

■ TODAY'S VERSE

1 Corinthians 13:13

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (ESV)

■ AWL KEVIN



Kevin is a 4 year old male Basenji available for adoption at The Animal Welfare League of Montgomery County (AWL) since 1/3/2025. Kevin came in with his doggy pal (who's also available), Gunnar. Kevin is dog friendly, but a meet and required is required to ensure good fit. Both love going out for walks/jogs, frolicking in a fenced yard, and being showered with endless love/attention. Kevin is looking for his best friend! Could that be you? AWL is open Monday-Friday from 12:15-5p and Saturday's from 12-3p. Come snuggle cats in a community cat room, walk dogs, or lend a helping hand!

■ MONTGOMERY MINUTE

The Linden Depot Museum, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit railroad museum located along U.S. 231, has launched a \$30,000 GoFundMe fundraiser to support Project 497, a cosmetic restoration of its historic Nickel Plate Road bay window caboose No. 497. Norfolk & Western Railway donated the caboose several years ago and it has suffered significant weather-related deterioration. Project 497 aims to restore the caboose's exterior appearance, returning it to a condition worthy of public display and long-term preservation. For more information or to donate, please visit the Linden Depot Museum's GoFundMe page: <https://gofund.me/41580a477>, or contact museum president, Gary Vierk at (765) 427-3630. Donations may also be mailed directly to Linden Depot Museum, Project 497, P.O. Box 154, Linden, IN 47955.



Speaking of UFOs, never seen one myself. Kinda wish I had.

■ QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Happiness? The color of it must be spring green."  
Frances Mayes

■ JOKE OF THE DAY

Did you hear about the sensitive burglar?  
He takes things personally!



# The Paper

## OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Montgomery County's oldest locally owned independent newspaper www.thepaper24-7.com | 50¢

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

## I'm Still Working; Why Didn't my Benefit Amount Increase?

*Dear Rusty: I have been working somewhat consistently since commencing my Social Security benefit income. I've been collecting since my full benefit age of 66, approximately. I'm now 81, and customarily, in about October of each calendar year, Social Security notifies me of additional benefits from my additional work. Not this year.*

*I earned some \$18,000-\$19,000 in 2025. SS advised I did not meet some 35-year formula. I thought that formula just applied to the original benefit calculation. Otherwise, one seems cheated given the SS taxes paid on income received after applying for benefits without*



### ASK RUSTY

Social Security Advisor

*any consideration for that income. Please advise me. Signed: Feeling Cheated*

*Dear Feeling Cheated: FYI, your Social Security benefit is always based on the highest 35 years of your lifetime earnings (with your early years' earnings automatically*

*adjusted for inflation). And that formula continues even after you start receiving benefits. Social Security will look at your earnings each year to see if your recent earnings are among your highest. If so, they will automatically re-*

See Rusty Page 2

## Empowering Seniors for Safer Online Experiences

### 6 Practical Safety Tips for Caregivers and Families

**Family Features**

Today's seniors aren't shying away from a world that has become increasingly reliant on technology. Quite the opposite, in fact, as recent survey findings suggest adults ages 65 and older are more digitally active and self-assured than ever before.

Nearly all seniors surveyed as part of the "Connecting the Digital Dots: Online Habits and Safety Concerns Across Three Generations" survey

from Cox Mobile consider themselves digitally literate, using devices for shopping, banking, social media and entertainment. With older adults spending a significant amount of time connected to the digital world – 41% of those surveyed reported spending five or more hours online daily – they're also more at-risk for scams, viruses like malware and data breaches.

Even though 61% of seniors who encountered

digital threats were able to mitigate the issues themselves, showing their growing digital capability, increased online engagement brings new challenges and responsibilities for caregivers, who often play a crucial role in supporting seniors' digital journeys.

To help support older loved ones' safety and confidence as they navigate an evolving digital landscape, Cox

See Safer Page 3

■ THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

**1.** Visitors to Indiana State Parks with limited mobility will soon have a free tool available to help them get outside and explore trails, with state-of-the-art track chairs coming to all Indiana State Parks throughout the state. A track chair is an all-terrain, electric-powered wheelchair that helps people with limited mobility safely explore rugged, off-road environments. Purchase of 45 track chairs was made possible by \$1 million in funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. The funds were part of a \$50 million grant the foundation made to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources in 2024 to support new development and upgrades across the Indiana State Park system. The track chairs will be distributed statewide for use at each Indiana State Park and Indiana State Park Inn. The new chairs supplement the 13 powered mobility chairs that are currently available at Indiana State Parks. More information about accessibility at DNR properties is at [on.IN.gov/dnr-accessibility](https://on.IN.gov/dnr-accessibility) and information on Lilly Endowment's investment in Indiana state parks is available at <https://events.in.gov/event/lilly-endowment-awards-50-million-grant-for-indiana-state-parks>.

**2.** Governor Mike Braun formally announced a major investment in agricultural and life sciences with the goal of creating 100,000 high wage jobs over 10 years and making Indiana the premier U.S. destination where human therapeutics, animal health, agritech, biotechnology, and environmental innovation flow together along the vital, anchored pathway of private-sector excellence. Anchored by world-class U.S. companies and research institutions with substantial incentives and a USDA facility advancing the vision, Indiana is the re-shoring and expansion epicenter: the place where American private enterprise creates 100,000 jobs and establishes institutional stature among the nation's most recognized innovation corridors. Braun highlighted the depth of leadership concentrated in Indianapolis and across Indiana in human health, animal health, agriculture, advanced manufacturing, and research..

**3.** The Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology is now accepting grant applications for the fiscal year 2026 Historic Preservation Fund. Applications are only accepted through the State of Indiana's Grant Management System website and must be submitted by 5 p.m. on Friday, June 5. Applicants are encouraged to contact the DHPA grant staff: Malia Vanaman at [mvanaman@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:mvanaman@dnr.IN.gov) or 317-232-1648 or Steve Kennedy at [skennedy@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:skennedy@dnr.IN.gov) or 317-232-6981 to discuss potential projects and confirm eligibility of the applicant, activity and property. For questions or guidance on using the state's grant management system, Euna Grants, support materials are available at: [IN.gov/sba/grants/resources-for-subrecipients](https://IN.gov/sba/grants/resources-for-subrecipients).

## 'Fine' Is New Fake: Emotional Honesty Is Key to Peace and Connection

"Fine" may be the most common and most dishonest word in the English language, and it's silently keeping people isolated from one another, explains Christian Life Coach Darla Nelson. She believes the antidote to that isolation begins with vulnerability.

"Fine" keeps people at arm's length; honesty invites connection," Nelson said. "Vulnerability is where true healing begins, and that's when peace starts to take root."

That message is at the heart of Nelson's new book, *I'm Fine. Really?: Moving From Stress and Anxiety to Peace and Calm*. Her book invites readers to drop the mask, embrace grace and rediscover the peace that comes from being real — with themselves, with others and with God.

Her book walks readers through simple, life-giving shifts to help them:

- Understand what's really behind those feelings of stress
- Release emotional weight that's been holding them back
- Build healthier thoughts, habits and relationships
- Embrace peace, even amid life's chaos

"The book is filled with honest, relatable stories — my own and those of people I've coached — that show life isn't always neat and tidy," Nelson said. "I don't pretend to have it all figured out. I'm just an ordinary woman who's learned (and is still learning) to trust God more deeply, let go of stress and build healthier habits one step at a time."

And that's what makes Nelson's narrative so refreshing: She doesn't speak from a place of perfection. She shares the trenches of real life with readers in a way that is candid and heartfelt. *I'm Fine. Really?* is an honest, faith-filled guide that can help readers let go of stress and live with more clarity, connectedness and purpose.

"Ultimately, my prayer is that readers feel seen, understood and inspired to let go of the pressure to be 'fine' and start creating a life that's truly fulfilling — spiritually, emotionally and physically," Nelson added.

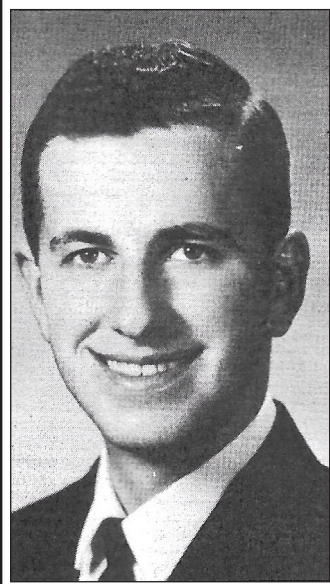
**I'm Fine. Really?: Moving from Stress and Anxiety to Peace and Calm**  
Publisher: Zamiz Publishing  
ISBN-13: 978-1949813456  
Available from <https://www.amazon.com/lm-fine-really-moving-from-stress-and-anxiety-to-peace-and-calm/>  
dp/1949813452

# The Paper OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

127 E. Main St. 103  
P.O. Box 272  
Crawfordsville, Indiana 47933  
Main 765-361-0100  
www.thepaper24-7.com

## RECOGNIZE ME?

Flashback Trivia with Butch Dale



Do You Recognize This 1965 New Ross H.S. Graduate?

**HINT:**  
He really enjoyed being in band and choir, and had a great interest in science.

Answer on Page 3

## The Paper

of Montgomery County  
An Independent Newspaper  
founded in 2004

Vol. 22 | Issue 31

Sen. Phil Boots, President  
USPS Publication Number: O22-679  
**Annual Print Subscription: \$89**  
**Annual Online Subscription: \$42**  
**To subscribe:**  
circulation@thepaper24-7.com  
**To contact news:**  
news@thepaper24-7.com  
**To submit legal notices:**  
Legals@thepaper24-7.com  
**For billing:**  
business@thepaper24-7.com

## SAGAMORE NEWS MEDIA

# WE'RE HIRING



Looking for a flexible position?

Interested in learning more about the newspaper industry?

Ready to learn something new or challenge yourself to improve your current skills?

WE ARE LOOKING FOR CANDIDATES FOR THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS:

**Sales** Get to know local businesses and find advertising options to fit their needs

**Pagination** Flex your creative muscle as you lay out news stories using inDesign

**Clerical** Assist our business department with account and subscription management

Training available for motivated individuals!

Join our team today!

Send your resume to jobs@thepaper24-7.com

WWW.THEPAPER24-7.COM

# Spring Break Camp Begins Monday

The Boys & Girls Club of Montgomery County will run 2026 Spring Break Camp, offering local youth a fun, safe, and engaging place to spend their school break. Registration is open and spots are filling up.

Spring Break Camp will run from Monday through Friday next week at the Boys & Girls Club and is open to youth in grades K-5. Camp is open

from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. with breakfast, lunch and a snack provided. Throughout the week, campers will enjoy a variety of hands-on activities, including a mix of games and gym activities, arts and crafts, STEM projects, group challenges and field trips. Camp provides opportunities for kids to learn new skills, explore their creativity, and build friendships in a positive environ-

ment.

The program is made possible through the generous sponsorship of Lakeside Book Company, whose partnership helps make the camp accessible to families in the community.

"We are grateful to Lakeside Book Company for helping make this program possible," said Gina Haile, CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of Montgomery County. "Spring break

can be a challenge for working families. Our goal is to provide a safe, supervised environment where kids can stay active, learn new things, and have a lot of fun."

The cost for the full week of Spring Break Camp is \$65 per child. Space is limited.

Families can register by contacting the Club at (765) 362-8912 or by visiting www.bgcmoco.org.

# Shadow and Light Showcases County & Hoosier Writings

A new literary anthology celebrating the depth, grit and creative spirit of Indiana writers will make its debut this spring as Purple Aardvark Publishing launches its inaugural collection, Shadow and Light: New Writing from Indiana.

The anthology gathers poets, essayists, storytellers and photographers with strong ties to the Hoosier state and asks them to create "good work about hard things." The collection reflects on the beauty and heartbreaking moments that shape human lives, refracting them through art.

"Hard things, like diamonds, have many facets," the editors write in the anthology's introduction. "When we dare to write through them, they catch the light."

"Writing to and from a place grounds me," says contributor Helen Hudson. "Everything is really so entirely miraculous, everything is pierced by wonder and delight, if you just pause for a minute and pay attention."

In Shadow and Light, first-time authors appear alongside award-winning writers well into their careers. The result is a book that feels both intimate and wide-ranging—firmly rooted in Indiana soil yet resonant well beyond the state's borders.

The collection includes work from more than 30 contributors, including Alec Jarvis, Andrew Chandler, Ann Graham Price, Anna Williamson, Dave Krohbne, Doug Calisch, Gwen Carlson, Gwynn Wills, Helen Hudson, J.R. Jamison, J.M. Wheeler, Katie Daniels, Kelly O'Dell Stanley, Kelly Shea, Kim Kile, Linda Haslanger, Lisa Rice Wheeler, Luke Blakeslee, Maggie Hoover, Marc Hudson, Marla McDaniel, Mary Glass, Michael Brockley, M.L. Greynolds, Nicole Brooks, Patrick Schlegel, Roberta Barmore, Robin Lee Lovelace, Sandra Salazar, Steve Bowman and Steve Charles.

The anthology will launch with a public celebration featuring author readings, book

signings, an open mic and a short question-and-answer session with the editorial board.

Readers and supporters are invited to attend the book launch cocktail reception from 5 to 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 28 at the Detchon International Center at Wabash College. Fans of the contributors, members of the literary community and the general public are welcome.

The event is graciously sponsored by Wabash College's Restoring Hope, Restoring Trust grant in partnership with the English Department.

Additional information about the anthology can be found at: [https://www.purpleaardvarkpub.com/our-books/Shadow and Light: New Writing from Indiana](https://www.purpleaardvarkpub.com/our-books/Shadow-and-Light-New-Writing-from-Indiana) marks the fourth publication from Purple Aardvark Publishing, a new collective imprint dedicated to championing distinctive voices and creative work connected to Indiana and the Midwest.

## RUSTY

Continued from Page 1

calculate your benefit to give you a higher amount (and pay you retroactively to the first of that year). Apparently, in past years, your more recent earnings were among the highest over your lifetime, which is why you received those notifications in the fall of each previous year saying your benefit was adjusted based upon recent earnings. That you didn't get a similar notification this year, means that your earnings in 2024 were not among the highest over your lifetime, so no adjustment to your monthly benefit was appropriate.

Now, to clarify, those annual notices you received in the past always referred to the preceding year – that is, if you received a notice in October 2024 of a higher SS benefit, that was a result of your 2023 earnings. If you got no such notice in October of 2025, that means that your 2024 income was not among the highest over your lifetime. And your 2025 earnings of \$18,000 - \$19,000 will likely not be among your lifetime highest either, so you probably won't get a notice next year either.

It's important to understand that your

contributions to Social Security (i.e., the SS payroll taxes you pay while working) are not put into a separate account for you - rather, they are used to help pay benefits to all beneficiaries. In other words, just contributing to SS with payroll tax from your work earnings doesn't necessarily mean you get a higher benefit. Your SS benefit is always based upon the 35 years in which you earned the most, including recent years if you continue to work. So, you weren't "cheated" – that is simply how the program works - your SS benefit is always

based on your highest 35 years of work earnings, including recent years, with earnings from the early years adjusted for inflation..

*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](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory)) or email us at [ssadviser@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadviser@amacfoundation.org).*

**AGGULEVEL**  
FOUNDATION EXPERTS

EASY FINANCING OPTIONS AVAILABLE!

**CALL 877-229-0197**

**WE CAN HELP WITH**

- BASEMENT WATERPROOFING
- FOUNDATION REPAIR
- SUMP PUMP INSTALLATION
- HOME INSPECTIONS
- CRAWL SPACE ENCAPSULATION
- CONCRETE LEVELING

**BEFORE AFTER**

**CRACKS IN THE BASEMENT?**

**FreedomCare**  
CAREGIVER'S INDEPENDENT CHOICE

**Let your loved ones care for you - and get paid!**

**Funded by Medicaid, choose FAMILY or FRIENDS as your paid caregiver.**

★★★★★ **Your caregiver gets paid weekly!**

OVER 5,000 5-STAR REVIEWS!

**STEP 1 Be a Hoosier!** You must live in the State of Indiana.

**STEP 2 Live with a Caregiver:** You must live in the same home as the Caregiver (either their own home or the home of the Participant).

**STEP 3 Have Medicaid and Get on a Waiver:** Be eligible for Medicaid or already have Medicaid and meet the financial requirements for the Pathways for Aging or Health & Wellness Waiver.

**Find out if you are eligible today.**  
**CALL 844.563.4012**

**The Paper**  
OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Visit us online:

**thepaper24-7.com**

## Community Forum With Mayor Monday

Crawfordsville Mayor Todd Barton has scheduled his monthly Community Forum for Monday, March 23 from 4 to 5 p.m. at the Mayor's Office in the City Building.

This will be Barton's 153rd Community Forum since taking office.

Holding a monthly community forum was something Barton pledged to do during

his first campaign for mayor 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.

The City Building is located at 300 E. Pike St., just off beautiful



Mayor Todd Barton

downtown Crawfordsville.

## SAFER

Continued from Page 1

Mobile, in partnership with Common Sense Media, offers educational materials on digital safety, smart device use and media literacy for all ages. In addition, these practical safety strategies can help empower seniors to make informed, safe choices online.

**Encourage Strong Passwords:** Simple passwords, like number sequences, keyboard patterns or personal information – such as variations of your name, birthdate, address or names of pets or loved ones – are easily guessable and may lead to issues. While the survey found 70% of seniors already create strong, unique passwords, encourage them to avoid reusing passwords across sites. Recommend a password manager app to safely store passwords and eliminate the need to write them all down, which could lead to a breach if not stored properly.

**Promote Security Software:** If devices aren't protected, even the most careful users are susceptible to viruses. Though 63% of those surveyed have security software installed, it's important to regularly make sure

it's up to date (or that automatic updates are enabled) and covers all devices, including laptops, tablets and smartphones.

**Enable Multi-Factor Authentication:** A simple and effective way to stop most attempts at unauthorized account access, 60% of seniors are already using multi-factor authentication as an extra layer of protection. Some seniors, however, may need assistance setting up the safeguard, which typically sends a code to a phone number or email address as part of the login process, for online banking, email or social media accounts.

**Review Apps and Channels:** Over time, it can be easy to accumulate apps on smartphones and tablets. While 51% of surveyed seniors remove unsafe apps, make it a habit to regularly check loved ones' devices for unfamiliar or suspicious applications and delete them. Also keep an eye out for unauthorized charges, data sharing or browser extensions.

**Utilize Built-In Safety Features:** Explore privacy controls on individual

devices (and apps) and check with your loved ones' internet service provider to ensure security features are being utilized like the 43% of those surveyed who are already taking advantage of their devices' safety settings. Included privacy protections may include limiting data sharing, disabling location tracking, blocking pop-ups and restricting other unwanted communication.

**Discuss Online Safety Regularly:** Because technology is ever-changing, it's important for caregivers to talk with senior loved ones about online safety. Open, ongoing conversations, like those one-third of seniors are already having several times a week or even daily, can help build trust and awareness of current scams, suspicious texts or emails, commonly used apps and more.

By fostering open dialogue, sharing practical safety strategies and leveraging trusted resources, caregivers can help their loved ones thrive and stay safe. Visit your local Cox Mobile store or go to CoxMobileSafety.com to find more tips, guides and full survey results.



Photo courtesy Andy Chandler

From left, Chamber Executive Director Stacy Sommer and Executive Assistant Jessica McClamroch.

## Happy St. Patrick's Day – Chamber Style

By Andy Chandler  
For The Paper

This St. Patrick's Day morning, the Hampton Inn on the northside of Crawfordsville played host to the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce's event, Biz and Brew.

This was a members-only gathering hosted by the Chamber, and was attended by roughly 20 people.

According to Chamber of Commerce Executive

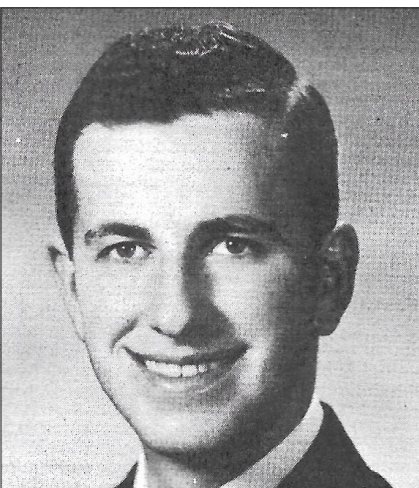
Director Stacy Sommer, "This is only the third one we've done. The last one we did was last October and it was Halloween-themed. Seventy people attended."

She said the purpose of this event was for Chamber members to network with each other as well as to have fun activities put together by the Chamber as ice breakers. Activities included bingo and

a photo booth for members to pose with Monty the Chamber Mascot. Breakfast was provided by the Inn and the Chamber and included coffee, biscuits and gravy.

Sommers said the next one is May 22. While details are still being worked out, members should check later at [www.crawfordsvillechamber.com](http://www.crawfordsvillechamber.com) or the Chamber's social media feeds.

**RECOGNIZE ME?**  
Flashback Trivia with Butch Dale



**ANSWER:** David McMullen



"The Tire Professionals"

**\$15 OFF**  
OIL CHANGE SPECIAL

Complete visual inspection & air pressure check. No other discounts apply. Not valid with any other offer. Expires 12/31/26

114 N. Water St. • Crawfordsville  
(765) 364-0584  
Weekdays 7:30 am - 5pm  
Saturday 8 am - Noon  
[pompstire.com](http://pompstire.com)

As a former sergeant in the U.S. Army and Iraq War veteran, I would like to start giving back to all who have served in the armed forces. On Veterans Day, I began offering a reduced commission in honor of your service to this great nation. Contact me for details today!

765-918-1773 - [william.dale@exprealty.com](mailto:william.dale@exprealty.com)

**CLARK DALE - EXP REALTY**

**THANK YOU VETERANS**




**exp REALTY**  
**FOR SALE**  
Clark Dale  
765.918.1773

# Public Notices Deadline:

11:00 a.m. 2 Business Days  
Prior to Publication:  
[legals@thepaper24-7.com](mailto:legals@thepaper24-7.com)

Private Party Notices Submitted After Deadline May Be Subject To \$25.00 Fee In Addition To The Cost Of The Advertisement

## WANTING TO BUY

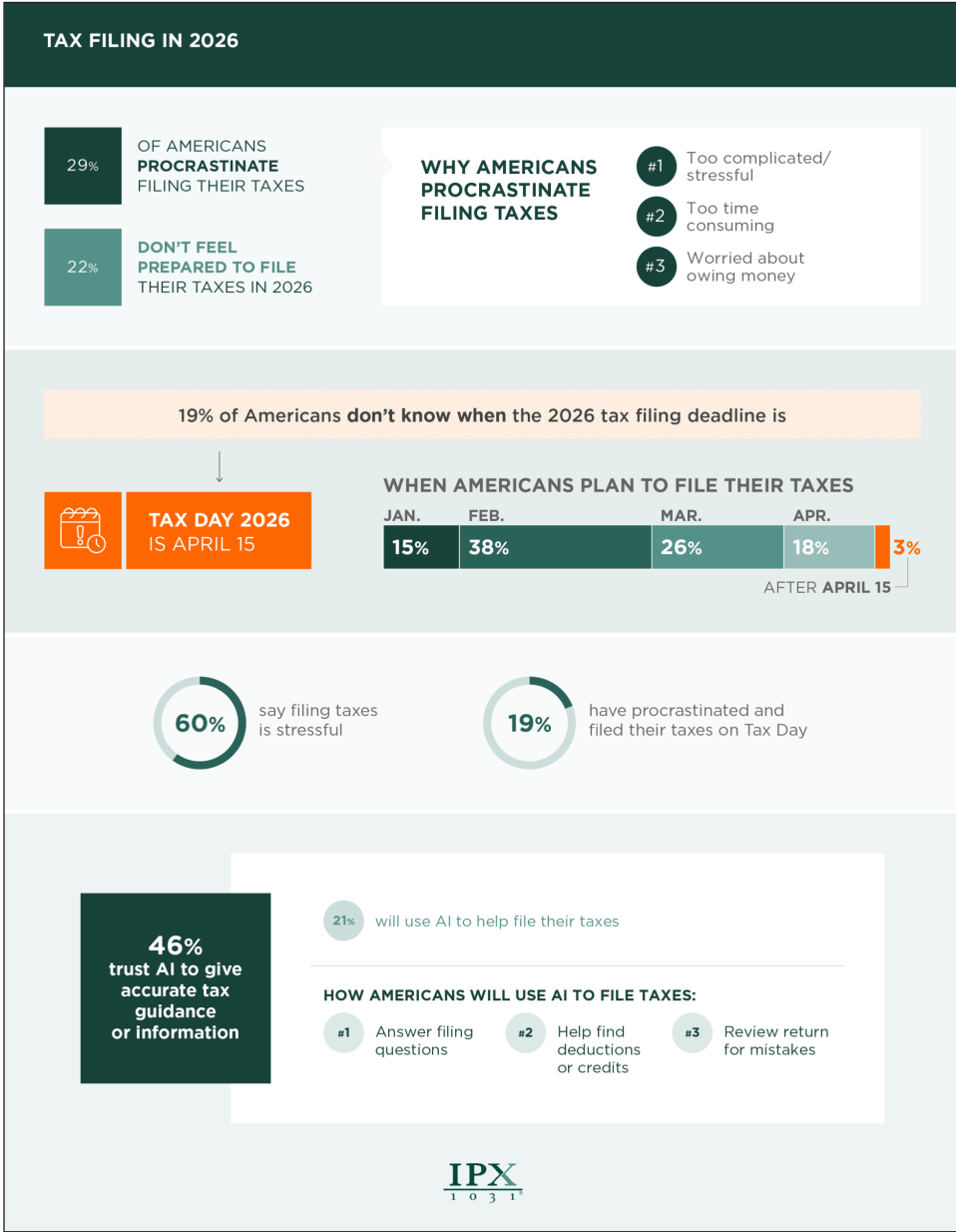
**ALL FIREARMS:  
RIFLES, SHOTGUNS,  
AND HANDGUNS  
THAT ARE 50 YEARS OLD  
OR OLDER  
IN DECENT CONDITION**

**I WILL PAY CASH  
ON THE SPOT!**

Call John "Butch" Dale  
Licensed FFL  
**765-404-1354**



# Nearly Third of Us Still Procrastinate on Taxes



As the 2026 tax filing season approaches, many Americans are once again putting off their returns. IPX1031's 7th annual Tax Procrastinators

report finds 29 percent of Americans will procrastinate filing their taxes this year, a slight improvement from 31 percent in 2025. New in 2026, 21 percent of

Americans say they plan to use artificial intelligence to help file their taxes this year. While nearly 3 in 10 Americans will procrastinate filing their

taxes, more than 1 in 5 (22 percent) say they don't feel prepared to file in 2026. The top reasons for procrastinating include:

The process feels too complicated or stressful

Filing takes too much time

Fear of owing money

Although Tax Day 2026 is April 15,

nearly 1 in 5 Americans (19%) don't know the filing deadline. As for when they plan to file, 15 percent will in January, 38 percent in February, 26 percent in March, and 18 percent in April. Nearly 1 in 5 (19 percent) even admit to procrastinating until Tax Day to file.

1 in 5 Americans Will Use AI to Help File Taxes

Nearly half (46 percent) of Americans trust AI to give accurate tax guidance or information and 21 percent say they will use AI to help file their taxes. The top ways people plan to use AI is to help answer filing questions, find deductions or credits, and review returns for mistakes.

Using Google search data related to tax

filings deadlines, we identified the states most likely to procrastinate filing taxes. For the 4th year in a row, Wyoming ranks #1. Alaska is 2nd, followed by Vermont, North Dakota, and Delaware. The top five is unchanged from the 2025 Tax Procrastination report. However, South Dakota moved up to 6th place, pushing Hawaii and Rhode Island further down the rankings.

In a change from 2025, New Jersey moved from the #41 spot to #50, becoming the state least likely to procrastinate filing their taxes. Wisconsin and Pennsylvania also rank among the states least likely to delay filing.

When it comes to refunds, expectations are mixed. More than 2 in 5 (44 percent) Americans expect their refund to be about the same size as last year, while 32 percent anticipate a smaller refund and 23 percent expect a larger one. According to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) the average tax refund in 2025 was \$3,052.

As for how Ameri-

cans will use their tax refund, 19 percent plan to save it, 18 percent will use it to pay off debt, and 9 percent plan to put it toward an emergency fund. More than a quarter (27 percent) don't expect to get a refund at all. Americans spend an average of \$128 per year on tax preparation with the majority filing through an online service (69 percent), followed by filing through an accountant (27 percent), and 4 percent use other methods. More than 1 in 4 (27 percent) of business owners and investment property owners say they struggle with filing taxes for their business or property.

*If you are interested in deferring your taxes on investment real estate, consider a 1031 Tax Deferred Exchange. You can use our Capital Gain Estimator or learn more about how a 1031 Exchange can help preserve and grow your assets when selling and buying investment properties. Learn more about Investment Property Exchange Services, Inc. (IPX1031), the nation's largest 1031 Exchange company.*

As for how Ameri-

As for how Ameri-

As for how Ameri-

As for how Ameri-

As for how Ameri-

As for how Ameri-

As for how Ameri-

As for how Ameri-

As for how Ameri-

# Use IRS Free File to Avoid Paying Fee

For 2026, eight private-sector partners are offering guided tax software products through IRS Free File to taxpayers with an Adjusted Gross Income of \$89,000 or less in 2025.

Taxpayers with an AGI above \$89,000 can use the Free File Fillable Forms, available beginning Jan. 26. These electronic versions of IRS paper forms are ideal for individuals who are comfortable preparing their own taxes using IRS instructions and publications.

Understanding IRS Free File

Each IRS Free File trusted partner sets its own eligibility requirements, which may include age, income, state residency and military status. Taxpayers and active-duty military personnel with an AGI of \$89,000 or less in 2025 can find a free federal filing option; some partners also offer free state tax return preparation and filing.

Claim tax credits at no cost

IRS Free File allows eligible taxpayers to claim valuable tax benefits, including the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit and other refundable credits. Refundable tax credits can reduce the amount of tax owed or result in a refund, even if no tax is due.

How to find the right IRS Free File product

Taxpayers can find the right product by visiting IRS.gov/freefile and:

Select "Explore Free Guided Tax Software", then

select the "Find a Trusted Partner" tool for help in finding the right product, or

Use "Browse All Trusted Partners" to review each offer,

Choose the product that best fits their situation, and

Follow the links to the trusted partner's website to begin their tax return.

IRS Free File works on computers, smart phones or tablets.

2026 IRS Free File participants

The following trusted

partners are participating in IRS Free File for 2026:

1040Now

Drake (1040.com)

ezTaxReturn.com (offers English and Spanish)

FileYourTaxes.com

On-Line Taxes

TaxAct

TaxHawk (FreeTaxUSA)

TaxSlayer

IRS Free File helps taxpayers save money and file their taxes quickly and securely.

For more information or to get started on a tax return today, visit IRS Free File: Do Your Taxes For Free.

# Utility Provides Customers with Leak-Saving Tips

Indiana American Water is recognizing the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Fix a Leak Week 2026 by sharing simple, practical tips customers can use to locate and address common household leaks that waste water, drive up bills, and strain home plumbing.

"Finding and fixing leaks can help customers protect their water, homes, businesses and monthly bills," said Kari Britto, Vice President of Operations, Indiana American Water. "At the same time, Indiana American Water is investing over \$200 million annually for the next several years to modernize water and wastewater infrastructure in our 75 communities across the Hoosier State."

Household leaks are more common than many people realize. According to the EPA, leaks affect about one in 10 homes and can waste more than 90

gallons of water each day.

Here are a few places where leaks are often found:

**Toilets:** A defective plunger ball or flapper valve can waste water by causing the tank to continually drain and refill. To test, drop a dye-tracing tablet or a small amount of food coloring in the tank and wait 5 minutes. If the dye-colored water seeps into the bowl, you may have a leak and need to replace the defective part.

**Faucets:** A leaky faucet can waste nearly 3,200 gallons of water per year. If you notice one dripping, try closing it tightly. If it continues to drip, the washer may need to be replaced.

**Washing Machines and Dishwashers:** If you see water on the floor near your washing machine or dishwasher, that could indicate a leak. You may want to call your repair service.

**Bathtubs and Showers:** Check the spout and showerhead for dripping water. New washers may be needed on the faucet handles.

**Boiler Systems:** If the sound of running water is continuous and does not stop and start periodically, there may be a leak. Contact a professional to check it out and perform repairs.

Learn more by downloading Indiana American Water's leak-detection kit and checking out the company's Fix a Leak Week blog post. Customers can also review water use for unexpected spikes and manage accounts through MyWater, Indiana American Water's online customer portal.

Additional tips on water conservation and the value of water are available through the company's Water Learning Center.

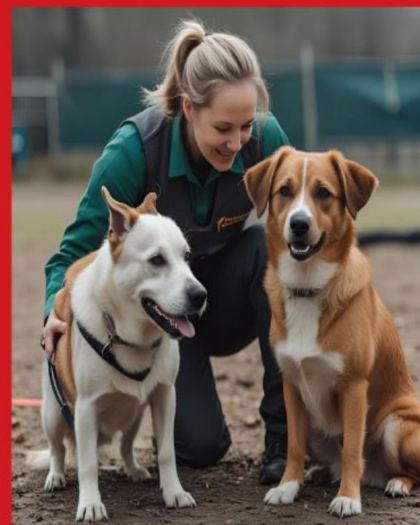
## Join our Kennel TechTeam

**DO YOU LOVE WORKING WITH ANIMALS? WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?**

**A REWARDING JOB IN ANIMAL CARE AWAITS!**

**JOIN OUR TEAM OF DEDICATED ANIMAL CARE TECHNICIANS TODAY!**

**HELP US KEEP OUR FURRY FRIENDS CLEAN AND HAPPY WHILE GAINING VALUABLE EXPERIENCE IN ANIMAL CARE!**



**APPLY IN PERSON M-F 2-5 PM OR SATURDAY 12-3**  
**1104 BIG FOUR ARCH ROAD**  
**CRAWFORDSVILLE, IN**  
**765-362-8846**

Have a great weekend!

# Roller-Coaster Season for Purdue's Boilermakers Continues Into NCAA



## SPORTS, SPORTS, & MORE SPORTS with Ken Thompson

The roller-coaster ride taken by the Purdue men's basketball team since the dawn of 2026 is once again on an upward trajectory.

Becoming the first No. 7 seed to win the Big Ten Tournament has renewed some faith in the eighth-ranked Boilermakers, who were viewed as a preseason national championship contender. Beating the Michigan all-star team while playing its fourth game in four days has regained some benefit of the doubt for a Purdue program that is best known for failure in the eyes of some national media members.

Keith Gill, the chairman of the NCAA Tournament Selection Committee, surprised many Big Ten observers with his statement that Purdue went from a No. 3 seed to the last No. 2 seed with its victory against the Wolverines. It has been believed by some that the tournament committee usually has its bracket finalized before the results of the Big Ten tournament, which typically concludes about 30 minutes before the bracket reveal on CBS.

Gill stated the tournament title game led to the committee's biggest debate in the final minutes.

"We had Michigan (as the No. 2 overall seed) and then when ... the Big Ten Tournament results came out, Arizona flipped to the 2 overall and Michigan to the 3 overall," Gill said. "Then when you look at Purdue, they started at the 11 (overall) line and with that result they scrubbed up to the 8 (overall) line and got them a 2 seed."

That jump allowed Purdue to go to St. Louis to start the tournament, likely bumping either Illinois or Michigan State from that slot behind West Regional No. 1 seed Arizona.

If someone had told me back in November that Purdue would have a better record away from Mackey Arena during the 2025-26 season, I'd have lost some money in my eagerness to place a friendly wager with that person.

But the facts are that the Boilermakers (27-8) went 8-3 on an opponent's court and are 7-0 at a neutral site. This statistic perhaps influenced the predictions by CBS college basketball analysts Clark Kellogg and Jon Rothstein that Purdue will win the national championship.

"Purdue has found its rhythm and mojo," Kellogg said during the CBS selection show. "They look like a team that can very well have a storybook ending getting to Indianapolis."

"I like Purdue and (reigning national champion) Florida to meet in Indianapolis. The storybook ending I'm talking about? The Purdue Boilermakers win the national championship 60 miles away from campus. They get it done."

Rothstein compared Purdue's momentum from winning an unexpected Big Ten Tournament championship to Connecticut's national championship run in 2004 and Florida's title

surge in 2007.

"A large returning nucleus that truly knew that the season didn't maybe truly start until Championship Week," Rothstein first stated on his X (formerly Twitter) account.

"One of the hottest teams in the country right now," fellow CBS analyst Isis "Ice" Young stated before picking Purdue to reach the Elite Eight.

"They've got a point guard who is one of the most decorated in the history of college basketball," host Brent Stover stated, referring to Braden Smith, who needs two assists Friday night against Queens to break former Duke star Bobby Hurley's NCAA career record.

Over at ESPN, where positive news about the Big Ten is rare since the network lost the conference TV package, Rece Davis stated that Arizona "has a pretty tough draw" in the West Regional.

Analysts Jay Bilas, Jay Williams and Seth Greenberg all have Purdue reaching the Elite Eight before losing to Arizona.

"I think Purdue has a pretty decent draw," Bilas said. "The Miami-Missouri winner is not going to be an easy second round game."

"Purdue made a statement today," said Greenberg, who was impressed with the 80-72 victory against No. 2 Michigan. "People say how good is Purdue? They went through that stretch where they lost two or three in a row. But they got back to who they were. They grinded it out. They were physical. They were tough. They played through their interior. Braden Smith looked to score a little bit more."

In a nightmare scenario, though, for Purdue Greenberg has Michigan and Michigan State reaching the national championship game. Greenberg joked about wanting to overhear the handshake line after picking the Wolverines.

Bilas and Williams have Arizona winning the national title. Bilas picked the Wildcats to beat Michigan State in the final.

NOTEWORTHY: Winning the Most Outstanding Player of the Big Ten Tournament was a major consolation prize for Smith after not repeating as an Associated Press first-team All-American last week.

Smith was chosen a second-team All-American guard, more than likely the result of Purdue's under-achieving month of February when the Boilermakers went 6-4 with losses to Michigan, Michigan State and Wisconsin inside Mackey Arena.

Smith did receive first-team All-America honors from the National Association of Basketball Coaches and the United States Basketball Writers Association. Those honors make Smith the fourth two-time consensus first-team All-American in Purdue history, joining Terry Dischinger, Rick Mount and Zach Edey.

Whether Purdue's dis-



Photo courtesy Purdue Athletics  
Braden Smith was averaging 14 points, 9.1 assists and 3.6 rebounds a game entering the NCAA Tournament.

appointing regular season finish will impact Smith's chance of being the first repeat winner of the Bob Cousy Award will be known in the next few weeks. Smith's fellow finalists are Michigan State's Jeremy Fears, Jaden Bradley of Arizona, Darius Acuff Jr. of Arkansas and Kingston Flemings of Houston.

Fears' chances may depend on whether voters take into consideration his less than sportsmanlike play at times this season. Smith is the nation's assists leader with a Purdue and Big Ten record 317, 23 more than runner-up Fears.

Smith is averaging 14 points, 9.1 assists and 3.6 rebounds a game entering the NCAA Tournament opener against Queens.

PURDUE'S VICTORY against Michigan was the most watched conference

championship game on any network in the last 30 years according to the Big Ten. In a statement, the Big Ten reported the broadcast peaked at 6.2 million viewers.

TWO VICTORIES in the NCAA tournament would give Purdue coach Matt Painter 500 at Purdue. The 55-year-old Painter has an overall record of 523-228, including a 25-5 record in his lone season at Southern Illinois.

Painter is on track to pass Naismith Hall of Famer Gene Keady's school record win total of 512 during the 2026-27 season.

THIS COLUMN was submitted Wednesday night before the Big Ten began play in the NCAA Tournament. With that in mind, I'm taking the league to go 6-0 Thursday night. The most noteworthy game

could be fourth-seeded Nebraska earning its first NCAA Tournament victory against Troy in Oklahoma City.

I like No. 8 seed Ohio State over No. 9 TCU in Greenville, S.C.; No. 5 Wisconsin over No. 12 High Point at Portland; No. 3 Michigan State over No. 14 North Dakota State at Buffalo; No. 1 Michigan over No. 16 Howard, also in Buffalo; and No. 3 Illinois over No. 14 Penn and former Iowa coach Fran McCaffery in Greenville.

In addition to Purdue over Queens, I'll take No. 9 Iowa over No. 8 Clemson in Tampa, and No. 7 UCLA over No. 10 Central Florida in Philadelphia tonight.

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.

## WE ARE HIRING!

### FULL TIME ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER/ KENNEL ATTENDANT



**Animal Welfare League  
of Montgomery County**

Saving Animals. Serving Community.

### Requirements

- Must be comfortable handling all domesticated animals of all sizes and temperaments
- Must be 21+ with a valid drivers license and clean driving record
- Excellent customer service
- Experience handling animals is a plus

On-the-job training is provided.

Please come by the shelter to fill out a paper application.  
1104 Big Four Arch Rd,  
Crawfordsville, IN 47933  
(765) 362-8846