



A step back from nightmare

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Half a world away from Haditha, Iraq, giddy Hoosier Democrats gathered last Saturday at the Hyatt. Their placards quoted the architect of the last political wave in 1994 -- Newt Gingrich's recent question, "Had enough?"



The late al Zarqawi

Orators like former House Speaker John Gregg and House Minority Leader B. Patrick Bauer promised that November 2006 would be a "referendum" on Gov. Daniels, as delegates happily waved "Ditch Mitch" signs.

They railed against Major Moves and Daylight-saving time. They rallied against the war In Iraq.

One delegate asked me if I thought it was going to be the 1994 wave in reverse. The answer was, "If it is, it's because of the War in Iraq, which is becoming a nightmare."

This morning, the national dynamic that appeared to be producing a wave shifted in dramatic fashion after U.S. Special Ops took out Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the coalition's most wanted man in Iraq.

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Democratic delegates carried "Ditch Mitch" and "Had Enough?" placards. At left, an energized 2nd CD nominee Joe Donnelly absorbed the scene. He is in a "tossup" race with U.S. Rep. Chris Chocola. (HPR Photos by Brian A. Howey)

Uncomfortable truths about gays

By **ABDUL-HAKIM SHABAZZ**

INDIANAPOLIS - Just when I thought this silly issue was about to be put to bed forever it resurfaces. Facing declining poll numbers and being about as popular as Michael Jackson in day care, the President is calling



Abdul Hakim Shabazz
Column

for a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage. I don't necessarily blame him for going down this road, if we were facing high oil prices, an increasingly unpopular war in Iraq, the possibility of a conflict with Iran, a political party facing serious voter anxiety, I'd do something too to shore



"At 6:15 p.m. Baghdad time, special operation forces, acting on tips and intelligence from Iraqis, confirmed Zarqawi's location and delivered justice."

- President George W. Bush



up my base. Luckily for the President, the Democrats aren't organized nor have put together a coherent message, for now. However, when "W" starts talking about gay marriage, I know things are getting bad.

To be fair, Democrats aren't getting on the gay marriage bandwagon either. Knowing what it did to them in 2004 (see Ohio). What I still don't understand, though, is what the big deal is about gay marriage? Let's see, two people joined together in a committed relationship raising children in a stable environment. This is bad why? Now the opponents of gay marriage say it hurts "traditional family values" and will break down society. I ask once again, how?

Child molesters, murders, and felons can all marry with no restrictions. Twenty-eight-year old Desmond Turner is accused of murdering seven people, three of them children, in a shooting in Indianapolis this past week. If he's convicted of the crime and sentenced to death, he can still get married, but my friends Bruce and Gene can't. And they've never even gotten traffic tickets.

All I have ever asked from people is a logical, rational reason as to why gays should not be allowed to marry? If the argument is they can't procreate, neither can the elderly or infertile, but we let them marry. If the argument is gay marriage will lead to things like polygamy and bestiality, I point out two things. Polygamy is actually in the Bible, remember King Solomon. Second, marriage involves the consent of two parties so if your dog can sign a marriage certificate I say take him on Letterman instead of to Niagara Falls for the honeymoon. Third, if the argument is that churches would be forced to perform gay marriages, I ask you to show me a church that was forced to perform a wedding that did not involve a prelude to a civil war in the 17th century.

Let's just be honest. The real reason so many oppose gay marriage is because it just creeps them out.



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Two men walking down an aisle, kissing each other and going on their honeymoon, and doing what couples do on their honeymoon makes social conservatives and some other folks just feel icky. Now two women, I actually find attractive, but that's my DVD collection.

So instead of citing a bunch of totally bogus reasons as to why gay marriage should be banned, ask yourself this question. If two men celebrating their wedding night makes you feel icky and creepy, then why are you thinking about it? ❖

Bush Statement

Last night in Iraq, United States military forces killed the terrorist al Zarqawi. At 6:15 p.m. Baghdad time, special operation forces, acting on tips and intelligence from Iraqis, confirmed Zarqawi's location, and delivered justice to the most wanted terrorist in Iraq. Zarqawi was the operational commander of the terrorist movement in Iraq. He led a campaign of car bombings, assassinations and suicide attacks that has taken the lives of many American forces and thousands of innocent Iraqis. Osama bin Laden called this Jordanian terrorist "the prince of al Qaeda in Iraq." Now Zarqawi has met his end, and this violent man will never murder again. Iraqis can be justly proud of their new government and its early steps to improve their security.



The hit came as Americans endured images and reporting of U.S. Marine atrocities at Haditha and, perhaps, two other sites. It came as **New York Times** columnist Thomas Friedman wrote that the Iraq insurgency had dissolved into sectarian "anarchy." It came after Basra, once a region of stability, had wrenched into "chaos."

The news was welcomed by Republicans. Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Dick Lugar said, "The death of Zarqawi is an important break for the Allied Forces. He certainly has been a mastermind for terrorism and the insurgency. His leadership has led to the death of many innocent Iraqis, quite apart from the attacks upon our troops. The significance of Zarqawi is that he was especially insidious and unfortunately successful in the attacks upon Iraqis as well as our forces. This is a real blow to the insurgency."

U.S. Rep. Chris Chocola, said, "This is a great success in the war on terror and a great day for the Iraqi people. The demise of al-Zarqawi will be remembered in history as an important moment in the formation of a free, democratic and secure Iraq. This should serve as a message to those who would try to destabilize Iraq for their own political purposes: don't stand against freedom, you will lose every time."

While the Zarqawi hit doesn't change everything, and it will be months before we know whether the assassination will be a tipping point, it does cause one to pause. It couldn't have come at a better time President Bush, whose approval ratings and ability to govern offered the prospect of pulling down Republicans from Washington to Wadesville. There is volatility in the political environment. It is no longer just a slam dunk for Democrats, who have been quick, over and over again, to pronounce the Bauers and Pelosis as the next House speakers.

The party's gubernatorial class -- Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson and State Sen. Vi Simpson -- talked about the need for "ideas" at the Democratic convention.

Peterson said he met a woman in the Hamilton Avenue neighborhood, scene of Indiana's own murderous atrocity last week, who was later interviewed on a TV newscast. "She said it took this tragedy to get the mayor to set foot on Hammilton Avenue," Peterson said.

The mayor said his "first reaction" was to be "defensive." But then, Peterson said, after further reflection, "That's exactly what I wanted to hear. She was saying, 'I'm going to fight for my neighborhood.'" Peterson said that while both state and national polls show most people believe we are on the "wrong track," he continued, "they don't mean that Hoosiers have given up. Give the people of Indiana a reason for hope. Let's show superior ideas. The haters and dividers aren't going to make anything better. Our voters want one thing: Who can work across party lines? Those are the people who can get things done."

Sen. Simpson told the 9th CD caucus, "Democrats need to be for more than just no. We need to talk a positive agenda." She was backing up her words, driving up to



Vanderburgh County Sheriff Brad Ellsworth (left) chats with Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson at the Democratic convention last Saturday. (HPR Photo)

Lafayette a few days later to talk about the Hoosier Health Security Plan with Senate candidate Dave Vorbeck.

But Saturday was a red meat day for Democrats and there was little in the way of new ideas or vision presented. The backdrop to this festival of political opportunism was the Iraq Nightmare Scenario, and if Democrats prevail in the Indiana House or Congress in the next five months, it will have little to do with Major Moves, Daylight-saving time or new ideas. While Iraq churned out images of death and atrocity, Major Moves was sprinkling money for beachfront development in Portage, Whiting and East Chicago -- Democratic areas. LaPorte got INDOT clearance for \$6 million in road construction.

There is a Republican vision and more than 20 Republican field operators for House candidates. Democrats are offering "no" and four staffers. This is not a slam dunk.

Unlike the 2004 John Kerry presidential campaign, Democrats appeared to be poised to connect the dots. They seem prepared to quote Gingrich ("Had enough?"), Cheney ("last throes") and showing a clicking gasoline pump where \$15 buys you about five gallons.

"I think we've gotten to the point where people don't want to waste lives," said Vanderburgh County Sheriff Brad Ellsworth, who is poised to give U.S. Rep. John Hostettler his most intense challenge since he upset Rep. Frank McCloskey in the 1994 wave.

Indiana Democrats brought the scorn of Indiana Republican Chairman Murray Clark, who instead of taking over the pro tempore position of the Indiana Senate, is now presiding over a potential Republican apocalypse. "I can summarize the Democrat convention in four words, "We hate Mitch Daniels," Clark said. "Their entire gathering was spent slamming the governor and his reform agenda. Even the Democrats' own speakers scolded their party regarding the need to create an agenda and not just continually bash the governor."

The ground shifted today. Whether the temblor produces a wave or not, both sides have much work to do.





It's not too late for Republicans to change debate, says McIntosh

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Former U.S. Rep. David McIntosh, the 2000 GOP gubernatorial nominee, sat down with HPR at a Monument Circle Starbucks on Monday. A beneficiary of the last political "wave" to sweep the nation, McIntosh, who will join the HPR Forum on Oct. 10, offered insights, having been there, done that, and possessing the T-shirt.

HPR: At the Indiana Democratic Convention last weekend, many of the delegates were holding placards quoting Newt Gingrich, saying "Had Enough?" It seems like Republicans have become what they begat.

McIntosh: Remembering back to '93 and '94, when nobody really believed that Republicans could get the majority because Democrats had been there for 40 years, I talked with people about "soft corruption; you know the quote, 'If men were angels, we wouldn't need a government.' And we're not, therefore we do. My point ended up being, give the Republicans a chance. It may be 20 years from now when Republicans have been in power for too long and it needs to shift back to the Democrats. That was all in the context of convincing people to make a change. I have a lot of friends, people I admire, who are in Congress right now and you see in the results of what they do that kind of soft corruption. We're going to vote for the projects that help us get re-elected when they don't benefit the larger public. I want to say now that I think Mike Pence is the voice in that conference that they should be listening to. We have to stay true to our compass if we're going to keep this majority while having the American people have confidence in us. If they view us as self-serving, trying to get pork projects, implying that Congress is above the law, like the investigation of Rep. Jefferson, those are very similar to what people were fed up with Democrats when I was first running. Part of the Contract with America was the bill that said "We're going to apply all the laws to Congress. That Congress shouldn't be above the laws for everybody else.

HPR: And now you've got this case involving Rep. Jefferson.

McIntosh: Republicans are out there saying, "The Capitol should be immune to these investigations." I don't think they really mean that. This taking bribes ... that's a crime no matter where he committed it. I think what's needed is principled leadership. The people that were there with Newt Gingrich -- Tom DeLay, Dick Armey -- have all left. Boehner was part of his first leadership team and I think he's a breath of fresh air. He understands K Street -- the business community -- and yet he's never taken an earmark. I'm hoping between now and the election, the Republican conference can get itself back onto those principles.

If that doesn't happen, the danger I see is that 1992, 1964, but a year when the Republicans' fate sits in the hands of those who say, "We don't need to go to vote because there's not really a big difference. I sense that kind of frustration among Republican believers who are conservative and principled. They are frustrated because they don't see them standing up for what they believe.

HPR: The **Wall Street Journal** cited the budget vote in April

as the reason the GOP will probably end up in the minority. Do you see a point of demarcation for the mess House Republicans find themselves in?

McIntosh: It was a gradual change. Back when we were in Congress together, Mark Souder pointed to the highway bill we passed and said, "This is the beginning of the end to what we put forward in the Contract With America. It had a bunch of projects in it. I voted for that bill because I thought it was justified. Mark voted against it. His point was, we were starting to behave like a traditional majority: putting things in bills to help Members. That's opposed to asking, is this good policy for the American people? Then I think it shifted further after the 2002 elections. The majority stayed in power because the President was leading. Certainly the Medicare entitlement bill was a huge disappointment for the small government conservatives. When I was there, there was tension between the leadership on behalf of the Republican majority and the Appropriations Committee. They always said, "Our job is to spend money. That's why there is an Appropriations Committee. The leadership had to go back and say, "OK, but only so far." And at some point, Tom DeLay reasoned, "Hey, maybe that's how we keep our majority." Eventually,



Former Congressman David McIntosh helps a young man fill out a Starbucks job application earlier this week. It is the subject of Brian Howey's weekly column at www.howeypolitics.com. (HPR Photo)



HOWEY *Political Report*

either party starts to have that soft corruption. It's not illegal, but it's more self-serving. I said that 20 years when I first started getting involved in this. It's now been 12 that people have started complaining about it. The reason is the Republican Party is more attuned to small government, therefore the core of the party is more offended by big government to help legislators get re-elected.

HPR: Back in 1999, Dan Quayle was talking about how Bush's Compassionate Conservatism was just a way for government to spend big money.

McIntosh: I think the President did actually mean to say, let's use our principles to serve the people who are disadvantaged. Small government sounds like we want to help the rich but not the average working class family. But I do think the President's position was focused on fighting the war on terror while he delegated to others domestic policy. He reserved for himself the final call on things, but he let others take the active lead in putting things together. So there was no strong notion to hold the line on spending once Mitch left as OMB director.

HPR: Twelve years ago, when did you feel the wave begin to develop?

McIntosh: It is earlier this year. We were so focused on our race in Muncie and Anderson and the 2nd District, I really didn't know it was coming until a week out. I got a call from Bill Paxson who said, "David, congratulations, our poll shows you are going to win." He said, "The only thing I have against you is that you'll never be in the minority." He said it was happening all over the country. I think somebody who wasn't in my shoes, having to win an election, would look back to that summer and the Democrats said they really didn't like the Christian Democratic voters, that was a signal. Then there was the crime bill and the restrictions put in the Brady Bill and that offended their base. Then there was the big spending and the tax increases before that and it started to become a wave. The reason I mention those two specifics is that it is early and there are things leadership can do that will either build the wave against them or, if they make wise moves, diffuse it. They can say, "Let's set an agenda on our terms." Frankly they will be helped out because the Democratic leadership is from the far left. They'll be tempted to put out an agenda that is too far to the left. So if Republicans can get back to their principles, and not just the moral issues, the

fiscal issues, they have a chance of avoiding the wave. But I agree with you, I see signs that it is building. In my personal race for governor, I knew a month out that we weren't going to win unless something dramatic changed. You look back and say I wish I could have done something earlier. So they have one, perhaps two more chances, I think, and then after that the question in the voter's mind has been set.

HPR: Most voters make their minds up now and the last five months is for that last 7 to 8 percent.

McIntosh: It is mostly out of control of the state legislators and congressmen. That is something fate can change. I think back to the Civil War when Lincoln was up for re-election and everyone that summer said he was toast; that he couldn't win.

HPR: And then, Atlanta.

McIntosh: Sherman's march to the south was successful and he won handily. It took awhile for it to seep into people's minds. So there could be things that could happen: Finding Osama bin Laden, people see progress in Iraq and not a quagmire; that could shift the opinions of people on the President.

HPR: I look at Iraq and I see the nightmare scenario emerging, with Americans involved in atrocities. Thomas Friedman says the insurgency has evolved into anarchy; Basra is now in chaos. Do you have a different perspective on that?

McIntosh: I guess I take the longer term. The forces that are arrayed against us, essentially al Qaeda, are there for the long haul. They will wage a battle to the death against Western civilization. What worries me is that we pull our military out part way or tie an arm behind our back as we go into battle.

HPR: What's your advice for Reps. Chocoma, Sordrel, Hostettler and, perhaps, even Souder, in the face of things now?

McIntosh: The tough thing for them will be to get the election in their districts to be about them. About their leadership. I'm convinced that all of our Republican incumbents will win if that's the case because I think they're all doing a great job. If they can have the resources and are ready to defend the votes they've made, they've got a chance to overcome a slight blip. A tsunami is a lot harder. The large forces can play out in ways that will hurt you. If the result doesn't come out well, my hope is they'll stand for election in two years and stand for the same thing and the message will be right for the environment. ❖



McIntosh will appear at the Oct. 10 HPR Forum to draw parallels between 1994 and now. (HPR Photo)



Bayh looks to connect with New Hampshire Dems

By MARK CURRY

WASHINGTON - It's going to be a cold and wet weekend in New Hampshire, but indications are Sen. Evan Bayh can expect a warm welcome Friday and Saturday as he attends six events in five cities.

Sen. Bayh is making his second visit in less than three months to gauge and foster support for an increasingly likely run for the White House. Of course, he is not the only presidential aspirant traversing the Granite State these days. Colin Manning, statehouse reporter for the *Foster's Daily Democrat* in Dover told HPR at least four other democrats will tour New Hampshire in the coming days, while *Salon* reports that two others were well-received last weekend.

Friday, Indiana's former governor lunches downstate with local elected officials in Manchester before attending a Democratic dinner 100 miles upstate in Bartlett. The next day Bayh starts out with a late morning reception a dozen miles from the seacoast in Rollinsford and then heads west for a lunchtime event in Concord. His journey ends in the city of Keene, population 23,000, which serves as the seat of government for Cheshire County located in the state's southwest corner.

Keene is a great place for the second-term senator to make a name for himself, according to Manning, who has been covering the statehouse for three years.

Democratic stronghold

"Cheshire County is probably the one county in the state where there are more registered democrats than

republicans," he said.

Bayh will appear at two events in Keene to launch the state senate campaign of Hoosier-born Molly Kelly, described by Manning as "an up and comer" with the potential to regain a seat held by GOP Sen. Thomas R. Eaton through four terms.

"A lot of democrats think they can win that one back," Manning said.

"It's just so wonderful that Sen. Bayh is coming out here," Kelly told HPR. She left home in Fort Wayne at age 21 more than two dozen years ago and ended up marrying and raising a family in New Hampshire.

"All my life I've been in politics," she said. Her parents were very involved in civil rights and the Vietnam war movement. "I always had the opportunity to meet wonderful, wonderful thinkers and people who cared about the community. People like Birch Bayh."

Area democrats know who Evan Bayh is, Kelly said, noting he "is a very big draw."



Sen. Evan Bayh works to connect with voters during a trip to Iowa in February. No matter how the Democratic candidate selection schedule shakes out for 2008, it appears a strong showing in the New Hampshire primaries or Iowa caucuses will be critical if Sen. Bayh is to become widely accepted as one who can win the White House. (Bayh Flickr Photo)

A real kickoff

"This is a real kickoff for me," she said, indicating Bayh's appearance will help her with name recognition and "to get the excitement going," especially for an evening fundraiser expected to draw about 75 supporters. Many will take advantage of the opportunity

to size up Sen. Bayh.

"This would not happen if not for the senator coming here," she said, noting later in the interview, "You can send a check or you can come to a reception with Sen. Bayh, so that's great."

Bayh is "definitely generating some news" and is "pretty well received here," said Manning. When asked for his impression of the candidate, the reporter recalled hearing Bayh address the New Hampshire delegation at the



2004 Democratic National Convention. "He seemed like a pretty well-polished guy. Other than that I don't remember too much about him. Well-polished, well-spoken, articulate."

Manning was most interested in the reception for state Sen. Iris Estabrook in Rollinsford, which falls into the Daily Democrat's coverage area.

"I know [Sen. Estabrook] is very excited about that fundraiser," the reporter said.

Quid pro quo

"It's a quid pro quo kind of thing," Manning said. "[Bayh] gets to come into the state and stump for the democrats at the same time he's trying to raise his name ID for a possible presidential election. "At the same time he is a national figure, he is known in the state and can attract some democrats and some money for Sen. Estabrook in a district that is very friendly to democrats. And that's a good place for him to make a lot of inroads, too, on the seacoast of New Hampshire, which is highly Democratic and went huge for John Kerry and with Gov. [John] Lynch (D) in the last election."

This sort of travel is hard work, and no other 2008 contender works harder at it than Sen. Evan Bayh. Last weekend he conducted a top-to-bottom tour of Indiana to promote energy legislation. The weekend before that he was navigating Iowa in much the same way he will criss-cross New Hampshire. And the weekend before that he was in Indiana to address the state Democratic Jefferson-Jackson Dinner.

Pundits of all stripes are taking note. Chris Cillizza of the Washington Post's blog The Fix wrote in the June 2nd entry, "We've long maintained that Indiana Sen. Bayh will surprise some people in '08. He and his campaign team continue to make smart - and often overlooked - moves that should pay dividends down the line." That same day, MSNBC's Tom Curry said on "Hardball with Chris Matthews" that he "found a lot of interest in Evan Bayh" during a trip to Iowa. The Washington Times of May 30 reported that Bayh was among the three potential Democratic presidential candidates who "most worry" former Republican House Speaker Newt Gringrich.

Worries Gringrich

"Either [former Virginia] Gov. Mark Warner or [Indiana] Sen. Evan Bayh have a lot to offer the Democratic Party because they're more moderate," Gringrich told the Times, although he predicted that either would have a very tough time beating New York Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton for the nomination.

According to Walter Shapiro of Salon, Warner was accorded "rock-star status" at the New Hampshire Democratic convention last weekend, and Sen. Russ Feingold (D-WI) "earned" a half-dozen standing ovations during a

"fiery" breakfast speech.

Former Sen. Tom Daschle (D-SD) is touring the state today, Manning, the statehouse reporter, told HPR. On Wednesday, Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack visits, followed next weekend by Sen. Joe Biden (D-DE).

"Bill Clinton is coming to the state on June 27th to do a fundraiser with the governor's wife on childhood obesity," Manning said. "You have to think he's laying the groundwork for Sen. Clinton's run at the presidency."

Will he connect?

No matter how the Democratic candidate selection schedule shakes out for 2008, it appears a strong showing in the New Hampshire primaries or Iowa caucuses will be critical if Sen. Bayh is to become widely accepted as one who can win the White House. One big question - will his views connect with voters in these two states?

HPR asked Molly Kelly what issues are important to her campaign.

"I really feel like the state and probably the nation - we know the nation as well - right now is very polarized and negative," she said. "We need leadership in the [state] Senate that can work across party lines, bring people together, communicate and work together and really find solutions and results. That's what I'm good at and that's what I intend to do."

When this writer pointed out that Sen. Bayh often makes a similar statement during campaign speeches, Kelly replied:

"I know and that's great and he is very successful."



Revolution in the Senate



HPR's complete coverage of the Garton, Borst upsets
www.howeypolitics.com



Pence becomes a blog reporter

By **MARK SCHOEFF JR.**

WASHINGTON - When Rep. Mike Pence (R-6th CD) sat down with new Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki during a trip to Baghdad in early May, he was part of the first group of American officials to meet the leader.

Participating in such an intimate session is something that an international correspondent for a newspaper would covet. By filing a detailed entry in his Web log (blog), Pence partly played that role for his constituents -- and anyone else who logs on.

In writing his blog (<http://mikepence.house.gov/blog>), Pence goes beyond editorializing. As in most blogs, opinion suffuses each offering. But Pence, a former radio talk show host, also adds elements of reporting.

Over the course of 15 paragraphs recounting his visit to Baghdad on May 7, he provides details about security measures--"...we donned our helmets and bulletproof vests," "...our meeting (with al-Maliki) had been moved to a new location due to a security threat"--that portray a country that remains in turmoil.

He combines his impressions of al-Maliki--"...a certain world-weary look about his eye"--with direct quotes from the leader. "After promising to form a cabinet of 'reconciliation between all the people of Iraq,' he said his government would 'save no money or blood to break terrorism,'" Pence writes.

Those words took on new meaning early this morning, when al-Maliki announced the death of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of the Iraqi insurgency, following U.S. airstrikes.

Pence, a member of the House International Relations Committee, goes on to write of al-Maliki: "He spoke of his intention to 'launch a plan for the protection of Baghdad' and specifically mentioned his intention to confront sabotage of critical energy infrastructure, adding that he had 'spoken to President Bush to help me on this.'"

The foreign minister of Turkey, Abdullah Gul, is another interview subject on Pence's blog. Gul is quoted as saying of the Iraq insurgency: "Iran's influence is deepening." Later, the foreign minister says of Iran, "We are disturbed that they are intending to acquire nuclear weapons technology...They want to develop a nuclear weapon as soon as possible." Pence met with Gul about 15 minutes after Gul hosted an Iranian security delegation.

The quotations that Pence posts on his blog don't constitute breaking news. But they do demonstrate how

one member of Congress is moving the line between government and journalism. He is essentially serving as a reporter when he's sitting in the room with foreign leaders.

They don't necessarily know it, though, because Pence doesn't tell them that they may be quoted on his blog. "I suspect (as) public people, they know they're on the record," Pence said in an HPR interview. "I tend to think that's implicit when they give a meeting to a congressional delegation." Pence, a self-described "copious note taker," feels a duty to relate what he's heard to his constituents--and to get the word out through his blog.

"I'm finding facts for the people I represent," Pence said in describing his foreign missions. "So I think the widest amount of distribution about what I've learned is consistent with the reason why I'm there. The people who bought the plane ticket ought to get a report on what I'm



doing."

That audience seems to be embracing Pence's blog, which was launched two years ago. He said that it receives about 100,000 hits each month and is the primary portal of entry to the Web site, rather than the homepage.

The benefits Pence gains from his blog go beyond his cyberspace readers. He said that a number of newspapers in the district run long excerpts from the blog and publish them along with photos that Pence has shot. One expert is wary of such developments. "There has been an increasing practice by members of Congress to circumvent the professional media in Washington by...producing their own videos and news releases...and then having the media

back home use them without attributing them to the member of Congress. Blogging seems to be the latest version of this trend," said Wesley Pippert, associate professor of journalism at the University of Missouri.

Pippert, who spent nearly 30 years writing for United Press International, supported the idea of congressional blogs. "I am a firm believer in giving people as much freedom as possible to express themselves, short of such things as libel and falsehoods, he said. But he cautions that congressional blogs are inherently subjective. "[M]any persons in presenting their account of the story find it nearly impossible not to put their actions and words into the best possible light," he said.

"It's about real time information," Pence said. "My constituents can read about my full day in Iraq the same calendar day it happened." ❖



Rich James, Post-Tribune - The Indiana Republican Party rolled out the heavy artillery Tuesday night in an effort to defeat Lake County Republican Chairman John Curley. They fired blanks. While they were here to back the candidacy of West Creek Township Assessor Rick Niemeyer for chairman, they were mostly on hand to defeat Curley. Former state Rep. Dan Domezich of Schererville, who played a big part in Niemeyer's campaign, was on hand, but quickly slipped away when he learned his candidate had lost. Mike McPhillips, who served as Domezich's puppet in the county Election Board office until Curley became county chairman and fired him, was on hand as well. Thanks to Domezich, McPhillips, a former Hammond cop, ended up being appointed by Gov. Mitch Daniels to run the Toll Road. But the biggest gun was Bob Grand. He's a Munster native who practices law in Indianapolis and has been at the heart of Indiana Republican politics for years — primarily as a fund-raiser. Yet, all that firepower wasn't enough to dump Curley — the Irishman who's done pretty well for himself since falling off the potato truck. But the two biggest Niemeyer backers were conspicuously absent. Neither Secretary of State Todd Rokita nor state Treasurer Tim Berry was on hand after sending letters to precinct committeemen supporting Niemeyer. They must have been too busy with state business. Despite all the high-powered pressure, Curley grabbed 62 percent of the vote, winning 149-92. Domezich's involvement is understandable; he wants to control the county party and is unquestionably the best Republican fund-raiser in this part of the state. But why Rokita? Why Berry? You'd think they'd have better political sense than to immerse themselves in a county chairman's election. It's akin to a state party chairman taking sides in a primary contest — you just don't do it. Their involvement enraged Curley backers as well as some of those committeemen sitting on the fence. If Rokita and Berry think they will be uniformly embraced by Lake County Republicans the next time they run, they are sadly mistaken. What is it they say about an elephant's memory? Yeah, it's longer than its trunk. Although Rokita and Berry had no business involving themselves in a county chairman's election, what's upsetting is the reason they felt compelled to do so. It's not because they felt Niemeyer is the greatest thing since Ronald Reagan. It's not because they thought Curley wasn't doing a very good job. It's not because they're obsessed with one day seeing a two-party system in Lake County. It's because of what happened May 11 at the Innsbrook Country Club in Merrillville. That's the night Domezich summoned Lake County's wealthiest Republicans and asked them to

generously pump up the campaign coffers of state party officeholders. After hauling the cash back to Indianapolis, Rokita and Berry acquiesced to Domezich's request that they back Niemeyer. It's one of those quid pro quo things. Money talks. ❖

Newt Gingrich, National Journal - The Democrats lost in San Diego last night in a special election many thought they would win. After all, the race was to fill a seat left vacant by a Republican congressman who had to resign when he pled guilty of corruption. President Bush's approval rating in a California Field Poll this week is around 28% percent (the lowest in that poll's history since just before President Nixon resigned in 1974). With 96% of the vote reported, Brian Bilbray has 49.48% of the vote and the Democrat has 45.28% (there are two minor candidates). With a margin of almost 5,000 votes, Bilbray seems certain to win. So what happened? Why was the Democrat only able to go from 44% to 45%? How did the Republican go from 15% to victory? Here's the bottom line: A conservative reform-candidate won in San Diego last night. The result of this election speaks volumes about what will succeed and what will fail for Republicans this November. Had the Democrats won, this would be a morning of giddy excitement for Nancy Pelosi and Howard Dean. Their allies in Washington and across the country would have been energized and Republicans would have been panic stricken. House Minority Leader Pelosi would be on the phone to every major donor explaining what their victory meant and why it justified more resources for the fall campaign. The left's columnists and pundits would have filled the airwaves and the newspaper and magazines with predictions of imminent Republican disaster. The DCCC chairman, Congressman Rahm Emanuel, would be on television this morning claiming a harbinger for the fall election. The elite media would have been thrilled at the prospect of a Republican loss of the House this fall. We would have heard the phrase "bellwether election" over and over this morning on the morning shows. Instead, we had almost no coverage. They lost. At a rally, someone told her (in Spanish) that they were for her but were undocumented (meaning they were in the United States illegally). Ms. Busby responded by suggesting that it was OK for a person in the United States illegally to be active in her campaign. Unfortunately for her candidacy, a Minuteman volunteer in the audience caught her words on tape and gave it to San Diego talk radio hosts. ❖





Tight victory in big GOP CD

TRENDLINE: Republican Brian Bilbray narrowly beat back a challenge by Democrat Francine Busby in a conservative district north of San Diego. The two were vying to replace Randy Cunningham, a former Republican congressman imprisoned for taking bribes. The race was watched closely for clues about whether President George W. Bush's dismal approval ratings and issues like corruption and immigration were taking a toll on Republicans five months before elections that will decide control of Congress.

Congressional Races

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: A liberal activist group is launching ads accusing Chocola and three other congressional Republicans of accepting money from defense contractors while opposing tough penalties for companies that overcharge the government (WISH-TV). Brooks Kochvar, chief of staff for Chocola, says the ad "is clearly misleading" and argued that the Republican has done all he can to help U-S forces. Moveon-dot-org is spending 300-thousand-dollars for the commercials. Besides Chocola, they target Nancy Johnson of Connecticut, Deborah Pryce of Ohio and Thelma Drake of Virginia. The 30-second spots will begin running tomorrow and remain on the air for about ten



days. **Status:** TOSSUP

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:** Hostettler was asked twice on a call-in show last week about Vectren Corp. giving Majority Leader John Boehner, R-Ohio, a ride to Evansville (Lee, **Evansville Courier & Press**). "It will actually be our campaign that will be reimbursing (Vectren) for the first-class ticket, since the majority leader came here for us," Hostettler said. Rural Bloomfield farmer Jim Wilson offered a simple solution to help solve the illegal alien problem at the heart of the current immigration policy debate to Hostettler during a Saturday morning town hall meeting in Bloomfield (**Linton Daily Citizen**). "One of the glaring admissions that I noticed was no reference to a border bench/wall. Was that the intention?" Wilson asked. Hostettler replied that the House-passed version of a bill included provisions to construct about 720 miles of fencing. He pointed out the Senate-version of the bill calls for about 300 miles of fencing along the Mexican border. Wilson noted the U.S.-Mexican border is at last 2,000 miles long. The Israelis found out the only way to do that was to build a wall." The Republican Congressman said fences are already erected near El Paso, Texas and San Diego, Calif., which is doing an effective job of curtailing the influx of immigrants at those two points. "If you strategically place fencing then you have a significant impact on crossings," he said. "We've reduced the convenience with a little fencing. There are places where we could place more fencing and significantly reduce it even greater." Congressional Republicans who are taking a harder line on illegal immigration than President Bush are more in touch with constituents and less willing to kowtow to interest groups, Hostettler said Thursday night (Lee, **Evansville Courier & Press**). Appearing live on WNIN-



PBS9's "**Shively & Shoulders**," Hostettler came under fire from co-host Patrick Shoulders, a Democrat. "The plan that the Senate has adopted is essentially President Bush's plan," Shoulders said. "Here's the former governor of a border state who, one would think, if he understand anything, would understand this problem. "Why is the House, (which is controlled by) his own party, biting him on this?" Hostettler said House Republicans are "closest to the people on this." "I've had several Town Hall meetings this year, about 15 or 16, and 80 percent of the questions ... I get are about illegal immigration," he said. "... Our constituents are telling us to get control of the border, enforce the interior and deal with this employment issue." Hostettler said some Republicans are listening to "consultants and pundits" who say cracking down on illegal immigration will alienate the Hispanic vote. But referendums and polls have shown that Hispanic-Americans are among the most passionate opponents of illegal immigration, Hostettler said. "Because they came here legally," he said.

Status: TOSS-UP

Congressional District 9: Republican: U.S. Rep. Mike Sodrel. Democrat: Baron Hill. **Media Market:** Evansville (11%), Indianapolis (23%), Louisville (55%), Dayton, Cincinnati (10 percent). **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. **2004 Presidential:** Bush 59%, Kerry 40%. **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:** U.S. House majority leader John Boehner visited downtown Jeffersonville Wednesday morning for a fundraiser for 9th District congressman Mike Sodrel (**News-Tribune**). Following the Sodrel event, the Republican congressman from Ohio sat down with The Evening News and The Tribune for a talk about a couple of the big issues occupying the House's attention. Boehner — who chaired the House Education and Workforce Committee for about five years — said areas such as Southern Indiana will need an educated crop of workers in order to properly grow its economy. The congressman touted the No Child Left Behind Act as a means to that end. The biggest indicator so far, according to Boehner: Improving scores on the lower end of the grade scale. NCLB, which Boehner helped author, also goes against the previous Republican commitment to a smaller federal government, taking control out of the hands of state and local lawmakers and federalizing education. Boehner defended NCLB, saying it wasn't an expanded federal bureaucracy, but a tool which creates greater accountability — a traditional Republican value, he said. Boehner also said he feels most seniors are happy with the newly instituted Medicare Part D program. Boehner touted America's as the best

health care system in the world. **Status:** TOSSUP.

State, Legislative Races

Senate District 22: Republican: State Sen. Ron Alting. Democrat: David C. Vorbeck. **2002 Results:** Alting 15,902, Sanders (D) 8,087. **2006 Forecast:** At a press conference Tuesday, David Vorbeck, managing director of Bison Financial Group, advocated using a partnership between government and businesses to extend insurance to the 860,000 Indiana residents who now lack it. (Shaw, **Lafayette Journal & Courier**). He said Indiana residents pay some of the highest premiums of anyone in the nation for health care. Alting said he wants to reform health care and is waiting for his Republican colleagues' proposals on how that can be done. "We all have ideas and mostly good ideas," he said. "One of the biggest challenges will be: How can we pay for it?" Both Alting and Vorbeck said they support Gov. Mitch Daniels' recent proposal to make more people eligible for Medicaid. Beyond that, Vorbeck said Hoosiers could acquire health insurance if Indiana law allowed the formation of a pool of insurance buyers, as now happens in Vermont. Those citizens who chose to join could use their sheer numbers to bargain for cheaper premiums. Vorbeck likes the idea because it accommodates the free market, he said. "But Indiana has prevented the free enterprise system by excluding the ability of creating the large risk pools," he said. **Status:** TOSSUP.

Senate District 31: Republican: State Sen. James Merritt. Democrat: Russell Brown. **2002 Results:** Merritt (R) 17,154, Sloan (L) 1,387. **2006 Forecast:** Sen. Merritt released this statement on Wednesday: "State Senator Jim Merritt(R-Indianapolis), the Republican nominee for Senate District 31,



Russell Brown

will run for another term in the Indiana Senate and is looking forward to the fall election." Brown responded with a statement, saying, "Several weeks ago, I was startled to learn that I might be facing a new opponent in the fall election. Although my Republican opponent was uncertain about his intentions, I have remained committed to our campaign for State Senate." In one of the stranger election year sagas, numerous GOP sources said that Sen. Merritt wasn't fully committed to his re-election and pondered withdrawing from the race. There was a "rambling" conversation with State Rep. Mike Murphy, the Marion County Republican chairman, in which Merritt reportedly vented his disdain about House Speaker Brian Bosma. Since the two represent the same area, Bosma said he called Merritt last week to see what was going on.



Earlier this week, Merritt was indicating to friends that he was going to run for both re-election and pro tem, though we never got the emphatic statement we suggested him make to remove all doubt. What do we make of this? **1.)** The Senate Majority Caucus still appears to be stunned by the loss of Senate President Robert Garton. **2.)** There is a realization that no one is safe any more from the wrath of voters. This will result in a different governing style. Senators can no longer do what they damn well please. **3.)** Merritt's re-election in by no means assured. The fact that he dithered will be used against him. He looks vacillating, weak and vulnerable. **4.)** Democrat Brown is the real deal. We're moving this race into the Tossup zone. Bad year for Republicans, bad vibes, a bad start from a candidate who hasn't had to worry about re-election before this year. This one has a "bad" ending written all over it if you're a Republican. **Status:** TOSSUP

Senate District 41: Republican: Greg Walker. Democrat: Terry Coriden. **1998 Results:** Garton 26,499. **2002 Results:** Garton 21,918 , Gividen (L) 3,350 . **2006 Forecast:** A key county Republican official, who we cannot identify, told HPR this week: "You don't know how many of us Republicans outside of Marion County are happy that Garton lost. We too saw that he was a barrier to change. Unfortunatley it looks like the next Senate leader will be of the same ilk. Kenley or Long. It is upsetting to hear Republican leaders bashing Mr. Walker. Ted Ogle, 6th District Chairman, has been quoted that he doesn't know if he can support Walker in the fall. Our leaders tell us that we are to support who they want us too at the convention and to do so blindly. However, when the voters speak we have a district chair making comments about who he might not support on the Republican ticket. I have also had a state senator not up for re-election this year say that Walker is out of touch because he doesn't have a TV in his home and therefore is not worth the support to get

elected. This same senator is mum when the health insurance issue is brought up. But who is really out of touch? Obviously those like Garton with TV's, Cable, Radio etc. seem to know it all. Pundits continue to wonder why voter turn out is so low. But I don't think the answer is all that hard. Even those of us who are politically active are discouraged by the responses of Ted Ogle and the unnamed Senator above. If our leaders have such disrespect for the voters why should they vote?" **Status:** TOSSUP ❖

House District 77: Republican: Andrew G. Smith. Democrat: State Rep. Phil Hoy. **2004 Results:** Hoy (D) 11,308, Hennig (R) 9,804, Garrett (I) 1,285. **2006 Forecast:** A recent fundraising letter paid for by Smith and signed by Hoy's 2004 opponent, David Hennig has ignited controversy over the same sex marriage issue (Langhorne, **Evansville Courier & Press**). The letter cites Hoy's vote against a bill to add a same-sex marriage ban to the state constitution and his performance of commitment ceremonies for same-sex couples in his capacity as a retired United Church of Christ pastor. Hoy says the letter contains inaccuracies and is a "smoke screen" to divert voters' attention from more important issues. Smith says the letter isn't inaccurate, adding that he is talking about legitimate public policy issues that illustrate Hoy's "extreme hard left" social agenda. "I don't think homosexuals should be discriminated against, but (Hoy) is using his position to articulate a theology of gay marriage, which runs counter to the entire Christian tradition," Smith said. "You'd better believe that is a relevant issue to voters. I, frankly, see my position on these issues as much more moderate than Phil's." The letter paid for by Smith, prominently features in enlarged letters a UCC statement endorsing homosexuality. Smith claims Hoy signed the statement.

Status: LEANS HOY ❖

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Daniels announces 1,200 jobs

JEFFERSONVILLE - Gov. Mitch Daniels traveled to Madison and Jeffersonville in Southeast Indiana to make two major announcements that will create more than a thousand jobs in Indiana: 1,100 jobs in Jeffersonville and 120 jobs in Madison. American Commercial Lines Inc., the parent company of Jeffboat, will expand its' corporate headquarters and facilities, creating more than 1,100 new jobs. Midwest Tube Mills will form R&T Steel and Wire in Madison to manufacture dog kennels and security panels.

Daniels appoints toll road lease oversight

INDIANAPOLIS - A seven-member board announced Wednesday will oversee a group of foreign investors that are leasing the Indiana Toll Road for \$3.8 billion (**Associated Press**).

Gov. Mitch Daniels formed the board, which is expected to meet for the first time later this month, by executive order. "This group will report to me about the company's compliance with the lease agreement, and it will be another way for citizens and toll road customers to make their opinions known," Daniels said in a statement. The planned toll road lease to a private, Australian-Spanish consortium is being challenged in court, but the state hopes the case will be dismissed so operations and maintenance of the 157-mile northern Indiana highway can be turned over to the companies by June 30. Four of the seven board members are residents of counties near the road. The board, which will be chaired by Earl Goode, the governor's deputy chief of staff, will meet quarterly. Other board members are Leigh Morris, the mayor of



LaPorte; Tom Sharp, commissioner of the Indiana Department of Transportation; Charles Schalliol, Indiana Finance Authority chairman; Aaron Carlberg, a Hobart resident who is the Indiana political director for the Indiana-Kentucky Regional Council of Carpenters; Kevin Kelly, president of Walsh & Kelly Paving Contractors in South Bend; and Kristin Sine, principal of Hendry Park Elementary School in Angola.

Talian critical of board

OGDEN DUNES - State Sen. Karen Tallian, D-Portage, said the group lacks the objectivity to determine whether the contractor is doing the job (**Post-Tribune**). "I think it falls way short of what it ought to be. The governor hasn't asked anyone who doesn't have a vested interest," Tallian said. Morris said he had been a critic of the lease, before he ultimately supported Major Moves. Now that the company appears on the verge of taking over, he said the governor wants the new board to provide genuine oversight. "I don't think this is just window treatment," Morris said.

May revenue dips \$27 million from forecast

INDIANAPOLIS - Indiana's revenue for May dipped \$27 million from the December forecast, according to David Reynolds, deputy director of OMB (**HPR**). He said that the state is still \$187 million over the forecast for the year.

INDOT gives Crown Point green light on interchange

CROWN POINT - Eager to get the new Interstate 65 interchange built at 109th Avenue, the city is taking a lead role in the project to move up its completion date from 2011 to early 2009 (**Times of Northwest Indiana**). At the request of the city and the office of U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky Crown Point has been given permission from the Indiana Department of Transportation to control the selection

process for the interchange's consulting engineer..

Family company buys Fort Wayne News-Sentinel

FORT WAYNE - A family-owned newspaper chain based in West Virginia is preparing to take ownership of The News-Sentinel. Ogden Newspapers Inc. has agreed to purchase The News-Sentinel for an undisclosed sum from McClatchy Co., the companies announced Wednesday. The News-Sentinel was one of 12 newspapers McClatchy decided to sell after it agreed to acquire Knight Ridder Inc. in a \$4.5 billion deal. Ogden Newspapers is purchasing Knight Ridder's 75 percent stake in Fort Wayne Newspapers. The Journal Gazette Co. owns the remaining 25 percent of Fort Wayne Newspapers under the joint operating agreement.

Gay rights group gets huge donation

FORT WAYNE - Fort Wayne father Otis Vincent had already pledged to give the largest single donation that Indiana Equality - a coalition of organizations from around the state supporting the gay and lesbian community - had ever seen Wednesday (**Fort Wayne Journal Gazette**). But during a speech announcing the group's fundraising campaign, Vincent shocked the organizers by increasing his gift from \$200,000 to \$275,000. The semiretired marketing director at Trinity Mortgage in Fort Wayne made the contribution in honor of his son, Stephen, who died of AIDS in 1995 at age 30. "As a parent we only wish the basics for our children - love, happiness and health. That's all I wanted for him. Instead, I watched while the world persecuted him for being gay." ❖

Retirees protest