

The PACKARD PRESS

A collection of thoughts and stories to educate, entertain, and inspire.

LET ME TELL YOU A SECRET

I Started Law School Without a College Degree

I was rushing between classes at Brigham Young University's J. Reuben Clark Law School when the dean of student affairs called me to her office. When I arrived, she looked at me over a pile of paperwork with her eyebrows raised.

"Well, Mr. Packard," she said. "Here you are, well into the second semester of law school. But my documentation shows that you haven't graduated from college yet!"

I think the dean expected me to explain that this was all a big misunderstanding. Instead, I said, "I'll be darned! I had quite forgotten about that."

It was true. Not only had I made it into law school before I finished my undergraduate degree, I actually attended an entire semester before anyone noticed — myself included.

If you're starting to wonder whether I am underqualified as a lawyer, don't worry. I got my diploma a few months later, and I'm fully educated! It's a crazy story, and to explain it, I need to back up a little.

First, you should know that when I first set foot on BYU's campus as an undergrad, I had this crazy plan to finish my entire four-year degree in only two and a half years! I wanted to do this because:

1. The sooner I finished undergrad and law school, the sooner I could become a lawyer.
2. Since BYU charged per semester (and not per credit hour), I would save a lot of money on college tuition.
3. My older brother Samuel finished *his* degree in 2.5 years. If he could do it, I could do it!

I chose an obscure degree in European Studies because I knew enough Spanish to test out of a semester's worth of upper-level Spanish classes. It was an unusual choice for a major, but I knew I was headed to law school, and I could finish this major faster than any other. But, as it sometimes happens, life threw a curveball. BYU discontinued the European Studies program halfway through my college career. There were just a few students in the program and most changed majors. And looking back, I should have done the same thing. But I had my plan.

So, I contacted the European Studies advisor, and we worked it out so I could finish the major with a modification to the required courses. I would work with him individually on a series of directed readings and a guided research project on a European topic of my choice. We settled on "The French Revolution and Napoleon's Rise to Power." I also took a bunch of European art history and geography courses, but for the upper-level coursework, he assigned me a heavy stack of books to read and a series of papers to write. We went through all the course schedules, and it would work! I would have to cram every semester (including the summer terms) with the maximum credits, but it was doable! I could get it all done before I started Law School. My last paper was due by the end of my very last semester. But here's the thing: It was a summer semester, and my advisor had left campus during the break. This whole arrangement with the professor was very loosey-goosey, and while I was busy finishing up my summer coursework, that last paper fell through the cracks. I started Law School just three days after my last final.

Amazingly, it didn't blip on anyone's radar until the dean called me into her office more than six months later. I quickly contacted my advisor and reminded him about our odd arrangement. "Well," he said, "we need to finish this thing!" I promptly finished my paper, turned it in, and wrapped up my undergraduate degree around the same time I finished my first year of law school. You should have seen the look on the dean's face when I finally checked "finish college" off my to-do list. Her sigh had equal parts frustration, amusement, and relief.

This story came to mind because, as I write, kids all over Texas are graduating from high school and getting ready to head to college. Next year, my oldest daughter Ella will be one of them, and — though it's hard to believe — I'll be giving her college advice instead of telling bedtime stories.

Maybe you know a little bird leaving the nest. If you do, consider passing on this advice I would give my younger self if I could go back in time: Don't speed through college. Slow down, build relationships with your professors, and pick a new major if yours gets discontinued.

Most of all, remember to get your diploma before you start grad school. Someday, a dean might ask to see it!

—Michael Packard



PIRATES STOLE OUR METRIC SYSTEM

Why America Never Changed to Kilos and Grams

Pirates, that's right, pirates stopped America from changing to the metric system. While they can't take all the blame, they steal a good chunk of it. There was a specific time in history when America did consider taking up the metric system. But pirates intercepted the standards, and America has refused to change its measuring system ever since.



Way back when America was still a new country, there was no regulated measuring system throughout the states.

Each territory was using some bizarre system that stayed only within state lines. For example, people were using Roman measurements, Dutch systems, and British systems dating back to King Henry VII.

In 1789, Thomas Jefferson decided that some order needed to be in place. A lover of all things French, Jefferson admired the metric system's logic and principle. He asked the French to help the U.S. transition to the metric system, and they were kind enough to send scientist Joseph Dombey.

Dombey boarded a ship and set sail for America with two items pivotal to our measuring system change. The first gadget was a copper cylinder 3 inches in height and width, weighing precisely 1 kilogram. The second was another copper object, but this time a rod estimated to be a meter in length. These simple trinkets would have eased us into the metric system. Except, we never received them. In fact, Dombey never set foot in America.

Unfortunately, storm winds blew his ship off course and into the pirate-filled Caribbean. The pirates hijacked his boat and held him captive, hoping to use him for ransom. In a tragic turn of events, Dombey died in that pirate prison before any ransom money could be sent. The pirates then auctioned off everything Dombey had on his boat, metric measuring tools included.

So, you can thank the pirates for all the painstaking work we have to go through when using metric-based recipes. Why Americans never swapped systems after 1789 is still a mystery!



HOW TO STAY SAFE WHILE YOU RIDESHARE

Smart Tips for Using Uber and Lyft

Apps like Uber and Lyft are great for filling public transit gaps — but using them can be nerve-wracking. After all, you need to get into a stranger's car and put your life in their hands! To reduce rideshare anxiety, remember these tips next time you call an Uber.

- 1. Double-check key details.** Before entering the vehicle, check that the driver's face and the car's license plate, make, and model match the information in your app. This may sound like common sense, but it's easy to forget if you're in a rush.
- 2. Ask a security question.** While you're still outside the car, ask the driver, "Who are you here to pick up?" They should know you by name. If they don't, don't ride with them.
- 3. Never take the front seat.** If your driver offers you the option to ride shotgun, politely decline. Sure, there's extra legroom, but sitting in the back keeps you out of easy reach and gives you access to two exit doors in case something goes wrong.
- 4. Loop in a virtual buddy.** Let a friend or family member know when you enter the rideshare, where you're going, and what to do if they don't hear from you at your destination. You can do this within the app (Uber has a Share Trip Status feature, and you can set up automatic location sharing in the Safety Tools section of the Lyft app), but you can also do it over text.
- 5. Familiarize yourself with built-in safety features.** Uber and Lyft have both taken steps to keep their riders safe, like those mentioned above, so check out Uber's Safety Toolkit and/or Lyft's Safety Tools and make sure you're ready to use them. Both apps offer multiple safeguards including the option to call for a critical response team if you feel unsafe.

If you do all five of these things, you can step into your next ride with more confidence and peace of mind. Share the tips with your friends and family, and if you're ever in a rideshare accident, call our team for legal help.

FIND THE RIGHT FINANCIAL HELP FOR YOUR LOVED ONES

The Difference Between SSD and SSI Benefits

If you have a friend, family member, or other loved one who is disabled, you've probably looked into the different government aid available for them. This can be an extremely frustrating process — the program names are so similar they look like alphabet soup!

Even if you are already on government assistance, it can be tough to figure out the difference between monthly payment programs like Social Security Disability Insurance (SSD or SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). That's where attorneys like us come in. Here's a quick and easy way to think about the two programs.

SSD vs. SSI

SSD benefits are for people who have previously paid into the Social Security system. They used to work, but now they're disabled, so they can collect their retirement checks from the government early. SSI benefits, on the other hand, are for disabled people with very few resources who have never worked to "earn" their monthly checks but still desperately need them.*

More Details on Social Security Disability Insurance

To be eligible for SSD benefits, you must have paid into the Social

Security system. These payments are automatically taken out of your paycheck in the form of Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) taxes, so if you've worked in the U.S., you've paid into Social Security by default. SSD benefits also give you access to Medicare, and your payments aren't affected by where you live or by other financial support you may have.

More Details on Supplemental Security Income

Someone who lacks resources, is disabled, and can't work is likely eligible for SSI benefits. SSI benefits also give you access to Medicaid. However, unlike SSD, SSI benefits can vary depending on where you live and how much additional financial support you receive.



Some disabled people can qualify for both SSD and SSI benefits. If your loved one applies to either option, it's important to remember that **most people are denied the first time**. The good news is that you can appeal, and our firm can help! Send your friend or family member our way, and we'll guide them through applying for both types of benefits.

**Note: In this article, we are referring exclusively to Adult SSI. Child SSI benefits are a separate, equally complex issue.*

TAKE A BREAK



- | | | |
|-----------|------------|----------|
| Blossom | Gemini | Nature |
| Derby | Horse | Parade |
| Emerald | Lightsaber | Seedling |
| Fertilize | Mother | Veterans |

RHUBARB CRISP

Inspired by FoodNetwork.com

Ingredients

Topping:

- 1/4 cup roughly chopped walnuts
- 1/4 cup old-fashioned oats (not instant)
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 3/4 cup flour
- 1/3 cup light brown sugar
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 4 tbsp unsalted butter

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 F. Set rack in the center of the oven.
2. In a food processor, place all topping ingredients. Pulse until the mixture is crumbled to the size of small peas. Do not over-process. Set aside.
3. Into a large, shallow baking dish, pour the rhubarb and sprinkle with sugar and flour, coating the rhubarb evenly. Spread crisp topping over entire filling mix.
4. Bake until crisp is bubbly and the top is golden brown, approximately 30-40 minutes. Serve warm or room temperature. Enjoy!



Filling:

- 2 1/2 lbs rhubarb, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1/2 cup plus 2 tbsp sugar
- 3 tbsp all-purpose flour

The Packard Family Is Here to Help Your Family

Personal Injury
Social Security Disability
Car Accidents
Special Needs Planning

1. Michael Shares a 20-Year-Old Secret
2. The Mysteriously Missing Metric System

How to Stay Safe While You Uber
3. SSD vs. SSI — What's the Difference?

Rhubarb Crisp
4. Give Your Plants a Coffee Boost!

PUT YOUR GROUNDS IN THE GROUND!

How to Make Coffee Fertilizer

They say April showers bring May flowers, but sometimes, even with Mother Nature's help, some sprouts have trouble growing. When this happens, the natural next step for many people is to give their precious plants a little fertilizer. But traditional chemically formulated fertilizers "[run] off into waterways or [get] broken down by microbes in the soil [and release] the potent greenhouse gas nitrous oxide into the atmosphere," according to a report from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

So, if you're looking for a more natural way to help your plants grow, you can make your own fertilizer at home — with coffee grounds! This eco-friendly alternative uses cinnamon as a natural pesticide and club soda for extra macronutrients.

What You'll Need

- 4-6 tbsp used coffee grounds
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 cup club soda

Your coffee grounds *must* have gone through a brew cycle to make them less acidic so they don't harm your plants. You can save the needed amount of coffee grounds throughout the week (depending on whether you use single-cup machines or drip pots) or brew a pot using 4-6 tablespoons specifically to use for fertilizing.

Then, once your grounds have been brewed, mix them in a bowl with cinnamon and club soda. When these ingredients are combined, it creates a solution full of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and other minerals that plants love! Apply this coffee mixture directly to the soil of your plants every two weeks, ensuring you spread the fertilizer over the entire surrounding area to distribute the nutrients evenly.

This mixture is excellent for indoor potted plants, outdoor plants, and even different bushes or shrubs. With this easy DIY fertilizer, you can reduce waste, help the environment, save money, and help your plants grow happier and healthier!

