



The Mitch influence on Romney/Ryan

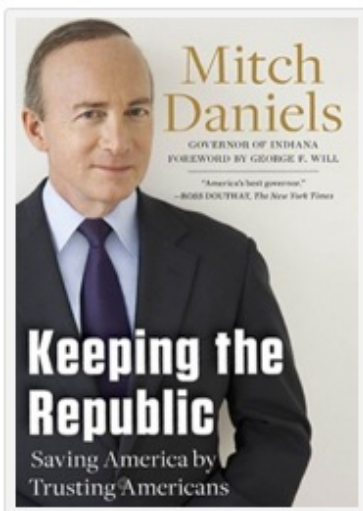
Daniels had urged bold action, and Ryan is reading from that same script

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – You could chalk up some of the Hoosier rhetoric surrounding Mitt Romney’s veep choice of Paul Ryan to hometown pride over the receding national Republican adult, one Mitchell E. Daniels Jr.

There was talk in the hours following the Saturday announcement from Mike Pence, Eric Holcomb, Todd Rokita and Marlin Stutzman about Ryan’s addition to the “comeback team” and his ability to offer a “roadmap,” all throwbacks to Gov. Daniels’ innovative 2004 gubernatorial campaign.

As the business week commenced, the talk had shifted into what Daniels would call the political “ruts” with Medicare as the badminton birdie. President Obama’s



campaign manager, Jim Messina, observed, “With Mitt Romney’s support, Ryan would end Medicare as we know it and slash the investments we need to keep our economy growing, all while cutting taxes for those at the very top.”

U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita defended the choice. “By selecting Paul Ryan, Gov. Romney has demonstrated that as president, he’ll be willing to defy conventional wisdom,” said Rokita. “This means embracing the

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Social media barometer

By **CHRISTINE MATTHEWS**

Bellwether Research

WASHINGTON – A new research project to monitor who’s up and who’s down in the state’s top 2012 political races is coming soon to Howey Politics Indiana. The Indiana Bellwether Barometer will be sponsored by Eli Lilly & Company through their social media platform, LillyPad.

We will be bringing you a weekly snapshot and analysis of what people are saying online about the candidates for U.S. Senate and



“I thought it was a wise choice because a particular number of Americans are about to be shafted in a very severe way. I do believe that he both understands and communicate effectively about the immensity of the injustice that about to be done.”

- Gov. Mitch Daniels, on Paul Ryan



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governor in Indiana. This type of research, sometimes called social media monitoring or sentiment analysis, is relatively new and used more by companies monitoring their reputations or products than in politics.

Stephanie Clifford, in a New York Times article, "Social Media Are Giving a Voice to Taste Buds" (July 30, 2012), writes: "While consumers may think of social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and Foursquare as places to post musings and interact with friends, companies like Walmart and Samuel Adams are turning them into extensions of market research departments. And companies are just beginning to figure out how to use the enormous amount of information available."

The use of social media monitoring in politics is newer yet and we

alone might still have limited applicability to the general public. NBC's Olympic coverage took a hit among the Twitterati, spawning the hashtag #NBCFail and a crush of tweets complaining about the lack of live television coverage, the taped network broadcast, and more. However, at the same time, Pew Research found that three-fourths of Americans rated NBC Olympic coverage as "excellent" or "good" and the network has reported big ratings that have exceeded expectations.

While the Twitter universe may be limited, eight in ten adults are online and two-thirds use social media (Pew Internet Project data, May 2012). Our project will have a wide funnel, including not only Twitter, but public Facebook posts, blogs, RSS feeds, comments on print and

Indiana Bellwether Media Barometer



have few public examples that help us determine its value.

During the GOP presidential primary this year, Pew Research introduced a social media research program to complement their national polling. They tracked the volume and tone of comments made on social media sites and in the news about the GOP presidential hopefuls. [See it here: http://www.journalism.org/commentary_backgrounder/PEJ%27s+Election+Analysis]

A few weeks ago, Twitter announced its "Twitter Political Index" [See it here: <https://election.twitter.com/>] which reports daily if the Twitter chatter about Romney or Obama is up or down, positive or negative. A score over 50 is considered positive, below 50 negative.

The Twitter Political Index monitors only Twitter, which is used by 15% of online adults, so it is unclear how representative this might be. A recent example suggests that Twitter

broadcast news sites, YouTube, as well as traditional news coverage. We have also taken an additional step of subscribing to Indiana content that is behind a paywall (which will include the Indianapolis Star in September) so that is not missed. Our "ingestion" process, as the tech people call it, cuts a pretty wide swath and the coding is sophisticated enough to classify tone as positive or negative.

It is not flawless (nor is human coding in traditional research), but it is far more sophisticated than the free social media monitoring tools, such as Social Mention, that I have taken for a test drive and whose coding of comments as positive or negative majorly missed the mark.

The use of social media research in politics, particularly as it relates to potential election outcomes, is still relatively untested. To our knowledge, there is no other undertaking of this type on a state level monitoring online commentary about



candidates for top statewide office in 2012 and relatively few examples of it being done on a national level. To make it even better is that we have a quantitative component, the Howey-DePauw polling program for which we will do statewide polls in September and October that will provide a traditional point of reference.

We are interested in using this tool to help us understand the dynamics behind the polling numbers we get with our telephone surveys. Our statewide polling will tell us a candidate's favorable or unfavorable rating, and who is ahead, but our social tracking will provide clues about why this may be. What are people saying about Richard Mourdock and Joe Donnelly, about John Gregg and Mike Pence? Is there a period of time when one of them took off or crashed? How and when did public perceptions change? We may also use the social dialogue and the issues and topics raised to help design questions for our fall surveys so that we can measure them in a traditional poll.

We will report weekly on our findings, but will be tracking daily and will have the ability to look at our data for any time range that interests us.

Public opinion research is in a period of transition and uncertainty where the tried and true methods of reaching people on the telephone and asking them 15 minutes worth of questions is increasingly difficult. Even when we include cell phones, it is challenging to get people to answer and take surveys. Recently, Pew Research reported that their response rates had dropped to 9% (they were 15% in 2009). They've gone from really low to incredibly

low, but despite these low response rates, carefully conducted telephone polls (with some weighting of hard-to-reach populations) still work.

But for how long? That is why the American Association of Public Opinion Research, the professional organization for public opinion pollsters, dedicated their annual four-day conference in May to "Evaluating New Frontiers in Public Opinion and Social Research" with sessions I attended such as: "Challenges in Using Twitter to Measure Public Opinion," and "Social Media Use, Public Opinion, and Behavior," "Survey Responses vs. Tweets – New Choices for Social Measurement," and "Social Media Analysis."

It was clear from these meetings that public opinion pollsters are just beginning to try to apply research principles to the vast trove of social data voters and consumers are providing. There are a lot of limitations we have to acknowledge, ranging from lack of context, faulty coding, limited geographic codes, and potential lack of representativeness, to name a few.

No one, for now, is suggesting social research is a replacement for traditional polling, but recent AAPOR chair, Scott Keeter of Pew Research, calls for pollsters to engage in "enthusiastic experimentation."

That is exactly what we are doing, with the support of our sponsor, LillyPad, and we are doing it right here in Indiana. ❖

Matthews is president and CEO of Bellwether Research based in Washington, D.C.

Ryan, from page 1

so-called 'third rail' and telling the truth about the most difficult issues we face, our debt-driving welfare, Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security programs."

U.S. Rep. Todd Young called the choice a chance to "refocus" the presidential race that had flitted on mud-splattered terrain ranging from Bain Capital to Obama's birth certificate. "At a time when unemployment remains above 8%, our national debt nears \$16 trillion, and political debate threatens to stall recovery, America needs leaders willing to put pen to paper and outline a clear path forward for our country," said Young, like Rokita part of the Tea Party class of 2010. "Paul Ryan – with whom I've worked on the Budget Committee to draft such a bold, comprehensive and coherent vi-

sion for America's future – is exactly that sort of leader."

But if there was an outlier on the needed substance of the debate, it was Gov. Daniels. In a seven-month sequence in 2011 that straddled his own flirtation with a presidential bid, Daniels made a compelling case that the issues facing the nation are so dire that the 2012 debate must center on them.

There was his CPAC speech in February 2011 where he issued his warning. "We face an enemy, lethal to liberty, and even more implacable than those America has defeated before," Daniels said in Washington. "We cannot deter it; there is no countervailing danger we can pose. We cannot negotiate with it, any more than with an iceberg or a Great White. I refer, of course, to the debts our nation has amassed for itself over decades of indulgence. It is the new Red Menace, this time consisting of ink. We can debate its origins endlessly and search





for villains on ideological grounds, but the reality is pure arithmetic. No enterprise, small or large, public or private, can remain self-governing, let alone successful, so deeply in hock to others as we are about to be."

Daniels was referring to the unsustainable entitlements. "An affectionate 'thank you' to the major social welfare programs of the last century, but sunseting when those currently or soon to be enrolled have passed off the scene," is the way the governor described entitlements.

"The creation of new Social Security and Medicare compacts with the young people who will pay for their elders and who

deserve to have a backstop available to them in their own retirement. These programs should reserve their funds for those most in need of them. They should be updated to catch up to Americans' increasing longevity and

good health. They should protect benefits against inflation but not overprotect them. Medicare 2.0 should restore to the next generation the dignity of making their own decisions, by delivering its dollars directly to the individual."

In September 2011, Daniels published his book "Keeping the Republic: Saving America by Trusting Americans." Now four months after opting out of the presidential race, Daniels explained, "The coming debate is not really about something so mundane as tax policy or health care or energy choices. It is about things more fundamental: Who is in charge, the people or those who supposedly serve at their sufferance? What kind of people will we Americans be, free and proud citizens who control our own lives and decide for ourselves, or submissive subjects of the crown who meekly conclude that our benevolent betters know best?"

Then last January, when he responded to President Obama's State of the Union address on behalf of Republicans, Daniels said, "You know, the most troubling contention in our national life these days isn't about economics, or policy at all. It's about us, as a free people. In two alarming ways, that contention is that we Americans just can't cut it anymore.... 2012 must be the year we prove the doubters wrong; the year we strike out boldly not merely to avert national bankruptcy but to say to a new generation that America is still the world's premier land of opportunity."

At the Indiana Republican Party fall dinner last October, Ryan was the keynoter and Daniels introduced him, calling him an "honest, candid and courageous"

public servant. "It's because he speaks with honesty and boldness," Daniels explained. "He speaks with trust in the American people that they can handle the truth, who can handle complex issues. He's sometimes spoken with too much honesty for some people, some in the other party. He speaks a little too forthrightly for Republicans elsewhere."

In what became a mutual admiration society meeting, Ryan "marveled" over OMB Director Daniels, nicknamed by President George W. Bush "The Blade."

"I was always jealous of him," Ryan said. "I tried to do that in Congress and they called me Pain in the Neck."

In a prescient notion, Ryan called the 2012 presidential race "the most important election and this time we mean it. I truly believe the next election means whether America remains an exceptional nation, or something else, in doubt, decline and in debt. It's a pretty clear choice: Do we want to stay on the path that we are on? Or do we want to restore the nation to prosperity?"

And Ryan added, "If we don't get this under control pretty soon, we are going to lose control of the situation.

We're coming to two tipping points, one moral, one fiscal." He echoed Daniels when he said the fiscal tipping point is only "a few short years" away. The moral aspect is that there are "more takers than makers." He added that "we believe in the safety net. But we don't want to turn that safety net into a hammock. It's anti-human. We don't want to keep kicking the can down the road. It's not too late to get this right."

Ryan and the 'third rail'

Romney, who has been badgered by uncertainty about his core beliefs, a candidate said to be prone to "play it safe," thus passed on gender and race when it came time to balance his ticket, and made the bold and controversial choice of Ryan, the House Budget Committee chairman who became the member of Congress who put political body parts on the so-called "third rail."

In January 2010, Ryan gained attention nationwide after unveiling his "Roadmap for America's Future," a proposal to eliminate the federal deficit, reform the tax code, and preserve entitlements for future generations. It used similar language to Daniels' 2004 campaign that featured similar "roadmap" imagery.

Dan Balz of the Washington Post, put Ryan's work as a budget crafter into this context: The budgets that Ryan has written have achieved a status close to dogma among conservatives, calling for a dramatic reordering of fiscal priorities and the scope of government. Democrats,





meanwhile, believe the Ryan plan is a major liability for Republicans by alienating elderly and moderate voters. His proposals contain three major elements: First, the Ryan plan would overhaul the entitlement programs that have grown to consume about 40 percent of the budget, reshaping Medicare coverage for the elderly, and cutting deeply into Medicaid, food stamps and other programs for the poor. Second, he would rewrite the tax code, slashing the rates paid by corporations and the wealthy. Finally, Ryan would cut spending on other federal programs and agencies, with the exception of the Pentagon.

Balz continued: Most controversial is Ryan's proposal to transform Medicare so that the government, rather than paying for health care for the elderly directly, would give beneficiaries a set amount of money to shop for a private health insurance plan. Last year, working with Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, Ryan tweaked the idea to add an option in which the elderly could remain in the traditional Medicare program, but they would have to pay significantly more for that coverage if it turns out to be more expensive than private plans. The politics of dealing with entitlements for the elderly have long been treacherous. That is why senior Republicans – while hailing Ryan for fresh, bold and creative thinking – initially maintained some distance from the particulars of the plan he first put forward in 2009, when he was the budget committee's ranking Republican in a chamber controlled by the Democrats. When the Washington Post-ABC News poll asked last year whether respondents would favor changing the Medicare program along the lines of the Ryan-written House budget, opinion tilted sharply negative. Only 32 percent supported it, while 49 percent were opposed."

It is poll numbers such as those that are now fueling the debate about whether Ryan was a wise choice for Romney, or whether he had handed Obama – who has led in the polls despite a molasses-paced economic recovery and an 8.3% jobless rate – a scenario to victory. But after

Romney trailed Obama by 9% in a Fox News Poll released last Friday and by 7% in a CNN Poll released the day before, the GOP ticket has received the expected bump, with Gallup tracking putting Romney/Ryan up by 2% and Rasmussen Reports tracking by 4%.

Medicare debate

On Wednesday, the Medicare debate took front stage center. In Ohio, Ryan accused the president of trying to "raid" Medicare by cutting more than \$716 billion from the program as part of his health care overhaul. "We want this debate. We need this debate. And we will win this debate," Ryan said. The Associated Press reported that Ryan did not mention that his own congressional budget proposal includes the same savings, which are supposed to be realized through lower payments to hospitals and doctors, and greater efficiencies in the program.

Joined by first lady Michelle Obama on the trail for the first time in months, Obama defended his handling of Medicare (NPR). "They start making up all kinds of stuff about my plans," Obama said at a rally in Davenport, Iowa, saying he worked to strengthen Medicare without undercutting benefits. Of Romney and Ryan's approach, Obama said, "Their plan ends Medicare as we know it."

Daniels told Fox News' Neil Cavuto on Aug. 18, 2011, that Ryan "intuitively understands" what's at risk and how to fix it. "The single best thing that a president – it won't be this one obviously – could do right now for growth and jobs and to reclaim

General Election: Romney vs. Obama

[RCP Electoral Map](#) | [Changes in Electoral Count](#) | [Map With No Toss Ups](#) | [No Toss Up Changes](#)

| Poll | Polling Data | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|---------|-----|-------------|-------------|-------------------|
| | Date | Sample | MoE | Obama (D) | Romney (R) | Spread |
| RCP Average | 8/2 - 8/14 | -- | -- | 47.4 | 43.9 | Obama +3.5 |
| Rasmussen Tracking | 8/12 - 8/14 | 1500 LV | 3.0 | 43 | 47 | Romney +4 |
| Gallup Tracking | 8/8 - 8/14 | 3050 RV | 2.0 | 45 | 47 | Romney +2 |
| Politico/GWU/Battleground | 8/5 - 8/9 | 1000 LV | 3.1 | 48 | 47 | Obama +1 |
| CNN/Opinion Research | 8/7 - 8/8 | 911 RV | 3.5 | 52 | 45 | Obama +7 |
| IBD/CSM/TIPP | 8/3 - 8/10 | 828 RV | 3.5 | 46 | 39 | Obama +7 |
| FOX News | 8/5 - 8/7 | 930 RV | 3.0 | 49 | 40 | Obama +9 |
| Reuters/Ipsos | 8/2 - 8/6 | 1014 RV | 3.4 | 49 | 42 | Obama +7 |

America's leadership in the world is to announce that we're going to change the safety net programs prospectively ... not for the recipients of today or even the next few years, but so there's something there for the younger people of this country," Daniels said. "We're not going to crush them under the debt that we've now laid out that could dominate their future."

But the criticism of Ryan was not confined to the Obama campaign and Democrats. David Stockman, the former Michigan congressman and President Reagan's first



budget director, bristled at the Ryan track record in an op-ed in the Huffington Post on Wednesday. "Paul D. Ryan is the most articulate and intellectually imposing Republican of the moment, but that doesn't alter the fact that this earnest congressman from Wisconsin is preaching the same empty conservative sermon," Stockman began. "Thirty years of Republican apostasy – a once grand party's embrace of the welfare state, the warfare state and the Wall Street-coddling bailout state – have crippled the engines of capitalism and buried us in debt. Mr. Ryan's sonorous campaign rhetoric about shrinking Big Government and giving tax cuts to "job creators" (read: the top 2%) will do nothing to reverse the nation's economic decline and arrest its fiscal collapse. There can be no hope of a return to vibrant capitalism unless there is a sweeping housecleaning at the Federal Reserve and a thorough renunciation of its interest-rate fixing, bond buying and recurring bailouts of Wall Street speculators. The Greenspan-Bernanke campaigns to repress interest rates have crushed savers, mocked thrift and fueled enormous overconsumption and trade deficits."



Stockman continued, "Mr. Ryan showed his conservative mettle in 2008 when he folded like a lawn chair on the auto bailout and the Wall Street bailout. But the greater hypocrisy is his phony plan to solve the entitlements mess by deferring changes to social insurance by at least a decade. A true agenda to reform the welfare state would require a sweeping, income-based eligibility test, which would reduce or eliminate social insurance benefits for millions of affluent retirees. Without it, there is no math that can avoid giant tax increases or vast new borrowing. Yet the supposedly courageous Ryan plan would not cut one dime over the next decade from the \$1.3 trillion-per-year cost of Social Security and Medicare. Instead, it shreds the measly means-tested safety net for the vulnerable: The roughly \$100 billion per year for food stamps and cash assistance for needy families and the \$300 billion budget for Medicaid, the health insurance program for the poor and disabled. Shifting more Medicaid costs to the states will be mere make-believe if federal financing is drastically cut."

When it comes to Indiana, Ryan helps even after Rasmussen had Romney leading Obama 51-35% earlier this month. The Terre Haute Tribune-Star reported that members of the Wabash Valley Tea Party liked the choice. "It says we're serious," said Mary Wright, an organizer of the Wabash Valley Tea Party movement. "We want something done." ❖

Daniels offers a 'clinical view' of Ryan, presidential race

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. - Ever mindful of his vow to refrain from partisan politics now that he is Purdue University president in waiting, Gov. Mitch Daniels was asked by HPI about the unfolding dynamic now that Paul Ryan is on the Republican ticket.

It was just three days after he joined Purdue students on campus. "I want to be helpful to you but I don't want to violate that rule," a cautious governor said. "I'm going to try to speak clinically. I thought it was a wise choice because a particular number of Americans are about to be shafted in a very severe way. I do believe that he both understands and can communicate effectively about the immensity of the injustice that is about to be done."

Is the governor wary of the predictable battlelines drawn since the Ryan announcement?

"I think that he adds value to the national debate," Daniels said. "I wrote a book about this. You know how I feel about the need to both recreate conditions of growth and jobs in the country, and closely related to that, to be fair to younger people. And Ryan, as much as any member of either party understands all of those issues. It's not just Medicare, it's the whole of that and I think he can explain them and speak to them in a positive and affirmative way."

Daniels talked of the way Ryan approaches "the political debate, more with a smile, more with a more positive sense than many people in my party and in the other party. So I think from that standpoint, if you'd like to see the kind of national debate that I think we need, then I believe Ryan being involved in it helps."

Before Saturday, the governor believed the campaign had not served Americans well. "To be honest, i don't think either side - even Gov. Romney to this point - has been raising these questions. His choice of Ryan suggests that he's prepared to. I hope that's right."

Daniels believes the issues go well beyond Medicare. "People should expect a real debate on these fundamental questions. Who is in charge? To what extent is the government going to make fundamental decisions for Americans versus entrusting and empowering them to make them for themselves. Will this debate on both sides stay clearly with the arithmetic? I hope people would give points for either side on which one refrains from mudslinging. It's been awful." ❖



Bucshon, Walorski ready for Ryan, Medicare fight

By **MARK SCHOEFF JR.**

WASHINGTON - Since Paul Ryan joined the Republican presidential ticket Saturday, Rep. Larry Bucshon, R-8th CD, has not run away from the Medicare issue. Instead, it looks as if he's decided that offense is the best defense.

"The only people who have put laws into place that have cut Medicare are Democrats, including President Obama," Bucshon said in an HPI interview. "The Republican approach is to preserve and protect Medicare for current and future seniors."

The topic has become more intense in the aftermath of presumptive GOP nominee Mitt Romney selecting Ryan, a seven-term Wisconsin congressman, as his running mate. Overhauling Medicare is central to the budget resolutions that Ryan, chairman of the House Budget Committee, has written the past two years.

Under the Ryan plan, people under 55 would receive subsidies to purchase private insurance on a Medicare exchange or to enter the traditional fee-for-service program. Current coverage would not change for people in or near retirement.

Medicare reform was a key element of House budget blueprints that Bucshon supported in 2011 and 2012 that were designed to cut federal spending.

His opponent, former Democratic state Rep. Dave Crooks, says Bucshon's votes put him at odds with south-west Indiana voters.

"Every time I talk to people about Medicare, they're troubled that he would end the Medicare guarantee and force future seniors to pay \$6400 more per year to keep a basic Medicare plan," Crooks said in an HPI interview. The cost increase estimate is from a Congressional Budget Office report.

"He's totally out of sync with the rest of us in the district," Crooks said.

Bucshon counters that congressional Democrats approved the 2010 health care law that cuts Medicare by about \$716 billion over 10 years to fund measure's reforms.

"They're trying to deflect criticism of what they've done to Medicare," Bucshon said of Democrats. "They're going to limit access to health care for seniors with these dramatic cuts to provider reimbursement."

Crooks said he would vote to overturn the Medicare cuts in the health care reform law. He emphasizes that they were included in Ryan's House budgets.

"When the Ryan plan was rolled out, they could have changed the numbers," Crooks said. "Ryan left them in, and Bucshon supported it."

In his fiscal year 2013 budget blueprint, Ryan acknowledged maintaining the health care reform law's Medicare reductions.

"This budget . . . ensures that any potential savings in current law would go to shore up Medicare, not pay for new entitlements," the outline, the Path to Prosperity, states.

Criticism of the inclusion of the Medicare savings in the Ryan plan is "unfounded," Bucshon said, because "budgets are based on what's in current law."

House Republicans have voted multiple times to do away with the health care law altogether. Crooks said the law shouldn't be scuttled but does need some revisions.

"There are some positive things in there," Crooks said. "We need to make it better."

In Indiana's other competitive House race, the open seat in the 2nd CD, both candidates are hewing to their party lines. "The Romney Ryan ticket provides Americans with two very different leadership options for the next four years," said Republican Jackie Walorski. "Americans can either choose to remain on this dismal path of slow job growth and bigger government, or vote for real change. I remain focused on improving our economy and creating jobs by repealing Obamacare, preventing tax increases, and reducing red tape on small businesses."

Democrat Brendan Mullen said the Ryan plan would hurt north central Indiana. "Congressman Ryan's budget, which my opponent supports, just doesn't make good fiscal sense for our families because it cuts Medicare that people rely on, forces folks to pay thousands more for their benefits, but keeps tax breaks for corporations that ship jobs overseas," Mullen said. "The last thing my mother and father or any Hoosiers want or need is to take money out of the pockets of seniors when special interests are getting a tax break."

In terms of campaign mechanics, the Ryan selection is boosting fundraising for Crooks. "We sent out a [email] blast on Monday and got a very good response," Crooks said. He declined to say how much was generated in donations but called it "above average."

The reaction to Ryan among voters has been positive, according to Bucshon. He calls him "a Midwestern guy, a family man with strong moral character and strong conservative values I agree with."

It's a good thing that Ryan's budget has spurred a debate about the size and scope of government, according to Bucshon.

"We need to have these big issues on the table so the American people can decide who they think has the best plan for America," Bucshon said. "Of course, I believe we do." ❖

Schoeff is HPI's Washington correspondent.



Why Romney chose Ryan

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE - Congressman Paul Ryan went hand fishing with relatives in Oklahoma. No poles and bait, just his hands. You go to a catfish hole, and bonk them with your first. Ryan also says he prefers hunting with a bow and arrow, rather than just a gun because it is more challenging. So it shouldn't be surprising that when it comes to budget problems, he talked about entitlement reform above a whisper and before an election, not just when he had no plan to run again.

Mitt Romney's whole public persona has been relatively risk free. Even at his most stubborn – for example, saying that releasing two years of tax returns is sufficient – it is really a risk-based assessment. So about everyone, including me, assumed that Ohio Senator Rob Portman

or former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty would be his vice presidential choice. Romney-Portman would solidify Ohio, the worst economy since the Great Depression would cripple the Obama presidency, and the people would repent for having elected him President. Safe win.

Perhaps we've downplayed another side of Romney. His dad, George, didn't salvage American Motors by playing it safe. Running as a Mormon in the West is one thing, but running for governor in

Michigan as a Mormon is another. His mom, Lenore, ran for the Senate when women weren't as active as now. And Mitt himself chose to run for the Senate against Teddy Kennedy and then for governor of Massachusetts, which wasn't like running as a Republican in Indiana. He only took charge of the Salt Lake City Olympics when it was in serious trouble. Then there is the Bain Capital side. Does a risk-averse person start and run a company like that?

Mitt Romney's career, from a mountaintop vantage point, is about taking on hard challenges, which means that he actually prefers risk. To Romney, the satisfaction of success when the challenge is great outweighs the risk of defeat. Simply put, it is a self-confident person who knows that odds are you will suffer a loss, and to accept those chances over and over, even after losses.

As a kid I had a Civil War game. I always chose being the South, knowing I'd lose most often. Who wants to be the North with all your extra troops, railroads and factories? If you lost you were incompetent. Winning was nothing. Of course it was just a game, not real life, but is

the same core principle.

Politico and other publications are running the comments of Republican "nervous Nellies." They don't like risk. They have lots of races to win, of which the presidency is just one. To political professionals, "roll the dice" means to go after gambling money, not do risky things on the campaign trail. This is the primary difference between those who work in elections and those who run for office: Candidates can win and have to govern.

Here is why I agree with Romney's bold choice to select Paul Ryan. (In full disclosure, I first met Paul when he was 20 working for Sen. Bob Kasten in 1990, working at the Small Business Committee office across the hall from Sen. Dan Coats, for whom I was legislative director at the time.)

1. The Democrats have no strategy except to yell, "Medicare, Social Security, rich, poor." It has been that way for decades. Avoiding the subject doesn't change the debate.

2. Since the Republicans adopted the Ryan budget, Romney was going to have to run on it anyway. If the Ryan budget is the issue, then you might as well have the guy on the ticket who can explain it best.

3. Romney appears to actually like Ryan. The ticket has some of the feel of Dole-Kemp. That didn't work. At all. But both Romney and Ryan are risk-takers and problem-solvers. Both are also, for lack of a better word, rather obsessed or at least abnormally driven individuals. Both appear to seek results, and like ideas, as opposed to needing to win for the sake of their egos.

4. Ryan is a salesman, not just a thinker. Ryan already has some powerful lines. "We know the President inherited a mess. But he made it worse." And, "We are the only nation founded upon an idea." There are and will be many more.

5. Ryan is a hard campaigner. He sleeps in his office and commutes back to Wisconsin where his family lives. When home he circles his district doing town meetings and trying to persuade people. He actually likes it.

6. Ryan will be able to raise money. The business community cheers his message.

7. Ryan may help deliver Wisconsin and other key Midwest states. Ryan should not only help in Wisconsin but Iowa, Ohio, Indiana, Minnesota and maybe Michigan.

8. Romney-Ryan want more than to just win, they want to govern. Unless you explain to people the difficult challenge of the budget in advance, once you win, you will have no mandate to do anything anyway.

This is Mitch Daniels roadmap stuff, and Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker. It is not, however, how Washington works. Even when members of Congress vote for entitlement reform, they seldom go home and talk about it, and certainly not in open meetings where they could have to





debate it.

Romney is going to force America to have a real discussion over all the negative noise. The message: America is broke, something must be done, there will be no economic recovery without fundamental reforms, tax increases won't create jobs, excessive regulation and financial uncertainty hinder job creation, it takes people who understand capitalism to actually lead a recovery, we believe you actually did build the businesses that create jobs and

thus will reward you if you will take that risk and America, if you just want bread and circuses, leading to a continuing economic sinkhole and no new jobs, it is your choice.

But we, Romney-Ryan, are at least going to offer a real choice. That was the message in picking Paul Ryan. ❖

Souder is a former Republican congressman from Indiana.

Chamber poll shows Senate race in dead heat, Pence with big lead

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Richard Mourdock (R) and Joe Donnelly (D) are in a statistical dead heat for the open U.S. Senate seat, with 17% of voters in that race still undecided, according to a new statewide poll released today by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce.



By a 41% to 39% margin (within the survey's margin of error), Mourdock enjoys a slight lead over Donnelly. In addition to the 17% of respondents who are undecided, 3% support Libertarian candidate Andrew Horning.

In the election for Indiana Governor, Mike Pence (R) holds a commanding 50% to 32% lead over John Gregg (D), with Libertarian Rupert Boneham supported by 3%. In that race, 15% of respondents are still undecided.

The scientific public opinion poll of 600 registered voters statewide was conducted by Market Research Insight from August 6-9, 2012. The poll has a margin of error of +/- 4% and utilized live interviewer telephone surveys to maximize accuracy.

Dr. Verne

Kennedy, senior analyst for Market Research Insight, served as project director for the poll. Kennedy has conducted more than 200 public opinion surveys in Indiana over the past two decades.

When poll respondents were asked to identify their political affiliations, results were 46% Republican and 38% Democrat, with 16% identifying as independents. Mourdock and Donnelly achieve similar support levels among their respective party voters, but 41% of self-identified independent voters are still undecided.

"As typical, both Democrats and Republicans are relatively polarized, favoring the candidate for their party," Kennedy says. The 16% of Indiana voters who say they are completely independent will likely determine the outcome of the Senate race.

"Murdock has the advantage in the election because more of the 17% of undecided voters on this race identify themselves as Republicans than Democrats," Kennedy explains. "For instance, among those voters undecided on the U.S. Senate race, 33% indicated their support for Pence for governor compared to 6% who support Gregg in that race."

The public opinion poll was commissioned by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce and its non-partisan political action program,

Indiana Business for Responsive Government (IBRG). Learn more by viewing the polling report and crosstabs.

A Garin-Hart-Yang Poll also released today showed Donnelly leading Mourdock 45-43%.

The Chamber poll, like the Rasmus-





sen Poll earlier this month, shows the steep dropoff for Mourdock from the presidential and gubernatorial races. At the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns conference in French Lick last week, HPI conversed with a number of Republican mayors. Many of these mayors said there are a number of Republicans uncomfortable with Mourdock. They said that many of these Republicans were also not likely to vote for Donnelly, but there was talk about "scratching" in the Senate race. The "scratch" term came up in several different conversations.

In a poll released by Donnelly earlier this month, the Democrat had a 41-40% lead. The poll by Global Strategy Group showed 51 percent of Hoosiers know who Donnelly is, with 34 percent viewing him favorably and 17 percent unfavorably. That compares to 70 percent name identification for Mourdock, with 37 percent seeing him favorably and 33 percent unfavorably. "This poll shows Joe's message of bipartisan, Hoosier common sense is resonating with voters across the political spectrum," said Elizabeth Shappell, Donnelly's communications director. "Hoosiers are rejecting Richard Mourdock's 'my way or the highway' tea party approach that would undermine jobs and cut Medicare. Folks here in Indiana would rather their U.S. senator work with both parties to create jobs, lower the debt, and balance the budget — and that's Joe Donnelly." The survey of 601 likely voters was paid for by Donnelly's campaign and conducted between Aug. 2 and Aug. 5 by Global Strategy Group. "After \$1 million dollars in negative TV ads against Richard Mourdock in the general election, the best Congressman Joe Donnelly could buy was an internal push poll showing the race within the margin of error, but no amount of money can change the fact that Donnelly's voting record is in lock-step with President Obama's attempt to run our economy into the ground," said Mourdock spokesman Chris Conner (Evansville Courier & Press).

U.S. Senate: Mourdock backs 17th Amendment repeal

Murdock was the subject of a Roll Call story on Tea Party Republicans who advocate repeal of the 17th Amendment, which would return the election of senators to state legislatures. Rep Todd Akin, the GOP nominee facing Sen. Claire McCaskill (D) in Missouri this fall, signaled during a primary debate in May that he might favor repeal. "I don't think the federal government should be doing a whole lot of things that it's doing," Akin said on KY3. "It might well be that a repeal of the 17th Amendment might



tend to pull that back, but I haven't written any thesis on it or anything like that." Richard Mourdock, the Republican nominee for Senate in Indiana, expressed similar sentiment in a February 2012 appearance that he said was sure to get the attention of Democrats tracking his campaign events. Mourdock, however, seemed to

have thought through the issue. "The House of Representatives was there to represent the people. The Senate was there to represent the states," Mourdock said.

The Roll Call story also cited Michigan Senate nominee Pete Hoekstra (R), who is challenging Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D), as championing a repeal of the direct election of Senators. In Arizona, presumptive Democratic Senate nominee Richard Carmona has circulated a Huffington Post story that cited Rep. Jeff Flake (R), his presumed general election opponent, making similar comments to conservative supporters last week.

Donnelly marked the 76th anniversary of Social Security being signed into law by painting a stark contrast between his record and Mourdock's. "For 76 years, Social Security has been a promise to all Americans that they would have a chance to retire with dignity," said Donnelly. "Indiana is home to more than 1.2 million beneficiaries, who are hard-working men and women who played by the rules and paid their fair share. We have an obligation to them to keep our promise and protect Social Security. Richard Mourdock's way would gamble with Social Security in Wall Street's casino, and he's even questioned if Social Security is constitutional. What we can't do is adopt the Mourdock Plan that would break promises to our seniors."

Former Indiana Sen. Evan Bayh is getting involved in his native state's 2012 Senate race, headlining a fundraiser later this month for Donnelly, according to an invitation obtained by POLITICO. Bayh will be a "special guest" at the Aug. 23 event in Munster, Ind., along with Rep. Pete Visclosky, Hammond Mayor Tom McDermott and other Hoosier State Democrats. Bayh's also the definitive example of how to win statewide as a Democrat in Indiana, and some Republicans have also pointed out that he has over \$10 million left in his campaign account that he could -- in theory -- use to help his party back home. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup

Governor: Gregg up on TV for good

Democratic Gubernatorial candidate John Gregg



unveiled his first campaign ad Tuesday morning. The ad, entitled "Hobo," features Gregg and some longtime friends from his hometown of Sandborn, Indiana. Hobo is the nickname of John's close friend Wesley Cook who is fighting a battle against cancer. The ad is 30 seconds and will air on broadcast and cable throughout Indiana.

Gregg points out in his ad that he thinks political ads are "pretty silly." So rather than the usual hackneyed approach, Gregg will be telling the stories of the people of Sandborn throughout his campaign, and will be showing how they will influence the kind of governor he will be.

"I grew up in Sandborn and I still live there with my two boys. My parents still live there, too. It's a town of 300

people and every one of those folks had something to do with making me the person that I am today," said Gregg. Hobo, a childhood friend of John's, is the focal point of how John sees Hoosiers and the place for community in all of our lives. "Frank, Jerry, and Hobo are some of my closest friends and all of us in Sandborn are rooting for Hobo in his fight against cancer." "I am honored that so many of my friends and neighbors wanted to be in the ads," Gregg added. "I thought it was important for the people of Indiana to have an idea about where I came from, what I believe and what I want for Indiana's future."

Gregg campaign spokesman Daniel Altman would not pin a dollar or gross rating point number on the ad buy, but said it was comparable to the buys Republican nominee Mike Pence has been making. Altman also said that Gregg will be up on the air for the rest of the campaign.

Pence has already aired five ads and began airing a second TV ad on jobs this week. As the ad opens, Pence, seen in a factory, explains how Indiana can be the state that works for all Hoosiers. "Our state is on the verge of an era of growth and opportunity," says Pence in the ad. "We can put more Hoosiers to work than ever before, but it'll take leadership and the right ideas."

In a speech Tuesday before the Marion Rotary Club, Pence talked about the need for Indiana to push back on the fast-growing tide of federal regulations and programs that hinder Hoosier businesses and cost Hoosier taxpayers more money. "We don't need the federal government to tell us how to build our roads, run our schools or

take over our health care systems," said Pence. "We need a governor who will say 'No,' to Washington, D.C., and 'Yes,' to Indiana." Pence pledged to put a new focus on homegrown solutions by establishing an office of federalism called the Office of State-based Initiatives (OSBI). OSBI will advocate for Indiana by tracking the costs of federal

mandates and coordinating with agencies to develop innovative solutions to effectively using federal dollars. OSBI will be created at no cost to taxpayers by retasking the current Office of Federal Grants and Procurement to oversee the state's federalism priorities. Indiana's economy has been stifled by an avalanche of federal mandates in recent years.

OSBI will be proactive in determining the costs of complying with federal mandates. It also will weigh the costs of federal grants and determine whether the state should participate. "OSBI will empower the people of Indiana and our Congressional delegation to stand up against federal mandates," said Pence. "Indiana must take the lead in stemming the flood of federal mandates that stifle Hoosier ingenuity in finding solutions to public policy problems."

The Gregg campaign reacted with Altman saying, "After 12 years in Washington, Congressman Pence has no business lecturing Hoosiers on federal mandates. He had the chance to pass legislation changing federal policy, but was unable to pass a single bill-- perhaps because he missed work 86% of the time. Now with nothing to show for his time in Congress, he wants to come back to Indiana and re-name a pre-existing office." "Governor Daniels created the Office of Federal Grants and Procurement on his first day in office, not to fight ideological battles but to 'increase significantly the amount of federal dollars coming to our state. Indiana ranks at or near the bottom among states in terms of our success in bringing federal funds back from Washington, and now the state is determined to move quickly to improve our performance and our ranking.' (IN Gov website) Apparently Congressman Pence wants Indiana to be dead last in recouping our tax dollars from the federal government."

Speaking in Evansville Gregg said he's targeting Democrats and "Lugar Republicans" in his race against Pence. "Our message of jobs and bringing people to work





together, and contrasting that with our opponent's record, has been gaining a lot of traction," Gregg said in an interview before the Vanderburgh County Democratic Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner. "Hoosiers are pretty independent voters," Gregg said. "I challenge people to look beyond party label at my background having made a payroll and having been a university president (Vincennes University), vs. somebody who's a career politician."

The majority of benefits from an income tax cut proposed by Pence would flow to the highest-income Indiana taxpayers, a new analysis shows (Kelly, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Pence last week proposed dropping Indiana's 3.4 percent income tax rate to 3.06 percent. He called it an "across the board" cut that would save an average family of four about \$228 a year. The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy used its microsimulation tax model to analyze the plan. ITEP is a non-profit, non-partisan research organization based in Washington, D.C., that works on federal, state and local tax policy. The organization's focus is tax fairness and sustainability. According to the ITEP report, if Pence's rate cut had been in effect last year, a typical middle-income Indiana resident would have seen their taxes fall by about \$102, while the state's richest 1 percent of taxpayers would have received an average tax cut of \$2,264. In total, more than half the benefits of the rate cut would flow to the best-off 20 percent of Indiana residents. Overall, about 12 percent of Hoosiers would see no benefit from cutting Indiana's income tax rate, the report said. Most of this group consists of low-income taxpayers who are too poor to owe state income taxes but who pay significant amounts in sales taxes, excise taxes, property taxes, and other state and local taxes and fees. Christy Denault, communications director for the Pence campaign, said his proposed tax cut is pro-taxpayer and pro-business. "It is designed to put more money into the hands of taxpaying Hoosiers, including the 92 percent of businesses that pay the state through the individual income tax. Mike's plan increases take-home pay for Hoosiers and provides permanent relief for our small businesses." **Horse Race Status:** Likely Pence

hopeful Brendan Mullen was to hit the airwaves starting Tuesday, according to his campaign (Elkhart Truth). It's Mullen's first TV ad, and in it he jogs past varied South Bend landmarks. As narrator, he touts his conservative views, his U.S. Army experience and his consulting firm, which he launched after leaving the service. "Growing up in South Bend, I was raised with strong Hoosier values — respect life, family and the right to bear arms," Mullen intones. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Walorski

Presidential: First Lady event rescheduled

The Obama campaign says the First Lady will attend a fundraiser for her husband, Aug. 23, at Lucas Oil Stadium (WIBC). Michelle Obama was to have been in Indy July 22 but that event was called off after the shooting two days earlier at a movie theater in Colorado. Tickets start at \$100.

A controversial billboard in Elkhart has been drawing a lot of attention-- both negative and positive this month (WSBT-TV). But Monday, protesters gathered at the billboard to argue its message. The billboard, paid for by "We the People of Marshall and Fulton County", is posted near Nappanee Street and John Weaver Parkway in Elkhart.



It says: "The Navy Seals removed one threat to America. The voters must remove the other." A handful of people gathered at the sign to say they don't agree with its connotations. "We got rid of Osama Bin Laden. It's like they think we got rid of him by magic," said Doris Stickel, a protester. "But I saw my president sitting in my room watching it come down. I take the assumption that they

are objecting to my president and I object to that." "I feel we're getting into a very dangerous climate and I would like to see a more human, loving election," said Clarence Moseng, another protester. Elkhart County's Republican Party Chairman Dale Stickel, said, "I am very unhappy with the ad, some may find it humorous, I do not. It can be read very negatively and at best it is in very bad taste. It is counterproductive to the goals of the people who placed it and further lowers the bar on an already negative campaign." ❖

2nd CD: Mullen hits the airwaves

A new television ad from Democratic U.S. House



Mourdock post-primary letter & Lugar 'betrayal'

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

ZIONSVILLE - In the days after Richard Mourdock's stunning primary upset over U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar, his campaign sent a fundraising letter out to Hoosier Republicans that raised some eyebrows and had the heads of Lugarites shaking. "Conservatives scored a tremendous victory in Indiana just a few weeks ago," the Mourdock letter read. "Against all odds and with the establishment working day and night to defeat me, we retired a 36-year entrenched incumbent senator, who routinely betrayed conservative voters to push through some of the most radical aspects of President Obama's agenda."

So much for reaching out to Lugar voters and independents who might have been inclined to vote for him in the fall against Democrat nominee Joe Donnelly.

Murdock had been critical of Lugar votes for President Obama's Supreme Court nominees Kagan and Sotomayor (though Lugar also voted to confirm Justices Scalia, Alito and Roberts) and the START Treaty, something Lugar supported predating the Obama presidency. But as Lugar supporters note, he opposed all aspects of Obamacare and the stimulus, as well as the carbon tax proposals.

What is emerging in late summer is that Mourdock is still playing to his Tea Party base and not making inroads with voters who don't buy into the parts of the Mourdock candidacy that favored voting against the debt ceiling and allowing the U.S. to go into default, as well as attempting to derail the Chrysler-Fiat merger, which Mourdock has consistently compared to Civil War era slavery as well as the Civil Rights movement a half century ago.

Polling has consistently shown that Mourdock has ground to make up with independents (61% who favored the auto rescue in a March Howey/DePauw Indiana Battleground Poll) and with Lugarites. In Howey/DePauw polling last spring, 57% of Lugar voters had a negative view of Mourdock, compared to 12% who viewed him positively.

In the Rasmussen Reports Poll released last Sunday, Mourdock was in a dead heat with Donnelly, leading 42-40%, well within the 5% margin of error. Among those who labeled themselves as "moderates," Donnelly led Mourdock 50 to 23%. Mourdock's favorable rating among moderates stood at a poor 25%, compared to 51% for

Donnelly.

In a Washington Post interview, Mourdock was asked if he was worried about winning over the more moderate Lugar voters. "I worry about everything every day, so of course I do," Mourdock responded. "But the primary showed Indiana voters look past negative attacks. Lugar spent a lot on negative attacks and it didn't work."

Asked if he had been in touch with Lugar supporters, Mourdock responded, "Not directly, no. But in the end, he is a Republican." As for his Tea Party speech in Dallas, Mourdock said, "People will have to make their own judgment on the fact I was asked to speak to a national conservative meeting, but I was proud to stand alongside [South Carolina Republican Senator] Jim DeMint."

Murdock, obviously, is not following the Nixonian axiom of "running to the right in the primary, and to the center in the general."

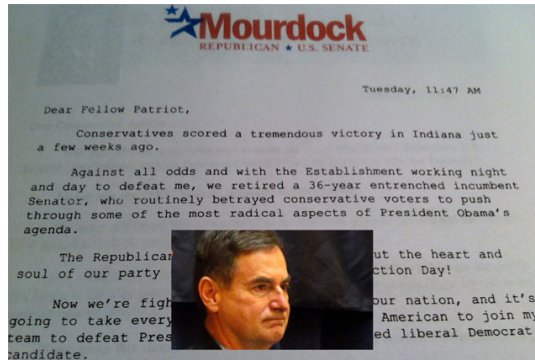
And it's not as if Lugar hasn't tried. In late July, he offered to introduce Mourdock to Senate Republicans on Capitol Hill. "My own comments on the night of the election were that I asked Hoosiers to support Treasurer Mourdock," Lugar said. "I indicated I would be very pleased to have the opportunity to introduce him."

This came after searing remarks Lugar made on Election Night following his defeat. He quickly said he would vote for Mourdock to help the GOP attain a Senate majority, but he lectured Mourdock, "If Mr. Mourdock is elected, I want him to be a good Senator. But that will require him to revise his stated goal of bringing more partisanship to Washington. This is not conducive to problem solving and governance. And he will find that unless he modifies his approach, he will achieve little as a legislator."

A more vivid contrast even within the Tea Party realm came on Fox News Sunday, when Tea Party nominee Ted Cruz of Texas was asked if he would work with Democrats. "I am perfectly happy to compromise and work with anybody," Cruz said. "Republicans, Democrats, Libertarians. I'll work with Martians. If -- and the if is critical -- they're willing to cut spending and reduce the debt."

It was in sharp contrast with Mourdock, who has based his candidacy by attacking "bipartisanship." And that was a hallmark of Sen. Lugar, who achieved some of his greatest Congressional victories working with Democrats like Sam Nunn. And that's Mourdock's problem with Lugarites. They view him as a bomb thrower who will simply make Capitol Hill even more polarized than it is.

Murdock's fundraising letter of May citing Lugar "betrayal" doesn't help him cause. ❖





St. Joseph GOP is no longer a joke

By **JACK COLWELL**

SOUTH BEND - The St. Joseph County Republican Party often has been a joke, fielding rather funny candidates or no candidates at all for some offices in past elections. But Democrats aren't laughing at it now.

"Very doable," says Republican Chair Deb Fleming of GOP prospects of winning control of the Board of Commissioners, the executive branch of county government, on Nov. 6.



Dr. Fleming, a dentist who became chair 17 months ago, says victories are within reach due to a rejuvenated organization, successful candidate recruitment and a whole lot of help from Democrats.

From Democrats? Yes, thanks to scandals enabling Fleming and Jake Teshka, county Republican executive director, to hammer away at what they call "a culture of corruption" among Democratic officials.

They concede that neither party has a monopoly on either good public servants or corruption, but they contend that wrong-doing involving Democrats in the county came in part through lack of a viable two-party system to provide oversight and options.

Democrats worry about adverse voter reaction to alleged forgery of signatures on petitions to get Democratic presidential candidates on the 2008 primary election ballot, bringing charges against long-time Democratic leader Butch Morgan, who resigned as county chair, and conviction of former Democratic Penn Twp. Trustee Jeffrey Dean for paying township money to his live-in girlfriend for work not done.

Now come allegations of funds in Olive Township, where another Democrat is trustee, being withdrawn by ATM at casinos.

Fleming knows that these local situations won't necessarily sway voters who prefer Democrats at the national, state and congressional levels, but she wants them to take a look this time down the ticket at county Republican candidates.

"The people of St. Joseph County are willing to split their ticket," Fleming says.

Yes, they are.

In 2010, Democratic Congressman Joe Donnelly won district-wide re-election thanks to a plurality of 8,500 votes in St. Joseph County. But with the Penn Township scandal already having an adverse effect on Democrats, the

Democratic candidate for county clerk won by only 77 votes and a Democrat won for county assessor by just 208.

As a Republican tide swept across Indiana, the county also gave pluralities to GOP candidates for the U.S. Senate, secretary of state, state auditor and state treasurer. Yes, there is Republican potential.

Fleming, while careful not to suggest abandonment of any race, is targeting especially the 3rd District commissioner contest, where Mishawaka Council Member Marsha McClure is the Republican nominee. Fleming helped to recruit McClure and supported her in a contested primary, resulting in some Republicans on the losing side denouncing her as "Boss Fleming."

Fleming has no regrets over seeking to recruit and support "excellent candidates," a contrast from some past elections when the Republican ticket included some candidates who didn't even want to win and others who, frankly, would have been disasters if they had somehow prevailed.

With one Republican hold-over on the three-member Board of Commissioners, a win by McClure - or a less likely win by the Republican nominee in the 2nd District - would give the GOP a majority, control of the county's executive branch.

Since this is a presidential election year, with a heavier voter turnout, that could affect local races.

What some township trustee did won't determine voter choices for president, but the presidential choice could determine votes farther down the ballot - the "coat-tail" effect.

President Obama carried St. Joseph County by 20,000 votes in 2008. He is likely to carry the county again, with no signs yet of Mitt Romney exactly catching fire here, but not by as much, since there are signs of less enthusiasm for Obama.

The Democratic ticket-leader could be Donnelly, now running statewide for U.S. senator. Donnelly has home-county popularity and the gift of an opponent, Richard Mourdock, whose strident Tea Party partisanship doesn't play well with independents and moderate Republicans.

In the congressional race, Republican Jackie Walorski is intent on preventing any big loss in St. Joseph County, the only thing that could defeat her in the new 2nd District, and Democrat Brendan Mullen still strives to get known.

No matter how Democrats do in those races, the St. Joseph County Republican Party has a real chance to win control of the county's executive branch and some other offices, too. No joke. ❖

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



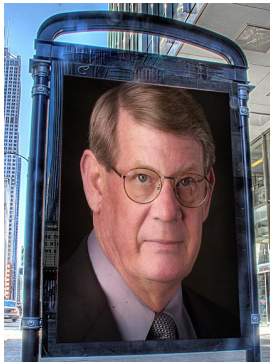
West Nile comes to Lake County politics

By RICH JAMES

MERRILLVILLE – I'm not sure what Northwest Indiana Republicans are drinking, but they ought to go on the wagon before they do serious harm to themselves and others. Does anyone have any reality pills? Or maybe a cold shower is all that is needed.

These guys will do anything to grab a headline.

Just in the last week, two Republican candidates and one town GOP organization came up with some pretty bizarre stuff. And when you call something bizarre in Lake County, it is, well, pretty darn bizarre.



The culprits are Joel Phelps who is challenging Rep. Pete Visclosky, D-Merrillville, in the 1st Congressional District; Eric Krieg, who is taking on Lake County Surveyor George Van Til, and the Republicans who control the Griffith Town Council.

Let's start with Krieg, who essentially said that Van Til is solely responsible for the emergence of the West Nile virus in Lake County, specifically in an unincorporated area just south of Griffith.

It's Krieg's contention that mosquitoes carrying the virus are breeding in ditches lining Broad Street, the main drag running south out of Griffith. Krieg said it is Van Til's fault that there is water in those ditches, which provide a natural breeding ground for mosquitoes.

There are a host of problems with Krieg's allegations. Foremost among them is that the surveyor is responsible only for legal drains, and the ditches in unincorporated areas of the county aren't legal drains and don't come under his jurisdiction.

Krieg said that if elected, he would put those ditches on his priority list, meaning, I guess that he would pump out the water to an unknown location. If that is Krieg's aim, it would take him eons to convert the many miles of wetlands to brownfields.

But Krieg's political comments are making light of a very weighty issue.

As Van Til told the Times of Northwest Indiana, "He is playing politics with something that is serious business."

Van Til should know better than most that Republicans have been doing that for years.

And then there was Phelps who expressed a good deal of optimism about his chances of beating Visclosky,

who has been in Congress since 1985.

Phelps called Visclosky a career politician and said he is running because he wants to do something, not be something. Phelps' comments are simply political fodder trying to play to the Tea Party zealots.

Thanks to Visclosky's efforts over the years, NWI is a much better place today. Losing him would be devastating. What really told me that Phelps had lost touch with reality is that he was very encouraged because of the results of calling 10,000 likely voters who are independent or marginally connected to a political party.

Phelps told the Times that half of those voters said they planned to vote for him.

That would be fine if there were an equal number of Democrats and Republicans in the district.

Unfortunately for Phelps, there are almost twice as many Democrats as Republicans in Visclosky's district. So, if you split the independents evenly, Visclosky still wins big.

And finally there are those pesky Griffith Republicans, the same ones who a couple years back opposed a Planned Parenthood facility in their town.

I could only assume they did so because the daughters of Griffith Republicans never need the multitude of services offered by Planned Parenthood. Perhaps they practice that failed Republican call for abstinence.

Anyway, the Griffith Republicans last week got back on their favorite campaign issue – pulling out of Calumet Township. In fact, it is the issue that gave them control of the council in the first place.

They complain – and rightly so – that Griffith residents pay too much in taxes because of the high demand for poor relief in Gary, which makes up the bulk of the township.

Yet the only way to make that fair is to spread poor relief costs across the county or across the state.

Unfortunately for the Griffith Republicans, their comrades who control the Legislature will never make such a move.

This isn't the first time Griffith has approached the Legislature with the secession proposal. And it has fallen flat each time.

Yet, the council last week approved a one-year expenditure to hire the Indianapolis law firm of Barnes and Thornburg to lobby for freedom from Calumet Township. While some say the \$60,000 to hire the lobbyists is a waste of money, the town likely would say it is a minor expenditure if Griffith can pull out of the township.

Actually it is a waste of money because the worst thing the state could do in terms of public policy is to let towns and cities choose their own townships.

How about renewing the call for the elimination of all forms of township government – not just township as-



sessors.

That's doable. Eliminating the ditch water in Griffith isn't. ❖

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

Kentland shows the way on economic development

By MORTON J. MARCUS

INDIANAPOLIS - Last week the Kentland Economic Development Commission (KEDC) met in the Town Hall to discuss and resolve a key issue concerning the town's future. It did so successfully, demonstrating the best of Hoosier values.

Kentland is in southern Newton County where U.S. 41 crosses U.S. 24. Furthermore, Newton County is located just south of Lake County in the northwest corner of the state. The town is the county seat with a population of approximately 1,700 and is home to several national and regional firms.



The main commercial street of Kentland contains a collection of older buildings with rustic canopies of shake shingles. These canopies give a unifying value to the street and form a distinctive architectural feature. They are, however, deteriorating and in need of replacement.

While they still give shelter from the rain and sun, they also provide homes for unwanted raccoons.

How does a community decide to renovate its downtown area? In Kentland the process was very similar to any town of any size in Indiana. There was a lot of talking. Many people had to be convinced of the need and the renovation plan. One person had to take the lead.

Now recall, these canopies are part of private properties. If any one of the building owners chooses not to participate in the renovation, the project will be uneven and perhaps a worse eyesore than it is currently. The canopies enhance the buildings they are attached to, but they also provide a unifying theme to the downtown area. Yet, this is not government infrastructure like streets, sewers, and water lines.

Should the Town of Kentland contribute to the canopies project? Is it right for local government to subsidize private building owners in order to preserve and improve

the look of downtown?

The answer of the KDEC was YES. Restoration of the canopies would make downtown more attractive to visitors and prospective investors. Such action was consistent with the mandate of the KDEC to improve economic prospects for the community.

The next step was problematic. Could the Town Council be convinced that this program, with its good effects for many in the community, was worth a monetary investment from the Town? Here Kentland differed from many contemporary Hoosier communities. Instead of a major battle of opposing philosophies, the Town Council agreed with the KEDC and voted to meet 20 percent of the cost of the project, subject to a \$20,000 limit.

But would the property owners agree to participate? This was the KEDC's initiative, not that of the men and women who own the nine properties. How much would it cost? What were the options? Were other public funds available to reduce the private costs?

These were the questions on the floor when the KEDC met last week with the property owners. The discussion was intelligent, on point, and friendly. There was none of the childish political bickering that characterizes public discussion these days. It was business acting in its own interest with a keen eye to the benefits to all, if all participated.

When the meeting was over, not one of the property owners demurred. Although one or two were not completely convinced, they agreed to have the project go forward with formal design work and final cost estimates.

After watching the Congress, the Indiana General Assembly, and many local government units squabble over less, this Kentland experience restored my faith in our Hoosier institutions and the people they serve. ❖

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



Lee Hamilton, Muncie Star Press: Presidential candidates and their aides know a lot these days about how to run a campaign. They just seem to have forgotten what campaigns are for. They're immensely sophisticated about targeting and messaging. They know how to drive the news cycle — or at least, try to — and they know where to focus their resources. They control the candidate, shape his every public foray to make him look good, and try their best to make sure he's not subject to inconvenient questions or cross examination. When "gaffes" happen, as they are bound to do, they move quickly to minimize the fallout. Yet what is good for a presidential campaign is not always good for the voter, as this year's contest so far proves. An immense gulf has opened between what the country needs from the candidates and the disappointing crumbs the candidates have offered. For the most part, the election thus far has been about the past — Barack Obama's failure to put the economy on surer footing, Mitt Romney's tenure at Bain Capital. It has not focused much on the future, which is what matters to voters. And let's be clear: There's plenty to talk about. Income, especially for the middle class, continues to stagnate, while jobs and the national debt are on every policy maker's front burner. The middle class is in trouble and looking for prescriptions that will set its families on a more secure course. We have an education system that worries many parents and causes economists to fret about our future competitiveness. Our health-care system remains bewilderingly complex and, for many Americans, at times dysfunctional. Questions about immigration and our openness to foreign talent remain unsettled. Yet it's hard to know from the campaign thus far what either candidate plans to do over the next four years on these and other issues. By contrast, I'm reminded of the year I first ran for Congress, 1964. Lyndon Johnson ran that year on a very specific platform, so that when he came into office he had a mandate; the result was the Great Society. Can you tell me right now what positive mandate Obama or Romney will have come inauguration day next year? I didn't think so. ❖

Abdul Hakim-Shabazz, Evansville Courier & Press: Who would have thought that in an economy that has been labeled the worst since the Great Depression, the candidates for governor would be talking about tax cuts, including income tax cuts (individual or corporate) and the elimination of the sales tax on gasoline. This makes a fiscal conservative's day. Most states are slashing budgets and drowning in red ink, but in Indiana the debate is what to do with the "extra" money. Of course, there is the chorus of voices who say instead of giving this money back to the people who earned it, we should give it to the people who

like to spend it. Republican gubernatorial candidate Mike Pence has proposed a 10 percent across the board cut in the individual income tax, while his opponent, Democrat John Gregg, has offered up the elimination of the state sales tax on gasoline and the elimination of corporate income taxes for businesses headquartered in Indiana. Frankly, I am more partial to reductions and eliminations in income taxes rather than sales taxes. I would much rather that government collects my money when I consume a good or service rather than when I go out and work to earn a living. Both Joe Donnelly and Richard Mourdock have come out in favor of extending the Bush tax cuts, much to the chagrin of the progressive movement. Opponents say the tax cuts for the top 2 percent should be allowed to expire. If I thought the government would actually use what would amount to about \$80 billion for deficit reduction I would agree, but we all know what is going to happen here. There is a valid argument to be made — and critics of tax cuts are correct — when they say more money for taxpayers is less money for government programs. My answer is: So what? The same local governments that complained about limited resources are the same people who fought tooth and nail against Kernan-Shepard reforms which would have consolidated offices and promoted efficiencies. ❖



Maureen Hayden, CHNI: I have a family member who goes to the same hair stylist as Paul Ryan, the Wisconsin congressman just named as Mitt Romney's running mate. It may not sway her vote one way or the other, but the Republican Ryan has a great head of hair — all dark and thick to go with those blue eyes and square jaw. He looks like some of my Irish relatives on my father's side. My late grandmother, Rose O'Connor, would have taken an instant liking to him. Not because of his controversial plan for cutting Social Security benefits or raising the retirement age, but because he's an Irish-American. The same reason she liked Democratic President John Kennedy and almost anybody else whose ancestors came from the Old Sod. Why we vote for the people we do is still a bit of a mystery. We'd like to think it has to do with the policies they preach, the promises they make and our perception of what impact they'll have on the economy. But there's an undeniable "likeability" factor that plays a role, too. Charm by itself isn't enough. I spent an afternoon recently with Rupert Boneham, the Libertarian candidate for Indiana governor who is better known as the scraggly bearded, wild-haired, tie-dyed castaway from the reality TV series "Survivor." I saw Boneham work an Indiana State Fair crowd. He dispensed more handshakes and hugs than any candidate I'd ever seen. He's immensely personable. ❖



Pence meets with Daniels on ACA

INDIANAPOLIS - In response to a request from Governor Mitch Daniels for input on the decisions the state faces on the Affordable Care Act, Mike Pence met with the Governor at the Statehouse Wednesday. After the meeting Pence issued the following statement: "I was pleased to meet with Governor Daniels today to discuss the decisions the state must make regarding implementation of the Affordable Care Act. The Affordable Care Act will increase insurance premiums, and it could cost taxpayers as much as \$2 billion for the expansion of Medicaid. These are among the most serious issues facing Hoosiers today, and, as such, I am carefully considering the options available to the State of Indiana and the impact the state's actions will have on our citizens, our economy and our state's finances. I am grateful that the governor has sought my counsel on this matter and will offer my recommendations in the next several days. Hoosiers deserve to know where every candidate for Governor of Indiana stands on implementing the Affordable Care Act in this state."



LG candidates debate ag issues

INDIANAPOLIS - The three candidates for lieutenant governor faced off Wednesday before a farm-friendly crowd at the Indiana State Fair discussing campaign topics including infrastructure, property taxes and more (Kelly, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Democrat Vi Simpson offered several specific proposals

during the traditional debate, while Republican Sue Ellspermann focused on the heritage of agriculture in Indiana. Libertarian Brad Klopfenstein provided some levity. Farm and rural issues play a central role in the duties of Indiana's lieutenant governor, who also serves as the state's agriculture secretary. Indiana farmland is valued using a formula that in part takes into account crop yields. Because recent years have been prosperous, the value of farmland has risen, which results in higher property taxes. Simpson said she would support reversing the caps on property taxes in the state constitution, saying the caps unfairly shift the burden from residential homes to farmland and commercial properties. Ellspermann said she supports revisiting the formula for calculating farmland value. "Now is the time to look at the tax structure for agriculture and make sure we've made it the most competitive in the Midwest," she said.

Van Til probe campaign related

CROWN POINT - A federal investigation into Lake County Surveyor George Van Til involves whether he engaged in campaigning activities while on the county clock, The Times has learned (Dolan, NWI Times). A grand jury was scheduled to convene Wednesday, and one of the cases it was slated to hear involved Van Til. The FBI removed a number of computers and containers full of documents from the surveyor's office in June. Sources said Van Til also may have used county computers for those alleged campaigning activities. Van Til, who has held the surveyor's office since his first election in 1992, said he did not know what the FBI was investigating. "From the beginning of this process, it seems to me that amongst some politicians and some media there hasn't been enough presumption of

innocence," he said. "This is America, I thought."

Fair disaster deal falls through

INDIANAPOLIS - Two weeks ago, Attorney General Greg Zoeller announced a State Fair stage collapse payout plan "that puts victims first." The state had linked up with two companies facing lawsuits over last year's tragedy to offer \$13.2 million to 62 victims — including the families of the seven who died — on top of the \$5 million they had already received (Indianapolis Star). In exchange, however, the victims had to release those companies, Mid-America Sound Corp. and James Thomas Engineering, of any liability. An Aug. 2 news release from the attorney general's office noted that 51 claimants had signed on — a "vast majority," the release said. That majority appears not to have been vast enough. Mid-America Sound announced Wednesday that the deal had fallen through because not a high enough proportion of victims "from the largest claims categories" — those who likely would receive the most in a successful lawsuit — accepted the deal.

Carson, Buckley advocate Amtrak

BEECH GROVE - U.S. Rep André Carson and Beech Grove Mayor Dennis Buckley decried presidential candidate Mitt Romney's proposal to slash Amtrak funding at a press conference near the Amtrak maintenance facility in Beech Grove this afternoon. In a Fortune interview, Romney identified subsidies for Amtrak, PBS, the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities as things he would eliminate.