

■ TODAY'S VERSE

Matthew 25:40

"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'" (NIV)

HONEST HOOSIER



Welcome to the lusty, busty month of May – at least that's what Julie Andrews sang way back in the day.

■ HAMILTON HAPPENINGS

Most government offices will be closed Tuesday May 5 when the Primary Election takes place. There are occasional exceptions. If in doubt, please check directly with the office or agency in question.

■ QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving."

Albert Einstein

■ JOKE OF THE DAY

Remember, there are three kinds of people in this world . . . those who can count and those who can't.

■ ADOPT A PET PORKY PETE



Porky Pete is a little guy with big opinions, a big personality, and an even bigger love for his people. This 8-year-old male Yorkshire Terrier has been available for adoption at the Humane Society for Hamilton County (HSHC) since 2/16/26. Once he knows you, his softer side comes out fast. He enjoys being close, loves a good cuddle, and seems very content being held or settled right in your lap. He also has a thing for stuffies, which is pretty darn adorable. To meet Porky Pete, please fill out an adoption application at hamiltonhumane.com/adopt, then stop by HSHC anytime 12-5 PM daily (closed Wednesday).

Have a fabulous weekend!

# The TIMES

NOBLESVILLE, INDIANA

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

### Do I need Social Security For Medicare?

**Dear Rusty:**  
I turn 65 this November 2026. Someone told me I need to set up a Social Security account at least 3 months ahead of time before applying for Medicare for the first time. I do not intend to take any Social Security benefits until, perhaps, age 67 or later. Please advise and thank you.

**Signed:**  
**Looking Ahead**

**Dear Looking Ahead:**  
You don't technically need to "set up" an online SSA account to enroll in Medicare, but it would be more efficient to do so. We always recommend creating your online "my Social Security" account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount well before you are ready to claim your Social Security benefits. That's because you can monitor your projected Social Security



## ASK RUSTY

Social Security Advisor

benefits to help you decide when to claim, but it also facilitates other things you might need to do at the Social Security Administration (such as claiming your SS retirement benefits online and enrolling in Medicare online).

As for Medicare, you can enroll in Medicare up to 3 months before the month you turn 65, and you can contact the Social Security Administration by phone up to 3 months

prior in order to schedule an appointment to enroll over the phone (call 1.800.772.1213 to make the appointment). You can enroll via telephone, even if you don't have your "my Social Security" online account set up. However, an advantage to creating your personal online Social Security account is that you could then enroll in Medicare online as described

See Rusty Page 3

## Rokita: Beware Bogus Mortgage Relief

If you get offers for mortgage-relief services from solicitors asking for an upfront fee, you're almost certainly dealing with a scammer.

"Hoosiers need to be aware that it's illegal for companies to charge you upfront for helping you find ways to pay your mortgage," Attorney General Todd Rokita said. "Don't fall victim to fraudsters trying to take advantage of your concerns about foreclosure or falling behind on payments."

Indiana has ranked near the top in the nation for

foreclosure rates, making the Hoosier State a prime target for these scammers.

Scammers often give themselves away with these red flags:

They tell you to stop communicating with your lender. (You always have the right to contact your lender directly to discuss free payment assistance options that may be available to you.)

They insist you pay them only by cashier's check, wire transfer or a mobile payment app. (These methods make it much harder to get your money back.)

They try to convince you to transfer the deed to your home to them or to a "rescue" company.

Important note for government-backed loans:

If your loan is guaranteed or insured by the government — including Federal Housing Administration, Veterans Affairs, U.S. Department of Agriculture/Rural Housing Service, or conventional loans backed by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac — your mortgage company is required by federal law to review your

See Rokita Page 4

## ■ THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

**1** Celebrate the start of the outdoor recreation season with free admission to all Indiana State Parks properties on Sunday, May 3, the second day of Welcome Weekend. Find an Indiana State Parks property and see what's new at on.IN.gov/stateparks. If you've never visited, on.IN.gov/dnr-welcome offers helpful tips. Campgrounds and comfort stations are open and water is on for the season. A 25 percent discount is available for campground stays Sunday-Wednesday through May 13 using the code SPRING26. Some restrictions apply. Many activities are on tap for the weekend, including full moon hikes, scavenger hunts, cloud watching, and more. All Indiana State Parks programs and events during Welcome Weekend and beyond are listed at calendar.dnr.IN.gov and on each property's Facebook page.

**2** Indiana State Treasurer Daniel Elliott welcomed Elad Strohmayer, Consul General of Israel to the Midwest this week, to discuss Indiana's continued investments and economic ties to Israel. This is Treasurer Elliott's first meeting with Consul General Strohmayer, who assumed the post last year, replacing Consul General Yinam Cohen. The visit underscores the strong relationship between the State of Indiana and the nation of Israel. Indiana has maintained a commitment to investing in Israel bonds, which have consistently ranked among the state's best-performing assets. Treasurer Elliott also helped lead a delegation of State Treasurers from across the United States to Israel last year as part of his duties as a member of the National Association of State Treasurers, where he currently serves as the Vice President of the national, non-partisan organization. As of April 2026, Indiana has invested \$120 million in Israel bonds as part of an approximately \$16 billion general fund portfolio. Treasurer Elliott oversees over 75 billion dollars of Hoosier funds through his direct management or service on various boards for the State of Indiana. In the nearly 3.5 years since taking office, he has generated over \$1.2 billion in investment returns for Hoosier taxpayers, more than the prior 10 years combined.

**3** Governor Mike Braun announced IN AI this week, a new statewide initiative focused on helping businesses grow, create jobs and increase wages through the practical application of human-centered artificial intelligence. The initiative will be executed by the CEOs of Indiana Corporate Partnership and will work directly with employers across the state to accelerate AI adoption in ways that strengthen businesses and expand opportunity for Hoosiers. IN AI is designed to meet businesses where they are, with a focus on practical application rather than theory. The program will provide a single, coordinated entry point for employers to: Identify where AI can improve operations Access tools and technical support Connect with talent to implement solutions The initiative will prioritize main street businesses in all corners of the state, while also supporting large companies seeking to scale AI across their operations.



## Buried in a Stadium? Some Say Yes!

Sports fandom is often framed as a lifelong commitment, but for some supporters, it's something even more permanent. The kind of loyalty that doesn't just survive bad seasons, relocations, or heartbreak, but quite literally follows them to the grave.

A new survey of 3,013 sports fans by SportsbookReview.com, a leading sports review site, set out to explore just how deep those allegiances run, asking a surprisingly revealing question:

If given the choice, which stadium would you want your ashes scattered in?

The results paint a picture of the venues fans feel most emotionally tied to and how those connections blur the line between tradition, identity, and ritual. The study also digs into how far supporters would actually go to make it happen, including whether they would bend (or quietly ignore) the rules to secure a final resting place on hallowed ground.

Indiana sports fans' choices were as follows:

#1. Notre Dame Stadium, South Bend

Since 1930, Notre Dame Stadium has stood as one of college football's most sacred cathedrals. To be laid to rest here is to remain forever part of a tradition that transcends the sport itself. Touchdown Jesus watches over every game from the library mural beyond the North end zone, and the echoes of legends seem to drift through the autumn air. The Fighting Irish faithful don't just attend games here—they make pilgrimages.

#2. Lucas Oil Stadium, Indianapolis

When Lucas Oil Stadium opened in 2008, it gave the Colts a venue worthy of a franchise that has delivered some of the NFL's most memorable moments. Having ashes scattered here honors a connection to a building that Indianapolis embraced as its own from day one. The retractable roof and massive window overlooking downtown create an atmosphere unlike any other in professional football. Big Ten championships and Final Fours have only added to its legacy.

#3. Hinkle Fieldhouse, Indianapolis

Standing since 1928, Hinkle Fieldhouse is a living museum of basketball history. Butler basketball has called this arena home for nearly a century, and the movie Hoosiers immortalized its timeless charm. The wooden rafters and classic sightlines transport you to an era when the game was simpler but no less passionate.

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# The TIMES

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## Franciscan Social Impact Program Applications Open

Franciscan Health's Social Impact Partnership Program is opening applications for funding to support healthcare-related programs for nonprofit health and human service organizations in at-risk communities.

SIPP funding applications will be accepted from May 1-29. Partner agencies will be announced in mid-July. Organizations may apply for up to \$10,000 in monetary support. Organizations may complete an application online starting May 1.

Serving populations most in need and in accordance with Franciscan's mission should be the focus of supported activities. These include people who have endured systemic racism; refugees and immigrants; the chronically low-resourced; at-risk youth and oth-

ers impacted by poor societal supports. Priority health needs as defined by Franciscan Health include chronic disease prevention and management, healthy relationships and mental wellness.

In mid-July, organizations will be selected to receive funding and are required to attend a welcome session on July 30. SIPP partners are also required to attend check-in meetings and submit progress reports at six-month and one-year intervals. Participation in the reporting process is required for consideration for all future funding and assistance.

For additional information or application support, please contact Franciscan Health Community Health Improvement Director Danielle Crowder at [Danielle.Crowder@franciscanalliance.org](mailto:Danielle.Crowder@franciscanalliance.org).

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Former Westfield Chief Endorses John Lowes

Dear Editor,  
I am proud to offer my strongest endorsement of John Lowes for Sheriff of Hamilton County, Indiana.

During my nearly 15 years as Chief of Police for the Westfield Police Department, I had the privilege of working closely with John while he served as a Police Captain. Over the course of our professional relationship, John consistently distinguished himself through exceptional character, sound judgment, and unwavering integrity. He earned the respect of his peers and subordinates, not only as a capable leader, but as a trusted colleague and dependable friend.

John is an intelligent, forward-thinking leader who understands that modern law enforcement requires a careful balance of accountability, transparency, and compassion. He has always demonstrated a commitment to professionalism, strong community partnerships,

and a leadership style grounded in respect and service—qualities that are essential for today's Sheriff.

What sets John apart is not only his experience and leadership ability, but his genuine dedication to the people he serves. He is a devoted father and a man of strong values who cares deeply about the safety and well-being of the community. His vision for Hamilton County reflects both practical experience and a sincere desire to build a safer, stronger future for all residents.

I have complete confidence in John's ability to lead the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office with integrity, vision, and professionalism. He will serve both the public and his deputies with honor and respect.

Hamilton County would be exceptionally well served by his leadership.

Joel Rush  
Former Chief of Police  
Westfield Police Department

## Noblesville Boom Tab Sports Media Exec Chris Defendis

The Noblesville Boom announced the selection of Chris Defendis as president of business operations, bringing more than two decades of senior leadership experience across sports, media and live entertainment to the organization.

Defendis most recently served as president of Xtreme One Entertainment/XFC Global, where he led all aspects of the organization's business operations, including ticketing, sponsorships, marketing, media distribution, partnerships, live events and community engagement.

In his new role, Defendis will oversee all business operations for the Boom, including ticketing, marketing, corporate partnerships, community outreach and fan experience.

"Chris brings the kind of well-rounded

experience that is critical as we continue to build the Boom's business and presence in Noblesville," said Chief Operating Officer of the Noblesville Boom Barry Gibson. "He has led revenue strategy, built high-performing teams and delivered strong fan engagement across a variety of platforms. Just as important, he understands how to connect a team to its community."

Prior to his current role, Defendis held senior leadership positions with WWE, Warner Bros. Discovery and HBO, where he led large-scale revenue portfolios, managed key partnerships and drove audience growth initiatives across global platforms.

Defendis' background spans traditional sports, media and emerging entertainment properties, with deep experience in revenue strategy,

sponsorships, media rights and live event execution. He has also served as a primary representative with league offices, media partners, sponsors and civic leaders throughout his career.

"I'm excited to join the Boom and be part of building something meaningful in Noblesville and Hamilton County," Defendis said. "There is an exciting opportunity to create a strong connection with fans and the community while delivering a great experience on and off the court. I look forward to supporting the vision Mayor Chris Jensen has helped shape for Noblesville as a vibrant, growing community, and for the Boom to contribute in a meaningful way."

A Hamilton County resident, Defendis is actively involved in the Hamilton County community. He previously



Chris Defendis

served on the board of Westfield Youth Sports and has coached youth baseball for several years. He and his wife have two children.

The Boom recently wrapped their first regular season at the newly renamed River-view Health Arena at Innovation Mile. Fans can visit [Noblesville-Boom.com](http://Noblesville-Boom.com) for more information and sign up for updates for the upcoming season.

## Recovery Program Launched in County

Invest Hamilton County, with support from the Hamilton County Commissioners, is launching Rise

and Reskill, a new workforce training program designed to help individuals in recovery gain and retain meaningful employment. The program operates under IHC's InvestOnward initiative,

which supports justice-involved and recovery populations through career development, skills training, and wraparound services. Research shows steady employment can reduce recidivism rates from 52% to below 20%, underscoring the critical connection between career stability and long-term recovery outcomes.

The Rise and Reskill curriculum was developed and is led by Ivy Tech Community College Hamilton County, with referral partner-

ships through Aspire Indiana Health, Bridges of Hope, and Hamilton County Community Corrections. Offered

monthly at Ivy Tech, the program provides 8 hours of classroom instruction and guides participants from recovery support services into structured career training. Candidates are referred through a recovery house or other partner organization and will leave the program with a work-ready resume, tools to assist in finding employment, and access to wraparound services that support long-term success.

"What we're seeing through our InvestOnward initiatives is that when you build the path to vitality for people to walk, the first step gets easier," said Mike Thibideau, President & CEO of Invest Hamilton County. "The results in Ham-



County Commissioner Mark Heirbrandt

ilton County speak for themselves — purpose and employment change outcomes. Rise and Reskill takes what we've learned and puts it into action for people in recovery who are ready to take that step."

"Hamilton County believes in pathways to prosperity for every resident, regardless of where they've been," said Hamilton County Commissioner Mark Heirbrandt. "Supporting initiatives like Rise and Reskill is an investment in public safety, in our workforce, and in the people who call this county home. When we give individuals the tools to rebuild their lives, the entire community benefits."

"The connection between recovery and meaningful employ-

ment cannot be overstated," said Antony Sheehan, President & CEO of Aspire Indiana Health. "Growing demand across industries, combined with evolving work requirements, means there are real opportunities for individuals in recovery to find purpose through work. When people have a reason to show up every day and see the impact of their contribution, outcomes improve — for them, their families, and our entire community."

Rise and Reskill is open to individuals in recovery from substance use who are seeking career training and employment support. To learn more or apply, visit <https://investhamiltoncounty.com/investonward/>.

**Invest Hamilton County is the central economic development organization that makes Hamilton County's workforce work—for everyone. We build the systems, collect the data, and build partnerships that help people find meaningful employment, help employers fill critical roles, and help our community thrive. From helping justice-involved individuals find second chances, to training first-time supervisors, to creating pathways for people with disabilities, to solving the childcare crisis—we're the team that turns insights and workforce challenges into community solutions. Discover more at [investhamiltoncounty.com](http://investhamiltoncounty.com).**

## Spring Property Tax Payments Due May 11

Now that May has bloomed, it's a good time to remember that 2026 Property Taxes are due Monday, May 11. The fall due date is Tuesday, Nov. 10 this year.

Property Tax statements were mailed out by the county two weeks ago.. Residents can make a payment in the treasurer's

office by cash or check only. Credit / debit cards are accepted only on the county's website with an addition 2.5 percent fee or by e-check for \$1.

<https://secure2.hamilton-county.in.gov/PropertyReports/index.aspx>

The following Hamilton County Banks are accepting

payments through Monday, May 11th.

BMO Bank  
Community First Bank of Indiana  
Farmers Bank  
First Farmers Bank  
Horizon Bank  
Merchants Bank of Indiana  
Star Financial Bank

## The Times

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## ROKITA

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to review your loan for free alternatives to foreclosure. These options can include loan modification agreements, repayment plans or forbearance. You never need to pay a third

party for these services. Contact your lender or a free HUD-approved housing counselor directly.

If you believe you have been a victim of a mortgage relief

scam, you should report it to the Attorney General's Office at <https://www.indianaconsumer.com> or to the Federal Trade Commission at <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov>.



Photo courtesy City of Westfield

The 2026 season will feature more than 50 vendors, including several popular returning booths.

## Westfield Farmers Market Returns May 7

The award-winning Westfield Farmers Market, presented by Community Health Network, returns for the 2026 season on Thursday, May 7, from 5-8 p.m. at Grand Junction Plaza (225 S. Union Street).

“There’s a reason the Westfield Farmers Market recently won a Best of Suburban Indy Award,” said Mayor Scott Willis. “Our market continues to grow and evolve each year, and this season will be no exception. I’m looking forward to supporting small local businesses all summer long.”

The 2026 season will feature more than 50 vendors at each event, including an expanded selection of produce

sellers. Popular returning vendors include Almost Paradise Farm (smashburgers and farm-raised meat), Promise Land Farm (produce), Wild Loaf (fresh sourdough bread), and Tulip Tree Creamery (cheese).

The market will also welcome new vendors this year, including Bear Fruit Farm (microgreens, produce, and pasta), Generations Pie Company (baked goods), Stuckey Farm (apples), and Wilson Farm Market (produce, cheese, and baked goods).

In addition to weekly markets, the Westfield Farmers Market is expanding its popular themed nights:

May 14: Race to the Market (Indy 500 cele-

bration)

June 11: Sweet Summertime

July 2: Red, White, and Bloom (as part of America 250)

July 23: Dog Days of Summer

August 6: National Farmers Market Week

August 20: Par-tee at the Market

Attendees are encouraged to park at the parking garage at The Union (first three hours are free), the Westfield Washington Public Library lot (with a free shuttle to-and-from Grand Junction Plaza), or along nearby streets where free parking is available.

For more information, visit [westfieldin.gov/farmersmarket](http://westfieldin.gov/farmersmarket).

## BURIED

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While placing ashes on the hardwood itself isn’t realistically feasible, the hypothetical speaks to something deeper — for those who grew up revering the game in Indiana, choosing this as a symbolic final resting place feels like coming home.

#4. Mackey Arena, West Lafayette

Since 1967, Mackey Arena has been the fortress where Purdue basketball comes to life. The steep upper deck creates a wall of sound that crashes down onto opponents, and the Paint Crew student section has earned a reputation as one of the most intimidating in the country. Boiler-maker faithful know this building demands everything you’ve got. Even though scattering ashes across the court wouldn’t be possible in reality, imagining it captures the devotion fans feel — a symbolic way to remain tied to a program that has produced legends and heartbreakers in equal measure.

#5. Gainbridge Fieldhouse, Indianapolis

Home to the Pacers since 1999, Gainbridge Fieldhouse anchors the sports scene in downtown Indianapolis. The arena has hosted Final Fours, All-Star games, and countless nights where the hometown crowd refused to let their team lose quietly, all wrapped in a warmth that reflects the Midwestern hospitality surrounding it. Although impractical in reality, the sentiment behind it is symbolic — honoring a lasting

connection to the court. To rest here is to remain connected to a franchise that helped put Indiana’s love of basketball on the professional map.

#6. Simon Skjodt Assembly Hall, Bloomington

On the Indiana University campus since 1971, Assembly Hall has witnessed some of college basketball’s most glorious chapters. Five national championship banners hang overhead as proof of greatness achieved, while the candy-striped warm-up pants, the passionate student section, and the echoes of Bob Knight’s dynasty all live within these walls. Although scattering ashes on the court itself isn’t realistically possible, the hypothetical reflects the depth of connection fans feel. For Hoosier supporters who spent decades in these seats, the idea symbolizes becoming part of a venue where there’s truly no place quite like it.

Why a Stadium?

When asked what drives this kind of attachment, the answers were telling and deeply human:

Emotional memories (family, friends, childhood) — 26%

Lifelong support for a team — 25%

It would be meaningful for loved ones — 19%

It feels like a “second home” — 17%

Symbol of identity / who I am — 13%

Together, they paint a picture of fandom that goes far beyond entertainment. These aren’t just places people visit—they are places people return

to, again and again, across decades.

Would Fans Bend the Rules?

The survey also explored how far supporters would go to make this final wish a reality: 23% said they would still consider scattering ashes even if it wasn’t allowed.

Where Would They Choose?

If given the choice of location within a stadium:

64% would choose the field or court.

32% would prefer outside the stadium

4% would opt for the stands

How Would Loved Ones Feel?

Being asked to carry out such a request brings its own emotional weight:

30% would feel honored

49% would feel comfortable, but unsure how to go about it

21% would feel uncomfortable

Should Stadiums Allow It?

Opinion is split, but leans slightly in favor: 54% believe ash-scattering should be allowed in controlled circumstances.

“Sports stadiums are some of the few places left where multiple generations share the exact same emotional experience,” says James Bisson, the Editor-in-Chief of [SportsbookReview.com](http://SportsbookReview.com).

“What we’re seeing here isn’t just about fandom - it’s about memory, identity, and belonging. For many people, these venues represent a constant in their lives, so it’s not surprising that some would want to remain connected to them in a lasting, symbolic way.”

## Lions Learn About County Civil War History

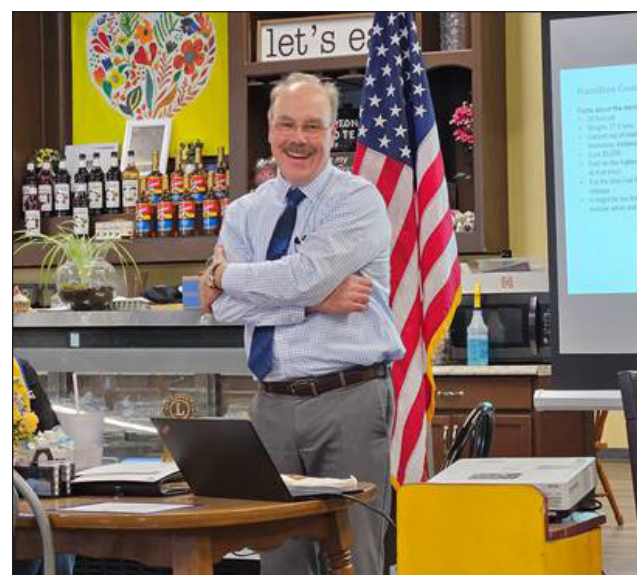
At their April 22 meeting, the Noblesville Lions Club welcomed Kevin Yaney to share his passion for history. Hamilton County has a rich Civil War history, which included 277 veterans who were killed during the war. The Hamilton Continentals were a Hamilton County militia that formed just as the Civil War broke out. Those 77 men became one of the first regiments formed to fight for the Union Army.

Yaney explained that the civil war monument in Crownland Cemetery was the source of the name for Monument Street that runs along the south side of the cemetery. He is currently leading a restoration project to clean the monument as well as add names of the soldiers and sailors who were previously left off.

The Unknown Soldiers Monument was dedicated in 1901. There is not a soldier buried under the monument, but it represents the Hoosier soldiers who were among the 620,000 men who died in the war. Some were buried on the battlefields, while others were buried at prisoner of war camps where they died. There is a cannon in the cemetery that has been authenticated as being built in 1862.



Photos courtesy Noblesville Lions  
Kevin Yaney and Noblesville Lions President Walt Scheid.



Kevin Yaney shares stories about Hamilton County Civil War history.

The memorial on the courthouse square in downtown Noblesville was originally erected in 1946 by the Noblesville Lions Club to honor all Hamilton County veterans killed in action. This Memorial Day, Monday, May 25 at 11 a.m., Yaney

will speak about the history of Memorial Day at the memorial. He will be joined by Danny Russell, an Abraham Lincoln interpreter who will give the Gettysburg Address in celebration of America’s 250th birthday.

## Art Garfunkel Back in Carmel

Legendary singer and actor Art Garfunkel will return to Allied Solutions Center this spring with an evening of songs and stories celebrating his enduring career.

The performance is set for 8 p.m. Friday, July 24, at the Payne & Mencias Palladium, 1 Carter Green, Carmel. Tickets starting at \$55 go on sale at [TheCenterPresents.org](http://TheCenterPresents.org), by phone at (317) 843-3800, or in person at the venue’s Fifth Third Bank Box Office.

The event is part of the Printing Partners Encore Series and the 2026-2027 Center Presents Season sponsored by Allied Solutions. The full upcoming season will be announced May 18.

Celebrated as the “Voice of Generations,” Garfunkel is a Rock and



Photo courtesy Allied Solutions Center  
Art Garfunkel is a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee and one of Rolling Stone magazine’s 100 greatest singers of all time.

Roll Hall of Fame inductee, winner of eight Grammys (including the Lifetime Achievement Award) and one of Rolling Stone magazine’s 100 Greatest Singers of All Time.

As co-founder and chief vocal arranger for the folk duo Simon & Garfunkel, he shaped popular culture with songs such as “Bridge Over Troubled Wa-

ter,” “The Sound of Silence” and “Mrs. Robinson.” His solo hits have included “I Only Have Eyes for You,” “(What a Wonderful World)” and “All I Know.” Garfunkel also is a poet and actor, with films including *Carnal Knowledge*, *Catch-22* and *Bad Timing*. He previously performed at Allied Solutions Center in 2018.

## RUSTY

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at this link: [www.ssa.gov/medicare/sign-up](http://www.ssa.gov/medicare/sign-up). And you can, as you wish to do, enroll only in Medicare without also taking your Social Security benefits at this time.

I want to also make you aware that if you are still working and have “creditable” healthcare coverage from your employer (“creditable” is an employer group plan with at least 20 participants), then you can delay enrolling in Medicare until your employer coverage ends (thus saving the usual Medicare Part B monthly premium). When your employer’s

healthcare coverage ends, you will enter a Special Enrollment Period during which you can enroll in Medicare without incurring a Late Enrollment Penalty.

Finally, please be aware that whenever you claim your Social Security benefits, you will be automatically enrolled in Medicare Part A (inpatient hospitalization coverage) and Part B (coverage for outpatient medical services). Since there is a monthly premium associated with Medicare Part B (but not with Part A), you can choose to decline Part B if you are still work-

ing and covered by your employer’s creditable healthcare plan, until your employer’s healthcare coverage ends.

*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 [ssadvisory@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisory@amacfoundation.org).*

# Examining the 'What ifs' Throughout Purdue Basketball History



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

Books, movies and TV shows have been devoted to stories about changing the course of history, from preventing Abraham Lincoln's assassination to would John F. Kennedy have pulled the United States out of Vietnam had he lived?

While not on the scale of either of those scenarios, I've always wondered what if the right decisions had been made to place Purdue's athletic fortunes on the trajectory of being a nationally recognized university.

Today begins a series on the moments that altered the course of Boilermaker basketball history.

Purdue passes on 1940 NCAA tournament  
Purdue athletics historically has had many "What If?" stories. This might be the biggest.

The Boilermakers claimed their sixth outright Big Ten Conference title and the 11th overall under Ward "Piggy" Lambert on the final day of the 1939-40 college basketball regular season. Purdue rallied from a 29-19 deficit with nine minutes to go at Illinois to pull out a 34-31 victory.

The victory denied Indiana a share of the Big Ten title. But thanks to the first of many high moral ground stances that have crippled Purdue athletics for decades, the Hoosiers accepted the Big Ten's berth in the second NCAA Tournament.

Lafayette Journal and Courier sports editor Gordon Graham explained to fans in a column on March 7, 1940, why Purdue (16-4, 10-2 Big Ten) chose to reject the NCAA bid.

"Some Purdue fans are asking why the Boilermakers, champs of the Big Ten, are not representing the Midwest. The answer is that coach Lambert, athletic director (Noble) Kizer, President (Edward) Elliott and faculty members felt that a 20-game schedule was enough.

"This has been Purdue policy in the past, and the NCAA asked Boilermaker officials about their stand before selecting Indiana. Lambert and Kizer even went so far as to recommend Indiana as the choice, if (Branch) McCracken and the powers that be at Bloomington felt they wanted to enter the competition. ... Indiana knows that Purdue was asked officially."

This "we're morally superior" stance opened the door for McCracken to build a dynasty at Indiana. The Hoosiers walloped Springfield and Duquesne at what is now Hinkle Fieldhouse on the campus of Butler University to reach the national title game against Kansas.

The Jayhawks were no match for the Hoosiers despite a semi-home court advantage in Kansas City. Indiana cruised

to its first national title 60-42 to finish 20-3 overall. Those three extra games seemed to inflict no permanent health or academic harm on McCracken's players.

Indiana would go on to win the 1953 NCAA title under McCracken, then three more under Bob Knight.

Purdue is still seeking its first NCAA title. The Boilermakers went 29 years without a Big Ten title until 1969 with Rick Mount and Billy Keller leading the way to a national title game loss to UCLA.

The 1940 Boilermakers were Lambert's last good team. Purdue finished no higher than fourth in the Big Ten during Lambert's final six years at the helm. Three losing seasons and health problems led to his retirement during the 1945-46 season.

Typical for Purdue, instead of conducting a national search for Lambert's replacement, athletic director Red Mackey and new president Frederick Hovde chose Lambert's assistant and former Boilermaker player Mel Taube to take the reins.

That decision leads us to our next turning point in Purdue basketball history.

John Wooden turns down Purdue offer

It became painfully obvious to Mackey and Hovde by 1949 that Taube was a mistake. With a 21-33 Big Ten record and 45-46 overall, Taube was no Piggy Lambert.

Three thousand miles away, Lambert's best player at Purdue was coming off 22-7 and 24-7 records in his first two seasons at UCLA. John Wooden had been a collegiate head coach just four seasons after returning from duty in World War II. At Indiana State, Wooden was 44-15 in two seasons, including an NAIA national runner-up squad in 1948.

Wooden, though, wasn't happy at UCLA. He wrote about this in his 1972 autobiography "They Call Me Coach."

"Despite the fact that the first two seasons had been fairly successful, I was not totally enthralled with UCLA. And it was about this time that various representatives from Purdue were talking to me about going back to West Lafayette. They

made a tremendous offer, a lot better financially than the \$6,000 I got to come to UCLA."

In 2026 dollars, Wooden's salary was \$80,000. Apparently, Purdue wasn't always thrifty with a dollar.

"In addition, I was to have a perpetual five-year contract with built-in increases I could renegotiate annually," Wooden wrote. "There were also a number of other amenities, including a family membership in country clubs, a new car every year, a very nice home on campus with nominal rent, a large insurance policy and several other so-called fringe benefits.

"I agreed to accept the Purdue offer if I could gracefully get out of the final year of my three-year contract at UCLA."

Wooden wrote that he expected no opposition from athletic director Wilbur Johns and Bill Ackerman, the director of Associated Students.

"They surprised me," Wooden wrote. "They pointed out I was the one who had insisted on a three-year contract and felt that I should honor it. They made me feel like a heel for even considering leaving. I was irritated to say the least."

Wooden refused Johns' offer of a raise and a contract extension but agreed to fulfil the final year of his contract.

"I was peeved and a bit stubborn," Wooden wrote. UCLA officials were sure Wooden would leave when he was contractually free.

But his wife, Nell, and his children had fallen in love with California and did not want to go back to Indiana. So Wooden stayed and won 10 national championships from 1964 to 1975, when he retired at age 65.

What did Purdue do? You guessed it: Mackey hired another Purdue alumnus.

Ray Eddy was a teammate of Wooden's on the 1932 national championship team. Eddy had just led Madison High School to the Indiana state championship in 1950.

"He's a winner," Journal and Courier sports editor Gordon Graham declared in a front page story announcing Eddy's hire.

No, he wasn't.

Eddy resigned following the 1964-65 season, having gone 12-12 with a roster that included Big Ten scoring champion Dave Schellhase. Amazingly, Eddy was given 15 years to return the Boilermakers to the glory days of Lambert. Even more amazingly, Purdue kept him employed for 13 more years as an associate

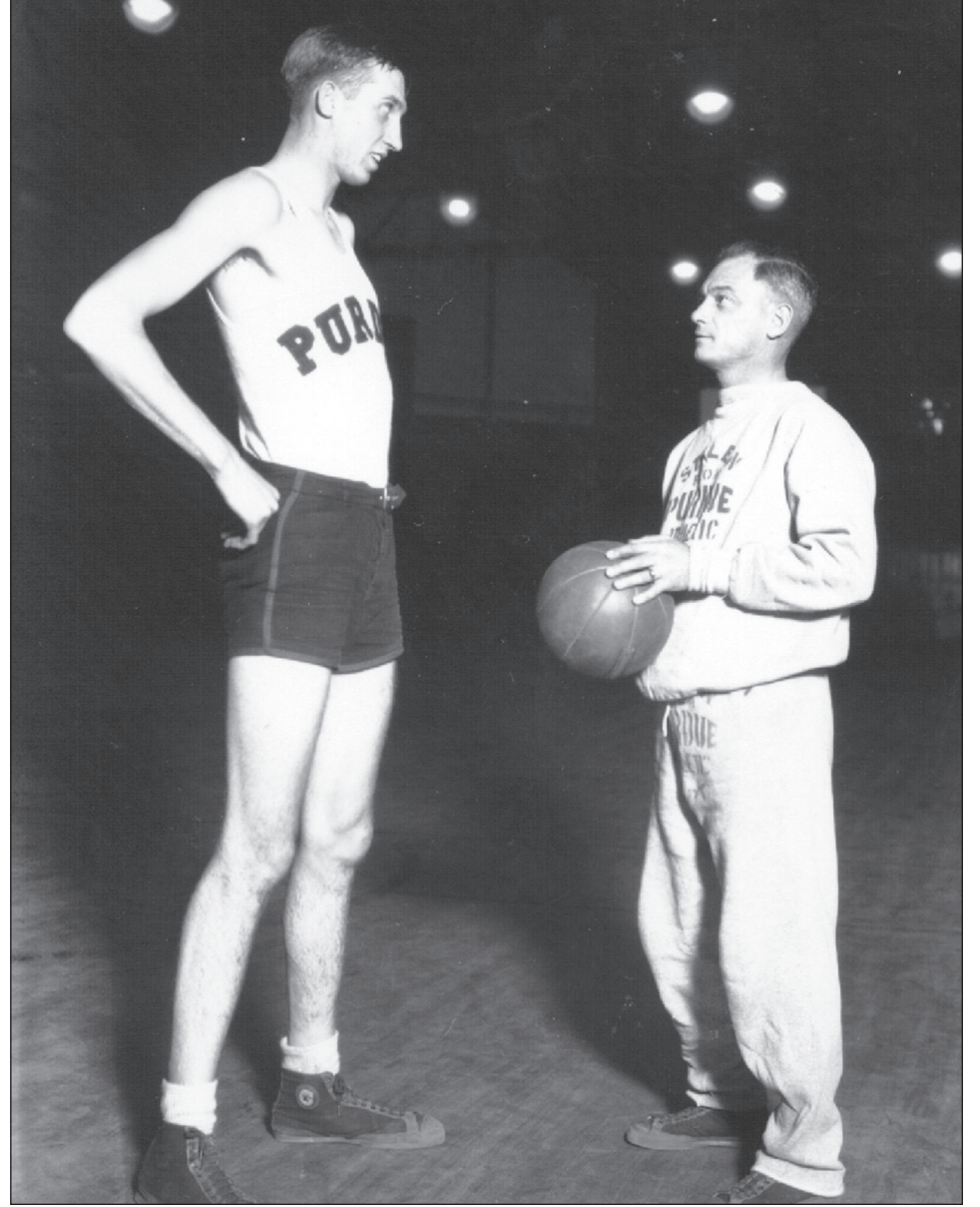


Photo courtesy Purdue Athletics

Ward "Piggy" Lambert with Charles "Stretch" Murphy, circa 1930.

athletic director.

Eddy had just seven winning seasons and was 30 games under .500 in Big Ten play. In three of those, Purdue claimed a share of second place in the Big Ten while Indiana and Ohio State established their basketball dominance.

Shortly after Wooden led UCLA to its second consecutive national championship, Mackey

finally found the right man to lead Purdue back to the top of the Big Ten. Former NBA guard George King had led West Virginia to three Southern Conference championships and three NCAA tournament berths. He was 36 at the time and had a reputation of being an excellent recruiter.

Which leads us to next

week's installment: How George King and assistant coach Bob King swayed Rick Mount from choosing Miami, Fla.

*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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## Alexandra Afriat Joins CCHA Law

Church Church Hittle and Antrim is pleased to welcome Alexandra “Alex” Afriat (Lasbury) as an Associate Attorney in the firm’s Business Services and Estate Planning practice groups.

Alex advises individuals, families, and business owners on a broad range of legal matters. Her practice includes business formation, contract drafting and negotiation, commercial real estate matters, corporate governance, and estate planning.

“Alex brings a strong financial background and a thoughtful, client-foc-

used approach to her work,” said Managing Partner Alex Pinegar. “We’re excited to have her join our team and continue supporting our clients’ business and estate planning needs.”

Alex earned her Bachelor of Science in Finance from Indiana University’s Kelley School of Business and spent four years working as a financial analyst in the banking and healthcare industries before pursuing her legal career. She went on to earn her Juris Doctor, summa cum laude, from Boston College Law School, with a concentration in tax law. While in



Alex Afriat

law school, she served as an articles editor for the Boston College Law Review.

Alex is admitted to practice law in Indiana and Illinois and is a member of the Indiana State Bar Association and the Hamilton County Bar Association.



Photo Courtesy Hamilton Heights Schools

Hamilton Heights’ Chase Hall

## Heights Senior Signs to Play Baseball at Marian Ancilla

## Carmel High School Shines at Cyber Madness

Many know about March Madness, the college basketball tournament that pits 68 teams against one another for hoops supremacy over the course of 18 days.

At Purdue University a different madness is taking root: Cyber Madness.

The competition challenges high school students in a capture-the-flag game on computers, and the importance extends beyond a physical pastime and introduces skills used in real-world cybersecurity work.

“Capture-the-flag events demonstrate to Indiana high school students that the skills they learn and improve upon, by participating in competitions like Cyber Madness, will help them prepare for a future in cybersecurity whether in industry, military, government or academia,” said Shawn Huddy, director of strategic partnerships at Purdue University’s Center for Education and Research in Information Assurance and Security.

Along with Purdue University’s CERIAS, the Indiana National Guard co-hosted the event at the West

Lafayette campus and brought five teams from across the Hoosier state together.

“This event is important to the National Guard because it allows us to identify the highest achievers across Indiana high schoolers in order to offer those students cybersecurity education and career opportunities that will increase their capabilities while maximizing Hoosier cybersecurity,” said Maj. Christopher Myers, the director of cybersecurity for the Indiana Air National Guard.

This capture-the-flag challenge took place over the course of weeks with the first two rounds played remotely and the final round in-person and on campus. The teams varied from a solo individual to the largest with six players. A total of 16 students competed, with Carmel High School winning the challenge followed closely by Munster High School.

“It was nice to visit Purdue and participate in-person with the Guard and University. CTFs [capture-the-flags] are a good way to gain familiarity with a variety of different

computer science and cybersecurity topics,” said Jacob Mazza, a Carmel High School student.

Teachers and parents chaperoned the students to the event, and they also saw the importance of the cyber challenge for future online security and information technology infrastructure.

“This event is important to our school because it provides real-world IT applications to our students. We’re excited to have local recognition of our skills, and to see about cybersecurity opportunities,” said Angie Rhoads, a South Newton High School teacher.

Another teacher echoed that sentiment that the capture-the-flag events provide.

“It allows them to gain meaningful experience by solving real life problems,” said Bailey Carpenter, a North Montgomery High School teacher.

As demand for cybersecurity professionals continues to grow, organizers say events like Cyber Madness are designed to give students an early foothold in a field critical to national and economic security.

Hamilton Heights High School senior Chase Hall has officially signed his national letter of intent to continue his academic and athletic career at Marian University Ancilla College in Plymouth, Indiana. Marian University Ancilla College is a member of the Michigan Community College Athletic Association and the National Junior College Athletic Association, competing in NJCAA Region 12. He is the son of Tabitha Hull and Russell Huber.

Hall chose Marian University Ancilla College because it immediately felt like the right fit for both his future and his development as a student-athlete. “It felt like a great opportunity for my future and a good place to call home for the next few years,” he said. “Everyone there was so welcoming and respectful, and the coaches were great to me from the moment I met them. I’m really excited for the future.”

Hall plans to study Exercise Science with the goal of becoming a Sports Physical Therapist, a career path that will allow him to support and work with

athletes in the years ahead.

A passionate baseball player from the moment he first picked up a bat, Hall has built his athletic journey on discipline, purpose, and an unwavering work ethic. “All I ever wanted to do was compete at the next level, no matter what it took,” he said. “Even if that meant lifting twice a day or hitting 500 baseballs a day, I would do it. I treat every rep like it’s my last, and because of that, I get the chance to play college baseball.”

Hall credits his father, Russell Huber, as one of the strongest influences in his development. “He has taught me almost everything I know about the game and has been there for me through this entire journey,” Hall pointed out. “Whether it was throwing extra BP after practice, hitting ground balls, or just playing catch in the backyard, it always meant a lot. He took time out of his day to help me get better, and I know I can always count on him. I couldn’t thank him enough.”

Outside of baseball,

Hall enjoys spending time with friends, swimming, and working out but baseball has always been his greatest passion. He also expressed gratitude for the coaches who helped shape his high school career. “I want to give a shout-out to Coach Pitts and Coach Hughes and thank them for everything they’ve done for me. They welcomed me with open arms my freshman year, and it’s been an incredible ride these past four years. I wouldn’t want it any other way.”

“Chase truly loves the game and has worked hard in the weight room and on the field to earn this opportunity,” said Adam Hughes, Hamilton Heights High School Baseball Coach. “We expect Chase to have a productive senior year leading into the college game.”

“We are excited that Chase gets an opportunity to continue his baseball career at the next level,” added Kurt Ogden, Hamilton Heights High School Athletic Director. He has dedicated himself to the sport and we are proud of him for earning this opportunity.”

## Heights Superintendent Shares Update for May

As we move into a month filled with special recognitions, I want to pause and share why these moments matter so deeply to me. Public education is built on people — the ones who greet our students each morning, who guide their learning, who care for their wellbeing, and who create the conditions for every child to grow. Recognizing them isn’t simply a tradition; it’s a reminder of the dedication, skill and humanity that make Hamilton Heights such an extraordinary place for students to learn and thrive.

Friday is National Principal’s Day, and we are fortunate to have an incredibly talented and dedicated group of principals who set the tone for that experience every day. They are steady, student-centered leaders who balance vision with compassion, ensuring our schools remain safe, welcoming, and focused on success. Their work is often behind the scenes, but their impact is felt in every classroom, every hallway and every student interaction.

We also honor our remarkable food service team on Friday for Lunch Heroes Day — the individuals

who nourish our students and create a warm, caring environment in our cafeterias. They rise early, prepare meals with pride, and greet students with kindness. Their work fuels learning, builds connection, and strengthens our sense of community. They are heroes in every sense of the word.

Next week, we celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week, a time to recognize the educators who inspire, mentor, challenge, and support our students. Teachers shape futures in ways that extend far beyond academics. They build confidence, spark curiosity, and create connections that last a lifetime. Their influence is profound, and our gratitude is endless.

On Wednesday, May 8, we will shine a spotlight on the compassionate professionals we honor on School Nurse Day — the individuals who safeguard the health and wellbeing of our students and staff. Our nurses are trusted advocates and calm problem-solvers, offering care, reassurance, and expertise when it’s needed most. Their work keeps our schools safe, healthy and ready for learning.

Each of these groups

plays a vital role in the story of Hamilton Heights. Together, they form a network of support that surrounds every student — academically, emotionally, and physically. I am deeply grateful for their dedication and proud to recognize the essential work they do for our schools and our community.

As we celebrate the dedicated professionals who make Hamilton Heights such a special place for students, it’s also a joy to spotlight the remarkable work our students are doing in their own programs — a reminder that everything we do begins and ends with them. Their growth, leadership, and curiosity are at the center of our mission, and the opportunities they embrace are made possible by the educators and staff who guide, mentor, and encourage them every day. This week, that leadership and hands-on learning are on full display in two meaningful, student-driven events. Our annual FFA Plant Sale is under way, inviting the community to browse a beautiful selection of vegetables, hanging baskets, and annuals. This student-run effort is a hallmark of our FFA program, with students



## Hamilton Heights School News

Dr. Derek Arrowood

leading every part of the process. All proceeds support the Hamilton Heights FFA chapter and the future leaders it continues to shape.

On Friday, students will also take the lead in our Ryan White Legacy Fest, raising funds and awareness for the Ryan White Scholarship Fund — a scholarship that honors Ryan’s enduring legacy and supports Hamilton Heights students who exemplify compassion, resilience, and community leadership. The decades-long event not only celebrates Ryan’s impact but empowers today’s students to contribute to a cause rooted in kindness, service, and community strength.

These student-led efforts reflect the heart of Hamil-

ton Heights: young people stepping forward with purpose, supported by adults who believe in their potential. And while the FFA Plant Sale and Ryan White Legacy Fest shine brightly this week, they are just two examples of the meaningful learning, leadership, and service happening across our campus every day. We are truly fortunate to be part of a community that shows up for one another. Thank you for supporting our students, our staff, and the programs that help them thrive. #WeAreHuskies

Dr. Derek Arrowood is the Superintendent of the Hamilton Heights School Corporation. His columns appear periodically in *The Times*.