk of poisoning if the contents are swallowed by young children.

Toys:

Cubimana Island Storm 3 In 1 Building Sets Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Battery Ingestion; Violates Mandatory Standard for Toys; Sold on Amazon by RBS Toys: The Island Storm Building Sets violate the mandatory safety standard for toys because the battery compartment within the LED light piece contains button cell batteries that can be easily accessed by children. When button cell or coin batteries are swallowed, the ingested batteries can cause serious injuries, internal chemical burns and death.

The KiddoSpace Recalls Peg Doll Children's Toys Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Choking Hazard; Violate Small Parts Ban: The recalled toys are intended for children under three years old and the toy's peg dolls can block a child's airway, which violates the small parts ban, posing a risk of choking and death to children.

The KiddoSpace Recalls Children's Flashcard Talking Toys Due to Risk of Injury from Lead and Phthalate Exposure; Violates Federal Lead Content and Phthalates Bans and Standard for Toys: The recalled children's flashcard toy sets contain levels of lead that exceed the federal lead content ban and levels of phthalates that exceed the federal phthalates ban. Lead and phthalates are toxic if ingested by young children and can cause adverse health issues. In addition, the flashcards also violate the mandatory standard for toys because they fail to comply with the short-circuit protection requirement for battery-operated toys.

Surreal Brands Recalls Children's Tubby Tots Fizzy Flask Bath Magic Bath Foam Sets Due to Impact Hazard: Moisture trapped inside the bath foam set container can cause pressure to build up, allowing pieces to be forcefully ejected when opened, posing an impact hazard.

The KiddoSpace Recalls Children's Sensory Swing Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Strangulation: The recalled swing's flexible fabric can form loops that can entangle a child's head or neck, posing a risk of serious injury or

death from strangulation.

Magnetic Chess Games Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Magnet Ingestion; Violates Mandatory Standard for Toys; Sold on Amazon by Kaiwenshangpin: The recalled magnetic chess games violate the mandatory standard for toys because they contain loose magnets posing an ingestion hazard to children. When high-powered magnets are swallowed, the ingested magnets can attract each other, or other metal objects, and become lodged in the digestive system. This can result in perforations, twisting, and/or blockage of the intestines, blood poisoning and death.

Zelbuck Children's Chess Games Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Magnet Ingestion; Violate Mandatory Standard for Toys; Sold on Amazon by n b plus: The recalled children's chess games violate the mandatory standard for toys because they contain loose magnets posing an ingestion hazard to children. When high-powered magnets are swallowed, they can attract each other, or other metal objects, and become lodged in the digestive system. This can result in perforations, twisting, and/or blockage of the intestines, blood poisoning and death.

The KiddoSpace Recalls LED Soccer Hover Balls Due to Serious Risk of Injury from Burn Hazard; Violates Mandatory Standard for Toys: The surface temperature of the recalled toys' batteries exceeds the allowable limit, which violates the standard for toys, posing a risk of burn injuries.

The KiddoSpace Recalls Children's Story Books Due to Choking Hazard: The recalled book's felt parts can detach, posing a choking hazard.

Grtard Magnetic Stick Figure Toy Sets Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Magnet Ingestion; Violates Mandatory Standard for Toys: The magnetic stick figure toy sets violate the mandatory standard for toys because they contain loose magnets, posing an ingestion hazard to children. When high-powered magnets are swallowed, the ingested magnets can attract each other, or other metal objects, and become lodged in the digestive system. This can result in perforations, twisting, and/or blockage of the intestines, blood poisoning and death.

The KiddoSpace Recalls Children's Handwriting Practice Kits Due to Risk of Injury from Lead Exposure; Violates Federal Lead Content Ban: The pens in the recalled children's handwriting kits contain levels of lead in the nib that exceed the federal lead content ban. Lead is toxic if ingested by young children and can cause adverse health issues.

The KiddoSpace Recalls Reusable Water Balloons Due to Risk of Injury from Phthalate Exposure; Violate Federal Phthalates Ban: The cord lock on the recalled water balloons' storage bags contains a regulated phthalate, which violates the federal phthalate ban. Phthalates are toxic if ingested by young children and can cause adverse health effects.

The KiddoSpace Recalls Children's Fingerpainting Kits Due to Risk of Injury from Hazardous Substances and Phthalate Exposure; Violates Federal Hazardous Substances Act and Phthalates

Ban: The recalled children's fingerpainting kits contain the hazardous substances methanol and ethylene glycol and are intended for children under 12 years of age, which violates the Federal Hazardous Substances Act. The products also contain a regulated phthalate, which violates the federal phthalate ban; phthalates are toxic if ingested by young children and can cause adverse health effects.

The KiddoSpace Recalls Children's Christmas Tree Play Sets Due to Risk of Injury from Lead Exposure; Violates Federal Lead Content Ban and Mandatory Standard for Toys: The zipper pull on the music box compartment of the recalled Christmas Tree Toys contains levels of lead that exceed the federal lead content ban. Lead is toxic if ingested by young children and can cause adverse health issues. Additionally, the Christmas tree component fails to comply with various mechanical and electrical requirements for battery-operated toys.

Joyreal Busy Board Children's Toys Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Choking and Laceration Hazards; Violate Small Parts Ban and Mandatory Standard for Toys; Sold on Amazon by Indream Store: The recalled children's toys violate the small parts ban because the small mirror can detach from the toy, posing a deadly choking hazard. In addition, the toys violate the mandatory standard for toys because the toy's mirror has sharp edges, posing a laceration hazard.

The KiddoSpace Recalls Children's Montessori Egg Puzzle Toys Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Choking Hazard: The recalled toys are intended for children under three years of age and the eggs can block a child's airway, posing a risk of choking and death to children.

Magnetic Chess Games Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Magnet Ingestion; Violate Mandatory Standard for Toys; Sold on Amazon by Yiruikeji2024: The recalled magnetic chess games violate the mandatory standard for toys because they contain loose magnets posing an ingestion hazard to children. When high-powered magnets are swallowed, the ingested magnets can attract each other, or other metal objects, and become lodged in the digestive system. This can result in perforations, twisting, and/or blockage of the intestines, blood poisoning and death.

Huaker Magnetic Balls and Rods Sets Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Choking; Violates the Small Ball Ban: The recalled magnet toy building sets violate the mandatory standard for toys because they contain small balls and are intended for children under three years of age, posing a deadly choking hazard.

Surveying Accessories Cheaper Recalls Board Games Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Magnet Ingestion; Violates Mandatory Standard for Toys: The recalled board games violate the mandatory standard for toys because the magnetic game pieces contain loose high-powered magnets, posing an ingestion hazard to children.

When high-powered magnets are swallowed, the ingested magnets can attract each other, or other metal objects, and become lodged

in the digestive system. This can result in perforations, twisting, and/or blockage of the intestines, blood poisoning and death.

Cobelae Busy Books Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Choking Hazard; Violates Small Parts Ban; Sold on Amazon by Flyindream: The toy books violate the small parts ban because the beads can loosen and detach from the product, posing a deadly choking hazard.

Child Products:

Trankerloop Baby Bath Seats Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death to Children from Drowning; Violates Mandatory Standard for Infant Bath Seats: The recalled bath seats violate the mandatory standard for infant bath seats because they are unstable and can tip over while in use, posing a risk of serious injury or death due to drowning.

Bicystar High Chairs Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Fall and Entrapment Hazards; Violates Mandatory Standard for High Chairs: The high chairs violate the mandatory standard for high chairs because they were sold without the required attached crotch restraint, posing a deadly fall hazard for children. In addition, a child's head can become trapped between the seat and the side of the high chair, posing a deadly entrapment hazard.

Sanven Technology Recalls Vevor Baby Gates Due to Risk of Serious Injury from Entrapment Hazard; Violates Mandatory Standard for Gates and Enclosures: The recalled gates violate the mandatory standard for expansion gates and expandable enclosures because a child's torso can fit through the opening between the gate and the floor, posing a risk of serious injury due to entrapment.

Babysense Max View Baby Monitors Recalled Due to Fire Hazard; Manufactured by Hisense: The display or “parent” unit of the Max View baby monitors can overheat and/or spark when charging, posing a fire hazard to consumers.

CheerKid Baby Bath Seats Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death to Children from Drowning; Violates Mandatory Standard for Infant Bath Seats; Sold on Amazon by Babibaby and Woot: The recalled bath seats violate the mandatory standard for infant bath seats because they are unstable and can tip over while in use, posing a risk of serious injury or death due to drowning.

Outdoor Equipment:

Evajoy Above-Ground Pools 48 Inches and Taller Recalled Due to Drowning Hazard; Manufactured by Shenzhen Danya Tech: The compression strap that surrounds the outside of the pool legs may create a foothold, allowing a child access to the pool, posing a drowning risk.

Weber Recalls Over 3.2 Million Metal Wire Bristle Grill Brushes Due to Ingestion Hazard: Small metal wire bristles can detach from the brushes, stick to the grill or food, posing an ingestion hazard and risk of serious internal injuries that could require surgery.

Watkins Manufacturing Recalls Hydromassage Rotary Jets in Highlife Collection Spas Due to Entanglement and Drowning Hazards: The hydro-massage rotary jets can

RECALLS

Continued from Page 3

create a suction force that allows the user's hair to be entangled, submerging their head underwater, posing entanglement and drowning hazards to the user.

Household Products and Supplies:

Dupray USA Recalls Neat Steam Cleaners Due to Risk of Burn Hazards or Serious Injury: The steam cleaner's boiler can rupture if it is overfilled, corroded and the pressure release valve malfunctions, posing risk of burn hazards or serious injury to users or bystanders.

SumDirect LED Mini Lights Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Battery Ingestion; Violates Mandatory Standard for Consumer Products with Button Cell Batteries: The recalled LED lights violate the mandatory standard for consumer products containing button cell or coin batteries because they contain button cell batteries that can be accessed easily by children, posing an ingestion hazard. Additionally, the LED lights do not have the warnings as required by Reese's Law. When button cell and coin batteries are swallowed, the ingested batteries can cause serious injuries, internal chemical burns and death.

Somgem Pig and Yomin Toilet Lighters Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Fire and Burn Hazards; Violates Mandatory Standard for Cigarette Lighters; Sold on Amazon by Elepdv: The recalled pig and toilet lighters violate the mandatory standard for cigarette lighters because they do not have the required child-resistant mechanisms, posing a serious risk of injury or death from fire and burn hazards. The lighters also failed to meet the pre-market lighter submission requirement needed to demonstrate that the lighters feature child resistant mechanisms and ensure their safety and compliance with U.S. regulations.

Andersen Windows Recalls Window Opening Control Devices Sold as Kits or Installed on 100 Series Casement Windows Due to Fall and Serious Injury Hazards: The window opening control devices can break or detach after accidental or other impact, allowing the window to be opened, posing fall and serious injury hazards.

Royal Oak Enterprises Recalls Lighters Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Fire and Burn Hazards; Violates Mandatory Standard for Multipurpose Lighters: The recalled lighters violate the mandatory standard for multipurpose lighters because they do not have the required child-resistant mechanisms, posing a risk of serious injury or death from fire and burn hazards. The lighters also violate the labeling requirements under

the Federal Hazardous Substances Act by missing required safety information.

PQL Recalls High Bay Linear LED Light Fixtures Due to Fire Hazard: The retaining pins used to secure the LED board inside some units can degrade, allowing the LED board to come loose inside the fixture, posing a fire hazard.

Prismatic 3D Prints Recalls Book Nooks Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Battery Ingestion; Violates Mandatory Standard for Consumer Products with Coin Batteries and Statute for Battery Packaging: The recalled book nooks violate the mandatory standard for consumer products containing button cell or coin batteries because the nooks include a spare lithium coin battery that can be easily accessed by children. In addition, the spare coin battery is not in child-resistant packaging, and the packaging does not have the warnings as required by Reese's Law. When button cell or coin batteries are swallowed, the ingested batteries can cause serious injuries, internal chemical burns and death.

JJGoo LED Balloon Lights Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Battery Ingestion; Violates Mandatory Standard for Consumer Products with Button Cell Batteries: The recalled lights violate the mandatory standard for consumer products containing button cell or coin batteries because they contain button cell batteries that can be accessed easily by children, posing an ingestion hazard. Additionally, the LED lights do not have the warnings required by Reese's Law. When button cell batteries are swallowed, the ingested batteries can cause serious injuries, internal chemical burns and death.

Joly's Recalls 80% Vinegar Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Poisoning and Chemical Burns; Violates FHSA Labeling Requirements: The recalled vinegar product violates the precautionary labeling requirements under the Federal Hazardous Substances Act (FHSA) because the hazardous substance lacks required warning labels and first-aid treatment instructions. This poses a deadly risk of poisoning if the contents are swallowed and a serious injury from chemical burns to the skin and eyes if improperly handled.

LShome Photoelectric Smoke Detector Fire Alarms Recalled Due Failure to Warn During Fire Posing Serious Injury or Death Hazard; Sold Exclusively on Amazon.com: If the sensing threshold of security warnings is set too high, the alarm might not sound in a timely manner, posing a fire hazard.

Airova Recalls

Aroev Air Purifiers Due to Fire and Burn Hazards: The air purifiers can overheat and ignite, posing fire and burn hazards to consumers.

Aterian Recalls PurSteam Elite Travel Steamers and Mighty Lil Steamers Due to Risk of Serious Burn Injury: The steamers can expel hot water from the steam nozzle during use, posing a serious burn hazard to consumers.

Little Cow Company Recalls 9 oz Candles in Glass Jars Due to Fire, Burn and Laceration Hazards: The glass jar holding the candle can crack or break during use, posing fire, burn and laceration hazards.

Scepter Fuel Containers Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Flash Fire, Burn and Child Poisoning; Violates Mandatory Standards for Portable Fuel Containers; Imported by Mameix Retail: The recalled fuel containers violate the mandatory safety standards for portable fuel containers because they lack flame mitigation devices required under the Portable Fuel Container Safety Act, posing a deadly risk of flash fire. In addition, the Children's Gasoline Burn Prevention Act requires all closures on portable gasoline fuel containers to be child-resistant. The spout on the product is not child-resistant, posing a risk of burn and poisoning to children.

Kitosun Submersible LED Lights Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Battery Ingestion; Violates Mandatory Standard for Consumer Products with Coin Batteries: The recalled LED lights violate the mandatory standard for consumer products containing button cell or coin batteries because they contain lithium coin batteries that can be accessed easily by children, posing an ingestion hazard. Additionally, the LED lights do not have the warnings as required by Reese's Law. When children swallow button cell or coin batteries, the ingested batteries can cause serious injuries, internal chemical burns, and death, posing an ingestion hazard to children.

Furniture:

Shintenchi 6-Drawer Dressers Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Tip-Over and Entrapment Hazards; Violate Mandatory Standard for Clothing Storage Units: The recalled dressers are unstable if they are not anchored to the wall, posing tip-over and entrapment hazards that can result in risks of serious injuries or death to children. The dressers violate the mandatory standard as required by the STURDY Act.

EnHomee 10-Drawer Dressers Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Tip-Over and Entrapment Hazards; Violates Mandatory

Standard for Clothing Storage Units: The recalled dressers are unstable if they are not anchored to the wall, posing tip-over and entrapment hazards that can result in risks of serious injuries or death to children. The dressers violate the mandatory standard required by the STURDY Act.

Clark Associates Recalls Lancaster Table & Seating Powder-Coated Aluminum Outdoor Restaurant Chairs and Barstools Due to Fall Hazard: The legs of the chairs and barstools can bend or break while the chair is in use, posing a fall hazard.

Furnlem 5-Drawer Dressers Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Tip-Over and Entrapment; Violates Mandatory Standard for Clothing Storage Units: The recalled dressers are unstable if they are not anchored to the wall, posing tip-over and entrapment hazards that can result in risks of serious injuries or death to children. The dressers violate the mandatory standard as required by the STURDY Act.

Beloems Adult Portable Bed Rails Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Entrapment and Asphyxiation; Violate Mandatory Standard for Adult Portable Bed Rails: The recalled bed rails violate the mandatory standard for adult portable bed rails because users can become entrapped within the bed rail or between the bed rail and the side of the mattress, posing a serious entrapment hazard and risk of death by asphyxiation. The bed rails do not meet structural stability or retention strap requirements, posing a fall hazard. The bed rails' push pins and push pin holes are incorrectly sized, posing a laceration hazard.

SOOWERY 6-Drawer Dressers Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Tip-Over and

Entrapment Hazards; Violates Mandatory Standard for Clothing Storage Units: The recalled dressers are unstable if they are not anchored to the wall, posing tip-over and entrapment hazards that can result in risks of serious injuries or death to children. The dressers violate the mandatory standard as required by the STURDY Act.

Fortemotus Direct Adult Portable Bed Rails Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Entrapment and Asphyxiation; Violate Mandatory Standard for Adult Portable Bed Rails: The recalled bed rails violate the mandatory standard for adult portable bed rails because users can become entrapped within the bed rail or between the bed rail and the side of the mattress, posing a serious entrapment hazard and risk of death by asphyxiation. The bed rails do not meet structural stability or retention strap requirements, posing a fall hazard. The bed rails' push pins and push pin holes are incorrectly sized, posing a laceration hazard.

Vive Health Recalls Adult Portable Bed Rails Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Entrapment and Asphyxiation; Violates Mandatory Standard for Adult Portable Bed Rails: The recalled bed rails violate the mandatory standard for adult portable bed rails because when the bed rails are attached to a bed, users can become entrapped within the bed rail or between the bed rail and the side of the mattress, posing a serious entrapment hazard and risk of death by asphyxiation. In addition, the bed rails do not bear the required hazard warning labels.

Exercise Equipment:

Todson Recalls Concord Bicycle Helmets Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Head Injury; Violates

Mandatory Standard for Bicycle Helmets: The recalled helmets violate the mandatory safety standard for bicycle helmets because they do not comply with the retention system and positional stability requirements. The helmets can fail to protect the user in the event of a crash, posing a serious risk of injury or death due to head injury.

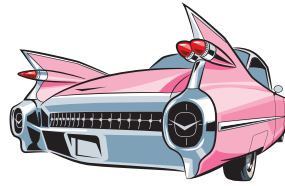
SAMIT Youth Multi-Purpose Helmets Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Head Injury; Violates Mandatory Standard for Bicycle Helmets; Sold on Amazon by SAMIT Outdoor: The recalled helmets violate the mandatory safety standard for bicycle helmets because they do not comply with the positional stability and certification requirements. The helmets can fail to protect the user in the event of a crash, posing a serious risk of injury or death due to head injury.

Semfri Children's Helmets Recalled Due to Risk of Serious Injury or Death from Head Injury; Violates Mandatory Standard for Bicycle Helmets: The recalled helmets violate the mandatory safety standard for bicycle helmets because they do not comply with the impact attenuation, positional stability, labeling and certification requirements. The helmets can fail to protect the user in the event of a crash, posing a serious risk of injury or death due to head injury.

If you believe you recently purchased a recalled product, stop using it, and check its recall notice. Then follow the notice's instructions, including where to return the product, how to get the product fixed, how to dispose of the product, how to receive a refund for the product, or what steps must be taken to receive a replacement product.

To view recalls issued prior to February, visit the Consumer Protection Safety Commission website.

REMEMBER WHEN?



Back in the day with
Butch Dale



Hot Cars From Back In The Day

Do you recognize this classic car from 1994?
Answer on Page 5

SCAMS

Continued from Page 1

1. IRS impersonation by email and text (phishing + smishing). Scammers send emails, direct messages (DMs), and texts that appear to be from the IRS, often using alarming language and QR codes that direct taxpayers to fake IRS websites to “verify” accounts, enter personal information, or claim refunds. The IRS urges taxpayers not to click links or open attachments from unexpected messages and to report suspicious IRS-related emails, DMs, and texts. The IRS reported over 600 social media impersonators during fiscal year 2025.

As a reminder, never click any unsolicited communication claiming to be from the IRS, as it may install malware surreptitiously. These links may install malicious software, including ransomware, on a taxpayer’s personal device, potentially preventing access to their files or personal information.

2. AI-enabled IRS impersonation by phone (robocalls, voice mimicry, spoofed caller ID). Phone scams continue to evolve, including calls that use computer-generated tactics and spoofed caller ID to appear legitimate. The IRS reminds taxpayers that it generally contacts taxpayers by mail first and does not leave urgent, threatening prerecorded messages, call to demand immediate payment, or threaten arrest. Taxpayers should not rely on AI-generated responses to complex tax questions, and they should verify any calculations or information provided by artificial intelligence.

3. Fake charities. Fraudsters often exploit tragedies and disasters by creating fake charities to collect donations and personal information. The IRS is committed to preventing fraudulent nonprofits from taking advantage of the American taxpayer.

Taxpayers who give money or goods to a charity may be able to claim a deduction on their federal tax return if they itemize deductions, but charitable donations only count if they go to a qualified tax-exempt organization recognized by the IRS.

4. Misleading tax advice on social media. Viral “tax hacks” can push taxpayers to file returns with false

information or claim credits they don’t qualify for, leading to refund delays, audits, penalties, or worse. The IRS continues to warn that social media-driven misinformation and disinformation remain a major driver of tax scams. The IRS and the Coalition Against Scam and Scheme Threats warn taxpayers not to fall for these scams, and urge them to follow trusted advice from the IRS, tax professionals, and other reputable sources. The IRS reminds taxpayers who knowingly file fraudulent tax returns that they could potentially face significant civil and criminal penalties.

5. Identity theft involving IRS Online Account access. Criminals may attempt to use stolen personal information to gain unauthorized access to a taxpayer’s IRS online account or may pose as helpers to collect sensitive information during account setup. Taxpayers should create their account directly through IRS.gov and should not rely on unsolicited third parties offering assistance. The IRS provides official guidance to help taxpayers securely establish and protect their accounts.

6. Abusive undistributed long-term capital gains claims. The IRS identified an increase in the abuse of Form 2439. This form allows shareholders of certain investment funds or real estate trusts to claim a refundable credit for taxes paid on undistributed capital gains. Identified schemes involve overstated or fabricated Form 2439 claims, including claims tied to organizations that are not legitimate investment funds or real estate trusts. The IRS has also seen fake claims falsely linked to real, well-known organizations. Improper claims may result in refund delays, audits, penalties, or enforcement action.

7. Bogus “Self-Employment Tax Credit” promotion. Scammers use misleading claims about a broad “self-employment tax credit” to encourage inaccurate filings and generate improper refunds. The IRS reminds taxpayers to rely on trusted sources and qualified tax professionals, not social media promotions, when determining eligibility for credits. Many taxpayers do not qualify for these credits, and the IRS is closely

reviewing claims coming in under this provision, so taxpayers filing claims do so at their own risk.

8. Ghost preparers. A “ghost” preparer prepares a return but refuses to sign it and/or refuses to include a Preparer Tax Identification Number (PTIN). When a preparer refuses to sign or provide a PTIN, that is a major red flag; the taxpayer is legally responsible for what is filed. The IRS urges taxpayers to avoid preparers who will not sign the return and to choose reputable help. Taxpayers should never sign a blank or incomplete return. Instead, the IRS reminds taxpayers to use a trusted tax professional for help.

9. Non-cash charitable contribution schemes. Some schemes involve inflated appraisals of donated property using syndicated conservation easements or art. Promoters often promise to eliminate or substantially reduce tax liability. The IRS warns taxpayers not to file returns with made-up information and reminds taxpayers that it can hold refunds while verifying claims.

10. Overstated withholding schemes (fabricated wage/withholding data). Scammers encourage taxpayers to inflate withholding amounts (sometimes described as “other withholding”) to manufacture a larger refund by reporting zero or little income on incorrect forms. The IRS may delay processing while it verifies wages and withholding against third-party records. Inaccurate claims can lead to penalties and enforcement action. There are multiple variations of the overstated withholding credit scheme, including those involving Forms W-2 and W-2G; Forms 1099-R, 1099-NEC, 1099-DIV, 1099-OID, and 1099-B, as well as the

Report abusive tax schemes and suspicious activity

The IRS encourages taxpayers, tax professionals, and the public to report suspected tax fraud, scams, identity theft, or other tax-related wrongdoing by visiting IRS.gov/SubmitATip. The new online tool allows individuals to confidentially submit information using a smartphone, tablet, or computer. It consolidates IRS fraud-reporting options into one location and routes tips to the appropriate IRS office. Prompt reporting helps protect taxpayers and quickly stop abusive activity.

Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend, Schedule K-1 with Withholding Reported, and Unspecified Source of Withholding Credit Claimed.

11. Spear-phishing and malware campaigns targeting tax professionals. Tax professionals and businesses remain targets of “new client” or “document request” emails that deliver malicious links or attachments to steal client data or access systems. The IRS and the Security Summit urge preparers to remain vigilant and to strengthen their security practices. Businesses and individuals, including tax pros, should always be cautious and look out for any suspicious requests or unusual behavior before sharing any sensitive information or responding to an email. Warning signs may include unexpected requests for sensitive information, mismatched or unfamiliar sender addresses, urgent payment demands, or links directing users to websites that do not clearly originate from IRS.gov. Be aware that by gaining access to a hacked email account, scammers can locate a genuine email from a previous victim’s email account sent to their tax professional.

12. Aggressive or misleading Offer in Compromise marketing (“OIC mills”). The Offer in Compromise program can help certain eligible taxpayers resolve tax debt when they are unable to pay in full, but “OIC mills” often overpromise results and charge high fees to taxpayers who don’t qualify. Taxpayers can check eligibility using free IRS tools to avoid high-pressure sales tactics.

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Behind the Mic With Purdue Announcers Rob Blackman, Bobby Riddell



**SPORTS,
SPORTS, &
MORE SPORTS**
with Ken Thompson

Every play-by-play announcer dreams of a signature call. Think Al Michaels and the 1980 Olympic hockey semifinal between the U.S. and Soviet Union. “Do You Believe in Miracles? Yes!”

To this point in Rob Blackman’s career with the Purdue Global Radio Network, his came on Easter Sunday in 2024 in Detroit during the final seconds of the Boilermakers’ Elite Eight victory against Tennessee.

“And wouldn’t you know it. On Resurrection Sunday, the Purdue Boilermakers have turned the doubters into believers. Believe this! For the first time since 1980, Purdue is headed back to the Final Four.”

In the aftermath of that moment, listeners asked Blackman if he prepared those remarks in advance.

“I’ve been asked that a lot and it’s a 50-50,” Blackman said. “I did not prepare that word for word. I did, however, jot down a few notes in my hotel room the night before just in case Purdue did win I wanted to tie it into the fact that it was Easter Sunday. In my mind I had rehearsed a few different scenarios that I could somehow tie it into Easter Sunday and luckily for me it came out damn near perfect.”

In a radio career that dates to his days as a football player at the University of Evansville, the Purdue-Tennessee game remains Blackman’s favorite broadcasting moment.

“I know that’s the easy answer, but it’s the answer,” Blackman said. “I know we talk about breaking glass ceilings but to finally get back to the Final Four. The other part of it is the team had just fallen flat on its face the year before in the NCAA Tournament. You had all these expectations and all these doubters out there ready to say ‘ha ha, we told you so. You can’t win in the tournament.’ So many people were ready to say that.”

“Hopefully, that will move into second place one of these days.”

This interview with Blackman and radio partner Bobby Riddell took place before Purdue basketball skidded into the postseason with an unheard of five losses in Mackey Arena.

Blackman was thrust into the Purdue basketball play-by-play role when longtime voice Larry Clisby’s ultimately fatal cancer battle took a turn for the worse in 2020. It’s never easy replacing a legend, but fortunately for Blackman he had learned a lot from Clisby as his color analyst.

“To me, he was an icon in broadcasting,” Blackman said. “I grew up in Monticello. I was born in 1970, back then as you know it was antenna television. You had very few options, but Channel 18 was an option. I can remember ‘Cliz’ doing the sports anchoring on Channel 18. Then you add on top of that he’s the voice of the Boilermakers, so anything related to Purdue or Lafayette sports had some kind of connection to Larry

Clisby.

“He’s a childhood hero of mine and the next thing you know I’m working alongside the guy thinking to myself ‘how did this happen?’”

“His passion was so contagious. Some would argue over the top at times and that’s a fair criticism. But look, there was never any doubt about where the Cliz stood on his thoughts about Purdue basketball. I think that’s what endeared him so much to the fans. Purdue was his team and those were his guys. By God, he was going to make sure everyone listening knew that.”

Clisby’s greatest lesson to Blackman had nothing to do with play-by-play techniques.

“One of the things, and he passed this along very early in our working relationship, was that you can’t fool the fans,” Blackman said. “This is a lesson Cliz said coach Keady shared with him. Look, if we’re playing poorly or badly, we being Purdue, then you need to let the fans know. Just as when we’re playing well, playing at a high level, you need to let the fans know.”

It was a long path for Blackman from North White High School in Monon, Ind., to a prized seat in Mackey Arena. It was during his days at the University of Evansville that Blackman’s passion for radio blossomed.

“At the time I wanted to be a disc jockey,” he said. “Evansville had a campus radio station at the time, they no longer do, so it was a great opportunity. Once I was there they allowed the students to also broadcast some of the college’s different sporting events. The announcing bug bit me. So I started to pigeon myself into that genre of broadcasting.”

After graduation, Blackman started out in Mount Carmel, Ill., calling high school and junior college games. A chance to call Division I football and basketball at Tennessee State and Lipscomb took Blackman to Nashville, Tenn. Moving back to Indiana with his wife in 2001, Blackman called Arena League football games and high school sports.

As sometimes is the case in life, who you know is as important as what you know. That’s how Blackman ended up at Purdue.

“When I called Purdue I caught a major break,” Blackman said. “The guy who picked up the phone had been a college classmate of mine. He was running the network at the time.”

While his former college acquaintance didn’t have a full-time position, Blackman was offered a role as a fill-in announcer.

“Luckily a full-time position opened up and somehow, some way a guy who grew up watching Larry Clisby on TV, figuring he was the coolest guy ever, was now working alongside him,” Blackman said.

In addition to Purdue basketball, Blackman has been a pit reporter for the past seven years on the Indianapolis 500 Radio



Photo courtesy Purdue Athletics
Bobby Riddell (left) and Rob Blackman are in their sixth season together calling Purdue men’s basketball games.

Network.

When Blackman took over the play-by-play job, that opened a spot for Riddell, a former walk-on guard who had starred locally for Harrison High School.

Riddell’s timing could not have been worse for someone learning the craft of broadcasting. Just weeks into his new role, the COVID-19 pandemic changed how Purdue games away from Mackey Arena would be broadcast.

But with Blackman’s guidance, Riddell soon found himself comfortable in a role he never expected to fill.

“It couldn’t have worked out any better for me starting out in this industry to have a guy like Rob who literally had my job alongside Larry Clisby all those years,” Riddell said. “He knows what it entails, and I was comfortable around him. There was definitely a lot of nerves from my end at the beginning. I love Purdue and stupidly was building it up as the biggest thing in the world and it’s just calling a basketball game.”

Riddell had been working full-time at a tax and accounting firm in West Lafayette, Heman Lawson Hawks. It was the same

firm Purdue coach Matt Painter and some members of his staff were using for their annual tax preparations. Riddell’s boss at the time allowed him to take the lead role on those accounts.

“That probably helped keep me fresh on their minds compared to any other former player,” Riddell said when the color analyst role opened. “Thankfully, I was someone coach Painter thought of as a good option. It also worked out well that Rob Blackman and Wes Scott, who is our radio engineer, were both also on the radio team when I was a player so I had a relationship with those guys.”

Riddell is now employed by the Purdue Research Foundation, which allows him to support a wife and four children.

“It’s a dream side gig for someone like myself,” Riddell said of being a part of the Purdue Global Radio Network. “When you get done playing and you’re not coaching, you miss that camaraderie when you are no longer part of a team. This has been the perfect amount to scratch that itch and it still allows me to have that good work/life balance. I can be a good husband and father, focus on my day job – the one

that pays the bills – with the Purdue Research Foundation. I’m a father of four now, I have three older boys and a daughter who is one-and-a-half. The job doesn’t pull me too much away except for these little hiatuses to Piscataway, N.J.”

Like Blackman, Riddell says his best basketball moment as an announcer came in Detroit.

“That was incredible,” he said. “As someone who bleeds gold and black, it was such a surreal moment to witness Purdue go to the Final Four and be on the broadcast for it.”

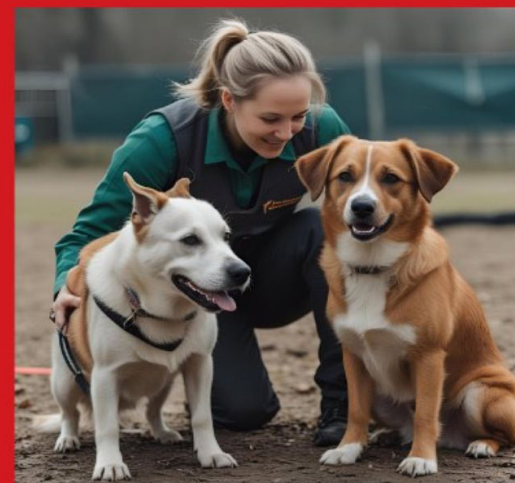
“Rob Blackman just totally knocked it out of the park with his closing of Purdue going to the Final Four. I was so nervous and wanted Purdue to win I could never get myself to say ‘if Purdue wins is there something cool I should say on the broadcast?’ Rob had that awesome close and he came to me. I was like, oh I should talk now and say something great. Off the top of my head I rattled off something excited. It was a dream-come-true moment.”

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.

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