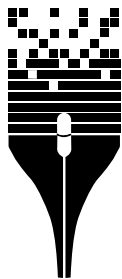


The Howey Political Report



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Brian A. Howey, publisher

Mark Schoeff Jr., Washington writer

Jack E. Howey, editor

The Howey Political Report Office: 317-254-1533
PO Box 40265 Fax: 317-466-0993
Indianapolis, IN 46240-0265 Mobile: 317-506-0883

brianhowey@howeypolitics.com
www.howeypolitics.com

Washington office: 202-775-3242;
Business Office: 317-254-0535.

Subscriptions: \$250 annually via e-mail or fax. Call 317-254-1533.

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“QUOTE” OF THE WEEK

“If I had a ticket to heaven and you didn’t have one, I’d give mine away and go to hell with you....” - Michael Deaver, describing a private birthday toast President Reagan made to Speaker Tip O’Neill, on CNN last Tuesday.

Steel crisis, taxes will shape end game

Bush tax cut may form the ‘contrast’

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY** in Indianapolis

At this writing, we are witnessing the end games on a number of fronts in Indiana and Washington that will have a distinct impact on our political culture for the next couple of years. They include:

The Indiana General Assembly: Gov. Frank O’Bannon’s cigarette tax looks dead and the dockside gaming chip has arisen (as we predicted). We don’t see dockside as faring much better than the cigarette tax because of the strident opposition of the governor, Speaker John Gregg and most House Republicans. Needing to bridge at least a \$60 million gap is the big question coming on at the 11th hour and there are no obvious answers at this point. Thus, a special session looks like a reasonable probability. The biggest risk for O’Bannon - the education governor - is his signature on a flat-lined school outlay that could throw many urban school districts smack dab in the middle of Democratic turf into turmoil. The governor’s staff reminds us that a special session always favors the governor, who’s already been bloodied by the necessity to seek a tax hike. The good news for him is that most regular folks aren’t paying too much attention ... yet. And they will when gasoline prices begin hitting the \$2 mark with no gas tax cut available in this, a non-election year.

Meltdown of the Steel Industry: In the early 1980s, the contraction and near destruction of Northwest Indiana’s steel industry prompted a crisis in December 1982, a special session and a record tax hike. LTV Corp. may be out of business by May 15 and by year’s end only USX may be standing, potentially impacting 120,000 Region families, a dozen

Continued on page 2

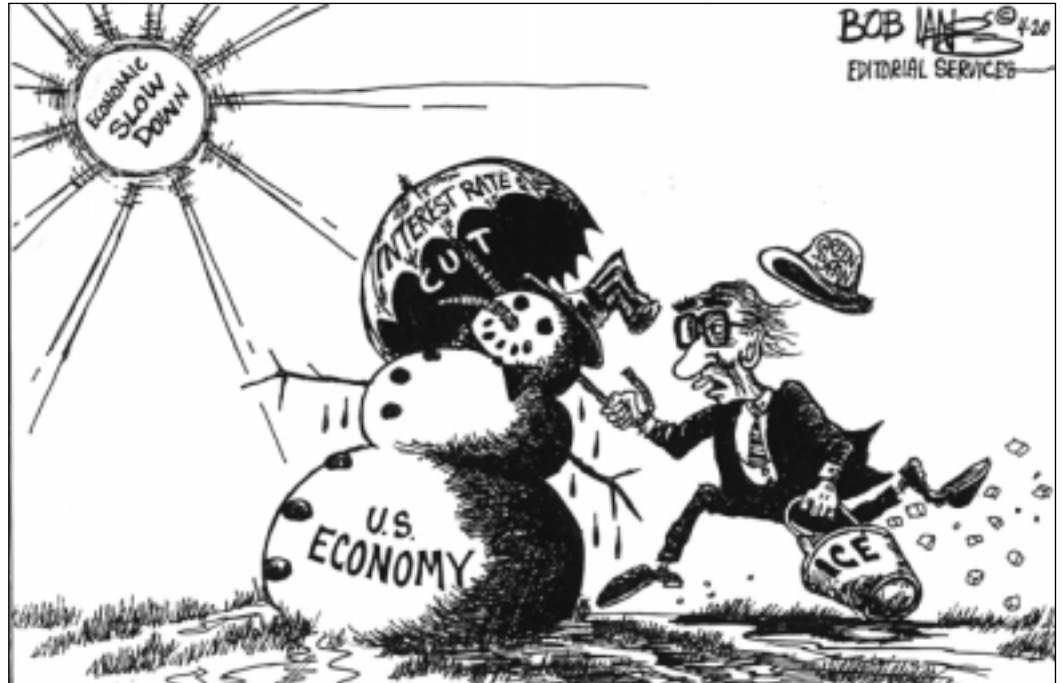
INSIDE FEATURES

Ticker: DC eyes on 2nd, 8th CDs	p. 2
Bob Lang: Greenspan’s rescue	p. 2
George Geib: Our political parties	p. 4
Perhap: A matriarch passes	p. 5
Horse Race: Skillman eyes S of S	p. 6
Columnists: Colwell, Ciancone	p. 8

TICKER T A P E

WASHINGTON WATCHING
2nd AND 8th CDs: If the Indiana Congressional map remains the way it has been approved by the state House Elections and Apportionment Committee, districts at the top and bottom of the state will be the focus of the Washington politierati. "In terms of control of Congress, the 2nd and the 8th will be among the most watched in the country," said Amy Walter, House editor of the Cook Political Report. The 2nd, which is the current 3rd for the most part, would be an open seat due to the retirement of Democratic Rep. Tim Roemer. "Either party has a pretty good chance of winning this seat," said Walter. Washington Republicans covet the 2nd. "That will be at the top of any list we put together," said Carl Forti, spokesman for the National Republican Congressional Committee. HPR estimates that the new 8th would be about 55 percent Democratic, posing an even tougher than usual challenge for incumbent GOP Rep. John Hostettler. But Walter said Hostettler has proven his mettle in close races. "I don't think Democrats should be popping champagne bottles over this district yet," she said. "If it were an open seat, that would be a different matter." A spokesman for the Democratic

Continued on page 3



End game, *from page 1*

or so school districts, and hospitals. It is an economic meltdown that could reverberate all the way to an unsuspecting Indianapolis, where most people view Gary and East Chicago as distant as Macedonia. They all may be in for a rude, rude surprise. The signals from the O'Bannon-Kernan administration point to a special session to restructure taxes later this summer or fall. Remember, Lake and Porter counties represent the Democratic bulwark. The critical question is, will Sen. Larry Borst care enough to cut a deal in 2001, or will he let Kernan and the Democrats stew well into 2003 and 2004?

The Bush Tax Cut: The nightmare scenario O'Bannon and House Democrats feared is taking shape. The governor was bloodied on the cigarette tax. The steel crisis is forcing restructuring. And now President Bush is pushing hard to wrap up his trillion dollar plus tax cut, possibly by this weekend. That provides the "contrast" that petrified Gregg and the governor's inner circle. President Bush is emerging from his first 100 days in pretty good shape. He stared down the Red Chinese, will get somewhere between \$1.6 and

\$1.3 trillion in tax cuts, and his education plan will likely pass this summer. That's potentially good news heading into 2002 for Indiana House Republicans, U.S. Reps. John Hostettler, Mike Pence, and challengers in the 2nd, 7th and 9th CDs.

Redistricting: By most accounts, the Democratic redistricting plans for the Indiana House and the CDs will stand; as will the Republican plan for the Senate. The Democrats say they have 45 relatively safe House seats. One independent analyst notes that President Bush, Sen. Lugar and Attorney Gen. Steve Carter won with good pluralities in 54 new House districts. That's ominous news for legislative Democrats. It could have been worse if Republicans had pushed for 99 seats instead of 100, extending more Democratic seats into GOP turf. As for the Indiana Senate, the question is when they'll get their intra-caucus quorum (34 seats). Our best guess is 2002.

Next Week: If the legislature wraps up, we'll take another look at the 2001 edition of HPR's "50 Most Influential List" to see how astute we were, and who the big winners and losers are at this point in the year. ❖

Rate Change for HPR Subscriptions



Dear HPR Subscriber:

Beginning in January 2000, *The Howey Political Report* began a new era of electronic transmission via the internet and fax. At that time, we added the *HPR Daily Wire* for customers receiving HPR via e-mail at no additional cost.

Over the past 16 months, the feedback we've received about the *HPR Daily Wire* is that it has become an essential executive business day summary of political and social events occurring throughout Indiana. It saves our subscribers much time in scanning the dozens of news sources from around the state. It is delivered directly into your e-mail account each business day.

The Howey Political Report weekly edition has remained a newsletter that offers head-of-the-curve, in-depth trending analysis, interviews and opinion from around the state and Washington. It continues to be a recognized source of the best information from Indiana by numerous news organizations, including CNN, *The Washington Post*, National Public Radio, *The Cook Political Report*, *The Rothenberg Political Report* and a number of news services.

Since the *HPR Daily Wire* debuted 16 months ago, it has grown to 12 to 20 pages a week, depending on news flow. We've dedicated a considerable amount of time, energy and resources compiling both the *HPR Daily Wire* and *The Howey Political Report*. Because of this dedication of resources, the time has come to begin charging for the HPR Daily Wire.

Beginning with our May billing statements, an annual subscription to *The Howey Political Report* will still be \$250. For subscribers wanting the *HPR Daily Wire* too, the combined package will be \$450 a year. *The HPR Daily Wire* will not be sold by itself.

We hope you continue supporting *HPR* as an independent, nonpartisan news organization.

Brian A. Howey
Publisher

TICKER T A P E

Congressional Campaign Committee said that the party is not necessarily pushing Indiana House Speaker John Gregg to run against Hostettler. "I'm not sure that we have a wish list for any congressional district in the country," said Mark Nevins, a DCCC spokesman. "The most appropriate thing is for the people of the district to choose who will represent them." Nevins cautioned that it's too early to speculate on new district maps because they might change. "The most likely result is that Democrats and Republicans will be at parity (nationwide). It will be a wash for both parties."

BAYH OPENS EDUCATION DEBATE: Sen. Evan Bayh helped open the Senate debate on education reform Wednesday by calling on the Bush administration to put its money where its mouth is. He praised Bush's focus on education, but criticized the president for devoting \$68 billion to tax cuts and \$2.6 billion to education spending in his budget. "I support tax relief, but it is not 25 times more important than our children's education," Bayh said in a speech on the Senate floor. "We should not be forced to make a choice between two alternatives, both of which can be accommodated if the admin-

continued on page 4

TICKER

T A P E

istration will be more forthcoming with resources." Bayh, who has been instrumental in shaping an education proposal offered by centrist Democrats, said that accountability, public school choice, flexibility for states and local school districts in using federal funds, and professional development for teachers are the four main reform principles.

D.C. DEMOCRATS PROTEST STATE SENATE GOP MAP: On Wednesday, a Democratic redistricting watchdog organization criticized a plan by Indiana Senate Republicans to carve up the current 10th CD and distribute it among surrounding GOP districts. Democratic Rep. Julia Carson represents the 10th, which is centered in Indianapolis. "Republicans in Indiana are following their party's plan to dilute minority voting strength across the country by targeting Rep. Julia Carson's district for elimination," Rep. Martin Frost (D-Texas), chairman of the National Democratic Congressional Redistricting Project, said in a statement. "The Republican plan would unfairly move many of Rep. Carson's constituents into the districts of right-wing Members like Dan Burton. Only Democrats are committed to protecting every minority Member's district and combating Republican gerrymanders that dilute

continued on page 5

The health of our political parties

By **PROF. GEORGE W. GEIB**

What's the current health of the county party organizations in Indiana? With no elections scheduled this year, it's often hard to tell. But if your interest is in local politics, the place to look is the recent set of party reorganization meetings held throughout Indiana.

The ritual occurs by law in both major parties once every four years, in the spring following the Presidential election. In each of Indiana's 92 counties the precinct committeemen and women elected in 1998, or their appointed successors, gathered recently to elect their county party officers for the next election cycle.

The theory is that the precinct workers are being given an opportunity to evaluate the performance of their leaders in the immediate preceding elections. But the theory frequently breaks down in the face of the heavy turnover of party volunteers, which often exceeds 25 percent per year. Most delegates to the 2001 county conventions were actually appointees of the current county chair. Some are so recent they have never served at a voting place.

Convention contests were few. Most county delegates simply listened to a set of upbeat speeches and then ratified the recommendations of their current county chairman and his leadership team. Don't be surprised if you missed the whole process.

All of this used to be a much bigger deal. It was a bigger deal for the county chairmen because extensive patronage came with the job. It was a bigger deal for the precinct leaders because they were the effective managers of voter turnout in their area.

Today, things are different. Old style patronage, such as the license branches and the 2 percent club, is almost dead. Effective precinct voter contact by party workers has often followed suit. The chances are better than even that

you'll never see your county convention delegate at the polls next year.

You might then ask, why bother? But don't be too cynical, because the county parties are not as dead as surface appearances might make you think.

They are not dead, quite simply, because a number still have one key power. It's the ability to name the nominees for public office, and especially for the less visible offices of local government.

Admit it. Without stopping to think about it, can you name your county recorder? Your township assessor? In a

Admit it. Without stopping to think about it, can you name your county recorder?

state where more than half the registered voters can't give a pollster the correct name of their serving U. S. Representative, what are the chances many of them will know their surveyor or trustee?

The parties have always known this. They name the candidate in the spring, and hope he or she can ride the party line vote to victory in the fall. If you had attended your party's county convention, you'd have been impressed by how many county and township employees from office clerks to sheriffs deputies were there, often with members of their family.

The control of entry to the nominating process is the most important power remaining to many local party organizations. The mechanics of that process are vital to them. If you live in a larger county, you will receive a visual reminder when you receive a primary "slate" in the mail with the recommendations of your party's caucus. If you live in a smaller county, chances are the slate is informal and verbal but just as real.

Slates dominate candidate selection. Voters either endorse them, or use them as the basis for casting their votes in opposi-

tion. If you are so fortunate as to see a party worker, their most likely handout or talking point will be a list "endorsed by your precinct committeeman."

Protecting the slate also dominates many local party attitudes toward ballot reform. You may have heard a lot in the national press about helping general election voters. But walk into your county courthouse, and you'll find the talk dominated by the primaries. Forget cost, and forget the lure of technology. The majority party in your county wants a voting system that makes it easy to instruct voters how to support the slate.

Which brings us back to the county conventions. When you evaluate your party's health and leadership, you may have judged them by their voter turnout results in the fall general election. But when your precinct leaders cast their votes last March, chances are good they had their eyes fixed squarely upon May 2002. You'll know then how well they did their job of leadership selection. Or you may, like so many Hoosier voters, not even notice. ❖

George W. Geib is a professor of history at Butler University in Indianapolis.

TICKER T A P E

minority voting strength." The Republican map has no chance of passage.

PASTRICK VOWS NOT TO SEEK EAST CHICAGO MAYORAL BID IN 2003: East Chicago Mayor Robert Pastrick, during a talk last week about reducing the size of government, suddenly said he will not seek another term as mayor (Rich James, Gary Post-Tribune). He was first elected in 1971. He acknowledged that he had said "no more" before and changed his mind, but this time, he said, he really, really means it.

ILLINOIS ROUTE NOT AN OPTION FOR INTERSTATE 69: Indiana is keeping pace with similar-sized states along the Canada-to-Mexico highway corridor in deciding which route the road should take, a federal transportation official said Monday (Tim Starks, Evansville Courier & Press). "Let me assure you Indiana is just where it ought to be," Gene Cleckley of the Federal Highway Administration told reporters Monday. Asked about the possibility of Indiana losing the road to Illinois — an idea feared by highway supporters — Cleckley seemed bewildered. "Illinois is not in competition," he said. "I don't know where they get that notion."

continued on page 6

PERHAPS... WE WANDER

By Brian Howey

Another party matriarch unexpectedly passes away

INDIANAPOLIS - The wariness of his return trip from Florida had barely receded when Indiana Republican Chairman Mike McDaniel began going through his answering machine, loaded with messages last weekend.

And then came the one that literally took his breath away. It was Deborah Daniels, newly appointed to the Bush justice department, telling McDaniel that her mother, Dottie Daniels, had unexpectedly died of an aneurysm.

It had been just a brief four months since Dottie Daniels took front, center stage at the Senate confirmation hearing of her son, OMB Director Mitchell Daniels Jr., at the behest of U.S. Sen. Joseph Lieberman. There stood the proud mother of two who would become presidential appointees, talking with great pride about her soon-to-be powerful son.

How many times in the history of the Republic would one mother find herself watching the children she raised taking such conspicuous and important positions in a new administration. The sur-

names would be limited to those such as Adams, Kennedy and Bush.

For McDaniel, the loss of Dottie Daniels was profound for a completely different reason. Countless times he would appear at Indiana Republican Headquarters only to find the elder Daniels couple working the tasks that many in today's society might find menial, but in the historic context of political volunteerism became increasingly rare, albeit vital.

Think of it: The mother of the OMB director not having a qualm about stuffing envelopes or updating mailing lists. At age 74, McDaniel figured robust and infatigable Dottie Daniels would be plugging away for another decade or two, probably out-lasting him.

Indiana Democrats figured their matriarch - Mary Lou Conrad - would have been a continuing fixture as she pounded out songs on the second level foyer piano at the French Lick Springs Resort every August.

The twist of irony and fate was that the same malady that took Mary Lou Conrad so unexpectedly two years ago claimed Dottie Daniels last weekend. ❖

TICKER

T A P E

9TH CD CHAIR WILL URGE BAYH TO RUN FOR PRESIDENCY: 9th CD Democratic Chairman Mike Jones will urge U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh to run for the presidency in 2004 (HPR). "I have been talking with friends about the possibility of his running for the Senate and President. Some disagree with me but I believe that he could win the Senate seat and carry the state in 2004," Jones said. "I am going to contact Evan and encourage him to run. I am excited about the prospects of a Bayh for President and Kernan for Governor ticket."

GOVERNOR SEEKS PUBLIC RECORDS FORUM: Gov. Frank O'Bannon said that he wants to create a forum to discuss the rules that govern access to public records in Indiana (Associated Press). O'Bannon met with several newspaper editors this week to talk about legislation that would exempt the General Assembly from the state's open-records laws. "I said that I would help in any way to bring together people to talk about that over the next few months," O'Bannon told reporters at his weekly news conference.

STATE WILL END FISCAL YEAR WITH SCANT \$24 MILLION: State budget and agency officials have recently found \$63 million in

Indiana 2002, 2004 Racing Form

Governor 2004: Republican: David McIntosh, Sen. Murray Clark, Sen. Luke Kenley, Sen. Teresa Lubbers, Eric Miller, Pat Kiely, George Witwer. **Democrat:** Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan. **1996 Results:** O'Bannon (D), Goldsmith (R), Dillon (L). **2000 Results:** O'Bannon (D) 1,230,345, McIntosh (R) 906,492, Horning (L) 38,686. **2004 Forecast:** U.S. Rep. Mike Pence told HPR on Thursday that he would back David McIntosh for governor in 2004 if the former congressman from Muncie decides to run again. Pence said Indiana Republicans have a strange tradition of "throwing away talent" by allowing one shot only at running for governor. Pence won the 2nd CD seat McIntosh gave up in his third try for Congress. He noted that in many other states it takes gubernatorial candidates more than one run to win the governorship, particularly if they challenge an incumbent. Pence on some early 2004 gubernatorial speculation lists, but said he had little interest if McIntosh were to make a second run. Luke Kenley, reacting to HPR Weekly on Thursday, confirmed he is

HORSE RACE

weighing a run for governor in 2004 and will make a decision by July 1. Kenley took issue with HPR saying he hasn't taken leadership stands on the issues. He noted that in 1997 he, along with then O'Bannon chief of staff Tom New and Jerry Payne of the AFL-CIO, helped hammer out the five-bill package that forged the budget, funding for Conseco Fieldhouse and RCA Dome renovations, and workers compensation increases. "I am the guy who helped come up with solutions," Kenley said. **Status:** *Leans D.*

Secretary of State 2002: Republican: Mike Delph, Deputy Secretary of State Todd Rokita, Richard Mourdock, Luke Messer, Carmel Clerk-Treasurer Diana Cordray. **Democrat:** Bloomington Mayor John Fernandez. **1994 Results:** Gilroy (R) 902,100, Jeffers (D) 542,539, Dillon (L) 32,483, Knight (A) 13,948. **1998 Results:** Gilroy 828,557, Little (D) 652,565, Dillon (L) 51,775. **2002 Forecast:** State Sen. Becky Skillman, R-Bedford, is being urged to get into this race by several key Republicans. **Status:** *Tossup.*

Congressional District 2: Republican: Chris Chocola, State Sen. Thomas Weatherwax, State Rep. Bill Friend. **Democrat:** Roger O. Parent, Jill Long Thompson, State Sen. Bill Alexa, State Rep. Mike Dvorak, Katie Humphries, Cleo Washington. **Geography:** LaPorte, St. Joseph, Starke, Marshall, Pulaski, Fulton, Cass, Miami, Carroll and parts of Porter, Elkhart and White counties. **Media Market:** South Bend-Elkhart, Indianapolis, Lafayette, Chicago. **2000 Result:** Roemer (D) 107,076, Chocola (R) 98,367. **2002 Forecast:** Chocola, now determined to run in the 2nd CD even though he lives in the new 3rd, must resolve the residency issue to the satisfaction of most of his potential constituents or his campaign will be doomed. He's rich enough he could buy a lake cottage on Maxinkuckee, but how would that sell in Onward or Peoria? **Status:** *Tossup.*

Congressional District 3: Republican: U.S. Rep. Mark Souder. **Democrat:** Open. **Geography:** Fort Wayne, Goshen, Kosciusko, Whitley, LaGrange, Steuben, DeKalb and parts of Elkhart and Allen counties. **Media Market:** South Bend-Elkhart, Fort Wayne. **2000 results:** Souder (R) 131,051, Foster (D) 74,492. **2002 Forecast:** 2000 Democratic nominee Mike Foster announced Saturday he has switched his allegiance to the Republicans after having "a revelation about my own political beliefs. My heart will always be rooted in faith and family. But my political loyalty and ideology now belong to the Republicans." **Status:** *Safe R.*

Congressional District 4: Republican: U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer, U.S. Rep. Brian Kerns. **Democrat:** Open. **Geography:** Tippecanoe, Clinton, Boone, Montgomery, Hendricks, Morgan, Lawrence and parts of Marion, Johnson, Monroe, Fountain and White counties. **Media Market:** Lafayette, Indianapolis, Terre Haute, Evansville, Louisville. **2000 Results: Old 5th CD:** Buyer (R) 132,035, Goodnight (D) 81,423; **Old 7th CD:** Kerns 131,562, Graf (D) 65,174. **2002 Forecast:** Buyer and Kerns have been working their new Northern/Southern Indiana district, seeking endorsements from legislators, county chairs, sheriffs and money people. But while many of these people are receptive to both men, they are unwilling to commit this early in

the game. True to his nature, Buyer is being very aggressive. Former Congressman John Myers is expected to work for Kerns in the counties where he once made a habit of bringing home the bacon. This is a very fluid situation with a \$2 million primary looming. **Status:** *Safe R.*

Congressional District 5: Republican: U.S. Rep. Dan Burton. **Democrat:**

Open. **Geography:** Indianapolis, Kokomo, Marion, Shelbyville; Wabash, Huntington, Howard, Grant, Tipton, Hamilton, Hancock and parts of Marion, Johnson and Shelby counties. **Media Market:** Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Lafayette. **2000 Results:** Burton (R) 194,771, Griesey (D) 72,821, Hauptmann (L) 8,874. **2002 Forecast:** Reliable sources tell HPR that Dan Burton might have thought about retiring if the Republicans had lost control of the House last year. But they didn't and he now looks quite content about serving another four or five terms in an extremely accommodating CD. **Status:** *Safe R.*

Congressional District 6: Republican: U.S. Rep. Mike Pence. **Democrat:**

Melina Ann Fox. **Geography:** Anderson, Muncie, Richmond; Wells, Adams, Blackford, Jay, Madison, Delaware, Randolph, Henry, Wayne, Rush, Fayette, Union, Decatur, Franklin, and parts of Bartholomew, Shelby, Johnson and Allen counties. **Media Market:** Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Dayton, Cincinnati. **2000 results:** Pence (R) 106,023, Rock (D) 80,885, Frazier (I) 19,07. **2002 Forecast:** Former Secretary of State Joe Hogsett is telling people he will not run in 2004, preferring to enjoy his young family. Majority Leader Dick Armey stumped for Pence in Muncie. One theory on why Eddie Mahern didn't stick Pence and Burton into the same district (instead of Kerns/Buyer): The Democrats are terrified of Pence's statewide potential and would rather keep him in Washington where there is already a buzz about a freshman on a leadership track. **Status:** *Leans R.*

Congressional District 7: Republican: Brose McVey, Marvin Scott, Tony

Samuel. **Democrat:** U.S. Rep. Julia Carson. **Geography:** Indianapolis. **Media Market:** Indianapolis. **2000 Results:** Carson (D) 91,300, Scott (R) 61,818, Ali (L) 2,513. **2002 Forecast:** McVey has filed papers to form an exploratory committee. "It's our intention to move ahead. We're not exploring much. We don't have any intention of going backwards." Hofmeister, the 1998 nominee, told HPR he doesn't plan to run. Our take on McVey is that he will be able to do what Marvin Scott never did - raise a lot of money. McVey is tight with the Republican establishment and key GOP money spigots. **Status:** *Leans D.*

Congressional District 8: Republican: U.S. Rep. John Hostettler. **Democrat:**

House Speaker John Gregg, Paul Perry, State Reps. Russ Stilwell and Jonathon Weinzapfel. **Geography:** Evansville, Terre Haute, Greencastle; Posey, Vanderburgh, Warrick, Gibson, Pike, Martin, Daviess, Knox, Sullivan, Greene, Owen, Clay, Vigo, Vermillion, Parke, Putnam, Warren and part of Fountain counties. **Media Market:** Evansville, Terre Haute, Indianapolis, Lafayette. **1994 results:** Hostettler (R) 93,529, McCloskey (D) 84,857. **1996 Results:** Hostettler (R) 109,582, Weinzapfel (D) 106,134, Hager (L) 3,799. **1998 Results:** Hostettler (R) 92,227, Riecken (D) 81,381, Hager (L) 3,395. **2000 Results:** Hostettler 116,860, Perry (D) 100,461. **2002 Forecast:** The *Wall Street Journal's* John Fund wrote, "The new congressional district map includes a seat designed to satisfy Democratic House Speaker John Gregg's yen to move to Washington." Gregg still mum, but once sine die occurs, everyone is going to want to know his plans. **Status:** *Tossup.*

Congressional District 9: Republican: Kevin Kellems, Mike Sodrel.

Democrat: U.S. Rep. Baron Hill. **Geography:** Bloomington, Columbus, Lawrenceburg, Rising Sun, New Albany Jeffersonville, Madison, Nashville; Spencer, DuBois, Orange, Crawford, Perry, Harrison, Washington, Jackson, Brown, Jennings, Scott, Floyd, Clark, Jefferson, Switzerland, Ripley, Ohio, and parts of Dearborn and Monroe counties. **Media Market:** Evansville, Indianapolis, Louisville, Dayton, Cincinnati. **1994 results:** Hamilton 91,459 (D), Leising (R) 84,315. **1996 Results:** Hamilton (D) 128,885, Leising (R) 97,747, Feeney (L) 2,315. **1998 Results:** Hill (D) 92,477, Leising (R) 87,278, Feeney (L) 2,397. **2000 Results:** Hill 125,978, Bailey (R) 101,790, Chambers (L) 4,634. **2002 Forecast:** Mike Sodrel, who operates Free Enterprise Bus, has business roots in Clark/Floyd area and good finances. He is weighing a run. **Status:** *Leans D.*

-Brian A. Howey

TICKER

T A P E

savings to prevent state government from running out of money in its primary checking account at the end of the fiscal year in June (Lesley Stedman, Louisville Courier-Journal). Even with the cut-backs, however, the state is expected to end its year with a scant \$24 million in its general fund, said State Budget Director Betty Cockrum.

BUYER ON STEEL MISSION: U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer, R-5th CD, has started a quest he hopes will make sure steel used in products made in the U.S. will be made in the U.S. (Tina McGrady, Crawfordsville Journal Review). Buyer is serving his fifth term from the 5th District, but will run in the 4th District next year because of redistricting. Nucor Steel is in his new district and Buyer has corresponded with Secretary of Commerce Don Evans urging action against foreign companies dumping steel in the U.S.

BILL WOULD AID POLICE AND FIRE PENSIONS: Sen. Luke Kenley, R-Noblesville, is awaiting appointment of House conference committee members to help resolve differences in a Senate bill that would help cities burdened by police and firefighter pension obligations (John Schmitt, Fort Wayne News-Sentinel). The bill would allow interest earned on Indiana's \$300 million Public

continued on page 8

TICKER T A P E

Deposit Insurance Fund over the next 10 years to be used to fund pension plans enacted before 1977. The Indiana Bankers Association and Community Bankers Association say the money belongs to the banks that funded the PDIF and isn't the state's to give away.

DIGGER MAY BECOME A CZAR: Former Notre Dame basketball coach Richard "Digger" Phelps was in Washington last week to meet with White House officials about his possible appointment to the position of drug czar in the Bush administration (Jack Colwell, *South Bend Tribune*). "I'm just exploring the possibility," Phelps said Saturday. Phelps is a Bush family friend who served as a special assistant to the director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy in the first Bush administration.

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COLUMNISTS ON INDIANA

Jack Colwell, *South Bend Tribune* - Congressman Steve Buyer, the Monticello Republican who represents the present 5th District, is assuming the Democratic plan will prevail, as is likely, and is doing the smart thing in response. Buyer would end up in a new 4th District in which he would lose most of his present constituents. Instead of complaining about it, Buyer says he would welcome the new constituents. He's already touring the new area. Since Buyer apparently would face a primary election challenge from Republican Congressman Brian Kerns, who now represents the 7th District, Buyer is doing the smart thing. It's not wise politically to complain about new areas and then have to go there to ask for support from the folks you said you didn't want in your district. ❖

John Fund, *Wall Street Journal* - The Democratic gerrymander. Even though each party has one legislative house in Indiana, Democrats control the process because stalemates are settled by a commission that they dominate. The new congressional district map includes a seat designed to satisfy Democratic House Speaker John Gregg's yen to move to Washington. The 3rd District, which has combined South Bend and Elkhart together in the same district since 1932, has been renumbered, and the counties separated, to preserve a Democratic seat. ❖

Pete Ciancone, *Terre Haute Tribune-Star* - Gov. Frank O'Bannon announced Monday that he would like to raise extra revenue by bumping the tax on cigarettes by 50 cents a pack. The governor wants to invest the extra money in education, which many people regard as a worthy idea. He justified the proposal, in part, by saying that the extra cost may well dis-

courage people from smoking. Young people in particular may never start if the cost is prohibitive. And the reduced levels of smoking might have the added serendipity of reducing the medical bills smokers seem to amass. So we'll pay for textbooks, new libraries and schools with a tax on smokes. For some reason we won't fork over real money in the bank. We have to buy them with tobacco taxes and lottery money. Of course, there's probably no way that this increase will go through as is. Rep. Vern Tincher, D-Riley, said he thought there might be sympathy for raising the tax, just not so much. Indiana's cigarette tax is 15.5 cents a pack; the national average is 41.9 cents. ❖

Gary Gerard, *Warsaw Times-Union* - The environment - like defense and civil rights - is an area where I think the federal government needs to be involved. We, as a nation, have made great strides in the past 20 years where the environment is concerned. I don't think anyone wants to see an erosion of that progress, even if it costs us. Whether W is beholden to corporate interests or not, some of his environmental decisions make him look like he is. It wouldn't hurt W to be a little less conservative on environmental issues. ❖

Larry MacIntyre, *Indianapolis Star* - It's quite likely that sometime in the next 72 hours, there will be a puff of white smoke from the fourth floor of the Indiana Statehouse indicating that the legislature's elite and secretive college of budget cardinals has finished its work. Legislative staffers will burn through reams of paper to make copies for lawmakers, lobbyists and journalists, all anxiously waiting to see who the budget cardinals have decided will suffer the most because of the state's projected \$923 million revenue shortfall. My prediction: Gov. Frank O'Bannon. ❖