



# Tanking GOP poll numbers fuel Democrat recruitment

## *Hill, Ellsworth, Donnelly, Hayhurst lining up*

By BRIAN A. HOWEY in Indianapolis

INDIANAPOLIS -- If you're a Republican and have a job in Congress or the Indiana General Assembly, you are nervously watching the storm clouds gather on the horizon. You are aware of Baron Hill, Joe Donnelly, Brad Ellsworth, Nancy Dembowski and Dr. Tom Hayhurst circling your raft.

If history is any guide, the midterm election in a president's second term is almost always tough on the ruling party. When 2006 rolls around, the public will see Republicans controlling the White House, U.S. House and Senate, the Indiana governor and both branches of the Indiana General Assembly.

Recent public opinion polls are revealing ominous tides. A Gallup Poll this past week had a 48-40 percent margin of voter preference for Democrats over Republican in Congress. By a 47-36 percent margin, those polled said the country would be better off if Democrats controlled Congress. A record 57-40 percent say they disagree with President Bush on issues that matter most to them. A CBS Poll this past week put Congressional approval at a dismal 29 percent, with 55 percent disapproving. In that poll, 19 percent said the economy was the most pressing problem and another 19 percent said the war in Iraq. That compared to 5 percent who said Social Security, and 3 percent who cited "moral values" and "religious values."

**These were the kind of numbers** -- in reverse -- we began seeing in the summer of 1994 when Newt Gingrich brought the Republicans out of a 40-year crawl in the desert.

Put another way, you can see the beginnings of a potential anti-incumbency trend taking root, though it's too early to establish that trend.

Now, if you're a Republican, the good news is that it's early. Way early. There is plenty of time for things to turn around.



U.S. Rep. Mike Sodrel



“There’s no way this passes out of the City-County Council. No way.”

— Deputy Indianapolis Mayor Steve Campbell, on today’s revelation that the city is now responsible for a \$48 million payment to the Colts as part of the stadium deal

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But there is a critical element to this GOP poll tanking and it has to do with recruitment. This environment comes at a time when credible Democratic candidates, and in the case of the Indiana General Assembly, credible Republicans pondering a primary challenge, will check the temperature and decide whether the water is right to take the plunge. In their hopes, that water turns into a wave, and, perhaps, a tsunami of the likes we saw in 1994 and 1980.

**In Northeast Indiana,** Democratic Fort Wayne Councilman Tom Hayhurst, a medical doctor, is considering a challenge to U.S. Rep. Mark Souder. In Southeastern Indiana, former Democratic congressman Baron Hill is almost certain to seek a rematch against the man who defeated him by fewer than 1,500 votes in 2004, U.S. Rep. Mike Sodrel. In Southwest Indiana, Vanderburgh County Sheriff Brad Ellsworth could challenge U.S. Rep. John Hostettler. And in the 2nd CD, Democrat Joe Donnelly is preparing a rematch against U.S. Rep. Chris Chocola.

"It's too early to assess candidate recruiting, but the overall political and economic environment suggests that Democrats could have an opportunity to make significant gains next year," said Stuart Rothenberg, publisher of the *Rothenberg Political Report*.

The critical question is why are Americans showing such disdain for the ruling party, and, perhaps, incumbents?

The war in Iraq doesn't appear to be going well. The promise of democracy after the riveting January elections has given way to the ugliness of suicide bombers day after day. The economy isn't purring. While more jobs are being created, consumers are seeing prices rise at the gas pump, the grocery store, and with health care. There is a great deal of talk about tax increases.

Rothenberg observed, "Questions about the economy, public discontent with President Bush's leadership, particularly on Social Security, and high gas prices have combined to create an atmosphere that favors the party out of power."

**Over the Memorial Day weekend,** a spate of news stories were published questioning President Bush's power. The *Washington Post* observed, "Two days after winning reelection last fall, President Bush declared that he had earned plenty of 'political capital, and now I intend to spend it.' Six months later, according to Republicans and Democrats alike, his bank account has been significantly drained."

*U.S. News & World Report* added that a "series of

setbacks suggests that Bush's backing has eroded among congressional Republicans and that he will have more trouble than ever winning enactment for his agenda on Social Security overhaul, making tax cuts permanent, and infusing the courts with more-conservative judges."

The other factor is what you could call the "over-reach."

National and Indiana Republicans saw their November 2004 dominance in Washington and Indianapolis as a social mandate, and they have pursued issues that are turning off moderate voters: marriage amendments, the Terri Schiavo case, stem cell research.

**A good example of this came last week** when Baron Hill criticized Rep. Mike Sodrel for opposing the embryonic stem cell research bill. "Mike Sodrel's position is out of the mainstream ... it's an extremist vote," Hill said. "This (vote) is out of step with the ninth district. I strongly support stem cell research. It can do marvelous things for Parkinson's and other diseases. The embryos are going to be disposed of anyway, for heaven's sake...let's put them to good use. That's a pro-life position, in my view."

Sodrel spokesman Cam Savage responded, "There are a great number of people across the country and in the ninth district who question the use of federal funds for something that is untested and that they have a moral objection to."

Hill "really ought to consider why he's no longer in office," said Savage. "He's pro-abortion and the people of the ninth district aren't."

**In the second potential** rematch, Donnelly is talking to the DCCC and raising money. "It will be a much different campaign," said St. Joseph County Democratic Chairman Butch Morgan. "He learned a lot. The DCCC is interested. Dan Parker and Shaw Friedman are helping."

Morgan views the 2006 potential as similar to what Republicans found in 1980 when a young John Hiler upset House Majority Leader John Brademas. "They tied Brademas to Jimmy Carter. It hurt Brademas. People think Chocola is listening to the president more than them."

The potential Hayhurst challenge to Rep. Souder may be a reaction to longer-term issues simmering. When Souder ran for Congress in 1994, he was part of a wave that tossed the Democrats out. They demanded balanced budgets, Congress living under the same laws as the rest of us, and



Former congressman Baron Hill



term limits.

Today, public servants such as Souder, Hostettler and Chocola are finding Americans reacting to an increasingly unpopular war (though Hostettler voted against it), and a fitful defense of ethically embattled Majority Leader Tom DeLay, who orchestrated the Terri Schiavo legislation in Congress.

Souder is also claiming that since his district was

redrawn, he is no longer beholden to the 1994 calls for 12-year term limits.

Voters will decide if things such as the Schiavo case was an over-reach. But at this critical juncture, the polls are fueling the dreams of challengers. ❖

## The ICLU's gift to House Republicans

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

There's an old saying ... *choose your battles wisely.*

Earlier this week, the Indiana Civil Liberties Union decided to take on Christian invocation at the Indiana House of Representatives. It may be the gift that keeps on giving to House Republicans into November 2006.

By autumn of 2006, Indiana Republicans will presumably be under attack for a myriad of teacher layoffs and school tax increases, stadium funding goofups as a result of the 2005 biennial budget. This comes in the intangibles of where the state stands under the federal No Child Left Behind mandates. The Indiana Department of Education has yet to release the 2004 list, let alone the schools that will likely take that critical third strike this year.

But here's a prediction: the pre-eminent campaign trail debate won't be about schools and taxes. It will be about gay marriage and prayer in the House.

On those issues, the church buses across Indiana's most conservative terrain will be rolling on Election Day.

The ICLU lawsuit filed Tuesday in U.S. District Court does not seek to stop all prayer, but "asks that the prayers be offered in a nonsectarian manner consistent with respect for the beliefs of all Indiana residents," said Ken Falk, the ICLU's legal director (*Associated Press*).

"Our lawmakers represent every Indiana citizen, so it is myopic to not see that this type of prayer will exclude and alienate some Hoosiers," Falk said. Falk said that on April 5 a prayer spoken said, "I thank you Jesus for dying for me." A minister sang "*Just A Little Talk With Jesus*" as legislators and onlookers were prompted to stand, clap and sing along, according to the ICLU.

But Christian pastors aren't the only people saying the invocation at the Indiana House. This past session, Rabbi Michael Friedland from South Bend and Imam Mongy El

Quesney from Crown Point gave invocations in the House.

House Speaker Brian Bosma released this statement following the ICLU suit: "This is another unfortunate effort to use the courts to restrict the opportunity for public citizens and legislators to exercise their right to free speech. I will adamantly defend the right of invited clergy and elected Representatives to speak openly about their faith in the halls of state government if they so choose. We will continue to allow visiting religious leaders of all faiths to exercise their right to freedom of speech and government will not restrict the content of that speech on my watch."

**State Rep. Luke Messer**, executive director of the Indiana Republican Party, added, "The Indiana Civil Liberties Union should be embarrassed for filing its preposterous lawsuit against Speaker of the House Brian Bosma. There is absolutely nothing wrong with allowing local religious leaders to recite a prayer at the opening of daily legislative sessions in the House Chambers. I applaud the Speaker for encouraging free speech and the principles on which our Nation was founded. We stand around the American flag as a state and nation reciting the words with '...one nation under God...' and our currency has a daily reminder with 'In God We Trust.'"

"I stand behind Speaker Bosma 100 percent on his decision to continue allowing daily prayers in the State House and I believe the vast majority of Hoosiers support this issue as well."

So the ICLU has played right into the House Republican wheelhouse. The biggest fear of Republicans in 2006 is base suppression. The sixth year of the Bush presidency, a controversial war in Iraq, higher taxes and the state of the economy all have the potential of keeping the GOP base from turning out.

**But you can expect Republicans** such as State Reps. Bill Davis, Billy Bright and Troy Woodruff to be showing TV ads and airing radio commercials pointing out the ICLU suit come 2006. They will try to ignite that evangelical base that makes up between a quarter and a third of the Hoosier electorate. ❖



House Speaker Brian Bosma: "This is another unfortunate effort to use the courts..." (HPR Photo)





## Indiana moves ahead in stem cell research

### *While Controversy Swirls Over Embryonic Investigations, State Works on Adult Variety*

By MARK SCHOEFF JR.

The Howey Political Report

WASHINGTON--A likely presidential veto of a bill that would loosen federal restrictions on embryonic stem cell research -- and opposition to the measure by the entire Indiana Republican delegation in the House -- won't necessarily set back Indiana's quest to become a leader in biomedical research.

While political controversy swirls in Washington over legislation that would allow federal funding for stem cell research using excess embryos from fertility clinics, a group of scientists at Indiana University is concentrating on adult stem cell research. Their effort was bolstered by legislation signed by Gov. Mitch Daniels in early May that would ban cloning and also establish an adult stem cell research center at IU.

Although the embryonic stem cell bill passed the House by a 238-194 vote, President Bush has vowed to veto it. In August 2001, Bush signed an executive order limiting federal funding for stem cell research to lines that had been established by that time. He and congressional opponents liken embryonic research to abortion because embryos are destroyed in the process. Rep. Mike Pence (R-6th CD) and other pro-life politicians highlighted "snowflake babies," or children who were adopted as frozen embryos, during the debate on Capitol Hill last week.

Embryonic stem cells can develop into any tissue or organ in the body, potentially making them a source for therapies for diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. Adult stem cells, although already differentiated, might be the genesis of new medicines as well. And they don't foment divisive political debates. A bill that would allocate \$79 million for research on adult stem cells was approved 430-1 by the House last week.

"There is a fair amount of data that would suggest that (adult stem) cells have beneficial effects in a variety of animal models," said Keith March, director of the Indiana Center for Vascular Biology and Medicine. "What we see is the opportunity to use cells that are widely available or autologous," meaning they are the patient's own cells.

March and 15 colleagues are conducting research on

cells derived from fat, umbilical cords and placentas, bone marrow and the olfactory bulb. Therapies emanating from these sources could address neurological, bone marrow and blood vessel diseases.

Establishing an adult stem cell center would strengthen their effort and help them partner with researchers around the world. "There hasn't been a programmatic commitment in a single institute to do this," said March, a professor of medicine, physiology, and biomedical engineering.

### ***Moving ahead on embryonic, adult cell research***

Another Indiana University scientist cautions that the political debate over stem cell research may be creating a false dichotomy between embryonic and adult stem cells. He urges federal support for both areas.

"We don't know how good adult stem cells are in comparison to embryonic stem cells," said Eric Meslin, director of the Indiana University Center for Bioethics. "Together they're outstanding sources. The sensible public policy strategy is to support both types of research until it is clear that one avenue is superior to the other."

But Pence and other opponents of embryonic research doubt its efficacy and oppose spending federal dollars. "To date, embryonic stem cell research has not produced a single medical treatment, where ethical adult cell research has produced some 67 miracles," he said last week in a statement on the House floor. "I believe it is morally wrong to take the tax dollars of millions of pro-life Americans, who believe that human life is sacred, and use it to fund the destruction of human embryos for research." Embryonic stem cell research can still proceed with state or private funding. California is investing \$3 billion in stem cell research.



U.S. Rep. Mike Pence

### ***8,000 extra embryos created ... every year***

The abortion versus discarding debate over frozen embryos hinges in part on demand. It is estimated that about 8000 excess embryos are created each year at fertility clinics.

"There will not be a market robust enough for those thousands and thousands of embryos to be adopted," said Meslin.

Using some of the extra embryos for research would speed discovery of treatments. Opponents of the embryonic stem cell research bill "are saying, 'We're willing to take slower progress because there's an important moral principle at stake that can't be compromised,'" said Meslin. ❖



## MoveOn Targets DeLay

**Trendline:** More than 2,400 MoveOn PAC volunteers delivered 470,000 petitions to 195 GOP House members in their district offices calling for Tom DeLay to be fired. The initial congressional members targeted in the campaign include, Rep. Melissa Hart (PA-4), Rep. Dave Reichart (WA-8), Rep. Chris Chocola (IN-2), Rep. Rob Simmons (CT-2), Rep. Mike Sodrel (IN-9), Rep. Heather Wilson (NM-1) and Rep. Marilyn Musgrave (CO-4).



## Indiana 2006 Congressional

**Congressional District 2: Republican:** U.S. Rep. Chris Chocola. **Democrat:** Joe Donnelly. **Geography:** South Bend, Michigan City, Mishawaka, Elkhart, Kokomo, Plymouth, Logansport; LaPorte, St. Joseph, Starke, Marshall, Pulaski, Fulton, Cass, Carroll and parts of Howard, Porter, Elkhart and White counties.

**Media Market:** South Bend-Elkhart, Indianapolis, Lafayette, Chicago. **People:** Urban/rural 73/27%; median income \$40,381; Poverty 9.5%; Race 84% white, 8% black; 5 Hispanic;

Blue/white collar: 34/50%. **2000 Presidential:** Bush 53%, Gore 44%; Cook Partisan Voting Index: R+5; **2002 Result:** Chocola 95,081 (50%), Long Thompson 86,253 (46%); **2004 Result:** Chocola 140,496 (54%) Donnelly (D) 115,513 (45%) **2006 Forecast:** Donnelly is preparing for a rematch with an official announcement expected early this summer. He has retained highly regarded DC consultant Bob Doyle and the goal is to post decent FEC numbers by June 30. St. Joseph County Chairman Butch Morgan believes that Rep. Chocola is vulnerable on the Social Security and gas price issue. President Bush scheduled one of his first "town hall" meetings at Notre Dame earlier this year. The *Rothenberg Political Report* notes that "Chocola appears to be solidifying his hold on this marginal district." However, he could be buffeted by the Social Security issue, the war and the economy. Chocola listed \$315,000 according to the FEC. Chocola was in South



U.S. Rep. Chris Chocola

Bend Wednesday to talk up the national energy plan (*South Bend Tribune*). Chocola says the proposal would boost production at the new energy ethanol plant in South Bend, possibly bringing more jobs to the area. He says it would also lower the amount of pollution that gasoline causes and decrease our reliance on foreign countries for crude oil. "There's just a tremendous amount of benefits, not only for our local community and the jobs it produces here, in the corn it uses that's locally grown, but also for our environment overall and our energy needs as a country," said Chocola. E-85 is an alternative fuel that uses 85% ethanol and 15% gasoline.

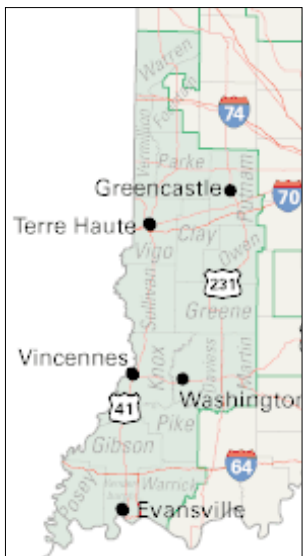
**Status:** LEANS CHOCOLA

**Congressional District 3: Republican:** U.S. Rep. Mark Souder. **Democrat:** Fort Wayne Councilman Thomas Hayhurst. **Geography:** Fort Wayne, Goshen; Kosciusko, Whitley, LaGrange, Steuben, DeKalb and parts of Elkhart and Allen counties. **Media Market:** South Bend-Elkhart, Fort Wayne. **People:** Urban/rural 65/35%; median income \$44,013; Race: 87% white, 6% black, 4.5% Hispanic; Blue/white collar: 36/52% **2000 Presidential:** Bush 66%, Gore 33%. Cook Partisan Voting Index: R+17. **2002 results:** Souder 92,566 (63%), Rigdon 50,509 (34%). **2004 Results:** Souder, Parra **2004 Results:** Souder 171,389 (69%), Parra 76,232 (31%). **2006 Forecast:** At this early writing, we would not describe Rep. Souder as in any kind of political trouble, though he only has \$13,000 cash on hand according to his FEC report in March. His last credible challenge came in 2002 when he demolished former Fort Wayne mayor Paul Helmke in the Republican primary. However, Councilman Hayhurst would be a credible Democratic challenger if he decides to get into this race. He is a medical doctor. His early talk centers on the economy and Souder's 1994 term limit stance of 12 years. Souder said that pledge is off since his district was redrawn. Souder's district includes some of the strongest evangelical communities, particularly those in Elkhart and Kosciusko counties, in the state. The question is whether a perfect storm of term limits, a bad economy, an eroding situation in Iraq, and a weakened Bush presidency would make him vulnerable. **Status:** SAFE SOUDER

**Congressional District 8: Republican:** U.S. Rep. John Hostettler. **Democrat:** Vanderburgh County Sheriff Brad Ellsworth. **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. **People:** Urban/rural 58/42%; median income \$36,732; poverty 10.7%; race white 93.7%, black 3.7%, Hispanic .9%; blue/white collar: 32/52%. **2000 Presidential:** Bush 56%, Gore 42%; Cook Partisan Voting Index: R+8. **2002 Results:** Hostettler 98,952 (51%), Hartke 88,763 (46%), **2004 Results:** Hostettler 145,576, Jennings (D) 121,522, Garvin (Green) 5,680. **2006 Forecast:** The Democratic picture in the Bloody 8th has clarified. Ellsworth is taking formal steps required to challenge Hostettler next year (*Evansville Courier & Press*). Ellsworth announced Wednesday that he has sent a statement of candidacy to the Federal Election Commission and will be making a formal announcement "in the months ahead" that he will run for Congress. "I look forward to traveling throughout the 8th District, listening to people and working every day to put their interests first," Ellsworth said in a prepared statement. "While a formal announcement will be forthcoming in the months ahead, today's filing with the Federal Election Commission allows me to begin setting up a campaign organization and lay the groundwork for this endeavor. "I have been in law enforcement for 23 years, the last six-and-a-half as sheriff of Vanderburgh County. I've worked hard to protect people and protect people's rights in this job. I will now take my experience and the problem-solving abilities acquired as sheriff and put it to work for the people of Southwest Indiana. Jennings has announced he will not run for the seat in 2006 (*Associated Press*). Jennings cited family reasons in his announcement Friday. "Running for political office puts a great deal of demands on a candidate's family. . . . I am not willing to once again spend the inordinate amount of time away from my wife and young daughter," Jennings said in a prepared statement. **Status:** *LEANS HOSTETTLER.*



**Congressional District 9:** Republican: U.S. Rep. Mike Sodrel. Democrat: Baron Hill. **Media Market:** Evansville, Indianapolis, Louisville, Dayton, Cincinnati. **People:** urban/rural 52/48%, median income \$39,011; race white 94%, 2.3% black, 1.5% Hispanic; blue/white collar: 34/50%; **2000 Presidential:** Bush 56%, Gore 42%; Cook Partisan Voting Index: R+8. **2002 Results:** Hill 96,654 (51%), Sodrel 87,169 (46%). **2002 Money:** Hill \$1.144m, Sodrel \$1.62m. **2004 Results:** Sodrel 142,197, Hill 140,772, Cox (L) 4,541. **2006 Forecast:** Hill and Sodrel set up a skirmish line over the stem cell research vote (see pages 1 and 2). That's a potent issue that could inspire both camps. We see this as an absolute cultural and political showdown, coming in a district where billboards suggested Hill was against religion in 2004. The *Rothenberg Political Report* observed, "Hill is running again, so the race is definitely worth watching." **Status:** *TOSSUP.*

## Indiana 2006 House

**House District 17:** Republican: State Rep. Steve Heim. Democrat: Nancy Dembowski. **2004 Results:** Heim 14,100, McLiver (D) 8,321, Foley (I) 854. SD5 Results: Heinold (R) 24,753, Dembowski (D) 24,398. **2006 Forecast:** Former state senator and Knox mayor Nancy Dembowski is being urged to make this race. She would be a credible challenger, losing in Senate District 5 to Sen. Vic Heinold by only 355 votes last fall. It was the first time that Dembowski had been on the ballot for a legislative seat, having been appointed to fill the seat vacated by Bill Alexa. Democrats believe that Dembowski is a proven vote-getter and would fare better without President Bush and Gov. Daniels on the ticket. **Status:** *LEANS R*

**House District 64:** Republican: State Rep. Troy Woodruff. Democrat: John Frenz. **2002 Results:** Frenz 10,516, Davis (R) 8,774. **2004 Results:** Woodruff 12,698, Frenz 12,507. **2006 Forecast:** Frenz tells HPR that he "honestly doesn't know" whether he will seek a 2006 rematch with Rep. Woodruff. **Status:** *TOSSUP.*

**House District 88:** Republican: House Speaker Brian Bosma. Democrat: Open. **2004 Results:** Bosma 23,289, Gordon (L) 2,132. **2006 Forecast:** About that missing \$48 million on the Colts stadium deal (the one Sen. Kenley says Indianapolis taxpayers will have to pick up): What's the tax pain threshold for Marion County voters? **Status:** *Safe R. ❖*





## Bush, Cheney (and Jeffers) survey the future Iraq landscape

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS - It might be worth clipping this page and stapling it to your 2006 calendar on this date. You would then be able to bear witness to whether Vice President Dick Cheney got it right this time.

It was the hard-charging Cheney who was convinced that Iraq was a depot of weapons of mass destruction. History has proven him wrong.

On Memorial Day, he was on CNN's *Larry King Live* and said that the insurgency in Iraq is doomed. "The level of activity that we see today from a military standpoint, I think, will clearly decline,"

Cheney explained. "I think they're in the last throes, if you will, of the insurgency." Those last throes produced three bombings and 16 deaths today.

Cheney predicted that the war would be over for the United States by the time President Bush exits office in 2009.



Over the Memorial Day weekend, we checked the website of Capt. Tim Jeffers ([www.timjeffers.com](http://www.timjeffers.com)) to get his take on things. Jeffers was the 1994 Democratic candidate for secretary of state and was a top aide to former Indiana House Speaker John Gregg.

Jeffers had this to say:

"Things here in Iraq have not been going so well lately. There has clearly been a spike in insurgent sponsored violence. In all of 2004, there were 25 car bombings. Just this month, we have had over 21. In the past 80 days, we have had over 126. Yesterday, 49 Iraqi people were killed. Thirteen U.S. soldiers have been killed since Sunday (May 22)."

That would seem to contradict Vice President Cheney.

**Jeffers continued, "The good news is,** the military announced plans to consolidate over 100 current Coalition bases into 4 permanent bases as we look toward winding things down here. The fact that somebody is thinking about it, is good news.

"It has not been a good two weeks for the U.S. military in terms of PR, as we've been grappling (not too successfully, I might add) with Saddam's underwear photos, the

*Newsweek* story about alleged Koran abuses, the Pat Tillman fratricide story, legal remnants of Abu Ghraib, and repeated reports of failure to satisfy various recruiting goals," Jeffers continued. "As for the training of Iraqi Security Forces, things continue to progress. Most of the combat



Capt. Tim Jeffers with NBC's Jim Miklaszewski. (Photo courtesy of Capt. Jeffers)

battalions have been 'stood up' and the focus now is to build a service and support capability. Iraqi police and military are out on patrol and seem to be having some success. However, the local police are still absorbing the bulk of the insurgent attacks. The two new ministers at the Iraqi Ministry of Defense and Ministry of the Interior are working together and are starting to take control of things."

**Here is what President Bush** said about this passing of the baton to Iraqi security forces at Tuesday's press conference: "I think the Iraq government will be up to the task of defeating the insurgents. I think the Iraqi people dealt the insurgents a serious blow when they had the elections [in January]. I believe that the Iraqi government's going to be plenty capable of dealing with them, and our job is to help train them so that they can.

"I'm pleased with the progress. I am pleased that, in less than a year's time, there's a democratically elected government in Iraq, there are thousands of Iraqi soldiers trained and better equipped to fight for their own country, that our strategy is very clear and that we will work to get them ready to fight, and when they're ready, we'll come home."

As for Capt. Jeffers, he extended these thoughts to his Hoosier friends on Memorial Day:

"Indeed, Memorial Day is a special day in the United States when we honor our loved ones that are no longer with us, especially those that died fighting in armed conflict throughout our history. In addition, it is a time to celebrate the sacrifice that our nation has nobly borne to secure freedom and liberty across our land and across the world. Being together with family and friends reminds us of the many blessings we share and the cost we are willing to bear to preserve and protect them." ❖



**Rich James, *Post-Tribune*** - I almost felt sorry for Lake County Democratic Party Chairman Rudy Clay on Tuesday morning. Easy! I said, "almost." This was to be his finest hour since the Indiana Democratic Central Committee ousted Stephen Stiglich and made Clay chairman a month ago. Clay was poised to have Charles Brooks confirmed as the Democratic attorney for the county Election Board. That should have been a slam-dunk. But this is Lake County Democratic politics, where the only certainty is to expect the unexpected. This was about control of the board and the election process. This was about cutting out the East Chicago guys — Tom Cappas, et al — who have made a career of tinkering with elections and pulled the strings to make Clay chairman. Why should anyone care who is the Democratic attorney to the Election Board? There's a bevy of reasons. The Election Board attorney is a powerful guy. The lawyer the East Chicagoans wanted was Justin Murphy. He was board attorney during the contentious 1999 mayoral primary between Stiglich and Bob Pastrick. Even though Stiglich was county chairman, Pastrick ran the Election Board by controlling the Republican members, who did work for his city, and Clerk Anna Anton. Murphy amazingly found a way to interpret election law in Pastrick's favor at every turn. But, Clay knew he couldn't go home to Gary if he picked the white guy the East Chicagoans wanted. East Chicago leaned hard on Republican Chairman John Curley to have his appointments back Brooks. But Curley doesn't bow to pressure. Besides, Curley is dumb like a fox. It's now difficult to say who has more clout on the Election Board — Philpot or Curley. Or is it Stiglich? ❖

**Jack Colwell, *South Bend Tribune*** - Nuclear war has been averted in the U.S. Senate. Questions now abound over who won, who lost and whether battles ahead still could trigger the nuclear option. **Q.** Sen. John McCain, the Arizona Republican who led the 14 peacemakers who averted war, has been declared a big winner by some political analysts. Is he? **A.** Depends. If the evaluation is of whether McCain has increased his national popularity and reputation, the answer is "yes." **Q.** But you're saying there's another way of evaluating? **A.** If the evaluation is of whether McCain has enhanced his chances of winning the Republican presidential nomination in 2008, the answer is "no." Voters in Republican presidential primaries are far more to the right in the political spectrum than are voters in general. They include activists who see the quest for conservative judges as a moral issue. They didn't want compromise, and they won't forgive McCain for unwillingness to go nuclear for the cause. **Q.** So McCain really hurt his presidential chances? **A.** Not too much, actually. It's just

that he didn't win in terms of enhancing chances in future Republican presidential primaries. He wasn't going to get support anyway from conservative activists who already viewed McCain as too moderate, too much of a maverick. Now, however, they will crusade to defeat him. **Q.** OK. Could McCain be elected president? **A.** Sure. It's possible. So could Hillary Clinton. But they have big problems, opposite problems. **Q.** Like what? **A.** McCain would have a very good chance of winning the presidency in the fall of '08, with widespread appeal to independents and Democratic moderates who would defect to him. His problem is getting the Republican nomination for that fall race. Hillary Clinton, if she runs, could sweep Democratic primaries, where voters are far more to the left in the political spectrum than are voters in general. Her problem then would be getting to the center, convincing enough independents and moderates in order to win in the fall. ❖

**Gary Gerard, *Warsaw Times-Union*** - I think the United Airlines pension default was under reported. It was the largest pension default in U.S. history and it really didn't seem to bother anybody, except maybe some pension administration-type people. And that's kind of strange because the pension default affects everybody — well, everybody who pays taxes, I should say. And it certainly has the potential to affect everybody else indirectly as it ripples through the economy. For the record, a federal judge, in a bankruptcy filing, allowed United to dump its pension obligation to 134,000 current and retired employees in the lap of the federal government. That's because United's pension fund is upside down to the tune of about \$6.6 billion. That's right. United has pension obligations of \$6.6 billion that they can't afford to pay. So now the burden of paying for those pension plans falls on the federal government. General Motors lost a cool \$1.1 billion in the first quarter this year. Ford hopes to break even this year. Steel companies are struggling. No one is openly predicting that other companies are considering shedding pensions. But if a judge says it's O.K., and boards of directors give CEOs a big fat bonus for doing it, it certainly puts the option on the table, doesn't it? Is this free enterprise? Is this capitalism? Seems to me, in a capitalist society, businesses that can't make money get weeded out, not propped up by tax dollars. Maybe United Airlines should change its name to United States Airlines. As taxpayers, I guess all we can do is hope that more companies like United don't abandon pension liability. With all this talk about the solvency of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, I wonder why more people aren't talking about the solvency of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. ❖







## Stadium deal shorts Indianapolis \$48 million

INDIANAPOLIS - A state plan to pay for a new Colts stadium is suddenly short \$48 million, and no one knows where the money will come from. That sum, promised to the Colts, is a crucial part of the city's agreement with the team to keep it in Indianapolis (*Indianapolis Star*). The money was not included in the funding approved by the General Assembly in April, a key lawmaker and other state officials confirmed Wednesday. Sen. Luke Kenley, R-Noblesville, an architect of the funding plan, said the shortfall was the city's to pay. "They said they could do it," Mayor Bart Peterson said. "Now they're changing their story that they used to convince the legislature and the public that they could do it better than we could do it." Kenley said, "The city has got to come up with the money. That's an obligation that the city has under the current lease." If the state can't finance the deal with the payment, Peterson said he'd be happy to reclaim control of the stadium's construction. "I won't stick the taxpayers of Marion County with another \$48 million in payments for this," Peterson said. "We will do the deal that they're refusing to do."



## Rep. Bell takes oath

INDIANAPOLIS - Matthew Bell is now state Rep. Bell, R-Avilla (*Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*). Bell, who runs a literacy program, was sworn in Wednesday to replace Bob Alderman, who stepped down from his seat at the end of the spring session to take a state transportation post. Republican precinct committeemen from Alderman's 83rd

District selected Bell on May 24 over two other candidates in five close ballots, including two ties.

## Citizens press Pence on torture at Gitmo

RICHMOND - Veteran Glen Lee is concerned about the "authorized use of torture" against prisoners or enemy combatants in U.S. custody (*Richmond Palladium-Item*). Specifically, he's concerned that treatment of them doesn't meet Geneva Convention standards. He also worries that world opinion about the United States is being damaged because of it. That's what he told U.S. Rep. Mike Pence (R-Dist. 6) at Pence's town hall meeting Tuesday at the Richmond Municipal Building. He said those military personnel involved in the torture of prisoners are being prosecuted or demoted in rank. "We need to make sure that story gets told all over the world," Pence said.

## Birch Bayh praises Deep Throat

WASHINGTON - Former Sen. Birch Bayh's fears that President Nixon would crush everyone who threatened his presidency were not borne out (*Times of Northwest Indiana*). But his sense that the country was in danger during the Watergate scandal makes him grateful for FBI agent W. Mark Felt, the Washington Post source known as "Deep Throat" who revealed his identity on Tuesday. "I think it was an indispensable role, because Nixon, (advisers H.R.) Haldeman and (John) Erlichman had done such a good job of covering things up that there would be no way to permeate it without somebody to provide some direction for (Post reporters Bob) Woodward and (Carl) Bernstein and enter that into our public record," he said. Bayh said he understands why Felt, who was second in command at the FBI, thought it would be a breach of

duty for him to give information to Woodward. Bayh has had access to intelligence he felt he could not share, but he said he supported Felt for giving Woodward information about criminal activity at the White House.

## Michigan City Council president arrested on DUI

MICHIGAN CITY - When searching for answers to life's problems, Chuck Lungren knows not to look at the bottom of a glass again (*Post-Tribune*). Trouble is, it took another drunken driving arrest, perhaps, for the 54-year-old city councilman from Michigan City to realize that. Lungren, president of the city council, plans to seek help for his drinking, which he said escalated following the end of his 20-plus-year marriage last year. "It put a lot of stress on me and as everybody knows there's no answer at the bottom of that bottle," Lungren said.

## Mayor King backs Lake County income tax

MERRILLVILLE - The only solution to the property tax crisis faced by some Lake County residents is more taxes, Gary Mayor Scott King believes (*Times of Northwest Indiana*). King proposed a countywide 0.5 percent income tax to fund a 2 percent property tax circuit breaker. "We believe that tax will generate \$36 million in Lake County," King told The Times Editorial Board Wednesday.

## Parke County sheriff resigns

ROCKVILLE - Charles Bollinger has told the Parke County Board of Commissioners he is resigning as sheriff to take a job with a law-enforcement organization in state government (*Terre Haute Tribune-Star*). Bollinger, who is more than half way through his second term, said he expects to resign within days to accept the new job. ❖