



The 24 hours that will shape 2012

Obama jobs speech, Perry-Romney debate set the tone; big Perry lead in new CNN poll

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - This first full week of September became the most vivid benchmark in the 2012 presidential race since Gov. Mitch Daniels decided not to run and Texas Gov. Rick Perry entered that vacuum. Within 24 hours last Wednesday and Thursday, Republican presidential candidates began laying markers in a race in which many believe the ultimate prize is attainable as President Obama flags in the polls.

A day later, a forceful President Obama made an impassioned plea for Congress to not wait 14 months until the election to work with the White House to put beleaguered Americans back to work as the jobless rate stalled at 9.1% and Gallup lists "underemployed" at 18.6%.

"The purpose of the American Jobs Act is simple: To put more people back to work and more money in



President Obama enters the U.S. House chambers for his address to a joint session of Congress last Thursday night. (White House Photo)

the pockets of those who are working," Obama said in a 30-minute address before a joint session of Congress. "It will create more jobs for construction workers, more jobs for teachers, more jobs for veterans, and more jobs for the long-term unemployed. It will provide a tax break for com-

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Are we safer now?

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE - He told us he was out for his morning jog. He saw something strange and began shouting, "Bomb, bomb, run for your lives!" The people began to scramble but the explosion rocked the second building, glass and blood everywhere, and the first building was destroyed. The terrorists had struck.



Khobar Towers was a complex housing US soldiers and other nationals near Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Nineteen Americans were killed and hundreds more wounded. Then Dennis Hastert, chairman of the National Security and



"Treasurer Mourdock is discharging his duties as state treasurer. When he is required to be out of office, he is in constant communication via wireless device." - Spokesman Ian Slatter

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Narcotics Oversight Subcommittee, (I was his vice-chairman at the time) led a CODEL over to the region to meet with regional leaders. I believe we were the only group to see Khobar Towers after the explosion before they tore the remaining parts down.

One of the unforgettable moments came as we were flying to Riyadh, riding in the back of a military transport plane, trying to sleep in makeshift seats. Suddenly my stomach went out from under me, as we did a sudden drop and bank. Then it happened again. When we landed, I saw one of our staffers looking ashen. He was riding up in the cockpit area, when he saw the missile alert light come on and start sounding. He asked: "Is this real?" The pilots said to shut up. We dropped, banked and shot off decoy missiles. The alert went off a second time, and they repeated the maneuver.

I grabbed Hastert, who got the company person (whatever he was officially called) and said, cleaning it up a bit: What in the world is going on? "Well, a man named Osama bin Ladin put out a hit on a congressional delegation (CODEL) planning to visit the region," we were told. "You were the only one being allowed in, so figuring it was you we had officially canceled the trip and you aren't here. So that's why we had not told you about the attack warning. We are not sure if we were actually fired upon. The missile alert lights can be wrong, but we decided to not take any chances. We also decided it was best at this point to tell you."

From that point on Bin Ladin topped my personal list of people I did not care for. This was 1996. Terrorist attacks against the United States did not begin on 9/11/2001. Terrorist

attacks were getting more sophisticated each year.

Here is the most common and stupid question I have received since 9/11: "Are we safer now than we were on 9/11? Just tell me that, don't give me a bunch of complicated answers (because, they seldom say, 'I am a simpleton who just wants to hear simple answers.')

Answer this question first. Are the Boston Red Sox better with Adrian Gonzalez and Carl Crawford than they were before they signed them? (If you don't know baseball, you have other problems I can't fix.) How can you say yes? They are losing to the Yankees again.

Time does not stand still, yet ideological opponents of any policy, both left and right, love to freeze time and then ask simplistic questions. Every year terrorist attacks were increasing in number and



sophistication; 9/11 was a point on a continuum of escalating success. In our oversight work, no one paid much attention to German night club bombings, or military barracks, or the USS Cole, other than as sort of a "one day wonder" (sort of like "the crazy people spit at our military again"). My understanding was this: Not once in simulated exercises did we ever stop an Al Qaeda attack.

On the morning of 9/11 I was meeting in my office with leaders from Macedonia about terrorism in the Balkans, when the first plane hit the World Trade Towers. I thought, what an incompetent pilot. Then the second plane hit. My close friend, Congressman Pete Hoekstra, ran into my office to talk about what to do when we felt our building shake, and then a loud boom. We ran to the window (stupidly, like little kids) and saw the



smoke from the Pentagon. Then the American government, the American people and other nations re-considered: Perhaps this terrorism thing is real.

So are we safe? No. Are we safer? No. Are we safer than we would have been if we had sat on our duffs and continued to contemplate our navel? Absolutely yes.

BORDER: In case you haven't heard, it is not sealed. But I served on the Homeland Security Committee from Day 1, and chaired the narcotics committee before that. NET: I guarantee you that it is a lot harder to get across today than it once was.

SEAPORTS: Sometime look at all the containers. Think of all the points of contact, all the ways to cut them, or break latches, or pay off people. Then try to sleep at night. NET: Our safety is not perfect, but unbelievably better around most of the world.

AIRPORTS: Mitch Daniels' joke when running for governor was one of the best: "How did they know it was Sadaam Hussein in the spider hole? He showed them his Indiana driver's license." Indiana was among the very worst. Everyone improved the security of licenses, baggage, and – as most people are aware – tried to address the problem that if the only place not screened is one's pri-

vate parts, the smuggled material goes there. NET: Second strongest gains in safety.

FINANCIAL TRACKING: You catch organized criminals basically in two ways, inside tips and financial tracking. International cooperation gains in this area were incredible. There are always difficult spots, but the shared goal of stopping terrorism has prevailed most of the time. NET: Strongest gains and incredibly important. It's much harder to disguise money, but never impossible.

PATRIOT ACT: It has worked just as intended. Conservative/Libertarian concerns are also proving justified. How to do prevention, especially when the terrorists utilize people with previously "clean" records, is nearly impossible. NET: This is problematic, but without it thousands of Americans would be dead today. But there has been a price in liberty. We will continue to debate this.

This is but a sampling of different areas. Even if we are attacked tomorrow, the indisputable fact is this: Terrorists have been trying to kill Americans and our allies nearly every day since 9/11. None have succeeded on our soil. To me, this is a pretty good definition of success. ❖

Souder is a former member of Congress.

Shaping 2012, from page 1

panies that hire new workers, and it will cut payroll taxes in half for every working American and every small business. It will provide a jolt to an economy that has stalled, and give companies confidence that if they invest and hire, there will be customers for their products and services."

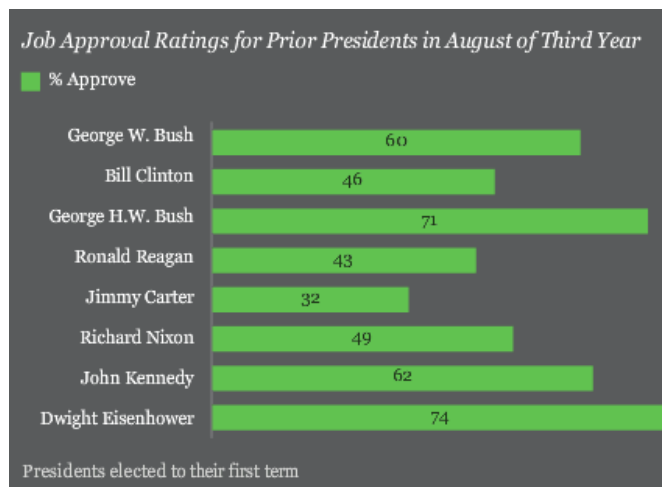
And there was a rhetorical refrain Obama repeated more than a dozen times: "You should pass this jobs plan right away."

The subplots were vivid and could define the 2012 race. Obama is poised to take a page from President Truman and paint this Congress – with a historic low 13 percent approval rating in the latest NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll – as a "do nothing" national legislature. Before the Obama speech, NBC/WSJ put at 73% the number who said the U.S. is on the "wrong track," and President Obama had a 44% approval rating with 59% disapproving of his handling of the economy.

Gallup had Obama's approve/disapprove in its three day tracking at 42/48% on Sunday.

There were also intriguing statements about entitlement reform. A day after Perry and Mitt Romney crossed swords over Social Security, with the Texas Republican calling it a "monstrosity" and a failed "Ponzi scheme," Obama told a nation, "If we don't gradually reform the system while protecting current beneficiaries, it won't be there when future retirees need it. We have to reform Medicare to strengthen it."

While Republicans, and particularly the new Tea Party lawmakers who joined them on Capitol Hill this year, spearheaded the drive to put deficit reduction front and center, the issue has risen at least modestly in the list of public concerns. A January survey by the Pew Research Center showed a gradual rise in public concern about the deficit with 64% citing it as a top policy priority for 2011, compared with 60% the previous year and 53% in January 2009. Those citing the budget deficit as their top worry grew from 28% in May and 29% in July to 22% in September. It showed a steady





rise - from 34% in March to 43% in September - of people saying the job situation should be a top priority.

The big factor driving down overall public preference for deficit reduction over stimulus since June was a change in outlook among independents. In June, they favored deficit reduction over stimulus by a 54% to 39% margin, but in the August survey, 47% backed spending on the economy while 46% stuck by deficit reduction as the higher priority.

In the NBC/WSJ survey, by a 47-41 percent margin, poll respondents favored a "new person" over their current member of Congress. Asked if they could vote to replace "every single member of Congress, including your own representative," 54% answered "yes."

Obama stumps for plan

Obama headed to Majority Leader Eric Cantor's district in Virginia on Friday going on the offensive. "I want you to call, I want you to e-mail, I want you to tweet, I want you to fax, I want you to visit, I want you to Facebook, send a carrier pigeon," he said at the University of Richmond. "I want you to tell your congressperson, 'The time for gridlock and games is over; the time for action is now.'"

While most Washington observers are pessimistic about a jobs deal getting done, even with the national jobless numbers flat at 9.1% and 8.3% here in Indiana, House Speaker John Boehner and Cantor appear to be reading the polls.

Boehner said, "It's my hope that we can work together to end the uncertainty facing families and small businesses and create a better environment for long-term economic growth and private-sector job creation." Cantor told CNN on Friday morning, "I think there's a lot of room for commonality and we can get something done quickly."

"We are going to work together," Cantor said, adding, "I think it's time to build consensus here."

On Friday, the two leaders sent an exceedingly polite letter to Mr. Obama asking that he send any bills containing his jobs plans to the Congressional Budget Office so that their costs can be evaluated (New York Times). "It is our desire to work together to find common ground

between your ideas and ours," the letter read, a significant switch from a few weeks ago, when Mr. Cantor, in an interview on The Wall Street Journal's Web site, said Mr. Obama was "over his head as to what to do about the economy."

Cantor cited the plan's initiatives for fostering small businesses and getting unemployed people back to work as areas where the parties could move forward. But the plan may have to be parceled up if those goals have a shot at becoming reality. Cantor agreed with Vice President Joe Biden's statement made on CBS's Early Show on Friday: "We are willing to compromise on any ideas that will help the middle class."

Delegation reacts

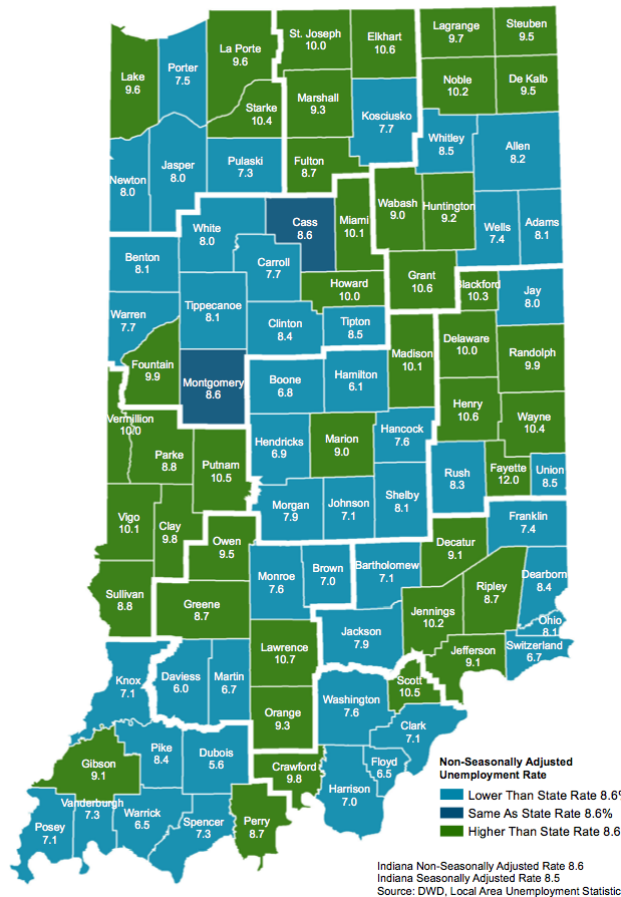
This also was reflected within the Indiana congressional delegation.

U.S. Rep. Joe Donnelly, seeking the Democratic Senate nomination and representing St. Joseph and Howard counties with a 10% jobless rate, said Thursday, "People are hurting, and entire families are being tested by economic hardship. That is the backdrop against which the President will address the nation this evening. More than anything else, I hope he emphasizes that now is the time to put politics aside and do what is right

for the country and those families. More political gamesmanship will not create jobs and it will only further dispirit the American people, who are rightly expecting us to come together and produce results."

Tea Party Republicans found areas of agreement. "The President offered some good starting points for discussion tonight, and I believe we can make some big strides this fall," said U.S. Rep. Todd Young, R-Bloomington. "In some instances, like the payroll tax holiday, I think we can go further than his suggestions by reforming our entire tax code to be fairer, flatter and simpler. Similarly, he's offered some regulatory review, but we must do more than root out a few bad regulations after they've already harmed

County Unemployment Rates July 2011 - Non Seasonally Adjusted





the jobs environment.”

U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman, who represents Elkhart County at 10.6% jobless and Noble at 10.2%, acknowledged, “I heard some of the right buzzwords. It’s time to get to work.” Stutzman added, “I would have liked to see a more bold and immediate plan to freeze the bureaucratic machine that issued over 3,000 final rules last year and has put a burden of \$1.75 trillion on the economy. Now, we can dive into the details of the American Jobs Act.”

Some were more critical. U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita, representing Lawrence County with a 10.7% unemployment rate, said, “What the American people needed to hear tonight from the President was an acknowledgment that his policies have failed and his assurance that he is willing to change course, putting the American people before politics. Instead President Obama offered up another campaign speech filled with shortsighted gimmicks, lip service to pro-growth policies and a tribute to the same big government, failed stimulus policies that have resulted in record debt and the worst economy since the Great Depression. Getting government out of the way is the most important thing we can do right now to unleash entrepreneurship, small business and economic growth. Instead we heard calls to raise taxes on job creators, spend more and borrow money from our children and grandchildren.”

Lugar critical, Mourdock silent

U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar, facing an intense primary challenge from Indiana Treasurer Richard Mourdock, observed, “The past two-and-a-half years of the Obama administration have been a lost opportunity leading to lost hope for millions of job seekers, homeowners and families trying to grow their paychecks and create better lives for their families. Dynamic job-creating economic growth comes from the private sector. This should be the core of our recovery plan, not more debt-increasing government

spending. The United States needs a total reform of the tax code. Replacing the income tax and IRS with the FairTax on final sale of goods and services would achieve dynamic job creating economic growth through greater savings, investment and stimulating a climate for business development and employment.” Mourdock had no reaction.

And U.S. Sen. Dan Coats added, “While I agree with the President that Americans cannot wait until after the next election for solutions to our fiscal crisis, I also don’t believe Americans can withstand 14 more months of more of the same policies from this administration. We cannot afford to repeat past mistakes. Removing rules and regulations that hurt our job creators, reducing taxes, and approving free-trade agreements are some of the many things we can do now to spur economic growth.”

But Washington Post columnist Dana Milbank saw more of a low-key circus than a Congress ready to get to work. “It was, in a way, more insulting than Joe Wilson’s ‘you lie’ eruption during a previous presidential address to Congress. The lawmakers weren’t particularly hostile toward the President – they just regarded the increasingly unpopular Obama as irrelevant. And the inclination not to take the 43-percent President seriously wasn’t entirely limited to the Republicans. Presidential addresses to Congress

are often dramatic moments. This one felt like a sideshow. Usually, the press gallery is standing-room-only; this time, only 26 of 90 seats were claimed by the deadline. Usually, some members arrive in the chamber hours early to score a center-aisle seat; 90 minutes before Thursday’s speech, only one Democrat was so situated. Republican leaders, having forced Obama to postpone the speech because of the GOP debate, decided they wouldn’t dignify the event by offering a formal, televised response.”

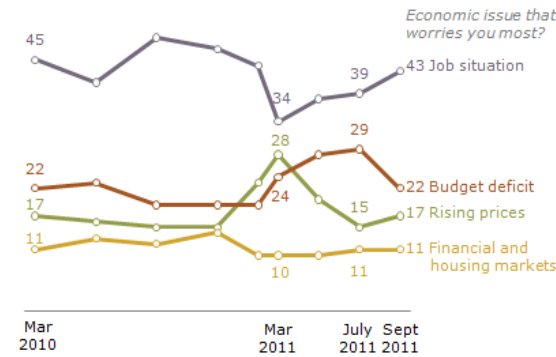
Politico’s Roger Simon observed, “And so Barack Obama, who once soared on the wings of hope, now plods on the leaden feet of reality. Obama delivered a strong speech at a time when he has never been weaker. Gallup says only 44 percent of the nation approves of how he is doing his job, while 50 percent disapprove. He is, in other words, “upside down” by 6 percentage points. A President can demand that Congress pass a bold jobs plan when his numbers are high. But when a President’s numbers are low,

Fewer Independents Prioritize Deficit Reduction over Spending to Help Economy

	June		August	
	Reduce deficit	Spend to help economy	Reduce deficit	Spend to help economy
Total	52	42	46	47
Republican	74	23	66	29
Democrat	36	59	32	61
Independent	54	39	46	47
<i>Among Rep/Lean Rep</i>				
Agree w/ Tea Party	84	13	82	16
Disagree/No opinion	63	30	55	40

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Aug. 17-21, 2011. Figures read across.

Jobs Top Deficit as Biggest Economic Worry



PEW RESEARCH CENTER/WASHINGTON POST Sept. 1-4, 2011.



he can only beseech.”

If there is to be no jobs plan that can pass, if Obama cannot stir the white hot heat of public opinion, then he faces political oblivion. He said in Elkhart in February 2009 and on NBC around that time that if his economic stimulus plan fails, “A year from now, I think people are going to see that we’re starting to make some progress. But there’s still going to be some pain out there,” Obama predicted. “If I don’t have this done in three years, then there’s going to be a one-term proposition.”

But the Republican field could be ready to snatch the proverbial defeat from the jaws of victory, and if that happens it could be entitlements that prompt voters to stick with Obama.

U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon, facing a GOP primary Tea Party challenge from Kristi Risk, and representing Vigo County with a 10.1% jobless rate, said, “I was pleased to see the President acknowledge what I’ve been saying for months. The Medicare program, one of the most relied upon and successful programs in history, is in trouble and needs to be reformed to protect it for current seniors and secure the program for future generations. What we don’t need is more deficit spending. Everyone agrees we have significant infrastructure needs. As a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I am working hard to ensure we have the resources to address this issue without adding to the deficit.”

Risk blasted Bucshon on Saturday. “After neglecting to vote repeatedly for cuts to discretionary spending, often as the lone Republican in Indiana to do so, and after adding trillions of dollars in deficit spending, Congressman Bucshon is now stating that we do not need anymore deficit spending. This appears to be somewhat hypocritical,” Risk said.

It was at the Simi Valley GOP presidential debate at the Reagan Library that Gov. Perry declared Social Security “a monstrous lie to our kids” and “a Ponzi scheme.” Perry added: “Maybe it’s time to have some provocative language in this country.”

The third rail?

At one time, this was the third rail of American politics. A top Perry aide refused, after repeated questions from The Huffington Post, to rule out the idea that Perry

would favor dissolving altogether the 76-year-old program that pays out benefits to seniors.

Romney pounced. “The governor says states ought to be able to opt out of Social Security,” the former Massachusetts governor said. “Our nominee has to be someone who isn’t committed to abolishing Social Security, but who is committed to saving Social Security. We have always had, at the heart of our party, a recognition that we want to care for those in need, and our seniors have the need of Social Security. I will make sure that we keep the program and we make it financially secure.”

“This is going to be a really big deal,” said Lanhee Chen, Romney’s policy director, in the spin room after the debate. “To make the argument that Social Security effectively has to be eliminated is a complete non starter. You’ve got millions of Americans who depend on Social Security. He’s going to have a really tough time explaining why he wants to kill Social Security.”

Perry defended his Social Security stance in a USA Today op-ed this morning: “The first step to fixing a problem is honestly admitting there is a problem. America’s goal must be to fix Social Security by making it more financially sound and sustainable for the long term. But Americans deserve a frank and honest discussion of the dire financial challenges facing the nearly 80-year-old program. By 2037, retirees will only get roughly 76 cents back for every dollar that is put into Social Security unless reforms are implemented.”



Mitt Romney and Gov. Rick Perry trade shots over jobs during their Simi Valley debate last Wednesday. They will be in a Tea Party debate in Tampa tonight.

Big Perry lead in new CNN poll

But what if Perry stays atop the polls? It could mean that Republican politics have taken such a surprising turn that all bets are off across the spectrum when it

comes to 2012.

A new CNN poll released this morning shows Perry taking 30 percent of the GOP primary vote, to Romney’s 18 percent and Sarah Palin at 15 percent. And if Romney’s hoping that Republicans recoil against Perry because they worry he’s unelectable, that fear hasn’t sunk in yet: With Palin out of the running, the headline stays the same: Perry 32 percent, Romney 21 percent, Paul 13 percent and all other candidates, including Bachmann, in single digits. “Perry doesn’t simply have the most support in a hypothetical ballot - he also tops the list of GOP candidates on every personal quality tested,” adds [poll director Keating] Holland.

Perry’s biggest strength may be the electability factor, with 42 percent saying he has the best chance of beating Obama next year. Some 26 percent say Romney has the best chance of defeating the president. ❖



From Cold War to 9/11

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - We were partying like it was 1999, because for a few more fleeting moments on my friend's back patio, it was. The odometer was about to tick into 2000, on the precipice of a new year, decade, century and millennium.

We were leaving behind the bloodiest century in the history of mankind. Two World Wars, countless civil rebellions, atrocities at the hands of despots had scorched the earth, induced famine and genocide. It morphed into Mutually Assured Destruction and the "Dead Hand," the Soviet defense computer system that would have taken over thousands of nuclear warheads had the United States decapitated its government. Machines were poised to wipe out humanity after an eyeblink of time - just 10,000 years - of our existence.



On this cold, Dec. 31, 1999, we wanted to believe we were entering an era of prosperity and peace as the world's sole super power. We expected to take our "peace dividend" after the Soviets imploded, and build a society of fast computers, cool cars, cheap gas, good jobs, affordable housing and generations that would do better than their parents and grandparents.

It would take 21 months to get the wake-up call when terror pilots rammed airliners into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a field in Pennsylvania. We find ourselves with a 9.1 percent jobless rate, a middle class under attack and wealth distribution that mirrors 1929. We have another president who appears to be failing.

New York Times columnist Thomas L. Friedman has written a new book with Michael Mandelbaum of Johns Hopkins University: "That Used to Be Us: How America Fell Behind in the World It Invented and How We Can Come Back." Watching Friedman on NBC's Meet the Press last Sunday was a dose of cod liver oil. The end of the Cold War and the 1990s was "like a 3,650 day victory parade for the United States," Friedman said. Victory, as it turns out, was unleashing "two billion people just like us" in China and India. Then came 9/11 and the U.S. spent the first decade of the 21st Century "chasing the losers from globalization rather than the winners."

The U.S. failed to finish a necessary war in Afghanistan and deal with nuclear-armed Pakistan - for a misguided invasion of Iraq that had no weapons of mass destruction. With the last of our combat troops scheduled to pullout by the end of this year, Iraq is slowly drifting into the Iranian sphere. We've spent \$1 trillion - almost all of it

unpaid for and now a part of a \$1.3 trillion deficit - taking out and trying to rebuild nations when our own country is in atrophy. A report last month detailed how \$60 billion of U.S. fund has been wasted in Iraq and Afghanistan. Sixty billion!

Friedman gives us context: "We went from the Greatest Generation, which the philosophy basically was 'save and invest'" to "the Baby Boom Generation whose philosophy turned out to be 'borrow and spend.'"

The Greatest Generation - which he defines as those born in The Depression, WW2 and the Cold War - "wouldn't think of shutting down the government for a minute." We've deviated from "sustainable values" of the Greatest Generation to Baby Boomers who adhere to "situational values." Friedman explains, "You put them all together and I think you really account for a lot of the hole we're in right now structurally."

So we've gone from a soaring nation to a "hole" with no clear path out and polarized politics with no middle ground. Austerity and a simpleton strategy of reducing the deficit have created a chronically high jobless rate and an eroding middle class. When you're watching the Colts or Bears on Sunday, there's a reason for so many luxury car TV ads aimed at the top 1 percent of the population while most of the rest of us stew.

In an NBC/Wall Street Journal poll released this past week, 73 percent put the U.S. on the "wrong track," President Obama had a 44 percent approval rating with 59 percent disapproving of his handling of the economy, and just 13 percent give Congress a favorable nod.

By a 47-41 percent margin, poll respondents favor a "new person" over their current member of Congress. Asked if you could vote to replace "every single member of Congress, including your own representative," 54 percent answered "yes."

Friedman notes that in the past America has "won at every turn" because there were "five pillars of success" that included educating people "up to and beyond" the current technology. Other pillars include: "Immigration, attract the world's most talented and energetic people. Third, infrastructure, have the world's best infrastructure. Fourth, have the right rules for incenting capital formation and risk-taking and preventing recklessness. And last, government-funded research. Put those together, stir, bake for 200 years, and you get the United States of America."

"Now, if you take all five of those ... and you look at the last decade ... possibly one of the worst, if not the worst decade in American history," Friedman said. "Education, boop; infrastructure, boop; immigration, boop; rules for capital investment - how'd you like that subprime crisis? - boop."

We've gone from hope and change, to Betty Boop for President. ❖



9/11 set Roemer on a new career course

By **JACK COLWELL**

SOUTH BEND - On that beautiful September morning, the one that turned so ugly 10 years ago, Tim Roemer and some other moderates met in his congressional office with Nancy Pelosi, who was seeking their support for House Democratic leader.

"We saw on the TV in my office when the first plane hit the World Trade Center," Roemer recalls.

"Then the second plane went in, and we knew something was terribly wrong."

The politics of House leadership was forgotten with the realization that the nation was under attack.

In fact, Americans everywhere forgot politics, put aside differences and flew flags to proclaim a United States of America.

"We almost couldn't be farther away now," says Roemer. He laments how "partisan vipers" in Congress leave the nation less safe now than it could be.

Roemer, then a Democratic congressman from South Bend and now recently returned from two years as ambassador to India, sponsored legislation to create the 9/11 Commission and then served on that bipartisan group that investigated the terror attack.

In a telephone interview, Roemer said partisanship and a "dysfunctional" structure in Congress have blocked some key recommendations of the commis-

sion. "We are no doubt safer today," Roemer said. "But we are not as safe as we should be. And there are no excuses."

Of the 41 commission recommendations, nine have not been implemented.

Roemer was especially critical of failure to provide a national emergency radio spectrum to enable first responders to a disaster, whether a terrorist attack or a natural disaster such as a hurricane or tornado, to communicate with each other.

With normal communications disrupted, first responders at the World Trade Center couldn't keep in contact.

"Emergency personnel going up one tower couldn't talk to those in the other tower," Roemer said. "They kept going up in the second tower, with no idea that the other tower had fallen."

Lives could have been saved, he said, if firemen climbing stairs to their doom had emergency communication working to let them know that the tower could fall, that they should go down, not up, and help everyone possible down those stairs with only minutes to spare.

Today, he said, that same situation of inadequate communication would occur because Congress, with partisan differences over the method of financing a D-block emergency radio spectrum, still hasn't acted.

Roemer also experienced communication problems at first in Washington, where the Pentagon was hit



Ambassador Tim Roemer's life changed in dramatic fashion after the 9/11 attacks. He would author legislation that set up the 9/11 Commission. (HPI Photo by A. Walker Shaw)



by a plane commandeered by terrorists and phones weren't working.

Though a member of the House Intelligence Committee, he wasn't able to receive classified information on the attack that could have been dispatched to the committee's windowless, soundproof room hidden away in the Capitol Building. The Capitol was evacuated amid fears that it too could be a terrorist target. It probably was.

"We know now that the plane that went down in Shanksville (Pa.) probably was headed for where many of us were on Capitol Hill," Roemer said. He hailed the actions of unarmed passengers to bring down that plane as one of the displays of heroism that helped to unite the nation.

Intelligence Committee members finally were directed to a secret site off Capitol Hill with secure communications for briefings.

Roemer went that night to the Pentagon.

Standing ankle deep in debris and water "where the Pentagon had been torn open," Roemer spotted a desk in the rubble. He wondered then and wonders still: "Who had been sitting at that desk? Where was that person?"

He also was impressed at how quickly, how efficiently, response teams there were working.

That isn't always the case, however, as shown by muddled responses to some natural disasters.

Unity of command is needed, Roemer said, and a 9/11 Commission recommenda-

tion to provide for a single person in charge for a unified disaster response has not been followed. Unified response training, with frequent exercises at the state and local levels is vital, he said, as is a clear command structure.

Congress has flatly refused to follow a commission recommendation to reform itself.

"There are 100 committees and subcommittees with overlapping oversight over homeland security," Roemer said. "That's a waste of taxpayer money. It's also dysfunctional."

He regards this as one of the reasons the nation is not as safe as it now could be.

Also, a recommendation for a clear and powerful role for a director of national intelligence to bring all the efforts and information together has not been followed.

Roemer said the director is more of a "czar," with

title but no real authority.

"The director does not have the power of the purse or the power to hire and fire," Roemer said. Such power, he said, is needed to ax wasteful spending on useless projects that are protected by political or lobbyist clout.

On the Intelligence Committee, Roemer saw cost overruns that seemed unjustified and costly programs of questionable value. All of this was classified information that members could not bring to public attention. A national director with power, he said, could act in those cases to terminate the waste.

In addition to pointing out what hasn't been done, Roemer said much was done right, especially at that time of unity.

He cited better coordination "to connect the dots" at the National Counterterrorism Center, with intelligence operatives working "face to face" to share information and to communicate also with local police.

Dots aplenty before 9/11 had remained unconnected.

America also is safer, Roemer said, because, finally, through persistence to find him, Osama bin Laden no longer lives on this 10th anniversary of his terror.

Roemer went to New York City as soon as Intelligence Committee members could visit Ground Zero.

"I'll never forget the smell of death," Roemer said, describing an awful odor of lingering smoke and toxic materials. "It actually left a taste in my mouth, like having a mouth full of something like a bunch of dirty nickels."

In sponsoring and then serving on the 9/11 Commission, Roemer heard heartbreaking stories from family members of victims and from first responders who saw it all.

"We must never forget," Roemer said. "It is so critically important." To be remembered as so important, he said, are the ugly events of that September morning and also the way the nation showed then that it could be a United States of America. ❖



U.S. Reps. Tim Roemer and Lee Hamilton both served on the 9/11 Commission.



Mourdock missing finance meetings as he mounts 11th campaign

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - During the first three years as Indiana state treasurer, Richard Mourdock was a regular presence at State Board of Finance meetings, attending 18 of 21 meetings that also include the governor and auditor.

But during 2010 and 2011, Mourdock has been a no-show more often than an attendee. Since January 2010, Mourdock has attended only six of 16 meetings. And since he announced his U.S. Senate candidacy in February of this year, Mourdock has attended only one of four meetings, that coming on April 19. He missed

meetings on March 15, May 17 and June 28, according to logs on the official Indiana State website.

Since assuming office on Feb. 10, 2007, Mourdock's attendance at these key meetings is 64.9%, with highs of 87.5 percent in 2008 and 100% in 2009. But that has fallen off to 36.4% in 2010 and 40% in 2011.

Former treasurer Marge O'Laughlin never missed a meeting. "That is something I would never want to miss because the actions we took were very important," said O'Laughlin, a long-time ally of U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar. "I was being paid by tax dollars and I was always there. I campaigned in the evening. I don't ever recall missing a board of finance meeting in eight years."

Mourdock has kept a busy campaign schedule, attending dozens of Republican Lincoln Day dinners across the state during 2011.

Ian Slatter, director of communications in the treasurer's office, told HPI, "Treasurer Mourdock is fulfilling his duties to the Board of Finance. Every meeting of the Board of Finance since 2007 has been attended by Treasurer Mourdock or his designee. Assigning designees is a common practice used on a regular basis by every statewide elected official, including the Governor and Lieutenant Governor."

Asked how often Mourdock is at the Statehouse, Slatter said, "Treasurer Mourdock is discharging his duties as State Treasurer. Like any statewide official, when he is required to be out of the office, he is in constant communication via wireless device."

But one thing is clear when it comes to Mourdock's

career: Since 1988, he has been an almost non-stop candidate, waging 11 political campaigns. He lost the 8th CD Republican primary in 1988, then lost the 8th CD general elections in 1990 and 1992 to U.S. Rep. Frank McCloskey.

He won two Vanderburgh County commissioner races in 1994 and 1998, then ran for Indiana secretary of state in 2002, losing a Republican Convention floor fight to Todd Rokita. A flyer distributed on the convention floor claiming he had the endorsement of Mike Delph, who had just dropped out, backfired and helped Rokita secure the

Richard Mourdock Election Record

1988	8th CD	Lost primary
1990	8th CD	Lost general
1992	8th CD	Lost general
1994	Vanderburgh Co. Commission	Won general
1998	Vanderburgh Co. Commission	Won general
2002	Indiana Secretary of State	Lost convention
2004	Vanderburgh Co. Council	Lost general
2006	Indiana Auditor of State	Withdrew
2006	Indiana Treasurer of State	Won general
2010	Indiana Treasurer of State	Won general
2012	U.S. Senate primary	Candidate

nomination on the third ballot. In that race, Mourdock saw the office as a political platform, telling the Indiana Daily Student, "This office must be used as a bully pulpit to go after the Democrats."

In 2004, as Mitch Daniels won the Indiana governorship and President Bush easily carried Indiana's 11 Electoral College votes, Mourdock lost an at-large bid for the Vanderburgh County Council.

In 2006, Mourdock ran for two offices, first for state auditor, and withdrew after term-limited Treasurer Tim Berry entered the race, and then for state treasurer, when he won the nomination and the general election. He was reelected as treasurer in 2010, leading the state GOP ticket in votes.

But less than two months into his second term, Mourdock announced he was challenging Lugar in the 2012 Republican primary.

The attendance issues come as Howey Politics Indiana has learned that Mourdock's deputy treasurer, Richard Bramer, has not been bonded. With Mourdock reportedly out of the treasurer's office many days, Bramer is second in command. Normally, Statehouse sources tell HPI, the deputy treasurer has power to transfer funds as a signature authority. Bramer does not have signature authority without being bonded, sources tell HPI.

Slatter explained, "Indiana Code 4-8. 1-2-4 (b)





requires Deputy Treasurers to be bonded. There are two Deputy Treasurers who are bonded. Richard Bramer is Chief of Staff and General Counsel for Treasurer Mourdock. This is not a position which requires a bond by statute."

Hoosiers for Conservative Senate have finalized plans for Indiana's first "TEA Party Convention" on September 24, 2011 at the H.J. Ricks Centre for the Arts in downtown Greenfield, announced HFCS Co-Chairs Monica Boyer and Greg Fetti. The convention will kick off at 10 a.m., and will feature a straw poll on the 2012 GOP Primary race for the US Senate seat from Indiana. HFCS district representatives will issue an endorsement that day, in the Senate race, based on the results from the straw poll.

The group, however, will probably need a new identity after it failed to renew rights to its name.

Indiana Treasurer Richard Mourdock holds up to \$350,000 in stock in USA Synthetic Fuel Corp. and its parent company, Global Energy Inc., according to his latest federal financial disclosure filings (LoBianco, Associated Press). The Cincinnati-based companies are seeking financing for a coal-gasification plant in Lima, Ohio, that has been pitched to investors and Obama administration officials as a clean energy alternative to more traditional power sources. In a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission, USA Synthetic Fuel said part of its business strategy relies on being able to produce synthetic natural gas cheaper than traditional natural gas suppliers as demand for the fuel grows under expected climate change regulations. Mourdock said his holdings, which he received as payment for geological consulting he did about a decade ago, don't create a conflict of interest because he wouldn't benefit financially if he succeeded in helping block the climate change regulations. He said he hasn't sold the stock because he wants to recoup the money he's owed for his work, but he wouldn't say how much he was owed or whether the stock was now worth that amount. He said he can't sell his holdings in Global Energy, which could be worth as much as \$250,000, because it's not publicly traded. "I'm trying to get paid for my work," he said.

Mourdock's situation is not a traditional conflict of interest in the sense of him benefiting from policies he's pushing, but it does raise questions of where his allegiances stand: with the tea party philosophy or with his stock portfolio, said Julia Vaughn, spokeswoman for Common Cause Indiana, a public interest group. "It begs bigger questions in terms of how does he make decisions about what his policies are going to be," she said.

Mourdock told The Associated Press he does not think climate change is manmade or as disastrous as scientists say it is. He also said he will continue to campaign against the environmental regulations being pushed by the Obama administration. He said he has no plans now to divest the stocks, the values of which are listed only as a range on his federal financial form. The stock in both com-

panies accounts for 5 percent to 28 percent of Mourdock's personal investments.

In forms filed with the SEC, USA Synthetic Fuels said it would be in a good position to take advantage of the Obama-driven climate change regulations because it captures all of the carbon dioxide when it converts coal to synthetic natural gas. Vice President Dwight Lockwood said his company has always planned to capture its carbon dioxide emissions and believes climate change regulations are inevitable, making it better to be ahead of the curve. "Our decision to do it is philosophical," Lockwood said. "You can read the tea leaves and know that somebody is going to have to do something, so we may as well get started."

Greg Fetting, co-chairman of Hoosiers for a Conservative Senate, said he opposes the climate change regulations but thinks Mourdock's investment makes smart financial sense. "He knows coal, it doesn't mean he subscribes to global warming," Fetting said. "I would invest in what I know."

Horse Race Status: Leans Lugar

5th CD: Messer rolls out heavy hitters

Luke Messer rolled out the heavy hitters for his campaign. The 6th District GOP candidate touts support from three former state chairmen (Al Hubbard, Jim Kittle, and Murray Clark) and an Oct. 5 fundraiser will be co-hosted by legislative leaders Brian Bosma and David Long, along with state school Superintendent Tony Bennett (Shella, WISH-TV). It's a lineup that will be hard to match as Messer seeks to replace Mike Pence.

Another Republican candidate has joined the race to replace Rep. Mike Pence, R-6th (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Kristen Foster, an attorney who lives in the Hancock County town of New Palestine, recently announced she will run for the congressional seat, which has opened as Pence seeks the GOP nomination for governor in 2012. Republicans who have filed their candidacies with the Federal Election Commission include Don Bates Jr., a financial adviser from Winchester; Travis Hankins, a real estate investor from Columbus; John Hatter, a human resources executive from Columbus, as well as Messer. Democrats who have filed to run include Brad Bookout, an economic development consultant in Muncie, and Jim Crone, a sociology professor at Hanover College.

7th CD: An opponent for Carson?

U.S. Rep. Andre Carson stirred up a lot of controversy when he said that some members of Congress aligned with the Tea Party movement want to see blacks "hanging on a tree" (Indianapolis Star). Among the things he stirred up: a potential Republican opponent in the 2012 election. Tony Duncan said he is exploring a run for the GOP nomination, becoming the first Republican to publicly discuss challenging the Indianapolis Democrat. But he's got



a couple of possible obstacles: He lives in Martinsville and has run three times for Congress before, always losing in the primary. The Constitution does not require a member of the U.S. House of Representatives to live in the district he or she represents. And Duncan, a 51-year-old carpenter and job superintendent who said he has worked on numerous Indianapolis jobs, including Lucas Oil Stadium, said his wide group of friends and family in the 7th District will give him a boost. And he does have one thing going for him: He shares the same name as the Democrat who has long won election as Center Township constable.

9th CD: Young worked better maps

Gerrymandering is as much about shoring up vulnerable incumbents as it is targeting the other party, and with a huge House freshman class and control of the majority of statehouses the GOP is looking to protect its own (The Hill). While some Democratic incumbents stand to benefit from redistricting, most of the lucky incumbents are Republicans. Many big states including New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Florida and Washington have yet to finish their redistricting plans and in all those states incumbents stand to benefit from the new maps. At this point, here are the top ten House incumbents most likely to benefit from redistricting: 10. Rep. Todd Young (R-Ind.) Young beat Rep. Baron Hill (D-Ind.) in a Republican-leaning southern Indiana district Hill had held from 1998 to 2004 and won again in 2006. During redistricting, which was controlled by the GOP, his allies in the state legislature raided next-door freshman Rep. Larry Bucshon's (R-Ind.) district for Republican pockets, shoring up Young and making Bucshon more vulnerable.

Evansville Mayoral: Debates begin

Jobs remained the top issue for both Evansville mayoral candidates Wednesday evening as they used the first formal debate of the race to criticize each other and the plans they discussed earlier (Sarkissian, Evansville Courier & Press). Republican Lloyd Winnecke won a coin toss to be the first to provide a two-minute introduction and used his waning seconds to slam Democrat Rick Davis' plan to use federal grant money to help troubled kids graduate high school and seek training for entry level jobs. "Unlike my opponent,

I do not support the use of dwindling federal block grant money to support programs in our schools," Winnecke said. "That program is naive and frankly, not responsible." Davis fired back in his introduction by promising to banish the secrecy he said current civic leaders hide behind. "It's time for open and fair government for the taxpayers of our fine city," Davis said. "My opponent represents the opposite: He's a veteran of closed door government. That status quo must go."

Winnecke began his TV ad campaign last weekend (Howey Politics Indiana). Seen walking through the north side neighborhood where he grew up, Winnecke says, "Jobs will be my top priority and you will have a voice in government." The ad tells viewers to read his jobs plan at the campaign website. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup

Indianapolis Mayoral: Leans Ballard

Informed and reliable sources in both parties tell HPI they have seen campaign internal polling showing Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard with a double digit lead. Based on polling data we've seen, HPI is moving this race from "Tossup" to "Leans Ballard." Virtually everyone we've talked to believes this race will eventually tighten up, but many observers saw Kennedy's first TV ads and five mailers on education as missing the mark.

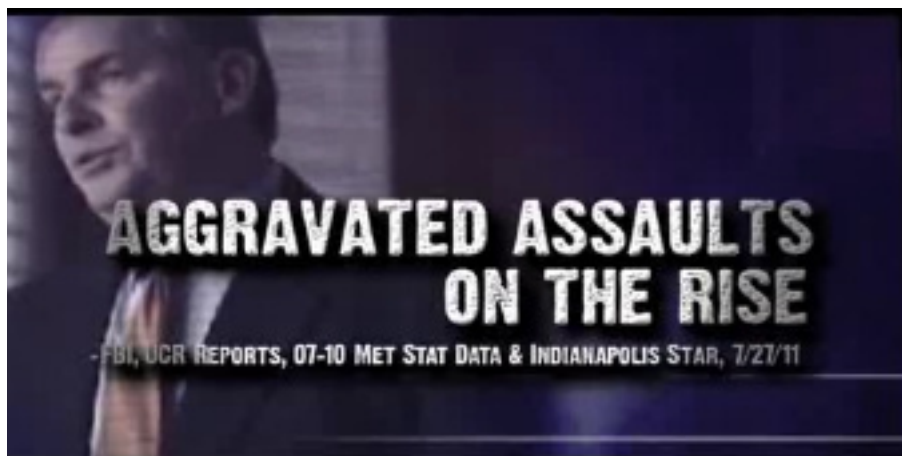
Public Opinion Strategies polling for the Ballard campaign puts his favorable at 72% and the right track question at 67%.

Democrat Melina Kennedy went up with a second negative ad on Friday, turning from the education issue to crime. It notes that Ballard received the FOP endorsement four years ago. "Confidence in the mayor has dropped," the voice over says. "Aggravated assaults are on the rise." Kennedy, the ad says, will reform the Department of Public Safety and hire 100 new cops "all without a tax increase."

Megan Robertson, campaign manager for Ballard, insisted that crime has dropped overall by 7.5% and the city's homicide total for 2010 is the lowest since 1995.

"When Melina Kennedy was deputy mayor, she raised taxes multiple times, left 120 police department positions unfilled and crime increased dramatically," Robertson said.

The Ballard campaign responded with a testimonial ad from Spencer





Moore, father of slain IMPD officer David Moore.

Kennedy unveiled an economic development strategy Tuesday that she said would focus on making it easier to do business in the city, grow small businesses, improve workforce development and foster entrepreneurship (Indianapolis Star). "What we need is an active mayor," Kennedy said at a campaign stop at the Cannon IV headquarters east of Downtown. "We need someone who will help move the ball forward . . . using the bully pulpit, bringing the business community together and never letting her eye off the ball."

"A lot of what Melina Kennedy highlighted and called for in her plan today is very similar to what Mayor Ballard already outlined two weeks ago," said Ballard's campaign spokeswoman, Molly Deuberry.

Kennedy, though, said the mayor has spent too much time focusing on international companies. A small-business owner herself, Kennedy said her focus would be more local. She and her husband, Bob Kennedy, co-own BlueMile, a store for runners. She outlined four areas to target: Promote job creation by reducing barriers and burdens on business owners. Her ideas include creating a single point of contact within the city for businesses, conducting a quarterly webinar on business issues, creating a business owners' guide to the city and conducting an annual survey on the state of business. Promote growth of small businesses through the use of city resources. That would include using the city website to promote businesses, encouraging minorities and women to open businesses, and creating a commission with up to 20 business leaders charged with supporting small- and medium-sized businesses. Improve leadership on local workforce development.

Again, the Ballard campaign is preparing to contrast the mayor's record with that of Kennedy when she was deputy mayor from June 2001 to September 2005. "She lost 15,000 jobs," Robertson said. "We've gained 19,000 jobs in a similar time period during very difficult economic times."

The Ballard campaign points to Newsweek which listed Indianapolis as one of the top 10 cities poised for the economic recovery. Forbes listed Indianapolis as the No. 1 "next boomtown in the Midwest" and the Wall Street Journal ranked it as the No. 7 city for business startups. **Horse Race Status:** LEANS BALLARD

HD42: Grubb ponders 2012

Rumors were swirling that State Rep. Dale Grubb might not seek another term in the district he's held since 1988. "Final decision pending," Grubb told HPI late last week. Attica Clerk-Treasurer Sharon Negele lost to Grubb 9,438 to 8,897 in 2010 and is expected to seek what many believe is a more Republican seat next year.

HD52: Moss eyes Yarde seat

Allen County Councilman Paul Moss, R-at-large, is considering whether to seek a seat in the Statehouse next year (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Moss on Tuesday said he filed paperwork with the state to create an exploratory committee for the purpose of possibly running for House District 52. The newly drawn district includes all of DeKalb County, much of Perry Township in Allen County – where Moss resides – and part of southeast Steuben County. Moss first ran for council in 2004, when he was awarded the seat early by caucus after the departure of Margaret Ankenbruck. He won election in 2004 and 2008. The house seat is currently held by Rep. David Yarde, R-Garrett, but Yarde has expressed an interest in running for Senate District 13 next year against incumbent Republican Sue Glick, of LaGrange.

Presidential: TPaw endorses Romney

Former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty endorsed Mitt Romney for president Monday, praising his onetime rival for his "leadership ability" and the "depth and scope of [his] private-sector experience" (Politico), "I believe he's going to be our party's nominee," Pawlenty said on "Fox and Friends," predicting Romney would be a "transformational and great president." Less than a month after ending his own White House bid, Pawlenty was in sync with the Romney campaign's message on everything from jobs to health care, to Social Security and Rick Perry.

Asked how he could endorse a candidate who he once mocked as the author of "Obamacare," Pawlenty said he'd spoken about health care with Romney and concluded: "Mitt Romney is 100 percent dedicated and committed to repealing Obamacare."

Obama drag on Democrats

Dissatisfaction with President Obama is hurting Democrats' chances in two House special elections that will take place on Tuesday (The Hill). In a Democratic-leaning New York City seat previously held by Democratic Rep. Anthony Weiner, some prominent local Democrats have endorsed Republican Bob Turner because of Obama's handling of Israel, while Democrat David Weprin has sought distance from the president. In a GOP-leaning Nevada district left vacant when Dean Heller was appointed to the Senate, Republicans are using Obama as a cudgel against Democratic candidate Kate Marshall, featuring him in all of their ads while mostly ignoring her. Many Democratic strategists are privately blaming Obama for their party's difficulties in both districts and worry that if his numbers don't improve he could hurt their chances at retaking the House in 2012. ❖



American politics are strangely volatile

By **DAVE KITCHELL**

LOGANSPORT - These are unusual times in American politics. In fact, let's just say they've gone to the point of strangely volatile.



Remember less than three years ago when Republican presidential candidate John McCain actually suspended his campaign? He returned to Washington because the economy had tanked and Congress and the President collectively focused their attention on free-flowing red ink from some of the largest banks in the world that happened to be within our shores.

Flash forward to this week and we see a President who wants to address a joint session of Congress about the economy and present a jobs plan. But instead of rallying in Washington like McCain did, Congress is running away. The Speaker of the House doesn't want him to come until a debate is held involving a field of candidates for an election 14 months away. Ironically, the greatest issue in the presidential campaign will likely be – the nation's economy.

It would seem that the paradigm of urgency for our nation's economic future has shifted from McCain's time to the present. In fact, it's hard to see how it's a priority other than a priority to talk about, not doing anything about.

It's unprecedented for a House Speaker to tell a sitting President he's too busy to have a joint session of Congress. It's just about as unprecedented as Indiana Rep. Andre Carson's claim that some Tea Party-backed Republicans won't be happy until African-Americans are treated much as racists in this country did almost a century ago. Sometimes, politics seems to be taking us in reverse in this country, and this is one of those times.

And then there's Rick Perry, the third-term governor from the Lone Star state who has suddenly entered the presidential race and zoomed past Michelle Bachmann, fellow Texan Ron Paul and supposed frontrunner Mitt Romney to lead polls. What's becoming clear is that Perry doesn't have the support of another former Texas governor who happened to win two terms as president. What George W. Bush had was more than a resume built in Austin. He had connections from his own father's years in Washington and name recognition.

But the larger question with Perry is whether the

Republican Party that isn't the Tea Party will balance a presidential ticket with a Tea Party-backed candidate as a concession to the movement. Is this really what Karl Rove wants? Can the GOP win without the Tea Party? Can it win with the Tea Party on the ballot? Will a Romney nominee with a Perry as No. 2 be good enough to defeat Obama? That Boston/Austin pairing hasn't worked since JFK and LBJ in 1960, but that's the other party.

If the Tea Party gets its way, Perry is probably going to be its man. Yet if he is the nominee or No. 2, he'll be one stark difference from either Obama or Romney. Both those men have come up with health care plans, while Perry presides over a state with the highest percentage of uninsured residents in the country. That's one contrast, but there is another.

It's Perry's wardrobe. While Obama and Romney are doing their part to appear like typical Americans with open collars and rolled-up sleeves, Perry looks uncomfortable in big-collared shirts with large ties. You begin to wonder if this fashion statement is the reason why Texas A&M is disassociating itself with the University of Texas to move to another conference. The Aggies will be gone from the Big 12 before the 2012 presidential election, which is becoming a Bigger 12 with every passing jobless report predicting we'll have 9 percent unemployment through next year.



The best hunches out there are that Texas A&M won't be the only party disassociating itself in 2012. Look for Republicans to use Perry as leverage to move Bachmann, Paul, Herman Cain and Newt Gingrich closer to the side of the stage instead of the center of it. Look for former ambassador to China and U.S. Sen. John Huntsman to be quietly waiting in the wings. ❖

Kitchell is an award-winning columnist based in Logansport.



Obama becomes the new Peanuts character

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND - President Barack Obama is like Charlie Brown, the likeable but naïve character in the long-running "Peanuts" comic strip.

Obama keeps thinking Republicans are going to let him kick the football, on economic stimulus, on trade, on health care and even on a debt-ceiling grand bargain. But they pull the ball away as he tries to kick, just as Lucy always does to Charlie Brown.



Charlie Brown, with endless determination and hope, keeps thinking naively that Lucy next time will hold the ball for him to kick. Alas, she pulls it away again, and he flips and lands on his back. "AAUGH!"

Congressional Republicans believe they have left Obama on his back so often that voters will conclude he will never kick the ball and thus deserves no more chances after 2012.

They could be right.

Polls show Obama's job approval rating plummeting, now with more disapproval than approval.

A nationwide poll of likely voters conducted for Politico shows 50 percent disapproving and just 45 percent approving of the job Obama is doing as president. Worse for the president, 41 percent say they "strongly" disapprove. Only 24 percent "strongly" approve.

Remarkably, in the same poll, there is a high likeability rating for the president.

Poll question: "Whether you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president, what is your impression of Barack Obama as a person? Do you approve or disapprove of him?"

Approval was 74 percent, with 55 percent saying they "strongly" approve of him. Only 18 percent expressed disapproval, 14 percent "strongly" disapproving.

There is danger here for Republican congressional leaders, who show such disdain for Obama, and Republican presidential candidates, who bash him over just about everything, even things he took from past Republican proposals.

Because they dislike Obama and see his job approval dropping as they drop him on his back time and again, they could mistakenly conclude that a majority of Americans also dislike him and rejoice every time they pull

away the ball.

Often, however, Obama is seen like Charlie Brown, a likeable loser.

That's not exactly a great campaign theme: "Re-elect Obama, the likeable loser."

Nor, of course, will that be Obama's theme.

The Obama campaign will point to his higher approval in areas such as dealing with terrorism and contend that failure to achieve jobs goals is due to Republicans who, like Lucy, are always pulling the ball away.

A lot of Americans do wonder:

"Why can't Good Ol' Charlie Brown and Lucy show teamwork and get the ball kicked off for once?"

But Obama needs to do more than be likeable and blame Republicans.

Americans might prefer a nasty Lucy who at least has hands on the ball rather than a nice guy who doesn't seem able to find a way to kick it.

Right now, it's a tie.

That poll shows an even divide over whether Obama or congressional Republicans offer the best hope for turning the economy around and creating jobs.

Republicans come out ahead on controlling the deficit (52 percent to 37 percent) and Obama wins on standing up for the middle class (57 percent to 35 percent.)

Concern about the future has a fifth of Americans "extremely worried" about another economic downturn. A majority is in some "worried" category.

That's not a vote of confidence in Obama.

But some of the harshest critics of the president among Republican presidential prospects aren't getting much of a vote of confidence either. In the poll, 58 percent of respondents say they definitely would not vote for Michele Bachmann and 45 percent already say they definitely would not vote for Rick Perry.

Will Obama halt his downward slide in approval, showing less naiveté and more resolve to take the ball away from Lucy and actually kick the darn thing down the field?

Will Republicans nominate a presidential candidate other than some nasty Lucy, offering instead somebody with skill at pulling together, not just ability to pull the ball away?

Will one side - or, ideally, both sides - shun the Washington version of the "Peanuts" comic strip?

Or will voters be left with a presidential choice of Charlie Brown vs. Lucy? "AAUGH!" ❖

Colwell has covered Indiana politics over five decades for the South Bend Tribune.



46% of Indiana cities and towns grew

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS - News flash: Toad Hop (Vigo County) recorded in 2010 census as having 108 residents. Onward (Cass County) progresses with 23 percent increase in population. Economy (Wayne County) stumbles, loses 6 percent in numbers.

Such headlines demand we ask, "How many places in Indiana grew and how many declined in population according to the latest census?" The answer is 276 out of 601 (46 percent) grew.

Do we have a crisis? Are our cities and towns shrinking in size, becoming less consequential? Are suburban, ex-urban and even rural life-styles drawing the civil out of civilization?

Upon further examination of the data, we discover those 276 places with increased populations grew by 456,000 persons or 53,000 more people than the state grew as a whole. The 319 declining places and a loss in population in unincorporated county areas made up the difference.



Population growth of cities and towns does not necessarily indicate their attractiveness as communities. Annexation of subdivisions and smaller communities also contributes to population growth for the annexing entity.

However, in Indiana, annexation has become increasingly difficult thanks to the anti-government movement bonding with the anti-urban sentiments of many Hoosiers.

To complicate matters, the U.S. Bureau of the Census recognizes, in addition to cities and towns, places that contain a density of population and a local identity, even if they are not incorporated government entities. The largest of these Census Designated Places (CDPs) is Granger (St. Joseph Co.) with more than 30,000 residents.

For the 2010 census, the Bureau went a step further than before by acknowledging 84 new CDPs with a total population of 67,800. Now the Notre Dame and Purdue campuses are CDPs with a total of 18,200 residents. Previously, all these CDPs were included in the unincorporated portions of their respective counties.

In 2000, Indiana had six cities with 75,000 or more persons (Indianapolis, Ft. Wayne, Evansville, South Bend, Gary and Hammond). That number jumped to nine in 2010 with the addition of Bloomington, Carmel and Fishers. To-

gether these nine provided homes for 1.7 million persons or 26 percent of the state's population.

At the other end of the population spectrum, Indiana's 272 places with fewer than 1,000 persons remained unchanged in number and gained nearly 1 percent in their combined populations. Perhaps this is what David Terrell, deputy chief of staff for Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman, means when he speaks of "resiliency rather than growth." In this case, our smallest places maintained population equilibrium in the face of the changing technical climate.

It is uncertain what the future holds for cities of different sizes. We expect economies of scale, where bigger means higher volumes of output and lower costs of production, to work against the smaller communities. But there seems to be no evidence in the data to support this hypothesis. Perhaps the effect is offset by the benefits of the Internet and the ever expanding influence of the automobile.

Yes, even a hundred years after its introduction, the auto is still changing our lives, enabling more of us to live at greater distances from our places of employment, shopping, schooling and worship. The Internet, as it becomes more accessible to more people, decreases the costs of our interactions. Both the auto and the Internet appear to be sustaining smaller communities in Indiana without diminishing the roles of our larger cities. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an independent economist, speaker, and writer formerly with IU's Kelley School of Business.

Weinzapfel backs project labor

EVANSVILLE - Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel might not be running for governor, but he stepped into a state-level fight last week when he argued in favor of project labor agreements (Bradner, Evansville Courier & Press). Weinzapfel, a former state representative, testified at a legislative study committee's hearing on the agreements, which require union labor and wage rules on public works projects. Lawmakers imposed tougher restrictions on those deals during the 2011 session, and some wish to do away with them entirely. Testifying on behalf of the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns, Weinzapfel said Evansville used a project labor agreement to build the \$127 million Ford Center, and it worked well. "I vowed from the beginning that this project would come in on time and on budget, and a PLA is one mechanism that has allowed me to keep this promise," he said. He said whether to use project labor agreements should be a "home rule decision." ❖



Mark Bennett, Terre Haute Tribune-Star: We stood atop a hill in rural southwestern Pennsylvania, and I do mean rural. Cars, trucks, SUVs and RVs kept pulling into the parking area. Groups of people climbed out of their vehicles and into the suffocating July heat. Then, they too stood on the hilltop, staring down at a grassy clearing in front of a woods. My brain saw it as a scene out of a Paul Simon song — “We’ve all come to look for America.” For all its tragedy, heartache and vast ramifications, the resiliency and spirit exhibited in this country on 9/11 is an American story. Virtually anyone who was school-age or older on Sept. 11, 2001, can describe what they were doing when that awful news transformed a peaceful, sunny Tuesday morning into a traumatic national turning point. More than a million people have traveled to that hill near Shanksville, Pa., to share their stories and contemplate. “It’s a wonderful setting to think about what happened here and what it means to you,” said Jeff Reinbold, a National Park Service ranger and site manager of the Flight 93 National Memorial. ❖

Rich James, Post-Tribune: I don’t know, Mitch. You were kind of a lovable guy when you were first elected governor. I even got on board with that “My Man Mitch” thing. But, you’ve changed. I’ve seen it over the last couple of years. Maybe that presidency thing did it to you. You know, the whole world asking you to run and your ego quietly slipping out of control. And then, bam, for whatever reason, you decided to finish your term as governor and likely will fade from the political scene. But, hey, if it hadn’t been for you, Mitch, the Republican Party never would have found itself embracing Rick Perry. I’ll tell you one thing, Mitch, what you did has the Barack Obama people smiling like Cheshire cats. ❖

Jennifer Rubin, Washington Post: In Florida, the Mitt Romney campaign is distributing a flyer attacking on Texas Gov. Rick Perry on Social Security. It contrasts Perry’s own words (“By any measure, Social Security is a failure”) with Romney’s positions (“Ensuring the program that millions of Americans rely on will be there for our children and grandchildren”). The issue is not simply, as Perry boosters would have us believe, that it is a Ponzi scheme. No, that part is halfway defensible (hence the focus of their commentary) since it addresses the concern that the system as currently configured will go bankrupt. No, the real issue is twofold: Are Perry’s attacks on the very idea of federal retirement benefits reasonable and will he make himself unelectable by defending them? Perry has suggested in his book that Social Security is unconstitutional (“Social Security is something that we’ve been forced to accept for more than 70 years now. ... at the expense of respect

for the Constitution and limited government”). However in the debate he said he didn’t want to discuss the theoretical issue. (But if it is unconstitutional, why wouldn’t he?) The Romney team is making several points. First, Perry has said these things frequently; it’s not a matter of backing away from a throwaway line in his book. Second, Romney is betting that even among conservatives this stuff sounds bonkers; in fact, Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.) has suggested as much. And finally, Romney is telling GOP voters that President Obama could essentially copy this sort of flyer, put it on every ad his campaign can manufacture, and make the election not about Obama’s rotten record but about Perry’s extremism. ❖

Mizell Stewart III, Evansville Courier & Press: The flurry of activity going on here makes me wonder whether those who cultivate the popular backlash against government — notably, the refrain that “government has never created a job,” have ever seen an interstate highway under construction. “You see the dust? That’s the road,” said Elliott Sturgeon of the Indiana Department of Transportation, pointing to a flurry of activity just south of U.S. 50 in Daviess County. The work is under way on a 10-mile stretch of Interstate 69 being built by for \$98.9 million by Walsh Construction of Indianapolis — the same company that built the new interchange at the Lloyd Expressway and Fulton Avenue in Evansville. If all goes according to plan, a ribbon of concrete and asphalt stretching from Evansville to Crane, Ind. will be open to traffic by the end of 2012. The current plan for traffic to be flowing from Evansville to Bloomington by 2014. Today, the I-69 right of way is strewn with scores of cranes and pieces of earth-moving equipment and hundreds of workers that include carpenters, operating engineers, ironworkers, laborers, surveyors, truck drivers and inspectors. At the height of construction next year, INDOT anticipates that some contractors will have difficulty finding enough skilled workers to handle the job. “One contractor has 15 bridges under construction right now,” said Sturgeon, who is INDOT’s operations director for the Evansville to Bloomington corridor of I-69. Some contractors are beginning to work day and night to meet their deadlines, he said. “The labor shortage will really hit next year.” True, Republican Gov. Mitch Daniels took a great deal of heat for leasing the Indiana Toll Road, a public asset, to a private operator to create his “Major Moves” financing scheme for highway construction, which built the Lloyd-Fulton interchange and is financing I-69. It also is true that without that maneuver, hundreds of workers would otherwise be sitting idle in the midst of the worst recession since the Great Depression. ❖





Bush has no regrets after 9/11

INDIANAPOLIS - A decade after the terrorist attacks that defined his presidency, George W. Bush said he doesn't regret any decisions he made after 9/11, including the war with Iraq and the use of controversial interrogation techniques that some considered torture (USA Today). Asked if he believes those polices — including the USA Patriot Act, which widened government access to Americans' communications and records — prevented another attack, he said, "Yes, I do." "Some of the tactics could have been different" in Iraq after Saddam Hussein was deposed, Bush said in an interview with USA TODAY. "Same with Afghanistan, same with the terrorist surveillance program" that eavesdropped on suspected terrorists' international communications. Still, he said, objective historians will conclude his policies "were necessary in order to protect the country." Bush said the events that led to the death of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in May began during his administration. "The work that was done by intelligence communities during my presidency was part of putting together the puzzle that enabled us to see the full picture of how bin Laden was communicating and eventually where he was hiding," he said. "It began the day after 9/11."



Bush43 makes surprise visit

CARMEL - Just two days before the 10th anniversary of the tragedy of September 11th, 2001, the Commander-in-Chief at the time of

the attacks made a surprise visit to Carmel, Indiana. Fox59 reports former President George W. Bush attended a private event held at Forest Lucas' mansion Friday. The event was hosted by the Indiana chapter of the Young Presidents Organization. President Bush met with members of the organization as well as Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels. Daniels was Bush's budget director during his first term at the White House.

Daniels orders Ohio bridge closed

NEW ALBANY - It will take engineers and transportation experts at least three weeks to determine how to respond to cracked steel beams that have closed the Sherman Minton Bridge indefinitely, Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels said Saturday (Louisville Courier-Journal). And neither Daniels nor any other Kentucky and Indiana official will even hazard a guess on how long it will be before the bridge — which carries almost 90,000 vehicles daily across the Ohio River — can reopen. The closure resulted in extremely long traffic backups on the Louisville area interstate system this morning. Daniels ordered the Minton closed at the height of Friday afternoon rush hour after cracks were found on Thursday during repair work. On Saturday, with the eerily quiet 49-year-old bridge looming behind him, he told reporters in New Albany that all options, including replacing the bridge, will be considered. "It's served really well, but the time has come to do something fundamental to it," Daniels said, joining Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear and the mayors of Louisville, New Albany and Jeffersonville. Despite the expected traffic tie ups that will surely result, closing the bridge was the "only responsible decision to make," Daniels said. He cited independent and unani-

mous opinions from four engineering experts that reviewed Thursday's findings — all recommended the span be closed. Beshear endorsed Daniels' decision and said Kentucky will work with Indiana in assessing the extent of the cracking. But he said it's premature to estimate the cost of fixing the bridge. "We're going to throw all of Kentucky's resources at this," Beshear said.

Obama to send jobs bill to Hill

WASHINGTON - A White House official says President Barack Obama will send Congress his new \$447 billion jobs bill Monday and speak in the Rose Garden to call for swift passage (Associated Press). Obama is also preparing to travel the country to build public support for the package he unveiled last week. He'll visit Ohio Tuesday and North Carolina Wednesday to ask voters to pressure lawmakers to pass the bill. The centerpiece of the plan is lower Social Security payroll taxes for individuals and businesses. There's also new spending to hire teachers and rebuild schools, among other things. Teachers, police officers, firefighters and others will join the president in the Rose Garden to call for passage, according to the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity ahead of the president's remarks.

Daniels latest gov to write book

INDIANAPOLIS - Gov. Mitch Daniels offers a pretty dim view of the politician author in the introduction to his latest book, even though many of his fellow scribes are his colleagues in statehouses across the nation (Associated Press). Daniels writes in the introduction to "Keeping the Republic" that most politicians write books to



defend their records or settle personal scores. His told C-SPAN last month that his will be different. Instead of allegories and sniping, Daniels offers prescriptions for entitlement spending and other fiscal policies. Veteran publisher Peter Osnos says the politician's tome has become "almost routine," and with good reason. He says books give politicians a chance to talk directly to a captive audience. Eleven of the nation's 50 governors have penned books. South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley's memoir comes out in January.

Delaware surveyor Kelley dies

MUNCIE - John Kelley, serving his second term as Delaware County surveyor, died Saturday, his family said (Muncie Star Press). Kelley, 61, died three days prior to his 62nd birthday. Family member Mary Vannatta said those close to Kelley believe he might have suffered a heart attack. "It's just a shock," Vannatta said. "He's a very loving, caring man and he loved his family." A Democrat, Kelley took office as surveyor in 2005. Previously, he had served as the Delaware County building commissioner from 2000-2003 and a Muncie City Council member from 1975-1980.

UAW offers to pay for satellite sites

INDIANAPOLIS - Democrats are calling Republicans' bluff in the battle over early voting in Marion County. Republicans have objected to the estimated \$53,000 cost of opening two satellite voting locations in addition to the county clerk's office, and it takes a unanimous Election Board vote to approve it (WIBC). Now the United Auto Workers are putting up \$50,000 to pay for it. Democratic Clerk Beth White says she'll ask Republican

board member P.J. Dietrick on Monday to accept. Election board chairman Mark Sullivan, a Democrat, has already joined White in pledging his support. White says she advised Dietrick of the UAW offer before announcing it publicly. She says Dietrick thanked her for the heads-up but didn't commit one way or the other. Dietrick has so far been unavailable for comment.

More Americans smoking marijuana

WASHINGTON - A new government survey says more Americans are smoking marijuana, but other notorious illegal drugs have fallen off (Associated Press). Nearly 7 percent of Americans aged 12 or older were illicit pot smokers in 2010, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, released Thursday. That is 3 million more users than earlier in the decade. At the same time, meth use has plunged by about half and cocaine use -- including crack -- is down sharply in the last few years. The annual survey by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration also found declines from 2009 in tobacco use and binge drinking among teens.

Howard County sets \$18M budget

KOKOMO - The Howard County Council left the door slightly ajar to provide county employees with a possible bonus in 2012 (Kokomo Tribune). Council members approved the budget Thursday that needed to include an across-the-board pay increase or bonus. This year full-time employees received a \$500 bonus. The council approved an \$18.2 million budget for 2012, a budget that could dip into the county's \$6 million operating balance dependent on revenues.

Goeglein writes book about Bush

FORT WAYNE - The day after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, White House aide Tim Goeglein was tasked with planning a prayer service. That service, and others President George W. Bush attended on anniversaries of the attacks "embodied the best of the Bush presidency," Goeglein, a native of Fort Wayne, writes in his new memoir billed as "an inside account of faith and politics in the George W. Bush era." "This was a reflection of a man whose faith was the center of his life and his presidency," writes Goeglein, who was Bush's point man for religious groups and conservatives. Goeglein had been one of the longest-serving Bush aides when he resigned in March 2008 after acknowledging he had plagiarized parts of guest columns he wrote for the Fort Wayne News-Sentinel. Goeglein doesn't explain why he copied parts of other people's articles in the columns, for which he wasn't paid. He says only that "it was all rooted in vanity and pride."

Owen County soldier killed

SPENCER - An Owen County family is mourning the loss of a soldier killed in Afghanistan (WTHR-TV). According to family members, Private Brett Wood was killed by a roadside bomb on Friday. Wood was just a child on September 11, 2001, but watching America under attack would shape his future. Shortly after graduating from Owen Valley High School, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. "He wanted to protect his family and his country and he really wanted to join after everything that happened with 9/11 years ago," said Wood's sister, Amber Poland. ❖