



Gingrich expects to make Indiana ballot

GOP presidential campaign will come home to Indiana

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - With Newt Gingrich's stunning come-from-behind win in South Carolina last weekend, what is sinking in with the Indiana political establishment is the same notion that occurred in early March 2008: The state will participate in a competitive presidential primary with the nomination undecided.

The Republican nomination process changed to a proportional system with 1,143 delegates needed. After the first three states, Gingrich has a 23-to-18 delegate lead over Mitt Romney, with Iowa winner Rick Santorum with 11 and Ron Paul with 6.

The critical question for Hoosier Republicans is whether the remaining field is capable of turning in the 4,500 signatures needed to qualify for the ballot. The signatures must be submitted to the 92 county clerk offices by Jan. 31 and to the Indiana Election



Just like Barack Obama turned the 2008 Democratic race into a dogfight here in Indiana, Newt Gingrich has done the same this year with his second comeback in the GOP presidential race.

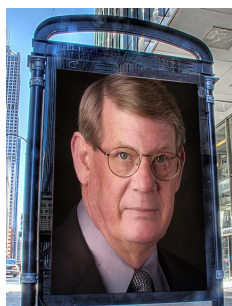
Board by noon on Feb. 10. As of Wednesday, only Romney has enough to qualify for the ballot with 5,917 turned in.

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Vultures after Sen. Rogers

By **RICH JAMES**

GARY - I remember writing a column some 25 years ago that said something to the effect that when Earline Rogers speaks, the Indiana General Assembly listens.



I said that because when Rogers spoke, her words were worth hearing. Her fellow legislators seemingly agreed, because they listened. Nothing has changed today. When Sen. Rogers, a Gary Democrat, speaks, the General Assembly takes note. And most importantly, she doesn't necessarily speak from a Democratic perspective, but rather in



“We do not accept that ours will ever be a nation of haves and have nots; we must always be a nation of haves and soon to haves.”

- Gov. Mitch Daniels, in his State of the Union rebuttal



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terms of what is good for Northwest Indiana.

Whenever some Yahoo – generally a Tea Partier – starts talking about term limits, I think of Rogers, among others. She belongs in the General Assembly. As a result of the 2010 Census and the revelation that Gary had lost 20,000 people over the last decade, the complexion of Rogers' 3rd Senate District has changed dramatically.

Rogers' district no longer is largely confined to Gary. It now reaches from Lake Michigan to the retail corridor along U.S. 30. The district includes all or parts of Gary, Hobart, Lake Station, New Chicago, Merrillville and Crown Point. Because of the makeup of the new district, the cultures are out. Gary School Board member Darren Washington and Hobart City Councilman David Vinzant are taking on Rogers in the Democratic primary. "This has to be one of the most diverse districts in the state," Vinzant said. "We need someone who can go downstate and represent all of that."

Apparently, Vinzant hasn't followed the workings of the General Assembly for the last 25 years. Rogers has been a voice for Northwest Indiana – not just for Gary – for three decades. And, I find Vinzant's statement to be racially charged.

Vinzant added that the district needs someone who can explain to fellow lawmakers that Northwest Indiana is different from the rest of the state. Northwest Indiana is different, and Rogers has bridged that gap by being able to work with downstate Republicans and Democrats. It is her common sense that has endeared her to both sides of the aisle.

Even though he didn't say it, Vinzant thinks he can win by pulling the white vote while Rogers and Washington split the black vote. And I thought Northwest Indiana had moved beyond such parochial thinking.

Hobart Mayor Brian Snedecor,

too, apparently hasn't followed Rogers' career. Snedecor said, "I don't want to bash Mrs. Rogers, but it's a new day. The issues at hand are not being addressed." Guess what, mayor? You just bashed Mrs. Rogers to curry the favor of your city council president.

Since Vinzant isn't very familiar with Rogers' performance in the General Assembly, let me spell it out for him. Her accomplishments include:

1. Authoring legislation to create the state's riverboat gambling system. And, yes, Hobart gets a cut of the tax revenue.

2. Being a leader in education reform, including legislation to create the A-Plus education reform package, implementation of ISTEP and anti-bullying legislation.

3. Playing a role in raising the age to which the death penalty can be applied in Indiana to 18 years.

4. Authoring Jojo's Law, which requires vehicles with 10 or more passengers used by public schools, preschools and day care centers to meet the same requirements as school buses.

5. Being a key player in the behind the scenes negotiations – with other legislators and Gov. Mitch Daniels – in the creation of the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority, which is one of the most innovative pieces of legislation in the last half century.

I'm not really sure what Washington is doing. Having grown up in Gary, he ought to have an appreciation for what Rogers has done and allow her to continue doing so. There was a time that Lake County protected its most effective legislators and officeholders. That was when Robert Pastrick and Stephen Stiglich were Democratic county chairs. Current Chair Thomas McDermott ought to take note. ❖

Rich James is a former editorial page editor and columnist for the Post-Tribune in Merrillville.



GOP Presidential, from page 1

Gingrich turned in 1,043. Paul had 3,456 and Santorum had submitted just 473 from the 3rd CD.

Madison City Councilman Kevin Shaw Kellems, who is serving as a consultant to the Gingrich campaign, said the former House speaker "absolutely" will be on the Indiana ballot. "We're making good progress on the signatures," said Kellems, a former aide to Vice President Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz and Sen. Dick Lugar. "We've got a number of volunteers in addition to Chris Faulkner," Kellems said of the operative from Faulkner Strategies.

"The deadline is the deadline. Sen. Coats filed on the deadline and got twice as many signatures as needed," Kellems said, noting that in the 2010 U.S. Senate race Coats did not declare until Feb. 2 and had only two weeks to come up with the signatures.

In addition to Kellems and Faulkner, key Gingrich operatives include former Jefferson County Republican Chair Mark Wynn and Kevin Boehnlein, who managed Mike Sodrel's only 9th CD victory in 2004 and the upset win of New Albany Mayor Regina Overton in 1999.

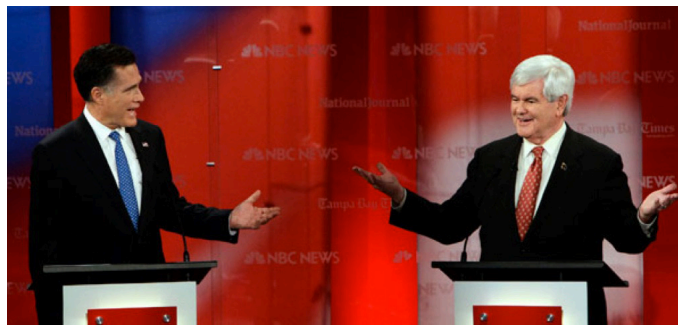
Romney is the only one of the remaining contenders to take State Chair Eric Holcomb's invitation to speak to Hoosier Republicans. Kellems said that the Gingrich campaign is considering an appearance in Indiana, but because of the South Carolina victory, the candidate's schedule is getting complicated.

The notion that Indiana would have a competitive

race in 2008 came much later than the current sequence. After Barack Obama won the Iowa caucus and Hillary Clinton won in New Hampshire, Obama compiled a 12-state winning streak before Super Tuesday in early March of that year, when Clinton won Ohio and the Texas primary (though not the caucus). Clinton would say – incorrectly – that the "Ohio River Valley will elect the next president" in the primary. Not only did Clinton win the Ohio primary, but she prevailed in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Kentucky, and clipped Obama by less than 1% in Indiana.

Gingrich predicted after his South Carolina win that the nomination process would be drawn out.

Indianapolis attorney Bob Grand is helping the Romney campaign build its Indiana organization. "The organization is essentially to the point where we've got all the petitions through the clerks' offices," Grand said. "We've done it with a majority of



volunteers."

Grand anticipates by early March the Romney campaign will shift out of the volunteer mode and bring operatives into the state. "If we're going to have a full campaign, we'll start to assemble a team. Right now, (we have) volunteers. As far as the date, I don't know. They could call me tomorrow. These guys are focused on races like Florida right now. It's probably March. I'm collecting names now so it won't be that hard. My goal would be to have a person or two in each county."

Grand, along with 7th CD Chairman John Hammond III, former state chairman Jim Kittle Jr. and former legislator Dan Dumezich – who also sits on the Indiana

2012 Florida Republican Presidential Primary

2008 Florida Primary on January 26, 2008 | 2008 GOP Florida Final RCP Average

Polling Data								
Poll	Date	Sample	MoE	Romney	Gingrich	Santorum	Paul	Spread
RCP Average	1/22 - 1/25	–	–	36.2	33.6	10.8	8.6	Romney +2.6
Rasmussen Reports	1/25 - 1/25	750 LV	4.0	39	31	12	9	Romney +8
Insider Advantage	1/25 - 1/25	530 LV	4.0	40	32	8	9	Romney +8
CNN/Time	1/22 - 1/24	369 LV	5.0	36	34	11	9	Romney +2
FL Chamber of Commerce	1/22 - 1/23	504 RV	4.4	33	33	10	6	Tie
PPP (D)	1/22 - 1/23	921 LV	3.2	33	38	13	10	Gingrich +5

[See All Florida Republican Presidential Primary Polling Data](#)



Election Commission – are the key Romney backers and fundraisers in Indiana. Romney also has been endorsed by U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita. Grand said that the Romney campaign will elevate its presence during the Super Bowl period, using surrogates. “We’re raising a fair amount of money for a state which doesn’t have a primary before May,” he said.

Paul appears to have a strong Tea Party contingent and grassroots campaign that will allow him to get on the ballot. He had the second largest total as of Wednesday, though still short of enough signatures to qualify.

As for Santorum, his key backer is State Sen. Mike Delph, who is developing legislation that would allow a candidate to qualify for the ballot if they paid a \$10,000 fee. “I believe he will collect the required signatures to make the Indiana ballot in time,” Delph said of the former Pennsylvania senator. “I know a lot of folks statewide are working hard to complete the process.”

Heading up the former senator’s Indiana signature drive is Shelley Ahlersmeyer. “We intend to be on the ballot,” she told HPI. “We do have captains in each congressional district. We’re starting to file signatures this week.”

Romney the favorite?

Going into an Indiana primary sequence, Romney appears to have the most endorsements, including State Sens. Jim Merritt and Ryan Mishler, and State Reps. Heath VanNatter, Mike Karickhoff, Ed Soliday and Tim Neese, and Howard County Chairman Craig Dunn and Vigo County Chairman Bill Treadway.

There has been no publicly released polling in Indiana on the race. The first Howey-DePauw Battleground Poll won’t be conducted until late March.

With the exception of Rokita, no one else in the Indiana congressional delegation has given an endorsement, nor has Gov. Mitch Daniels who last November said he would likely not endorse a candidate.

“An incredibly well-respected person, Gov. Christie, made an endorsement a couple of weeks ago, and it sort of sank without a trace, so I don’t know why anybody would be excited about what I thought,” Daniels explained.

Paul would expect to get much of the Tea Party vote that will turn out for Richard Mourdock in the U.S. Senate race. Evangelicals like Delph appear to be lining up behind Santorum.

As for Gingrich, the man who already has two comebacks in this campaign, came from double digits down



Mitt Romney appeared before Indiana Republicans last summer.

in South Carolina and won by 14%.

The Real Clear Politics Composite in Florida has Gingrich up by 2.6% today after a flurry of new polls were published in the past 24 hours. On Wednesday, Gingrich had a 4% Real Clear Politics lead on the composite between Jan. 19 and 23. Before then, Romney had had sizable double-digit leads before last weekend’s defeat in South Carolina.

Needless to say, the Republican nomination battle is seeing historic poll fluctuations almost on a daily basis. That was an element absent from the 2008 Democratic battle.

Hoosier Democrats had a field day in 2008 when the first truly contested campaign since 1968 came to the state, a prelude to more than 150 visits to the state by the Obamas and Clintons.

Now, it looks as if 2012 will be the GOP’s turn. Indiana is open for business.❖



Crushing fines ultimately caused Dems to fold

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - In the end, it was the crushing fines set up in the 2011 anti-bolt legislation that caused B. Patrick Bauer and House Democrats to cave on Right to Work Wednesday.

After intermittent walkouts throughout January, the issue came to a head and, ultimately, a 54-44 vote to pass HB1001, identical to the Senate version passed last week. While AFL-CIO President Nancy Guyott promised to continue the fight in the Senate, this battle is essentially over.

The chaotic session began Wednesday with Democrats insisting the doors into the hallway stay open. Fearing yet another walkout, House Speaker Brian Bosma relented, and so the emotional debate on what Democrats were calling the "most divisive issue in a generation" proceeded between chants and shouts.

"This is Right to Work ... for less," Bauer stormed. "Less pay, less health care, and yes, less safety."

"After your vote against the referendum, your vote is shallow and hollow," Bauer said of a ploy that would have placed the issue on the November ballot, though there were constitutional issues involved with that. Republicans were having none of it. It was a capstone legislative defeat for a 42-year veteran who has presided over his party's fall from a majority to a devastating 60-40 minority after he waged one of the most tawdry campaigns in modern Indiana history, attempting to defend caucus members in 2010. In the process, Bauer helped lose the Democratic Party's Southern Indiana base.

The more Democrats walked, the more fuel and fodder the House Republican Campaign Committee collected for fall ads in an attempt to gain a super 67 seat majority. For Speaker Bosma, it was a win/win. He passed his top priority, and he will have his caucus campaign against Democrats who bolted.

The Democratic caucus - where Gov. Mitch Daniels marveled at Bauer's iron-fisted control - heaved and groaned under the weight of fines that would have totaled \$10,000 per member if the boycotts had lasted through the Jan. 31 session day, when the legislature pauses for the Super Bowl. The theory was that Democrats would try and parlay their stand for labor with a worldwide audience, perhaps eclipsing the attention their colleagues received last winter in Wisconsin in that fight over collective bargaining.

Caucus Chair Dale Grubb quit that job as caucus

unity was challenged over fines. There are some members facing tough challenges this upcoming fall - Reps. Ed DeLaney and Peggy Welch - who broke ranks and returned to the chamber while 35 of their colleagues sat out.

It was a perplexing dance with only one man - Bauer - knowing what the end game was. Asked if anyone was privy to the South Bend Democrat's thought process and ultimate game plan, Democratic Chair Dan Parker could only smile and shake his head. No one else knew.

Weakened Democrats lamented the body blow organized labor would take with the looming Right to Work law. "This bill has been for all of us the most divisive," said State Rep. Gail Riecken, D-Evansville. "The thing that really got me was how it was handled. The procedures were thrown out."

But it was the newest member of the caucus, ponytailed Rep. Mike White of Muncie, who revealed the angst. "I'm the rookie here," he said. "I'm also fresh off the streets. What the people on the streets tell me is they want us to get to work on a whole lot of other things."

Indeed, as Democrats obsessed about derailing Right to Work and Republicans prepared to use the full weight of their daunting majorities, a litany of other important legislation ranging from mass transit to a statewide smoking ban, to local government reform were beginning to fall by the wayside.

And Republicans chided the minority that Right to Work would not be the end of the world. "The sky will not fall the day after right to work passes. It just will not," said Rep. Sue Ellspermann. "Right to Work is clearly a job creation strategy as companies seek to locate to those states."

During what would be a 54-44 vote with five Republicans joining the minority, the Democrats called for a voice roll call and the session ended in shouting.

"The only places where today's events will be cheered is in the boardrooms of big businesses and corporations across this state," Bauer - the face of the Indiana Democratic Party - fumed afterwards. "For those who threw their weight behind this plan, and were willing to trample on a lengthy list of constitutional rights in order to do so, there is only one thing to say: Shame on you."

And in dozens of downtown restaurants and bars Wednesday evening, Republicans and business advocates were toasting a seismic victory in a northern state, clinking flutes and goblets of shame, red and white, sparkling and dry.

Had Bauer kept caucus losses to 55 seats, instead of 60, Right to Work probably wouldn't have happened. Why he is still in power should be a question every Hoosier Democrat ponders. John Gregg, phone home. ❖





Nothing will surprise me

By **RUSS STILWELL**

BOONVILLE - The House Republican leadership team has made the 2012 session of the General Assembly a historical lesson on how to pass a divisive and contentious bill by using the most excruciating procedural sequences ever envisioned. This grueling process lacked clarity, rules, direction or any semblance of a seamless process. It never should have happened this way.

I'm sure they're not particularly fond of the hundreds of protesting Hoosiers every day. No doubt they're not very pleased with the minority using every rule in the book, and those that are not included, in their mission to stop the Right to Work bill.



No doubt, the House Rs had the votes to pass RTW from the very first day of the session. There was no doubt that House Ds would oppose this every step of the way, including the occasional withholding of their presence.

Even a casual observer of the legislative process could have outlined a far more efficient and practical legislative pathway to pass RTW than the non-medicated tooth-extraction course of action the House Rs invented.

Given the ill-advised pathway to pass RTW, what did they expect? They knew that labor would make this a most painful process. They had to know that the House Ds would be fightin' and screamin' every painful step of the way. And what did they do? They made it easy for the opposition to cry "foul play" and for House Ds to march off to caucus. Let's reexamine.

No 1: Whoever concocted the that ill-advised Statehouse policy of limiting the number of folks allowed in the building, under the guise of public safety and fire codes, must have been not only politically challenged, but did not expect the immediate public outcry. The opposition to this ill-fated policy was strong and the move vigorously opposed by every major news outlet in the state. Only after a public outcry was the admission to the Capitol policy rescinded. The legislative Republican leadership was silent on the issue until public outcry, and this was just what the House Ds and the labor community needed to fire up the troops. Never should have happened!

No. 2: In my 14 years in the legislature, I had never seen a joint House/Senate committee hearing on one issue, let alone one that would be the most contentious in a half-century. If the House Rs had just scheduled their Labor Committee (actually, the name changes every time

the House majority changes - Labor Committee for Ds and Employment Committee for Rs) to have a hearing in the House Chamber, endured the hours of testimony and kept the process open, then the Ds would have had only one choice: participate, offer amendments and vote. But no, in a rush to pass the contentious bill they just had to do the unthinkable: Infuriate the Ds, give credibility to labor who shouted "unfair," and belabor the painful process they set in motion when they attempted to deny entrance to the Statehouse.

No. 3: What about the House Labor Committee hearing? When the Speaker of the House suggests it wasn't "democracy's finest moment," you can bet labor and the House Ds would have a swift reaction. What were they thinking? All they had to do was do what they should have done in the first place. Just endure the pain of another lengthy hearing, let everyone have their say, and pass the bill with the predicted party line positions. In their rush to send this fateful bill to the floor, they provided more gunpowder to a flotilla of opposition that was already getting ready to explode. What were they thinking?

No. 4: Once the House Ds returned for a painful afternoon of amendments to the RTW bill, only a fraction of the amendments were offered in the first four hours. You think they thought this wasn't going to be an all-day ass-kickin' exercise of amendments, roll call votes, statesmanship and showmanship? After that long six-second period of silence when Speaker Bosma called for "any more amendments," he gaveled the dreadful RTW initiative to engrossment.

What? After waiting for an eternity for the Ds to come to the floor and only a couple of hours short of victory, why would he not allow additional amendments when challenged at about the precise time he gaveled the bill closed? He certainly had the right to engross, but political common sense dictated a far more exhaustive call for amendments, given the rancor of this particular legislative exercise. The House D reaction? A political novice could have predicted that outcome.

As I write this column on Wednesday morning, I make the painful assumption that the House will convene, muster a quorum, pass RTW and claim victory. The war may be over, but the battle will surely continue when the Senate again takes up this fateful bill. Let's hope they don't make the same mistakes the House did.

I suggest they have a full and open public committee hearing. I would hope that they would endure the opposition with their myriad of amendments. And I would hope that they process this House bill just like they always do - during the second half of the session, just like they have for decades. However, after reviewing the previous actions in their zealous attempt to pass RTW in a record-breaking pace, nothing will surprise me. ❖



Dems sense economic change as Obama defends U.S. auto revival

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Internal polling for the Joe Donnelly Senate campaign shows President Obama leading Mitt Romney in Indiana by 4%.

This is the message that Indiana Democratic Chair Dan Parker told a group of mayors at a Winston-Terrell Group forum on Wednesday morning.



Nationally, Americans are growing more optimistic about the state of the economy and direction of the country, according to a new NBC News-

Wall Street Journal poll out Wednesday evening. Obama is receiving better grades on his handling of the economy and job as president. More people said they believe the economy will get better (37 percent) in the next year rather than worse (17 percent). That's the highest level in more than a year and a seven-point jump over last month. It also represents a reversal from October, when 32 percent of Americans said they expected the economy to get worse, versus 21 percent who expected improvement.

"The calendar says it's the dead of winter, but for President Obama, these results must feel like the start of spring," said Democratic pollster Peter D. Hart, who conducted this survey with Republican pollster Bill McInturff.

The number of people who said the country is headed in the right direction, 30 percent, remains far lower than the 61 percent of U.S. adults who think it is on the wrong track.

But the figures represent a change in trajectory; the number of Americans who said the country is on the right track is up eight points from last month, and 13 points from October.

And for the first time in six months, more people approve of the job the president is doing (48 percent) than

disapprove (46 percent).

"The psychology about the economic conditions has switched," Hart told NBC News. "The old saying is 'a rising tide lifts all boats' - then clearly - this economic optimism has clearly lifted Obama's ratings."

But Congress sees no boost from any emerging sense of optimism. Instead, its 13 percent approval rating remains near historic lows, while 80 percent disapprove of the way lawmakers are doing their job. That's the same as it was the last time the question was asked in August.

Conventional wisdom is that Indiana is almost certain to return to the red column in 2012 after backing Obama in 2012. But from the first days of the Obama presidency, he took an interest in Indiana, appearing in Elkhart on his first major trip out of Washington. He's been to Wakarusa to push hybrid cars.

The perplexing thing about Obama and the Indiana Democrats is that they did not raise a general defense for the party's role in saving the auto industry. The irony, is that just weeks after the 2010 election in which Indiana Democrats were drubbed, losing two Congressional seats and the party's Southern flank in the legislature, President Obama and Vice President Biden showed up in Kokomo at the Chrysler Transmission Plant II. "Today we know that was the right decision," Obama told a small crowd at the plant, the same location that Rep. Donnelly was told a month before by workers there that they would vote Republican. "This plant is now running at full capacity and that is why I am here today. We're coming back; we're on the move. We decided to make a stand. We made the deci-

sion because we had confidence in the American worker," Obama said.

It came after Republicans, led by Treasurer Richard Mourdock who tried to stop the Chrysler-Fiat merger, have campaigned against the "auto bailout," even though it was President George W. Bush who used TARP funds to prop up GM and Chrysler in the final months of his presidency.

Obama picked up on that Kokomo defense Tuesday night, addressing what could be a key Democratic theme up and down the Indiana ticket this year. In laying out his "blueprint for the economy, Obama talked about automakers.

"On the day I took office, our auto industry was on the verge of collapse," Obama said. "Some even said we should let it die. With a million jobs at stake, I refused to let that happen. In exchange for help, we demanded responsibility. We got workers and automakers to settle



President Obama greets U.S. Rep. Joe Donnelly after Tuesday's State of the Union Address.



their differences. We got the industry to retool and restructure. Today, General Motors is back on top as the world's number-one automaker. Chrysler has grown faster in the U.S. than any major car company. Ford is investing billions in U.S. plants and factories. And together, the entire industry added nearly 160,000 jobs."

Obama continued, "We bet on American workers. We bet on American ingenuity. And tonight, the American auto industry is back."

Expect Donnelly and Democratic gubernatorial candidate John Gregg to use the auto revival as key parts of their campaigns. Don't be surprised to see Obama back in Kokomo before the November election to make the same case.

U.S. Senate: Awaiting Mourdock numbers

As a prelude to what looks to be yet another dismal FEC report, Treasurer Richard Mourdock's campaign (or a surrogate group) has inducted a push poll. The speculation is that Mourdock will drop the poll numbers, and then the FEC numbers just as the Super Bowl hoopla takes over the state. The good news for Mourdock is that the Club for Growth is still weighing the campaign. "We're looking at the race," Barney Keller, communications director for Club for Growth, told the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette.

The fundraising event for Sen. Dick Lugar that featured Gov. Mitch Daniels last week raised \$70,000. And Lugar picked up the endorsement of Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard. "President Reagan said, 'Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they have made a difference in the world, but the Marines don't have that problem,'" Ballard said. "Everyone knows I'm a Marine. But we have with us tonight a Navy man who doesn't have to wonder if he's made a difference in the world. He is making an incredible difference. That man is Dick Lugar." Ballard said Lugar's leadership and vision on the local, state and national level have always been "decades ahead of its time."

The Lugar campaign charged that Mourdock continues to mislead voters on Lugar's longtime opposition to Obamacare, Lugar campaign officials charged. David W. Willkie, political director for Friends of Dick Lugar, demanded "Murdock retract a misleading survey his campaign recently submitted to the Tea Party of Hamilton County." In the questionnaire, Mourdock inaccurately claims he is "the only candidate for U.S. Senate in Indiana who will support the lawsuit that Indiana and dozens of other states have filed to strike down Obamacare." Willkie again pointed to Lugar's longtime opposition to Obamacare: Dick Lugar announced his early opposition to Obamacare in July of 2009, five months before its passage.

The Mourdock campaign is targeting a letter to the editor campaign to dozens of Indiana newspapers carrying HPI Publisher Brian A. Howey's opinion column. Suzy

Barnhart of the Mourdock Senate campaign recently sent this email to supporters: As I have watched the Lugar campaign and listened to comments they have made, I have noticed one particular issue, Richard's attendance at board meetings as State Treasurer, repeated over and over. Brian Howey, the independent reporter who has repeatedly written negative articles about Richard, posted an article about this issue, and it appeared in several newspapers. Below is one link: http://tribstar.com/opinion_columns/x2146225823/BRIAN-HOWEY-House-Dems-Murdock-and-showing-up-for-work. Now, Jim Holden, Richard Mourdock's campaign manager, has written the truth about this "fact-twisting" that Howey has been doing since Richard entered the race. Please read these two articles and write a short letter to the editor of your local paper, or one of the main newspapers in your area about this unethical reporting. We can't let him continue to "make up" damaging information about our candidate. Make sure you mention the positives about Richard's work as State Treasurer. Brian Howey is the same writer who misreported that Richard lost a huge amount of money out of a state fund. The "problem" with the column was that Richard had nothing to do with the fund that Howey cited. You can also forward this information if you have found someone in your county that you trust will write a good paragraph. Please let me know you have received this email, and if you, or someone you know, will write about it. Let's STAND FOR THE TRUTH with Richard!

Murdock's Campaign Manager Jim Holden wrote, "Brian Howey's recent column about the U.S. Senate races proves once again that he will not allow the facts or journalistic ethics to get in the way of attacking Richard Mourdock and promoting his chosen candidate, Dick Lugar. Now Mourdock is challenging Howey's hero Dick Lugar in the 2012 Republican primary, and Brian Howey doesn't like it. In his latest article, Howey twists the facts and uses utter falsehoods to slander Mourdock's record as State Treasurer by claiming that he is missing various meetings of state boards of which he is a member. What Howey fails to mention is that over 99% of the hundreds of state board meetings he mentions were attended by Treasurer Mourdock or a member of his senior staff as provided by state law."

Howey responded: Jim Holden is talking about an "opinion column" that runs on newspaper editorial pages. I have repeatedly asked Treasurer Mourdock's office and campaign for an interview with the candidate, which would allow him to explain his official functions as well as the way he is running his 11th campaign since 1988, and he has repeatedly refused.

2nd CD: District in play

Brendan Mullen is running for Congress in Indiana, but the National Republican Congressional Committee



(NRCC) is running an ad against him saying he owns three homes in Washington, D.C. "Three houses owned by him and his family. Thousands in contributions from D.C. insiders just like him." (NRCC website.) Mullen's Washington-based candidacy is highlighted in a new online ad paid for by the NRCC that is appearing on local websites. "With multiple homes in D.C. and none in Indiana, Washington insider Brendan Mullen is already swimming in the swamp with his big-spending Democrat friends. Indiana voters have gotta wonder: If Mullen's elected, will they ever see him again?" said NRCC spokeswoman Andrea Bozek. Jackie Walorski, Republican hopeful for Indiana's 2nd District seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, is keeping busy (Vandenack, Elkhart Truth). "It's 16 to 18 hours a day for us," the conservative former state lawmaker said. The time's been spent raising money to finance her bid and "raising up the ground troops," she said.

3rd CD: Stutzman files, no opponent yet

U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman, R-3rd, has filed for a second term. John Forrest Roberson, 62, and Tommy A. Schrader, 49, both residents of Fort Wayne, filed this week as candidates in the Democratic primary (Francisco, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Schrader won a City Council at-large nomination last May. He was later removed from the general-election ballot by the Allen County Election Board after acknowledging he was registered to vote in Green Bay, Wis., and had voted in a municipal primary election there. Schrader said Wednesday he is running for Congress to get back at the Allen County Democratic Party for seeking his removal from the ballot. "They need to be taught a lesson," he said. "People voted for me. I won the primary. They ran me through the sewer." Schrader, who finished third out of five candidates for three at-large nominations, said he opposes abortion rights and is "more of a conservative."

8th CD: Crooks makes DCCC cut

Dave Crooks could be in line for financial help from national Democrats in his bid for the 8th District U.S. House seat held by freshman Republican Rep. Larry Bucshon (Evansville Courier & Press). The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee placed him on its list of "Emerging Races." It's their second-tier list of races to watch - the ones that land just outside their "Red to Blue" program. "This is a great step for our campaign. It shows that our momentum is growing, and that we're becoming increasingly competitive and have the grassroots support necessary to win in November," Crooks said.

9th CD: Young kicks off campaign

U.S. Rep. Todd Young plans to file for reelection

this morning at the Indiana Statehouse before commencing a two-day tour of the 13 counties that makeup the newly drawn 9th.

SD37: Bray, McCarty to run

Former Martinsville City Attorney Rod Bray announced he is seeking the Republican nomination for the Senate District 37 seat currently held by his father, Sen. Richard Bray. Senator Bray announced Tuesday he will retire when his current term expires this November (Howey Politics Indiana). "My family has a long tradition of public service. My grandfather served in the US Army during World War II and in the US Congress and my father has served in the Indiana House of Representatives and the Indiana Senate," Bray said. "Public service is something I feel very passionate about and I feel it's my time to contribute and give back to the great state I call home." Bray, an attorney in private practice with significant experience in municipal law, said the key issues he is focused on are jobs, the economy and education. Johnson County Councilman Josh McCarty is likely going to run for SD 37. He is the owner of McCarty Mulch & Stone with offices in both Johnson and Morgan County. McCarty runs a large family farm in Johnson and Morgan county as well.

Indiana House: 5 GOP primaries

House Labor Committee Chairman Douglas Gutwein will be challenged in HD16 by Diana Boersma. Boersma, a lifelong Republican with an MBA, has grown fed up with the Republican attack on the middle class. "Growing up, I always believed in what Republicans stood for, but over the years, something about the party changed," Boersma said. "Today, our leaders are blaming Indiana's problems on the middle class workers who built this country, and we have got to stick together to protect regular, working class people from these political attacks." Richard W. "Rich" Ludington has filed in HD16 as a Democrat. In HD53, State Rep. Bob Cherry will face a challenge from Sam Weist. And in HD83, State Rep. Kathy Heuer will face Keith R. Potter. IN HD 48, Jerry Brewton is challenging State Rep. Tim Neese. In HD38, Rep. Heath VanNatter will be challenged by Steve Wilson, a teacher in the Northwestern Howard school system. Lunchpail Republican PAC spokesman Ed Maher says three more people are in the process of filing papers to run. Their hunt is still on for someone to challenge the House speaker. "Right now, we don't have anybody identified in that district," Mr. Maher says. "You can bet we're going to try." In HD37, Indiana Township Association executive director Debbie Driskell has filed. In HD55, Sam Harvey of Connerville has filed for the GOP primary. He is a 24-year veteran of the Indiana National Guard and a former Fayette County GOP Chairman. ❖



Fallen home values and the middle class

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - I live in one of those "cutesy houses in Broad Ripple," as once described by then Senate Finance Chairman Larry Borst back in 2002. In fact, this publication is produced from a home office across the street from Broad Ripple Park.

Lured by a historically 3.3% interest rate, the decision was to refinance. And this led us to the rude awakening facing hundreds of thousands of American families. Our home is worth \$30,000 less now than it was purchased in late 2005. And that's after an estimated \$40,000 invested into home improvements, such as a paved driveway, new windows and a new air conditioning unit.



This is a devastating development for middle class families like mine. Part of my retirement strategy was to invest in the home, and have it paid off by retirement. And to have it appreciate in value. That was the trend for the past 70 years, part of the American dream.

Yes, the constitutional property tax caps are good to homeowners. But they represent a hollow victory when the value of the home drops off a cliff.

Who's to blame? President George W. Bush? Chairman Barney Frank? Sen. Chris Dodd? Fannie & Freddie?

Probably all the above. There was a systemic breakdown.

Thus, with approval of Congress hovering around 9%, a key reason why is what has happened to middle class families and home values. The American dream is hollowing out. Once secure middle class families are feeling the noose tighten around them: higher gas and food prices, higher health insurance, lower or static personal income, skyrocketing college tuition costs with mystery, mandatory student fees being tacked on the bill, and big hits to 401Ks.

Then there are the banks and the appraisal system that seems rigged in their favor. I was at a gathering the other night and the declining housing values became the topic of discussion among friends. All of us discovered this rude reality during a refinance process. Here's what was really revealing: almost all of the appraisals on our homes had come in just above the payoff on the existing loans. Is this a coincidence?

District Attorney Joe Hogsett says he is targeting

white collar crime. Could there be new collusion in the appraisal network?

Almost a decade ago here in Indianapolis, an FBI and IRS investigation uncovered an \$8 million mortgage fraud conspiracy. Back in those days, it was reverse: properties were being appraised for two or three times their value.

President Obama broached this topic during his State of the Union address Tuesday night. "There's never been a better time to build, especially since the construction industry was one of the hardest hit when the housing bubble burst," Obama said. "Of course, construction workers weren't the only ones hurt. So were millions of innocent Americans who've seen their home values decline. And while government can't fix the problem on its own, responsible homeowners shouldn't have to sit and wait for the housing market to hit bottom to get some relief."

The President is sending Congress a plan that gives every responsible homeowner the chance to save about \$3,000 a year on their mortgage by refinancing at historically low interest rates.

"No more red tape," he said. "No more runaround from the banks. A small fee on the largest financial institutions will ensure that it won't add to the deficit, and will give banks that were rescued by taxpayers a chance to repay a deficit of trust. Let's never forget: Millions of Americans who work hard and play by the rules every day deserve a government and a financial system that do the same. It's time to apply the same rules from top to bottom: No bailouts, no handouts, and no cop-outs. An America



built to last insists on responsibility from everybody."

And Obama said, "We've all paid the price for lenders who sold mortgages to people who couldn't afford them, and buyers who knew they couldn't afford them. That's why we need smart regulations to prevent irresponsible behavior." Irresponsible behavior, eh?

Seems like we've seen an array of that, these days. The taxpayers bailout the banks. We watch our home values decline. It becomes hard to get a loan. The banks raise the bar on lending. And to Members of Congress, here's a fair warning: I'm really, really mad as hell. ❖



Daniels' response heavy on foresight, blind to hindsight

By **DAVE KITCHELL**

LOGANSPOURT - Daniels' response heavy on foresight, blind to hindsight

Perhaps it was his finest hour - or half hour - as either an elected or appointed official.



Those few minutes late Tuesday night when Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels gave the Republican response to President Obama's third State of the Union address acknowledged shortcomings the GOP has in its agenda, and it played to his strength as the closest thing to a CPA fiscal persona his party has.

Daniels had to have grabbed the attention of some party faithful when he said Republicans have to stop giving

tax incentives to the rich that they don't need and that don't serve any purpose that creates jobs. That wasn't the politically correct thing to say if you're a Republican, but it showed the budgetary candor Daniels is known for having. Had Daniels continued that theme throughout his response, he might have taken the national Republican Party in an entirely new direction that it may eventually go.

Daniels began his response by crediting the president and his wife for serving as strong role models for the country. He also made it clear, unlike Republican presidential candidates and party leaders, that the president isn't to blame for problems created when the national economy tanked in the fall of 2008. Yet he said Obama could not acknowledge that the economy is worse today than it was three years ago when he took office.

There was no mention of General Motors regaining its position last week as the world's No. 1 automaker or of Chrysler getting off the mat and emerging stronger than it has been in years – both stories that have helped his own state rebound from recession. There was no mention of a world without Osama bin Laden and Moammar Gadhafi. There was no mention of a health care reform package that will cover more Americans, nor his own acknowledgment than an attempt to reform Medicaid in his own state was an embarrassing failure not only for his administration, but IBM. So much for a private sector solution to running government like a business.

Daniels may have struck a chord with many

Americans when he warned that if the United States fails to repair its safety net of Medicare and Social Security, it could find itself in the same position several of Europe's nations have – bankrupt.

But if Daniels was successful in conveying his foresight and passion for the nation's domestic picture, he completely avoided any mention of accountability – the kind that made Bernie Madoff the poster boy for a national collapse that included a mortgage crisis. He pointed to a high unemployment rate for Americans under 30, but he made no mention of the skyrocketing unemployment rate that escalated in the final months of his former employer, President George W. Bush.

Daniels criticized Obama for "castigating" Americans, without directly saying Obama was inciting class warfare, as in the "99 percent" and "Occupy Wall Street" crowds. But his own castigation of the Senate majority and Obama for entitlement spending is a speech that could have been given in 1952, 1962, 1972, 1982, 1992 and 2002 – and in all likelihood will be given again by someone in 2022. The national debt, much as the Bible says in reference to the poor, will always be with us.

Perhaps the great irony of his response is that in complimenting Obama as a role model, he couldn't point to a state or a presidential candidate with a clear model, policy or philosophy that challenges the president, reduces the national debt and raises employment. "Passionate pro-growth" policies sounded much like what Americans have heard before, but what are they?

Through it all, Daniels sounded like a dutch uncle giving advice to Republican presidential candidates and recommending what they should be talking about on the campaign trail. To that extent, his response was closer to what they should be saying than what they will be as they head to the Florida primary and journey west.

He spoke of a nation that potentially could be carried over a "Niagara of debt" because of its spending, but on the points that mattered, Obama was more convincing that the nation is doing anything but climbing inside a barrel and doing the shuffalo to the falls near Buffalo, N.Y. ❖

Kitchell is an award-winning columnist from Logansport.



The Grinch who stole South Carolina

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE - Watching Newt Gingrich give his rambling victory statement Saturday night after his huge victory in South Carolina made me wish Republicans could find a less risky candidate such as one who headed the Worldwide Wrestling Federation or was once a witch.

After New Hampshire both the good Newt Grinch and bad Newt Grinch appeared in just a few days. His performance in the first debate was masterful, on multiple topics: entertaining, full of good ideas and holding the

other candidates accountable. In the second debate he was awful, finishing third at best but played to the crowd with a feigned outrage about the first question being about his rather unique marital history. By bashing the media, he fed red meat to the conservatives that further built upon his sudden re-emergence from the ashes, yet again.



I believe the official number of prime-time television debates is up to 214. Pretty much every topic has been covered, though it

is very helpful to have only four participants for back and forth purposes. After surging ahead, Newt's second wife is suddenly on national television repeating a number of allegations. His daughters from his first marriage, not especially big fans of the lady who had an affair resulting in the abandonment of their mom, got some revenge. Nothing really new came out, in fact less, than was in an Esquire magazine article years ago but few people saw that article.

The television preview was everywhere.

It really bothers me that people are so easily manipulated. With ABC already being challenged as to why they had been sitting on the interview, how could the first question NOT be about the accusations? But Newt is anything but a dummy. He had that answer all rehearsed, designed to bait and switch, knowing that conservatives hate the media more than, well, multiple "open marriages."

Santorum wiped the floor with Gingrich during the actual second debate, and Romney did better as well. Santorum prophetically has warned Republicans that if Newt is our candidate all Republicans will wake up every morning wondering if today is the day Newt will implode himself and the Party. Newt even called his own ideas "grandiose." That was no Freudian slip; it was a Freudian wipe out.

Perhaps, just maybe, a tad – just a smidgen – of

humility would have been in order for Newt when asked the first question. He could have said: "I've made some serious mistakes for which I'm very sorry. I have asked and continue to ask for forgiveness for my sins, from my family and from God. I am thankful God is full of grace. But John, I really don't think it is proper to"

Instead, he acted as if he was the wronged person. He lectured CNN's John King as if the moderator had sinned against God as well as against all of American history. Newt Grinch blew his biggest chance to show some remorse on a national stage, and instead turned into "angry, hectoring, lecturing" bad Newt.

Here are a few other points:

1. The public is going to learn a lot about Sheldon Adelson over the next week. Details will emerge about the man who gave \$5 million to rescue Newt Gingrich which funded the Bain Capital attack that boosted Newt from behind to ahead.

2. Romney's tax returns will be interesting fodder for demagogues. It is so ironic that his dad, George Romney, was the pioneer in releasing all his returns as a candidate.

3. Romney has indicated that he will demand further info about Newt's ethics condemnation. Neither the tax or the ethics focus is likely to improve either's image.

4. Few delegates have been decided but Florida's diversity and size will be a better indicator than the other primaries. Looking ahead, Romney has the heavily Mormon Nevada and the M&Ms – Michigan, Massachusetts and Maine - coming soon. Plus Gingrich and Santorum are straining to get on ballots. Romney has the ability to survive another loss, which at this point is conceivable if not likely in Florida.

5. Ron Paul said the other three candidates were not much different than President Obama. He is setting up a third party run, possibly a convention walkout by his people like the 1948 Democrat Convention because the Party rejects his platform. Of course the party will reject his views because his anti-war statements, for example, are so far left that ironically as a third party candidate he could attract so many liberals that either the President would have to move left or Paul could attract more Democrats than Republicans.

6. Santorum has now pulled more votes on primary day than the final polls predicted three straight times. On a shoestring budget he has gained among those undecided and is the only one to do it three straight times. Debates have partially evened up the money game. Another strong Santorum debate or two won't give him a victory in Florida but he could strengthen his position as we head to the states with more delegates.

7. There is not going to be a convention candidate, unvetted and who hid out during the primary season.



One could emerge in March, and join as another possible choice. Watch for the "suspended but not withdrawn" Gov. Perry who could run as a favorite son in the Texas primary in order to be a broker.

The wild ride continues. ❖

Souder is a former Republican member of Congress from Indiana.

Don't blame me, the media made me do it

By MORTON J. MARCUS

INDIANAPOLIS - "It's simple," Harry the Hipster tells me. "You guys, and most economists are guys, make this stuff so complicated, so much of this is connected to that, with this exception and that caution, like maybe nobody can understand. You get my drift?"

Harry is no youth, but still a youthful oldster. His Ducktail haircut, all black thanks to Just-for-Men, frames his wrinkles, giving testimony to years of smoking and sun-bathing.



"Now you take, for example, those monthly labor force figures. You got November of '11 as your latest for the states, so we'll take them. Now I'm going to compare them with November of '07. You know why?" he asks.

"Because that was when things were still going well," I answer.

"Bingo, Buster," he claps me on the shoulder. "So back then we had 209,000 more Hoosiers employed than we have today. And what has hap-

pened to those people?"

"Tell me," I challenge.

"We don't know," he grins maliciously. "We don't know if the 2.9 million Hoosiers holding jobs now were among the 3.1 million with jobs in '07. It's likely many were, but we don't know. We don't have any reports where we track who was doing what back when and what they are doing now. All we have are numbers from now and from then."

"**And you are contesting** these numbers?" I ask with defiance.

"No way, José," he says. "I'll take the numbers. I just want to bring out what you guys don't when you talk about them. 'Cause you go on and say that 64 percent or 133,000 became unemployed with the balance (76,000) just disappearing."

"That's a lie," I insist with more vigor than neces-

sary. "We report that 76,000 left the labor force."

"Wrong!" Harry says. "What you have is a number for November 2011 that is 76,000 fewer than you saw in the same month four years earlier. You don't know if 200,000 left the labor force while 124,000 entered. All you have is a net figure, a difference between two unknown numbers.

"You guys tell stories without actual facts to back them up. And it's not just that the public believes you, it's that you believe your own stories."

"So what would be your way of telling the story?" I ask.

"**Don't tell no story,**" he responds with a double negative that sets my teeth on edge. "Just tell the facts: Indiana was one of 23 states that saw a decline in its labor force and the number of persons employed between November 2007 and 2011. Only seven states had a rise in both their labor force and persons employed states as different as Texas and Vermont. Another 20 states (plus the District of Columbia) experienced rising labor force numbers despite a fall in the numbers employed."

"Yes," I cry in frustration, "but people want to know why."

"Do you know why?" Harry asks.

"No, but I can make an educated guess," I reply.

"Yeah," he smiles that evil smile. "Your guess is workers retire, die or move. You imagine that workers leave some place to go somewhere else for better opportunities. You fall back on immigration when you become desperate for an explanation. But you have no direct evidence."

"Well, be that as it may," I say, "but it's the media that makes us do it. All those reporters asking economists for answers, inviting speculation. We try to provide reasons for what we see based on what we understand. It's the best anyone can do." ❖

Marcus is an independent economist.



Not so fast on 'Jackie's District'

By **JACK COLWELL**

SOUTH BEND - Indiana's 2nd Congressional District, viewed after Republican-controlled redistricting as already "Jackie's District," could instead be a political battleground once again.



Jackie Walorski, the Republican who lost a close race in 2010, still appears likely to win in a district now with more Republican areas redistricted in and a key Democratic part of LaPorte County drawn out.

But Brendan Mullen, the presumptive Democratic nominee who drew attention by raising more campaign funding than Walorski in the third quarter of 2011, now is one of 18 Democratic candidates in the nation targeted for support in a Democratic Congressional Campaign

Committee program.

The National Republican Congressional Committee has targeted Walorski for key program support in the past and is likely to respond to any DCCC effort to win the district.

This is good news for TV station managers; bad news for TV viewers who are annoyed by a blitz of 30-second political ads.

At the time of the last noncompetitive congressional race in the district, when Congressman Joe Donnelly faced only token Republican opposition in 2008, a station manager quipped that the resulting lack of political advertising might force him to hold a bake sale in the parking lot.

The district was back in the national spotlight in the battle for control of Congress in 2010, with millions of dollars pouring in for TV buys by the candidates, party committees and outside interest groups as Donnelly defeated Walorski in a close race.

When redistricting took out Democratic areas of LaPorte County and added solid Republican strength in Elkhart and Kosciusko Counties, it looked as though it could be back to bake sales to raise revenue for TV stations counting in their budgeting on congressional candidate ads.

Mullen, a 34-year-old West Point graduate and Iraq veteran who is a South Bend native, decided, however, to make the "hopeless" race, convinced there was hope, particularly with voter disdain for the Republican-controlled House. And he could gladden the hearts of the TV execs, making it a real race, even if ultimately he doesn't win.

Mullen of course thinks he can win. He cites his selection as one of the 18 candidates in the DCCC "Red to Blue" program as proof that the party's congressional experts also think he can capture the seat.

Well, neither DCCC nor NRCC will allocate precious resources to a candidate just because they like the person. Decisions are made pragmatically, with not a cent going to someone regarded as having little or no chance to win. Mullen says getting acknowledged on the "Red to Blue" list was a goal involving reaching various plateaus along the way - in organizing and developing a message as well as in fund-raising.

The program's name refers to turning states or districts that would be colored red, as the news media do to designate Republican areas, to instead be colored blue, the color used to show Democratic victories.

The DCCC says the program "highlights top Democratic campaigns across the country and offers them financial, communications, grassroots and strategic support."

Congressman Steve Israel of New York, DCCC chairman, said in unveiling the list that he is confident of Democratic gains in the House, where Republicans hold a 25-seat edge, but he stopped short of predicting that Democrats yet are in position to win control.

A majority of Democratic candidates on the list are running against Republican freshmen, including Tea Party types about whom voters could have "buyer's remorse." Mullen is the only Indiana House candidate on the list.

Meanwhile, the Cook Political Report, which last fall changed its evaluation of the 2nd District from "likely Republican" to "leans Republican," still leaves it leaning, a sign that it still could be "Jackie's District" but not so solidly so.

While Mullen gained attention by raising more funds in the 2011 third quarter - \$152,563 to Walorski's 131,133 - she still was ahead by \$187,000 in cash on hand due to a head start from her 2010 race.

Campaign finance reports for all of 2011 are due Jan. 31. What happened in the fourth quarter will be interesting, but certainly not decisive, except perhaps in enabling TV station managers to conclude happily that no bake sales will be needed. ❖

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



Charlie Cook, National Journal: The ABC News/ Washington Post and CNN/Opinion Research national polls released this week that show Congress's job-approval rating dropping to record low levels are barely creating a ripple - because the news is not new. With the exception of the immediate aftermath of extraordinary events like 9/11, the public routinely holds Congress in, as they say, "minimum high regard." But now, the new norm is record lows. Both polls showed that upwards of eight of 10 Democrats, Republicans, and independents alike disapprove of the institution - an instance of rare agreement for three such disparate groups. What is new is that in recent months, the long-held distinction between how voters see Congress overall and how they view their own members of Congress seems to be diminishing as well. An NBC News/Wall Street Journal survey in August found that 54 percent of respondents would choose the option (if it were on the ballot) to defeat every single member of Congress, including their own. Only 41 percent would not do so. Now, routinely, when voters are given the choice of reelecting their own (unnamed) member of Congress or choosing to "give a new person a chance," majorities opt for the latter.

One of the more unfortunate trends in recent years has been that Washington and the political world have increasingly looked at politics and policy on a single lateral partisan or ideological plane, without considering other possibly important dimensions. Too many view everything on a left-right ideological axis or on a Democrat-Republican plane, viewing every issue or development as a zero-sum game. If we can make the other side look bad on this issue or subject, we will look better, they reason. Political operatives and reporters, cable political shows, and Internet blogs tend to feed this tendency. When the Gallup Poll tallied up its 20,392 interviews over the 2011 calendar year, it found that a record 40 percent of adults called themselves independents. By comparison, just 31 percent identified themselves as Democrats and 27 percent as Republicans. Those people in politics should consider how independents react to this towel-snapping. Also noteworthy is that while Democrats hold a 4-point edge in overall party identification, when independents are asked which way they lean, more of them point toward the Republican Party than to the Democratic Party - a new development as well. Will one-fourth of all House members seeking reelection lose either their primary or general elections this year? Absolutely not. Will a fifth? Probably not, given that the Vital Statistics on Congress reports that the House's lowest reelection rate in the past half-century was 86.6 percent in 1962. But we could see about a tenth of incumbents lose, an unusually high turnover rate, with some losses attributable to redistricting and others to the deteriorating environment for incumbents. ❖



Mark Kiesling, NWI Times: Just as Obama was given center stage in 2004 to deliver the keynote speech to the Democratic National Convention, Daniels was given the spotlight Tuesday. He was the Republican choice to respond to now-President Obama's State of the Union address, a platform that only can mean one thing: The GOP is seriously considering him as its candidate for the White House in 2016. The two-term Indiana governor declined to run this year, citing family issues, but I say he knew he couldn't beat the charismatic Obama. Daniels was careful, very careful, not to be critical of things that have made Obama popular while focusing on some of the holes in his rhetoric, particularly when it came to job creation. He also was very careful not to engage in partisan attacks, using measured tones and what arguably showed a presidential demeanor. In short, he sounded like a statesman. Not the most exciting one, perhaps, but one who could garner support from his own party while failing to ignite anger from the opposition. Obama, while perhaps not deserving of a second term, was far more charismatic and knows how to deliver a speech. They must teach you at Democrat school how to be charismatic: FDR, JFK, Bill Clinton and now Obama. ❖

Matt Tully, Indianapolis Star: Every time it seems that Indiana will not play a role in the 2012 presidential election - or at least won't contribute to the drama surrounding it - something pulls us back in. A week or so ago, Mitt Romney boasted of wins in Iowa and New Hampshire and appeared on the verge of effectively wrapping up the GOP presidential nomination. In the days since then Iowa's outcome has been reversed and Romney's campaign has suffered its biggest stumble - a loss in the South Carolina primary. So the path to the GOP nomination is once again foggy, and the odds that the battle will continue until Indiana's May 8 primary have improved. Meanwhile, you'll recall that Gov. Mitch Daniels took himself out of the presidential running last spring, ending the possibility that a Hoosier would be a key player in the race. But wait. Amid those rumblings that Daniels could emerge as a vice presidential candidate comes this: More speculation in the national media about a last-minute presidential bid by Daniels in light of his official response Tuesday night to President Barack Obama's State of the Union address. And in that speech, Daniels offered sharp words of criticism for Obama and congressional Democrats - words that no doubt appealed the Republican base that so wanted him to make a run for the White House. "No feature of the Obama presidency has been sadder than its constant efforts to divide us, to curry favor with some Americans by castigating others," Daniels said. ❖



Mass transit bill defeated in House

INDIANAPOLIS - A plan that would have allowed for voters in Marion and Hamilton Counties to vote on expanding mass transit failed to get out of the House Ways & Means Committee by a 10-11 vote (IndyPolitics). The legislation would have called for a referendum on a raising the local option income tax to pay for the billion dollar program. However the the plan was a victim of the recent "right to work" debate. As all but one of the House Democrats on the committee voted against the proposal, citing language they said was anti-labor. The provision said an employee "may not be required to join a union". Democrats took that as anti-labor, however Ways and Means Chairman Jeff Espich said the language was merely repeating what was existing federal law. However that was not enough and the measure failed 10-11. Proponents however say they will try to bring the plan back before session ends.



Creation bill passes Senate panel

INDIANAPOLIS - An Indiana Senate committee on Wednesday endorsed teaching creationism in public schools, despite pleas from scientists and religious leaders to keep religion out of science classrooms (Associated Press). Senate Bill 89 allows school corporations to authorize "the teaching of various theories concerning the origin of life" and specifically mentions "creation science" as one such theory. State Sen. Scott Schneider, R-Indianapolis, who voted for the measure,

said if there are many theories about life's origins, students should be taught all of them. But John Staver, professor of chemistry and science education at Purdue University, said evolution is the only theory of life that relies on empirical evidence from scientific investigations. "Creation science is not science," Staver said. "It is unquestionably a statement of a specific religion." The Rev. Charles Allen, head of Grace Unlimited, an Indianapolis campus ministry, said students would be served better by teaching religion comparatively, rather than trying to "smuggle it in" to a science course. The Republican-controlled Senate Education Committee nevertheless voted 8-2 to send the legislation to the full Senate.

Rapist parental rights bill advances

INDIANAPOLIS - A rapist who impregnates his victim could not have custody, parenting time or contact with the child under legislation approved 8-0 by an Indiana Senate committee Wednesday. State Sen. Ed Charbonneau, R-Valparaiso, said he sponsored Senate Bill 190 after learning of a Chicago case in which the rapist sued his victim for custody of the child conceived as a result of the rape. The legislation allows a court to exempt a rapist from paying support for the child he is not allowed to see. The measure also would not apply to a child conceived by a married couple, regardless of the circumstances of conception. It now advances to the full Senate.

Court agrees with state in IBM case

INDIANAPOLIS - Court agrees with state's position in key issues in IBM case The Marion Superior Court

made summary judgment rulings today on a number of issues in the State's lawsuit against IBM based on IBM's failure to live up to its promises under the contract to modernize Indiana's welfare benefits system. In the most important decisions, the court made these rulings: • Rejected IBM's claim that it is entitled to over \$43 million in "deferred fees" even if the state had cause to terminate the contract because of IBM's poor performance. The Court agreed with the state that if IBM's poor performance justified terminating the contract, then IBM is not entitled to any "deferred fees" under the contract. • Rejected IBM's argument that its poor performance was excused because Indiana experienced an economic downturn and flooding after the contract was signed. The Court said these reasons were simply not valid under the contract, and that evidence about flooding or economic downturn was legally irrelevant. • Rejected IBM's argument that it was entitled to return of computers and other equipment used during the contract, which IBM has claimed are worth some \$9.3 million. • The state may be able recover up to \$125 million in damages, based on the contract provisions, and that subcontractor assignment fees may be owed to IBM pending determination of whether IBM was terminated for cause and determination of the State's damages at trial. The rulings mean that a number of claims IBM has made since the beginning of the lawsuit have been eliminated from the case. "This clears the way for the state to pursue recovery at trial for the damages caused by IBM's substandard performance," said Peter Rusthoven, an attorney representing the state.

Moses won't contest fines

INDIANAPOLIS - Rep. Win Mo-



ses, D-Fort Wayne, has chosen not to participate in litigation halting the collection of fines against House Democrats (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). House Republicans have fined Democrats who boycotted the session to block movement on the right-to-work bill. Other members of the Democratic caucus face up to \$4,000 in fines, and signed onto a temporary restraining order issued by a Marion County judge stopping Republican House Speaker Brian Bosma from unilaterally taking the money from expense checks owed the members. But not Moses. "I've always been responsible for my actions as an individual and I accept full responsibility and will pay my fines because I believe what I did was right," he said.

Wolkins pulls cosmetology bill

INDIANAPOLIS - State Rep. Dave Wolkins withdrew from consideration on Wednesday proposed legislation would have eliminated licensing requirements for cosmetologists and a handful of other professions in Indiana (Evansville Courier & Press). Wolkins, R-Winona Lake, said stylists, aestheticians and others who argued against the change when they testified before a House committee last week were so persuasive that their industry should be licensed and regulated that he would not even ask for a vote on the legislation. "They were amazing," Wolkins said of the hundreds of people who came to protest the bill. "They won the day. They made their case."

House staffer becomes US citizen

INDIANAPOLIS - Several state representatives took time today to honor their staffer, Press Secretary Gareth Evans, on his recent accomplishment of becoming an American

citizen. Evans moved from Zimbabwe to Indiana in October 2001 due to the political and economic unrest that had plagued the country. "The decision to leave the country came shortly after the president announced that he was going to forcefully take over small businesses," said Evans. "We were left no choice but to leave everything we had ever known and seek new opportunity in the United States." On November 18, 2011 at the Indiana State Fairgrounds, Evans took his Oath of Allegiance.

Muncie mayoral race cost \$336k

MUNCIE - The campaign season contest between then-Mayor Sharon McShurley and challenger -- and eventual winner -- Dennis Tyler saw more than a third of a million dollars raised and spent (Muncie Star Press). Between the two campaigns, McShurley and Tyler raised \$366,793, almost certainly a record for a local election contest.

Clean air rules will up electric cost 14%

WEST LAFAYETTE - An analysis prepared for the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission predicts new federal clean air regulations will raise electricity rates in this state by about 14 percent by 2020 because of necessary upgrades to coal-fired power plants (Associated Press). The analysis is from the State Utility Forecasting Group, a state-funded panel of researchers based at Purdue University. Director Douglas Gotham says Indiana is expected to experience larger price increases than projected on a regional or national level. About 85 percent of the electricity used in Indiana is generated by coal-fired power plants, compared with about 45 percent nationwide. Gotham predicts

Indiana rates could rise by 34 percent overall by 2020 when other factors are included such as costs associated with ongoing new plant construction.

Obama, Brewer argue on tarmac

PHOENIX - Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer came to greet President Barack Obama upon his arrival outside Phoenix Wednesday. What she got was a critique. Of her book (Associated Press). The two leaders could be seen engaged in an intense conversation at the base of Air Force One's steps. Both could be seen smiling, but speaking at the same time. Asked moments later what the conversation was about, Brewer, a Republican, said, "He was a little disturbed about my book." Brewer recently published a book, "Scorpions for Breakfast," something of a memoir of her years growing up, and defends her signing of Arizona's controversial law cracking down on illegal immigrants, which Obama opposes. Obama was objecting to Brewer's description of a meeting he and Brewer had at the White House, where she described Obama as lecturing her. In an interview in November Brewer described two tense meetings. The first took place before his commencement address at Arizona State University. "He did blow me off at ASU," she said in the television interview in November. ❖