



Our reforms for Kernan-Shepard

The time for modern reformers is coming to the Hoosier State

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - In the aftermath of the 2002 property tax reforms, **HOWEY POLITICS INDIANA** began writing about the need to restructure state and local government. I've written about this subject probably more than any other journalist in Indiana.

This came after years of covering as a reporter and editor not only the Statehouse (off and on since 1985), but city halls in Elkhart, Fort Wayne and Indianapolis as well as Allen County government. I've sat through six-hour city budget hearings. I've listened to mayors and commissioners talk about how much road salt to buy or how much gas (and at what price) to purchase. My conversations have included Tim Jeffers, John Goss, Paul Helmke, Jim Perron, Bart Peterson, Mitch Daniels (when he



Gov. Daniels, Chief Justice Shepard and former Gov. Kernan at the Blue Ribbon Commission announcement last summer. It's about to be showtime. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

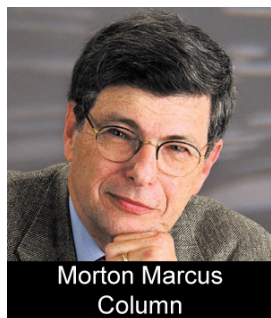
was White House budget director), David McIntosh, Murray Clark, and Vi Simpson. One of the most significant motivators was Gov. Robert D. Orr, who called me numerous times in the final years of his life with vigorous encouragement to

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Resurrecting tax reforms

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – With new mayors and council members in many of our cities, it's time to drag out some of previous suggestions for fiscal reforms. Of course lowly mayors and councils can do nothing that is not approved by the almighty General Assembly. After all, we know that all the best brains filter up to the legislature with only the sludge left behind.



Morton Marcus
Column

First, it's time to reconsider property tax abatement. But we can't understand property taxes and their abatement if we don't



“If constitutional property tax caps are ultimately approved, they will have unintended consequences that cannot be anticipated today.”

- Steve Johnson, in an op-ed in the **Indianapolis Star**



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Indianapolis mayor-elect Greg Ballard could learn some tax lessons from Morton Marcus. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

Third, let's stop unfair subsidies to seniors. Why should a person get a \$1,000 exemption on his/her income tax just because s/he is over 65? Why is a rich person of age 66 given a benefit denied to a poor person age 64? Income taxes should be based on income, not age. As Dr. Seuss might have said, "a person is a person, no matter how old".

Fourth, get rid of preferential treatment for homeowners. Property taxes are levied on land, buildings and other improvements. Whether that site and structure are used as a house or a bakery is of no consequence for property tax policy.

Fifth, let's give larger individual exemptions to make our income tax more progressive. Right now we provide a \$1,000 exemption per person (plus an added \$1,500 for children). Raise that to \$5,000 per person so that a family of four with an adjusted gross income of \$20,000 would pay no Indiana income tax.

Sixth, stop blind budgeting. Let's have localities budget on the basis of actual revenues received rather than on the thin air of revenue expectations. Today your city or town

makes up a budget and submits it to DLGF long before revenues are known. Then DLGF certifies a property tax rate for each locality. Later the Office of Management and Budget figures out how much local income tax is returned to your county.

By this time, schools, counties, cities, towns, libraries and other local entities are already spending the money they have yet to see. Wouldn't it make more sense to have these governmental units spending from money they actually know they have?

Seventh, local revenue sharing is very important. If a new factory moves into one school corporation, how are the property taxes to be distributed among the surrounding schools where the workers may reside? It's time to start sharing the benefits of economic development.

There are many other reforms to consider, but I have run out of space and you might have run out of time. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist, writer, and speaker formerly with the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University.



pursue reforms. I've had conversations with Orr and Judge Patricia Gifford, who sat on the 1970 Constitution Commission. I've read the two Coalition on Modern Public Efficiencies and Tax Expenditure (COMPETE) reports. Last month, I attended the Kernan-Shepard Blue Ribbon Commission forum at Franklin College.

At the 2004 HPR Forum, our panel on "The Case for Government Reform" included State Sen. David Long, Lawrence Township Assessor Paul Ricketts, Michael O'Connor and Debbie Driskell from the Indiana Township Association.

At the 2005 HPR Forum, Gov. Daniels talked of the "stasists vs. dynamists" who would ultimately form the skirmish lines in the battle to reform government. "In my view, we have a new politics shaping up in this state," Daniels said at the time. "The dividing lines, the fault lines, are not quite the ones we were so familiar with for most of our past. The new fault lines in Indiana politics are between the forces of change and the forces of standing still."

Also at the 2005 HPR Forum, Chief Justice Randall Shepard gave the keynote and told us that the Indiana Constitution of 1851 would not be an obstacle. "It seems to me the real question for modern reformers is not what the Constitution won't let us do, but what we are ready to do with each other for Indiana's future," Shepard advised.

Today, Hoosiers find themselves on the brink of a historical opportunity. The Blue Ribbon Commission met yesterday to begin pondering the vast amount of research it has compiled over the past five months. It will issue a report sometime in December.

"The commission has been sorting through a lot of information, including previous reform efforts, the best practices and reform initiatives of other states, the experiences of those who have tackled this kind of process before, and copious public input provided via the web, e-mail, mail, and through the six public forums," said Jamie L. Palmer, senior policy analyst, Center for Urban Policy and the Environment. "The process has been organic. As new questions or ideas arise, new information is added.

"The commission and staff have worked under a very tight timeline - reforming 150 years of practice in a few months - but we believe we will deliver a real outline for reform. The commission will identify real opportunities for improving the efficiency of local government and ways to make it more accessible and responsive to the public. The recommendations will be ambitious and yet practical. The members' intent is to offer up a set of workable, practical recommendations, not blue-sky ideas that have little hope of being implemented."

Palmer said there has been coordination with Sen. Luke Kenley's Tax Commission and that Gov. Daniels has been briefed regularly.

Kernan-Shepard has requested public input and you can read hundreds of pages of it at the website at

Today, Howey Politics Indiana

For 14 years, many of you have been receiving The Howey Political Report. Today, we become **HOWEY POLITICS INDIANA**.

We are the most comprehensive source of political news and analysis in the Hoosier state every weekday. We wanted to work "Indiana" into our name. We also know that in countless government, campaign, public affairs and legal offices, our readers anticipate "the Howey" coming through with the day's political and public policy news.

Howey Politics knows Indiana. We know how to read the trends and nuances. We know where the bodies are buried. **HOWEY POLITICS INDIANA** reflects what we truly are.

This is the first part of an exciting transformation that will occur over the next couple of months. We are introducing a new Internet optimization strategy that will place our content and advertisers at the top of search engines. The **HOWEY POLITICS INDIANA FORUM** is poised to become an exciting contributor to the 2008 election cycle. Subscribers will have greater access to **HOWEY POLITICS INDIANA** stories in a text friendly format for blackberry and iPhone users. Our website will become the true "hub" of Indiana politics, featuring Indiana's highest circulated columnists (Brian A. Howey and Morton J. Marcus), with photos and analysis updated on a daily basis.

As Indiana prepares to make great public policy strides into the 21st Century, **HOWEY POLITICS INDIANA** will be evolving as well. ❖



Howey Politics Indiana Publisher Brian A. Howey (right) with NTI Chairman Sam Nunn and Sen. Richard Lugar on a flight between Yekaterinburg, Russia and Odessa, Ukraine last August.



www.indianalocal.govreform.iu.edu.

I view Gov. Daniels tax reform proposals of Oct. 23 as the cart before the horse. How can tax reforms be earnestly debated when we don't know how much government needs to be funded?

The Kernan-Shepard report should be the linchpin on the coming debate as to how Indiana government should be structured and how it will be paid for. Working on a couple of pale ales at the Broad Ripple Brew Pub in 2003 with then gubernatorial candidate and current Republican Chairman Murray Clark, I asked this question:

"If you took all the tax money that went to support Indiana townships, counties, cities, towns, school corporations, universities, airports, libraries, police departments, sheriff departments, jails, prisons, sanitary districts, transportation districts, full-time and volunteer fire departments and all the agencies bureaus and fiefdoms that speckle Indiana with more government than just about any state in the union ... would there be enough money to do all the things we need to do if we restructured?"

Clark pondered a moment and then said, "Probably, yes."

With this background in mind, here is a distillation of our recommendations to Kernan-Shepard:

County government

Change the three commissioners to an elected county executive. This would create a clear line of authority with elected policy makers. The Constitutional offices of assessor, auditor, treasurer and recorder would be combined into a finance position appointed by the county executive. The executive would also appoint a cabinet that would hire a board certified pathologist as county medical examiner, a surveyor, and a fire commissioner. The clerk - an inherently political position - would continue to be elected as well as a prosecutor and sheriff. This provides a check and balance system. No matter how reform minded Hoosiers become, they will never let go of the sheriff (i.e, someone needs to send this message to Greg Ballard). The county council would be the legislative body that would approve the executive's department selections. The county councils should be expanded to ensure minority representation. Counties should be designated in three classes (urban, suburban and rural). My impulse would be to call for county consolidations - Newton and Jasper, Clark and Floyd, Ohio and Switzerland, Miami and Wabash etc. Many of Indiana's 92 counties were created during America's Jacksonian period which promoted decentralized government that still exists today. Counties were created so a person could walk to the county seat in half a day and get back by dark. An intellectual case could be made that Indiana should have only 30 or so counties. The state could provide funding or tax incentives for such consolidations, but to require them would be politically costly.

Local tax review

The Indiana General Assembly has created county tax review boards. This is now deeply flawed in that this board is unelected. It should be an elected board. In Gov. Daniels' property tax reforms, he calls for a referendum process on all major local construction projects. An unelected tax review board and the referendum process could have a disastrous impact on communities as they would form a pincer from two sides. A mayor, a county executive, a school board (all elected positions) would find themselves second-guessed from the top and bottom. A referendum industry would spring up to set up pro/con campaigns against any new school, park or library. Instead of thoughtful deliberations, communities would be faced with emotional campaigns that now mark the political process in states like California. Currently, if voters don't like how a mayor or a school board is spending, they have the power of the ballot box to remove those officials and change policy. I also believe that the referendum process would create progressive enclaves while a number of communities would fall behind after choosing not to upgrade with projects. I understand this probably comes under Mark Lubbers' "Get Real or Die" philosophy, but the idea would be to bring as many communities along (particularly if Wi-Fi becomes widespread, allowing more entrepreneurs to migrate from urban to rural areas).

Townships

They would be eliminated. Counties and cities would coordinate fire protection and take care of immediate poor relief (most of which takes place in urban settings) as well as cemetery maintenance. Counties would take over assessing functions. It's worth noting that in 1934, Gov. Paul McNutt tried to get townships removed. That time has now come.

Cities

The impulse would be to get cities and counties to create more Unigovs. The reality is that this would be very complex and fraught with political danger. If Fort Wayne and Allen County combined, what happens to New Haven, Hometown and Woodburn? The best chance to achieve this is to encourage natural economic regions to develop (and in many areas, they already have). State government could create incentives if cities and counties want to combine building, street/highway, planning functions, many of which have already happened. Perhaps incentives from the state could be put in place to encourage cooperative government services and even consolidation.

Schools

The governor is correct that 100 percent of school operational funding should come from the state. Our initial



impulse was to call for school corporation consolidations, particularly in counties under 50,000 population. I couldn't defend the number as anything more than arbitrary. In some counties - such as DeKalb - this has already occurred when Auburn and Waterloo schools combined. Garrett didn't. It would be up to taxpayers to determine if there should be greater efficiencies via consolidation. In Steuben County, for instance, a forced consolidation of Angola, Fremont and Hamilton schools would likely bring vociferous opposition by proponents of local control. With the state providing 100 percent funding, I believe that the state can then require efficiencies (in purchasing, gifted and talented students, vocational and adult training) on a gradual and evolving basis.

State government

Create a true executive branch with the governor compiling a cabinet of finance (auditor/treasurer), education, secretary of state, agriculture, commerce, accounts, local government, public safety, inspector general, social services, National Guard and natural resources. The attorney general would be elected as a check and balance and

would be given prosecutorial powers, in essence, becoming the state's DA. My rationale is that one political party - the Democrats - barely contest any statewide office other than governor/lieutenant governor and attorney general. If the political process doesn't get involved, then these non-policy positions should be included in the executive branch pyramid with the buck stopping at the governor. The governor should have a line item veto. Veto overrides should require a super majority.

Indiana General Assembly

The House should be increased to 101 members and the Senate to 51 members. A non-partisan commission would generate computerized legislative and congressional maps with the goal of creating competitive, community-oriented districts.

Parties and elections

Primary elections are costly and have low and eroding participation. Indiana's political parties would be re-energized if the nominating process was returned to the caucus and convention system. ❖

2008 Indiana Governor

Governor 2008: Republican: Gov. Mitch Daniels, La Ron Keith. Democrat: Jim Schellinger, Jill Long Thompson. **1996 Results:** O'Bannon (D) 1,075,342, Goldsmith (R) 997,505, Dillon (L) 35,261. **2000 Results:** O'Bannon (D) 1,230,345, McIntosh (R) 906,492, Horning (L) 38,686. **2004 Results:** Daniels (R) 1,302,912, Kernan (D) 1,113,900, Gividen (L) 31,644. **2008 Forecast:** Washington Post blogger Chris Cillizza, who keynoted the **Howey Politics Forum** on Oct. 23, has elevated the Indiana's governor's race from 4th to 2nd on his watch list. Here's his take: The Fix spent a day in Indianapolis late last month (at the HPR Forum) and had a chance to see the two Democrats running for governor -- former Rep. Jill Long Thompson and architect Jim Schellinger. Long Thompson is steady if not spectacular and relies heavily on her personal story. (At the event I attended, she mentioned she had been raised on a farm in answer to nearly every question asked of her.) Schellinger is the more charismatic of the two but is clearly a political novice with few policy proposals behind his rhetoric. Gov. Mitch Daniels (R) is a savvy campaigner and is already aggressively working to remind Hoosier voters of the promises he kept since taking office. Cam Savage of the Daniels campaign told **Roll Call** on Monday that his camp is focused on carrying Marion County in 2008 after Greg Ballard's stunning upset last week.

Here's our take. We're hearing more and more

"friends" of the governor describe his tax plan as more akin to a "re-election" ploy. We believe that of all the public policy decisions, Daniels' lack of interest in property tax reform earlier this year was his worst. It has opened him up to what the Democrats are saying: that he allowed this crisis to occur. It's been fascinating to watch him bash allies like the Indiana Chamber and the Indiana Manufacturers. It will be interesting to see what the end game is next March and whether he thinks he doesn't need them.



The Daniels campaign tends to brush off the notion that a Democratic wave in 2008 - something we see as a distinct possibility - won't swamp them because Hoosiers can make distinctions between state and federal issues. That didn't happen in city elections this month where many frugal mayors got blamed for the property tax crisis. Danger! Danger! Danger! If a Democratic challenger had emerged by this point, and without a clear path in this property tax mess - we might be inclined to move this race into Tossup. But with Schellinger and Thompson, we don't have a clear picture. There is virtually no policy positions taken by either one despite the fact that the Statehouse is now rife with property tax plans and soon with a historic government reform agenda coming from Kernan-Shepard. Indiana Democrats are not providing ideas. If Schellinger or Thompson can match up campaign money with credible policy initiatives, this race could very well end up in the Tossup zone. **Democratic Primary Status:** LEANS LONG THOMPSON. **General Status:** Leans Daniels ❖



Democrat source says Carson not likely to return to DC; Elrod enters the race

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Informed and reliable Democratic Party leaders are telling **HOWEY POLITICS INDIANA** that U.S. Rep. Julia Carson is facing a grim future and that her current health crisis is likely to prevent her from ever returning to Washington.

The high-ranking source would talk to **HPI** only on condition of anonymity. The source said that Carson's life expectancy will probably be measured in "weeks" and not months or years.

This news came as State Rep. Jon Elrod, R-Indianapolis, was announcing his candidacy today.

The source said that even Carson's congressional staff has been kept in the dark from the inner circle of confidants that have guarded her condition from any revelations to the general public. That inner circle has been described as including former Congressman Andy Jacobs Jr., Center Township Trustee Carl Drummer, and the congresswoman's grandson, Indianapolis Councilman Andre Carson.

In the Oct. 25 edition of *Howey Politics*, Jacobs refuted the rumors that Carson had suffered a stroke or had metastasized lung cancer. "The next rumor will be that she's pregnant with quintuplets," Jacobs said.

When Carson appeared on WTLC's "**Afternoons with Amos Show**" on Oct. 31, the interview with Amos Brown took place in an undisclosed location outside of his studios. Carson, who coughed during periods of the interview, said she was suffering from bronchitis.

Carson was admitted to an Indianapolis hospital on Sept. 21 for what has been described as a leg infection by her staff. But she talked in an almost spiritual sense, telling Brown, "When God gets through with me he will lay me down to sleep and I'll be somewhere praying the Lord my soul to keep. When I get to the point where I come to the end of the road and talk to the Lord about what I'm going to do now, I think he'll show me the answers."

The high-ranking Democratic source walked through the coming process to potentially replace the 7th CD congresswoman. The source said in the case of a vacancy, Gov. Mitch Daniels will set a special election date. It will be the caucus of precinct committeemen and women

who will select a nominee in each party. A special election would likely be held within 90 days of a vacancy. Potentially it could be one of two elections in the 7th CD in 2008 if a vacancy occurs well before the November general election.

The Democratic Party source said the process would be confusing since the two parties would be expected to slate candidates at their party conventions next February.

Multiple Democratic sources tell **HPI** that candidates preparing for this process include Councilwoman Joanne Sanders, State Reps. Greg Porter and Carolene Mays, former Indiana and New York City health commissioner Woodrow Myers, former Indiana Democratic Chairman Robin Winston, and even out-going Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson. **Roll Call**, the Capitol Hill newspaper, reported that Carson's health has sparked a "fresh round of speculation that she is preparing to retire." Peterson's loss on Nov. 6 creates a dilemma for Marion County Democrats, who also lost the council.

Meanwhile an **Indianapolis Star** analysis of the

Peterson-Ballard race revealed a huge dropoff in support for the Democrat from African-American precincts. It was an indication that the Carson machine is not nearly what it once was when it made Julia Carson an undefeated political figure as her career went from the Indiana Senate, to Center Township trustee, to Congress. "We know from looking at the precinct-by-precinct votes that the precincts that always perform well for her, they were not there for the mayor," one Indiana Republican operative told **Roll Call**. "The word on the street

is that the black community just didn't come out."

"Certainly after Tuesday, everything is possible," Cam Savage, spokesman for the re-election campaign of Gov. Mitch Daniels, told **Roll Call**. "Republicans are feeling very good about their chances in the county. Republicans are very energized. They have the mayor's office for the first time in eight years and all the support that goes with it." **Roll Call** mentioned Elrod, State Sen. Teresa Lubbers, Prosecutor Carl Brizzi and Secretary of State Todd Rokita as potential GOP candidates in an open 7th CD.

Elrod kicked off his campaign today saying voters needed "active leadership" while adding, "Partisanship, influence-peddling, and wedge issues have eroded America's confidence in its government. Earmarks, pork barrel spending, and unfunded entitlements have resulted in an unsustainable federal government - a government that will not be able to keep its promises to later generations."❖



State Rep. Jon Elrod announces for the 7th CD today. (Elrod Campaign Photo)



Bush visit steers clear of 'Bloody 9th' rematch

By MARK SCHOEFF JR.

WASHINGTON - All politics is local, except sometimes when the president comes to town.

President Bush visited the 9th CD for the second time within a year earlier this week. Although in a speech at the Grand Theater he criticized the Democratic majority in Congress for what he called tax and spending hikes, he steered clear of the topic that has brought him to the area on previous occasions--the showdown between Democrat Baron Hill and Republican Mike Sodrel in what has become the "Bloody 9th."

Hill, who is the incumbent, and Sodrel, who is the challenger again, will hook up for the fourth time on the 2008 ballot. But that battle was on hold during Bush's trip to New Albany on Tuesday.

Local business leaders who participated in a private lunch with Bush at Sam's Food & Spirits prior to his public address said that the discussion ranged from agricultural policy to health care to small business development.

"He was very relaxed, what I call laid back," said Jerry Miles, owner of Milestone Realty Group. "He was willing to answer anything we asked him."

But the conversation didn't touch on the local campaign that is likely to be one of the most hotly contested in the nation.

"He did not say a word about the Ninth District race," said Mark Deuser, president and CEO of Techshot Inc.

One reason he avoided the topic may have been that Hill and Sodrel both attended the luncheon. But even the two bitter rivals engaged in the mellow discussion.

"I don't think there was any political tension at all," said Ted Huber, co-owner and president of Huber's Orchard and Winery. "It was an open dialogue of businessmen speaking their concerns."

Like the other executives in the room, Huber is a

member of One Southern Indiana, an economic development organization for Floyd and Clark counties that invited Bush to New Albany. Sodrel, who owns a local bus and trucking company, is a former chairman of the group.

Huber took advantage of an audience with the president to air his misgivings about agricultural legislation that is working its way through Congress.

"The farm bill seems to be leaning its way toward the larger corporate farms, away from the smaller family farms," Huber said.

He also told Bush that it is difficult to find farm workers, a situation that makes immigration reform more urgent. "We're back to ground zero with farm labor," Huber said. "It's going to be harder and harder to compete."

Small business breakthroughs are one way for the local economy to become more competitive, Deuser said. His firm does engineering research and development. It started out with contracts to make life sciences equipment for NASA space shuttle missions in the 1990s.

Deuser told Bush that a federal small business innovation program helped his firm get off the ground and can foster others. Local leaders are also working with Purdue University and other schools to develop engineering and science companies. "We're looking to create our own little incubator in Floyd County," Deuser said.

Even though those kinds of economic stories dominated lunch, politics did come up in Bush's speech

at the Grand. But it was of the national, macro variety and intended to frame the debate in Washington over spending priorities.

Bush did not do anything on the side to give Sodrel's nascent campaign a boost. "It was not a political trip," said Alex Conant, a White House spokesman. "We did not do any fundraising," Conant said. "It was a good opportunity to visit the area and talk about the economy."

In his speech at the Grand, Bush criticized Democrats in general, and Hill implicitly, for profligate spending and taxing. He may have highlighted themes that Sodrel will use, too.

"The majority was elected on a pledge of fiscal responsibility, but so far it's acting like a teenager with a new credit card," Bush said.

In a statement, Hill shot back. "I find it odd and



President Bush and former congressman Mike Sodrel (right) have lunch at Sam's Tavern in New Albany on Tuesday. (White House Photo)

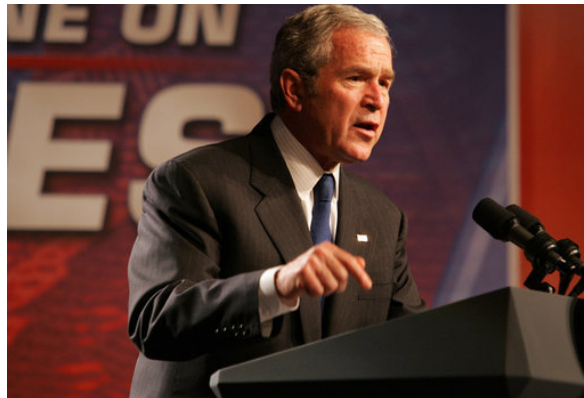


ironic that the president has only now begun emphasizing fiscal responsibility," he said. "For six years, spending ran wild under his leadership and he did nothing to stop it."

Hill stressed that he has introduced a bill that would enshrine in law Democratic rules that require new spending to be balanced elsewhere in the budget.

Bush and Republicans, however, claim that the so-called "paygo" philosophy is an excuse to raise taxes. "To them, every bill on the floor is an opportunity for a tax hike," Bush said.

Whether such indirect attacks--or Bush's visit in general--will help Sodrel is unclear. The Sodrel campaign



played no role in bringing him to New Albany, and it hasn't asked for a return engagement

"**For right now,** we haven't thought about it," said Diego Morales, Sodrel's spokesman. "What we're doing is raising money in the district."

Political campaigns may not have been affected by the Bush drop by, but benefits will accrue to One Southern Indiana, which is raising the profile of Clark and Floyd counties.

Huber said that the Indiana side of the Ohio River is no longer an economic footnote. "People used to think of us as being a stepchild to Louisville," he said. ❖

2008 Indiana Congressional

Congressional District 2: Republican:

Open. Democrat: U.S. Rep. 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%. **2002 Result:** Chocola 95,081 (50%), Long Thompson 86,253 (46%); **2004 Result:** Chocola 140,496 (54%) Donnelly (D) 115,513 (45%) **2006 Result:** Donnelly 103,561, Chocola 88,300. **2008 Forecast:** With no opponent on the horizon, Donnelly enters 2008 looking pretty good for re-election. **Status:** SAFE DONNELLY



Congressional District 3: Republican:

U.S. Rep. Mark Souder. Democrat: Michael Montagano. **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 Result: Souder, Parra 2004 Results: Souder 171,389 (69%), Parra 76,232 (31%). **2006 Result:** Souder 95,421, Hayhurst (D) 80,357. **2008 Forecast:** Montagano will make this race interesting, but given the Republican nature of this district, it would take a tsunami on the level of 1964 or 1974 to wash Souder out. We don't think the GOP fracture in Fort Wayne over the Kelty fiasco will carry districtwide. Kelty's candidacy was so thoroughly flawed that Souder might lose some support among the Kelty true believers still upset that he pulled the endorsement. **Status:** LIKELY SOUDER

Congressional District 4: Republican: U.S.

Rep. Steve Buyer. Democrat: Nels J. Ackerson. **Geography:** **2008 Forecast:** This is such an overwhelmingly GOP district that Ackerson will need a Democratic tidal wave to make this competitive. But ... it could happen. Ackerson is a Zionsville attorney who is already working the campaign extensively. **Status:** LIKELY BUYER

Congressional District 5: Republican:

U.S. Rep. Dan Burton, Dr. John McGoff. **Geography:** Media Market: Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, South Bend. **People:** Urban/rural 73/27%; median income \$40,381; Poverty 9.5%; Race 84% white, 8% black; 5 Hispanic; Blue/white collar: 34/50%. 2006 Republican Primary Result: Burton 61,150, Alfred 6,869, Wakley 4,822. 2006 General Result: Burton (R) 133,118, Carr (D) 64,362, Sharlow (L) 7,431, Miller (I) 18. **2008 Forecast:** HPI ran into McGoff at the Ballard victory party on Election Night and his take: "This is huge for us. There is energy for challenger campaigns and people are not happy with incumbents." On Wednesday, McGoff reflected further, saying, "That was a big night for Republicans. It was an underfunded can-



didate who ran a victorious campaign." McGoff said that Burton "will out-raise me. He will outspend me. That's a fact. We will have to win just like Greg Ballard did. People here have never had an alternative in the past." **Primary Status:** Leans Burton

Congressional District 8: Republican: Greg Goode. Democrat: U.S. Rep. 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. **2008 Forecast:** RNCC is looking to see if Goode can finish 2007 with a money flourish, otherwise he won't get much help out of DC. **Status:** LIKELY ELLSWORTH

2008 Indiana Legislative

TRENDLINE: We will be watching to see whether State Reps. Sheila Klinker, Paul Robertson and John Day retire.

House District 15: Republican: State Rep. Don Lehe. Democrat: Myron Sutton. **2002 Results:** Lehe 9,975, Baranowski (D) 5,641. **2006 Results:** Lehe 8,750, Sutton 8,723. **2008 Forecast:** The former Newton County sheriff is challenging Rep. Lehe once more in one of the closest races in '06. **Status:** TOSSUP

House District 46: Republican: Bob Heaton. Democrat: State Rep. Vern Tinchler. **2004 Results:** Ullmer 17,592. **2008 Forecast:** Heaton announced today. Speaking to a crowd of supporters at the newly constructed Hilton Garden Inn in downtown Terre Haute, Heaton said, "If the Indiana General Assembly is a citizen legislature, then I certainly feel qualified...There have been changes in my life that convinced me to look at this opportunity. I am self-employed and I know from regular interaction with my

clients that they are concerned about the issues that face our state and country. I am a taxpayer, too, and I take great issue in how those tax dollars are expended." Heaton graduated Indiana State University with Bachelor of Science Degree 1980 and played basketball for Indiana State University. In 1979, Heaton, along with teammate Larry Bird, made it to the championship game in the NCAA Final Four. "I seek to serve and to be a representative committed to learning the issues, hearing the opposing views of constituents, advocating for the people of Vigo, Owen, Clay and Monroe counties and to do my best to assure that Indiana serves its citizens well," Heaton said. **Status:** TOSSUP

House District 44: Republican: State Rep. Amos Thomas. Democrat: Nancy Michael. **2006 Results:** Thomas 9,127, Thompson 7,948. **2006 Forecast:** Former two-term Greencastle Mayor Nancy Michael will challenge the Thomas family (this time Amos) for this seat. Indiana Democratic Chairman Dan Parker calls Michael another Sue Crosby. **Status:** LEANS R.

House District 89: Republican: State Rep. Larry Buell. Democrat: John F. Barnes. **2004 Results:** Buell 15,391. **2006 Results:** Buell 7,809, Barnes 7,297. **2006 Forecast:** This is a rematch in a district that

is trending Democratic. Buell will have his hands full once again. **Status:** TOSSUP.

House District 97: Republican: State Rep. Jon Elrod. Democrat: Indianapolis Councilman Dane Mahern. **2006 Results:** Elrod 4,454, State Rep. Ed Mahern, 4,446. **2008 Forecast:** Councilman Mahern announced to his fellow Democrats that he will try to pick up the family mantle after Elrod upset his father last year. This becomes an open seat after Elrod announced for the 7th CD. Indianapolis Star columnist Matt Tully chided Mahern in today's editions: Though he had been cagey about it for several months, Mahern acknowledges he was eyeing a Statehouse seat while waging this year's council campaign. The desire to end up at the Capitol, where members have more power and influence, spurred him along during this year's race. "This is something I've been thinking about," he said. "I knew I had to win re-election first." But why? Why sell voters on your candidacy for City-County Council if you have no intention of serving a full term? "I think a lot of it is there is a vacuum of change taking place," Mahern said. "A lot of people see it as an opportunity." **Status:** LEANS D.



Former ISU basketball star Bob Heaton announces his challenge to State Rep. Vern Tinchler in Terre Haute this morning. (Photo courtesy of Heaton campaign)



Seeking your video help in covering the 2008 campaign

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS - One of the highlights of my political life has stuck with me for more than 30 years and I've been thinking about it as the 2008 Indiana governors race begins to hit full stride.

It was my senior year of high school and my dad was the managing editor of the Peru Daily Tribune. In November 1973, my parents took me to Disney World for the Associated Press Managing Editors convention. It was an idyllic week of sun and surf and making out with an Australian foreign exchange student under the monorail.

But as the week drew to a close, helicopters flew in grid patterns over the Magical Kingdom. Snipers appeared atop the Contemporary Hotel. President Nixon was coming and we were on our own. Before a nationally televised news conference, he gave America the quote that pushed Mickey Mouse off the favorite wristwatch mantle. Nixon told us, "I'm not a crook."

Now, that's a great story. But what in the heck does it have to do with Gov. Mitch Daniels or Democratic gubernatorial candidates Jill Long Thompson and Jim Schellinger?

During the convention, I befriended the sons of two other managing editors, one whose dad worked for the Cleveland Plain Dealer. After Nixon told us he wasn't a crook, my new friends and I scavenged a bunch of the wire service copy that littered the bureau floor and ended up in one of their parents' hotel room. My friend from Cleveland had to go fetch something so we cooled our heels on the balcony.

Suddenly the hotel door burst open. His parents and some colleagues and their wives entered the room. I could hear ice tumbling into glasses and drinks poured. And I heard his dad begin a rant about Ohio Gov. James Rhodes. It was Rhodes who, three years earlier, called up the National Guard and sent them to Kent State University. As Neil Young would soon lament, there was the drumbeat and shots and ... "four dead in O-hi-o."

It ignited a political firestorm. Now I heard the

managing editor tell his colleagues of the coming 1974 campaign, "I'm going to put a reporter on Rhodes everywhere he goes and if he so much as spits on the sidewalk, we're going to print it."

My friend from Pennsylvania and I glanced at each other in the dark, until the balcony door swung open, and there stood the towering editor. He didn't skip a beat. "Hi boys," he said, and then moved back into the room.

We emerged, said hello and skedaddled.

So, what does this have to do with the 2008 Indiana governor's race?

YouTube.

I recalled my Disney World adventures as I scanned some of the many political blogs on the Internet. There was a video clip of candidate Schellinger telling his "penny" story to a group of guys in a Southern Indiana parking lot. It's a staple story of his campaign. But what caught the eye of the blogger was Schellinger's statement that until just a few years ago, he and his wife lived "pay-check to paycheck." Schellinger is the CEO of a big architectural firm. This Republican blogger was amused by the notion that any CEO would be living paycheck to paycheck.

We live in an era of the 24-hour news channel and the 30-second sound bite and what I call bottom line journalism. The profit motives of our bigger newspapers and TV stations prohibit them from doing what the Cleveland Plain Dealer managing editor vowed to do.

Unless Gov. Daniels is opening a new Honda plant, or participating in a debate (and, by the way, the formation of an Indiana Governor Debate Commission is a wonderful idea), the central Indiana, major news media with signal strength or circulation that reaches the majority of the state, doesn't follow him out of Indianapolis.

That's where citizens, particularly the ones who have digital video cameras, come in. If the governor or his Democratic challengers come to town, take your video camera along. You can post it on YouTube and send me an e-mail. Send the very newspaper you're reading the link as well. Citizens with cameras that don't lie can

go where professional reporters cannot. There simply are not enough reporters that can reach a statewide audience.

Citizens can gather up the raw data that will help provide more coverage of our candidates. The idea here isn't necessarily "gotcha" journalism. The idea is to extend the media's eyes and ears to places like Badger Grove, Coal Bluff or Wakarusa (Indian for "knee deep in mud").



Brian Howey's Column



Schellinger's penny story turned to his "living paycheck to paycheck" quote on YouTube.



Such coverage can have potent results. A video camera in a small southwestern Virginia burg in 2006 caught then-U.S. Sen. George Allen (and prospective GOP presidential candidate) in his infamous "macaca" quote that most considered a racial slur. Viewed by millions on YouTube, it tipped the U.S. Senate from Republican to Democrat. The campaigns might flinch at the idea of citizens tap-

ing and uploading their appearances on YouTube. But their own campaigns videotape each other all the time looking for gotcha moments and propaganda.

Citizens deserve to see more and now have the power of technology to make it happen. ❖

Note: This is Howey's statewide column this week running in 25 newspapers reaching 250,000 readers.

Indianapolis vote registration totals don't make sense

By **GERRY LaFOLLETTE**

INDIANAPOLIS - A study of municipal election statistics for Indianapolis since Unigov went into effect shows both fewer voters voting and the official number of registered voters is questionable, if not realistic.

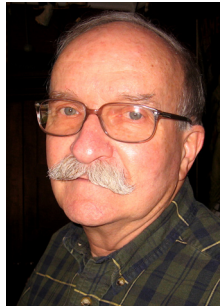
On Nov. 6, in this city's version of the Boston Tea Party (remember, that was a tax on tea), Mayor Bart Peterson received 15,000 fewer votes than he did in 2003. Republican Greg Ballard had 28,000 more than his party's nominee four years ago. Total turnout was up 15,000 from 150,000 to 165,000.

The highest number of voters in a city election was in 1971, the first year after Indianapolis expanded to the county lines under Unigov. Mayor Richard Lugar defeated Democrat John Neff. The vote was roughly 150,000-100,000. Interestingly, Neff's numbers would have won the last two elections.

Four years later in the competitive contest between ex-Congressman Bill Hudnut and Democrat Bob Welch, more than 236,000 persons cast ballots. Not since 1975 has the number exceeded 200,000. It came close in 1991 when Hudnut retired after four terms. He was succeeded by former Prosecutor Stephen Goldsmith who defeated State Sen. Louis Mahern. Nearly 197,000 voted. In Hudnut's three re-election bids, he was such a heavy favorite that GOTV drives by both parties were difficult. For the GOP, it was because Hudnut was so far ahead and everyone knew it. For the Democrats, it was just the opposite. Their man was so far behind and everyone knew it. Still the totals were not far off this year.

The worst election numbers and certainly the lowest since World War II and maybe even further back occurred in 1995 when Goldsmith won a second term. It was a combination of many factors, including the weakest Democratic candidate in memory. The number of voters - 116,000.

When Peterson won his first term in 1999 against Secretary of State Sue Anne Gilroy, nearly 197,000 voted.



LaFOLLETTE

The number of registered voters by Nov. 6, 2007, was 630,993, according to the Marion County Election Board. The number has grown virtually every election cycle despite the fact that the county's population has stayed around 800,000 for the last three decades. True, the composition has changed as more and more people move to the suburbs. But others move back into the city or into neighborhoods newly stabilized through restoration or redevelopment.

Also casting a dim light on the 630,000 is that the decennial census estimates the number of persons 18 and over in the 550,000 range, perhaps a bit higher.

The official number could come from the ease of the motor-voter registration allowing persons to sign up at the BMV. Another reason could be the people who move and may end up on voter lists in two counties or even twice in the same county. Statewide voter lists are supposed to help here. An example brought to my attention is an adult who has not lived at an address for eight years and is still on the voter list in the Washington 54 precinct.

The Lugar-Neff high mark came at a time when both political parties were much stronger. Now they are skeletons of their former selves thanks to, among other things, campaign finance laws and the subsequent growth of PACs. In the old days, both parties would have vigorous voter drives. Also, 1971 was the first year of 18-year-old voting. The 26th Amendment went into effect on July 1 that year. The initial enthusiasm might have sparked an uptick. If so, it has since diminished.

In presidential years in the 1970s, the combination of active political parties and increased interest by the people, the Marion County totals of those eligible to vote was around 420,000 to 440,000. These numbers cast further doubt on current.

In other words, minus the above-listed factors how could the totals grow by more than 250,000 when there is little indication today of increased interest on the part of the electorate, in fact, maybe less?

It's something for political junkies to contemplate as we go down the road already overshadowed by the longest presidential campaign in history. ❖

LaFollette is a retired Indianapolis Times and Indianapolis News reporter.



Poll dancing: everyone loves a winner

By **MARK CURRY**

WASHINGTON - Polls released in the last few days indicate the 2008 presidential race is heating up in the early voting states, particularly among Democrats in Iowa where three candidates appear to be in a statistical tie. Media and campaigns alike are dissecting mountains of poll data to learn what they can about hearts and minds. In less than two months, residents in Iowa and New Hampshire cast the first votes to decide who will be the next president of the United States.

Iowa: A Democratic battleground

Democratic presidential contenders are in for a slug-fest at the Iowa caucus Jan. 3, if recent polling is any indication. Three polls conducted since the beginning of November, including two completed Nov. 12, find New York Sen. Hillary Clinton in a tight contest with Illinois Sen. Barack Obama and former North Carolina Sen. John Edwards.

"Nobody's been knocked out. Nobody is breaking out," David Yepsen wrote in today's Des Moines Register. The article was entitled "Place your bets: Caucus outcome far from certain." Concerning a CBS News/New York Times survey released yesterday, the veteran political pundit wrote, "The poll also illustrates why Democrats are having trouble deciding on a candidate: Clinton is seen as most electable, Obama as the one who'd bring real change in Washington and Edwards best understands the problems of Iowans. Clinton says what people want to hear but is best prepared to be president. Obama needs more preparation."

Republican Mitt Romney is having trouble solidifying his lead among GOP voters in Iowa, according to the CBS/NYT poll. At 27 percent, the former Massachusetts governor is only six points in front of the former Governor of Arkansas, Mike Huckabee.

"None of that is good news for Romney," Yepsen wrote. "He has poured time and money into the state and still can't seem to break above 30 percent. It again raises the question of whether he peaked too early in Iowa. Also,

50 percent of Romney's supporters say they could be persuaded to change their minds."

New Hampshire: Mitt, Hillary lead

Romney, like Clinton, is outpolling the competition by a dozen points or better in the Granite State. The CBS/NYT poll found 34 percent of Republican voters say Mitt's their man, followed by Giuliani and Sen. John McCain of Arizona, both with 16 points. A Boston Globe survey delivered similar results, with Romney at 32 percent, although Rudy edged McCain by a statistically insignificant three points (20-17).

"Mr. Romney is running relatively strongly in New Hampshire, but many of his supporters say they are open to changing their mind," the New York Times reported.

Hillary scored 37 percent in New Hampshire, according to the CBS/NYT survey, and 35 in the Globe survey. Obama continues to be Hillary's closest competitor there,

though the Illinois Democrat trails by 15 points in the CBS/NYT poll and 14 in the Globe's survey. Edwards scored only 9 points total in the CBS/NYT poll.

The "polls suggest that New Hampshire is heading toward the voting with a more positive view of" Clinton, the Times reported. "There, 34 percent of respondents said Mrs. Clinton was the candidate who best understood the needs and problems of people in their state; in Iowa, 18 percent of respondents said that."

McCain camp decries 'Clinton News Network'

Sen. McCain's campaign is taking advantage of the controversy surrounding his response to a question during a campaign stop in South Carolina by simultaneously targeting two entities conservative voters love to hate: Hillary and CNN.

In a widely publicized incident, a woman in Hilton Head, S.C., on Monday asked the Arizona senator point-blank: "How do we beat the bitch?" As reported in the New York Times, "McCain was obviously uncomfortable, trying to deflect the vitriol with humor and offering to give a translation. But he did not condemn the questioner, instead calling it an 'excellent question.'"

Rick Sanchez of CNN angered the McCain team when he suggested the candidate endorsed the questioner's choice of wording. In response, Rick Davis, McCain's campaign manager, e-mailed a message to supporters that decried the cable network's attempts to saddle the candi-



A South Carolina voter asks Sen. John McCain, "How do we beat the bitch?" (Screen shot of YouTube video.)



date with a share of the blame. Here is the first paragraph of the e-mail, courtesy of National Review's "Campaign Spot" political blog, which ran the entire text:

"The CNN Network, affectionately known as the Clinton News Network, has stooped to an all-time low and is gratuitously attacking John McCain for not defending Hillary Clinton enough when a South Carolina voter used the 'B' word to describe her when John McCain stopped into a luncheon yesterday at the Trinity restaurant in Hilton Head, SC.

"... we are on a comeback, we are the only campaign that can defeat Hillary Clinton and CNN knows it," Davis wrote further into the message. "We are not going to let Senator Clinton's friends in the liberal blogosphere and on CNN try to destroy our campaign. Senator McCain is a fighter and he is not going to back down to CNN."

The 827-word e-mail, which mentions Clinton and CNN 16 and 12 times, respectively, ends with a plea for contributions to "help John McCain fight back against this onslaught by CNN and their liberal friends in the blogosphere...."

Democratic debate tonight

Key events on the presidential campaign calendar as gleaned from the ABC News "The Note Futures Calendar."

2008 State Presidential Polls

Iowa (R)	Date	Romney	Giuliani	Thompson	McCain	Huckabee
Strategic Vision	Nov. 9-12	30	12	11	7	19
CBS/NYT	Nov./ 2-12	27	15	9	4	21

New Hampshire (R)

CBS/NYT	Nov. 2-12	34	16	5	16	6
Boston Globe	Nov. 2-7	32	20	3	17	5

South Carolina (R)

Survey USA	Nov. 9-11	20	26	18	14	12
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Florida (R)

St. Pete Times	Nov. 4-7	19	36	8	12	9
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Iowa (D)

Date	Clinton	Edwards	Obama	Richardson	Biden
Nov. 9-12	29	29	27	7	5
Nov. 2-12	25	23	22	12	4

N. Hampshire (D)

CBS/NYT	Nov. 2-12	37	9	22	6
Boston Globe	Nov. 2-7	35	15	21	10

Tonight: Nevada Democratic Party hosts a presidential debate, moderated and broadcast by CNN.

Nov. 16-17: Presidential candidates are invited to Manchester, N.H., for a Democratic National Committee eastern region meeting.

Nov. 17: Clinton, Edwards will discuss plans to address global climate change and energy issues at a forum in Los Angeles.

Indiana Right to Life neutral

Indiana Right to Life President Mike Fichter released this statement Wednesday: In the wake of yesterday's announced endorsement of presidential candidate Fred Thompson by the National Right to Life Political Action Committee, the Indiana Right to Life Political Action Committee is clarifying that its presidential endorsement has not yet been issued. "We are on our own timeline and will make our presidential endorsement when we feel the timing is right," notes Fichter, chairman of the IRTL-PAC. While acknowledging that Thompson's candidacy will be included in its endorsement discussions, Indiana Right to Life remains deeply troubled over Thompson's recent comments on NBC's "Meet the Press" stating that he does not support the plank in the Republican Party Platform advocating a Human Life Amendment to the Constitution." ❖



Leslie Stedman Weidenbener,

Louisville Courier-Journal - The message out of the Capitol last week was loud and clear: People are fed up. Republican Greg Ballard didn't just beat Democrat Mayor Bart Peterson in last week's election. He won by more than 3 percentage points. That may not sound like much. But Ballard -- a virtual unknown who barely raised enough money to run television commercials -- got 5,200 more votes than the two-term incumbent who once seemed to be a shoo-in. You may be wondering why that matters in Southern Indiana or elsewhere in the state. But it's a sure bet that Gov. Mitch Daniels and lawmakers everywhere were paying attention, so the election will likely have a profound effect on the 2008 legislative session, which actually begins Nov. 20 with an Organization Day. Peterson lost because people are mad about taxes. It's likely some Marion County voters didn't even know anything about Ballard when they went to the polls Tuesday. They just believed that Peterson was to blame for a property-tax mess and they wanted him out. Just two days later, House Speaker Pat Bauer, D-South Bend, said his caucus would introduce the plan and probably have two public hearings on it before the end of the year. Already, Senate President Pro Tem David Long, R-Fort Wayne, has announced that his caucus too will introduce the plan and have its own hearings next month. The moves are unusual. Typically, the session doesn't begin in earnest until January. But lawmakers know that voters are irked and they need to respond -- now -- or face their wrath at the ballot box. Of course, the Indianapolis election must be put in some perspective. The property-tax problems tended to be more exaggerated in Indianapolis than other parts of the state. Also, the issue in Indianapolis was about taxes generally -- not just property taxes. That's because in the midst of the uproar over property taxes, Peterson pushed a 65 percent local income tax increase through the City-County Council. That just didn't sit well with voters. So Peterson was likely facing a greater backlash than may exist next fall throughout the rest of the state. But that doesn't mean lawmakers are writing it off. They're paying attention. ❖

Rich James, Post-Tribune - If you live in Crown Point, you might want to give some thought about getting out. Something ain't right in that town. The mob has come to Mayberry. Big Brother is holed up in the clock tower on the Courthouse Square. And, based on some of the happenings just before the election, he may be looking next in your bedroom window. How else do you explain what happened in Tuesday's mayoral election? Main Street was turned into Wisteria Lane. And Republican moms were suddenly desperate housewives. For the record, Democrat David Uran was elected mayor over Republican Gayle Van Sessen. By all accounts, he will serve well. Yet, there are a



lot of people in Lake County's last bastion of Republicanism who didn't see Uran's election coming. After all, Uran -- a former Crown Point police officer -- isn't a household name when it comes to politics in the county seat. And Van Sessen seemed to be the choice of Republicans after she ousted GOP Mayor Dan Klein in the primary. And, based on Klein's lopsided victory over Democrat Wayne Isailovich four years ago, it was clear -- crystal clear -- that Crown Point was still very Republican. After conceding to Uran, Van Sessen wondered aloud whether Crown Point still embraces the GOP. I suspect it

does, but it's one limp party. Go figure. Republicans told Klein -- a mayor in his first term -- to take a hike in the primary. Six months later, they did the same to Van Sessen. So fleeting and fickle. Was Tuesday's outcome more a vote against Van Sessen than one for Uran? Could well be. In retrospect, there are several reasons why Uran won. Perhaps the biggest one is the sex sheet that made its way to Crown Point doorsteps shortly before the election. The literature contained sexually charged e-mail exchanges between Van Sessen and Frank Mosko in 2006. He was city economic development director at the time. Regardless, I bet it'll make for some red-hot snickering at the next Republican Women's Club meeting. The only question is whether the smear sheets came out of the Klein camp or the Uran camp. Given what happened in the Republican primary, the answer should be easy. I tell you, these Crown Point Republicans make East Chicago Democrats look like choir boys. ❖

Stephanie Salter, Terre Haute Tri-

bune-Star - So, another election has come and -- pending a recount -- gone in Terre Haute. Half the voters are reeling from shock and disappointment, and half are heady with success. This column is addressed to the first group. The operative phrase for the shocked and disappointed among you: Focus on the numbers. Once certified, the numbers are the truth, such as humans can glean that sort of thing. They are your touchstone. Before you utter a single generality -- "What is wrong with this town?" -- before you contemplate something really stupid -- "I need to move some place that isn't suicidal." -- look at the numbers and say them aloud. Right now, before the recount, according to the Vigo County Clerk's office, 6,055 people chose to change mayors, while 5,948 people chose to keep the one we've had for the past four years. One-hundred and seven votes is not enough reason to give up on an entire city, all of its people, or the electoral process. If you want to throw in the towel on Terre Haute, find another excuse. Create your own conspiracy theory, but don't use 107 votes. That doesn't even rise to the level of wimping out. ❖



Fort Wayne/Allen County consolidation begins

FORT WAYNE - Efforts by Fort Wayne and Allen County officials to research consolidation or combining of government services will officially begin Monday when a handpicked committee meets for the first time (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). The county commissioners and the Fort Wayne City Council agreed to a resolution in June creating the 14-member board and providing general guidance to the group. The commissioners didn't make their seven appointments until August, after the City Council's nominations. Mayor Graham Richard announced his three picks a few days later. The first meeting was delayed in part because City Councilman Sam Talarico, R-at large, resigned from the committee in September.



Tax protesters converge on Statehouse today

INDIANAPOLIS - A group of taxpayers from around the state converged on the Statehouse this morning to call for the elimination of property taxes (Indianapolis Star). They said they supported the increase of sales and income taxes, along with a state spending cap, to replace the approximately \$6 billion raised by property taxes statewide. However, Indianapolis attorney John Price, who led the group, could not give details on how much those taxes would need to go up. A study done earlier this year by the nonpartisan Legislative Services Agency found that the sales tax would need to be raised from the current 6 percent to more than 13.2 percent or the income tax would need to be raised to 9 percent from the current 3.4 percent. Alternatively, LSA told the state Tax and Financing Policy

Commission, both sales and income taxes could be raised, with the income tax jumping to 6 percent and the sales tax jumping to 9.5 percent. Price said that numerous lawmakers in both the House and Senate have said in the past that they support elimination of property taxes, and cited polls that show a majority of Hoosiers agree. "Let the people vote," Price said.

Daniels signs Midwest energy saving pact

MILWAUKEE - The region's governors signed an agreement today to work together to reduce energy consumption, focus more on renewable energy and limit greenhouse gas emissions (Associated Press). The signing was part of a regional summit on energy and climate change hosted by the Midwestern Governors Association. Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle, chairman of the 12-member group, has said the Midwest can lead the nation in renewable energy. "Our strong manufacturing base and rich agricultural industries, along with the wealth of resources in our vast northern forests and our world-leading research universities, position the Midwest to become the Saudi Arabia of renewable energy," he said in a statement announcing the signing. Nine U.S. governors and Gary Doer, premier of Manitoba, Canada, signed the deal today. The governors were: Doyle, Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich, Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels, Iowa Gov. Chet Culver, Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm, Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty, Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland, and South Dakota Gov. Mike Rounds.

Supreme Court hears PD oath validity case

INDIANAPOLIS - -- Attorneys for the state asked the Indiana Supreme Court yesterday to overturn a lower court's ruling that an arrest was invalid because the officer had not been sworn in as a member of India-

napolis' merged police department (Associated Press). That ruling called into question nearly all arrests made by Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department officers since the agency was formed Jan. 1. The agency was formed by the merger of the Indianapolis Police and Marion County Sheriff's departments. Attorneys for a woman arrested on a drunken-driving charge in January argued that while Officer William Bueckers had been sworn in as an Indianapolis Police Department officer, his status did not automatically carry over to the new department. Deputy Attorney General Cynthia Ploughe told the justices that state law requires an oath only of officers who train others at the law enforcement academy. "There is no law that requires officers of the IMPD to be sworn," Ploughe said. Justices asked defense attorney James Voyles to explain why he believed officers needed to be sworn in after the merger when the same officers had already taken an oath. "Why does the prior oath evaporate?" Justice Brent Dickson asked. Voyles said anytime a police officer begins work for a new agency, the oath should be administered.

JLT picks up endorsements

BLOOMINGTON - Jill Long Thompson today announced several key endorsements during a campaign swing through Bloomington. Newly re-elected Mayor Mark Kruzan, former Mayors John Fernandez and Tomilea Allison, and Hoosiers and Rudy writer/producer Angelo Pizzo are all supporting Long Thompson's campaign for governor. The support of State Representative Matt Pierce of Bloomington was previously announced by the campaign. Allison served as Mayor of Bloomington from 1983 to 1995, serving as the first woman Mayor. Fernandez served from 1995 to 2004.