



# JLT's 'bizarre' opportunity

*Financial meltdown giving the Democrat a chance at victory*

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - The political ghosts of Bart Peterson and Ann Richards hover above the finely orchestrated re-election campaign of Gov. Mitch Daniels. And another out-sized Texas personality - George W. Bush - could be creating the conditions of a potential upset of extraordinary magnitude. It is a scenario that has even Hoosier Democrats shaking their heads at the sheer irony of the situation.

Three recent Indiana polls - two by the same company, Research2000 - now suggest that the Indiana governor's race is headed for dead heat territory. The latest WISH-TV/Research2000 poll showed Daniels with a narrow 49-45 percent lead. It came on the heels of the South Bend Tribune/WSBT poll a week ago by the same firm that



showed Daniels leading 47-46 percent. The Indianapolis Star/WTHR-TV/Selzer Poll two weeks ago had Daniels up 46-42 percent. These poll contrasted with similar polls taken at similar times by Public Opinion Research and Rasmussen Tracking that supported the summer-long trend

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## Decisions & info

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS - "Geez Morton. Lighten up." was one of the e-mails that came in this week. I find it difficult to do that while our state and national economies are under such stress.

Another correspondent wanted an answer to that persistent question "are we better off than we were a year ago? Four years ago?" Here is a small part of that answer:

At this writing, there are 5.5 million more jobs in the country than four years ago, an increase averaging one percent per year. Since 2004, Indiana gained 40,200 jobs



Morton Marcus  
Column



"The first Civic in Greensburg becomes a landmark vehicle in Indiana's proud automotive history."

- Gov. Mitch Daniels on the 900 workers at the new Honda plant



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for an average annual growth of 0.3% per year.

**In the past year** alone, the U.S. lost 517,000 jobs, a decline of 0.4%. Indiana lost 34,100 in the past year, 1.1% of our jobs.

But there is much more information necessary to say that we are or are not "better off." For example, consider manufacturing. Nationally, employment is falling less rapidly than in Indiana. Between 2004 and 2008, the national rate of decline in manufacturing jobs averaged 1.6% while in Indiana it was 1.9%. In the past year, the U.S. saw a 3% decline in manufacturing jobs while Indiana had a fall of 3.2%. Similar results can be found in the average weekly wages of manufacturing workers; Hoosiers are not keeping pace with their national brothers and sisters.

That is the kind of information that makes news headlines and excites politicians because it has inflammatory power. Whichever party is out of power decries the facts; those in office cite them as examples of why we must hold to the path they have cut recently through the economic forest.

**The truth is that** Indiana has lagged the nation in virtually every measure of economic consequence for the past 30 years. Democrats and Republicans have had their turns exercising executive and legislative powers. Both parties have reason to be proud of their achievements. Yet neither party can claim to have defeated, even deflected, the forces that created our economic afflictions.

Why? Policy makers often do not put today into the context of yesterday. They do not know what is happening today and even less about yesterday. For example, this year the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics discontinued detailed employment data necessary for good decisions in 65 metropolitan areas, including Anderson, Columbus, Ko-

komo, and Michigan City-LaPorte.

Why? The budget submitted to, and passed by the Congress was too tight. Other federal agencies also cut statistical programs. Have you asked your congressional candidates if they intend to restore the programs that were cut?

**The current mortgage** mess is another example. How many homes in your county stand vacant because of foreclosure? How many mortgage payers in your county are behind in their payments? Why? Without this information we can not mount programs to correct the problems that we believe exist.

Many Hoosiers are boiling with anger about the bad deeds of "those people." Who are "those people?" We all "know" that mortgages were taken out by people who could not afford the houses they were buying. Was this the fault of the home buyer, the mortgage broker, the banker, Fannie, Freddie or some other "Wall Street" villain?

How many of the sub-prime loans were issued to people who could not afford the monthly payments compared to those who did not have good credit records? Were they misled or coerced into signing those mortgages?

The lack of information shapes myth; it should not shape policy. Are we so crazed that we would forge regulations to prevent such abuses in the future if they have been trivial in the past?

**Neither political** party calls for better information about our economy; both say data are not sexy. Are candidates wearing only transparent ignorance attractive to voters? Hoosiers should not be satisfied to vote on Nov. 4 for candidates whose policies are connected only vaguely to reality.



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## Thompson, from page 1

of a double-digit Daniels lead. Our analysis last week was that the Selzer and Research2000 polls left out important support data such as key demographics, right/wrong track numbers and voter approval and ID numbers.

Some of those blanks began to fill in with the WISH-TV poll that showed Daniels fav/unfavs at 49-39 percent while Thompson's stood at 48/34 percent. This compares with the August 29-30 Howey/Gauge numbers that had Daniels at 56/28 percent and Thompson at 32/19.

All of this brings back memories of two elections - 2007 and 1994 - when personally popular and successful incumbents were swept out of office out by events that overwhelmed their campaigns. In 2007, Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson had a 10 to 1 money advantage over Greg Ballard, who wasn't able to run TV ads until the final two weeks of the campaign. But in running his TV ads throughout the summer, Peterson appeared tone deaf with the property tax crisis and lost by 5 percent in what was then described as one of the most stunning upsets in Hoosier history.

In 1994, popular Texas Gov. Ann Richards outspent George W. Bush by 23 percent. She had, according to Wikipedia, become famous for "her personal charisma, for her ease with the public. Her sense of humor was part of her day-to-day personal life." And she lost 53-46 percent as the Republican tsunami engulfed her and scores of other Democratic incumbents across the nation, including U.S. Rep. Jill Long. A month prior, Richards looked to be in good shape. That is what the Daniels re-elect may be facing with the irony being that Bush is the thread between them: swept into office by a tidal wave while potentially leaving a huge, devastating wake for his party as he departs.



Texas Gov. Ann Richards

## Accidental governor in the making?

The spending disparity and campaign professionalism contrast between the Daniels re-elect and Thompson's strange campaign are as stark as Peterson and Ballard. Yet all you have to do with the WISH-TV poll is look at the approve/disapprove numbers of the government bailout - 31/62 percent - to understand that fear and loathing have penetrated this picture. Among Republicans, those num-

bers stood at 28/66 percent. Asked whether tax dollars should be used to bail out private companies, the numbers are 17/72 percent.

## Fear swamping Mitch's firewall

If this gubernatorial race is as close as these recent media polls show, however incomplete the data, this is an example of a national dynamic potentially swamping the firewall that Daniels' re-elect had counted on: that Hoosiers would separate national from state issues. CNN's John King noted on Tuesday that "people in Ohio and Indiana don't trust their own bank, don't trust Wall Street and don't trust the politicians."

In his opening lines in the second presidential debate, Barack Obama called the financial collapse that prompted the Dow to lose 13 percent of its value as "the final verdict of the failed economic policies of the last eight years."

It stands to undermine the basic message of Daniels: that Indiana is an "island of prosperity" in the Midwest, that it is recession-proof, and that thousands of new jobs (and roads) are in the pipeline. All of that has a great deal of truth to it, but the basic confidence up and down the food chain has been significantly jarred. The dilemma facing Daniels is that by not addressing the 6 million Hoosier people who have been scared since our first polling last February, and are now on the verge of financial hysteria, he risks a further erosion of confidence. But in making an FDR "the only thing you have to fear" speech or even Ronald Reagan's 1982 "stay the course," it could threaten to puncture the message of the campaign over the last six months that the plan is working.

Barack Obama did address the fear and confidence factor on Wednesday, telling 12,000 people at the Indiana State Fairgrounds, "I know we can steer out of this crisis. Our destiny is not written for us, but by us. That's who we are. I'm here today to tell you that there are better days ahead. I know these are tough times. I know that many of you are anxious about the future. But this isn't a time for fear or panic. This is a time for resolve and leadership."

What has to be galling Hoosier Republicans and amazing a number of Indiana Democrats we've talked to is that as inept as the Thompson campaign has been, she is still in a position to ride into office by simply being in the right place at the right time. She has had trouble coalescing the Democratic establishment that backed Jim Schellinger. She feuded with the UAW and while the fences are officially mended and the UAW is working its traditional GOTV, hand-bills and phone banks, there hasn't been the \$200,000 cash infusion that Joe Kernan and Frank O'Bannon received. She ran generally panned TV ads in August and then pulled them just after Labor Day, which runs counter to the most basic campaign strategy. When Thompson went off the airwaves almost all the polls showed her down 14 to 20





percent. EMILY'S List demanded she change her media consultant. State records show Long Thompson collected about \$266,000 in individual contributions of \$10,000 or more since Sept. 1, compared to nearly \$450,000 for Daniels (Times of Northwest Indiana). Her debate appearances with Daniels were panned for a lack of ideas and details and the viewership of the debates has been minuscule. She came off as a complainer. There have been no radio buys, no cable, no direct mail. No field staff. She spent much of September pushing the governor/aircraft issue that was hardly inspirational.

"You don't see the TV, the yard signs and the traditional elements of a campaign," said Danny Ernstes, UAW Labor 2008 coordinator, of the Thompson campaign. "The polling doesn't match the campaign."

### *A 'bizarre' campaign*

St. Joseph County Democratic Chairman Butch Morgan called the Thompson campaign "bizarre." He said Thompson is not coordinating with House Democrats or the Linda Pence attorney general campaign. But, Morgan said that if Thompson can run two or three weeks of TV and tie Daniels to President Bush, she has the potential for an upset. "If she's within 5 percent by Election Day, with all the new voters, she can win. But all the stars and all the planets will have to align."

Early this week, the Thompson campaign touted a big issue rollout at the Indianapolis Rotary meeting at the Scottish Rite Cathedral. While the campaign handed out a 56-page booklet - the One Indiana Plan - that was essentially her campaign planks filled with previously announced policy positions, she ditched her prepared text. Campaign staffers said she did so due to the 20-minute time constraint (though she talked and answered questions for almost 40 minutes). During a brief press conference afterward, she haltingly answered questions, with communications director Jeff Harris assisting her talking points from the side. At one point, Harris had to remind Thompson that one of her proposals dealt with the Indiana Economic Development Corporation. It was a fitful foray into policy.

She also denied that her campaign was in financial trouble, essentially whistling past the graveyard as reporters eyes rolled. Asked when she would return to the air, both she and her campaign have been answering for the



**Jill Long Thompson with communications director Jeff Harris at the Rotary faux "rollout." (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)**

past couple of weeks, "very soon." The campaign's decision to pull ads a month ago sent a bad message to many potential campaign donors. Her own media pollster was unable to stoke up the contributions. The SEIU, which told HPI they would do "whatever it takes" has been MIA. Morgan said the SEIU would have played a bigger role if the Thompson campaign had its act together.

So the conduct of the campaign in relation to the polls showing a tight race is discordant, because there has been almost no money, a flimsy message, and no compelling issue. It doesn't make sense.

Chris Sautter, Thompson's former media consultant, says that the financial crisis is hurting Republicans across the board.

That is the factor that could change the dynamic. Indiana House Democrats' tracking shows that candidates up and down the ticket are benefiting from the crisis. Morgan told HPI that Thompson is running "12 to 15 percent" behind most House candidates. John McCain's erratic behavior on the crisis has not only hurt his standing in the polls, it is a contagion working downward on the ticket.

It's what nailed Gov. Richards, who was "personally popular," but lost because "voters wanted change" in 1994. The same thing happened to Peterson in 2007. Now Daniels finds himself running TV ads touting balanced budgets, job creation, a better BMV and an S&P AAA bond rating for the first time in state history and that message conflicts with the fear and uncertainty that is not only sweeping the U.S., but all western economies.

The irony is that in 1994, Thompson lost on the same night Gov. Richards did, both victims of a tidal wave well beyond their control. If Thompson can muster a late TV buy like Ballard (though the Indianapolis mayor had to deal with only one media market), there lies a potential winning scenario.

### *Looking at the numbers*

In 2004, Daniels defeated Gov. Joe Kernan with 1,302,912 to 1,113,900. In 2000, Gov. Frank O'Bannon won with 1.23 million votes. In 1996, O'Bannon won with 1.075 million votes. One Democratic leader speaking on background looked at the 1.3 million who turned out in the May Democratic primary and believes that those numbers create a scenario for a Thompson victory. He said that ob-



viously not all 1.3 million will vote Democratic. Take away 20 percent, that still puts Thompson in the 1 million vote range, within striking distance. Add in the close to 250,000 to 300,000 newly registered voters since the primary, and that puts Thompson into the 1.2 million range, the Democrat said. Yet, it can be a folly to ply primary results into a general election context. A number of the primary votes, for instance, were a combination of Limbaugh Anarchists as well as Republicans who feared Hillary Clinton winning the nomination.

This scenario poses the dramatic \$64,000 question? How will the newly registered Obama voters behave? Will they vote for just Obama? Will they vote straight Democratic? Or will they split their ticket?

Andy Miller of Bose Associates recalls the 2000 when he worked on State Rep. Bob Bischoff's re-elect campaign. He said in that election, voters cherry picked: George W. Bush, Frank O'Bannon, Michael Bailly (who ran aborted fetus photos in the 9th CD race) and Bischoff.

Daniels campaign manager Eric Holcomb believes that Daniels will win a significant number of the new Obama voters. "These new voters are going to vote for people they believe in." Holcomb said that the campaign's internal polling shows that the governor will attract many of these voters. In the Aug. 29-30 Howey/Gauge Poll, 39 percent of Hillary Clinton's primary supporters and 26 percent of Obama's said they would support Daniels. "We have a substantial number of these new voters," Holcomb said. "And the governor has been spending a lot of time on college campuses. There will be a high number of new voters who aren't wed to any specific political party. They are concerned about their lives one, two or three years from now." Holcomb noted that a recent rally for Daniels at Purdue attracted 600 students.

The UAW's Ernstes tells HPI that of every 10 out-calls it makes, "six are voting for Barack Obama, two are on the fence, and two are voting against him." As for whether they'll pull a straight Democratic ticket, Ernstes said, "I just don't know." Morgan said that many new Obama voters in the 2nd CD will vote a straight ticket, but this comes in an area where Daniels' toll road lease is controversial and U.S. Rep. Joe Donnelly is very popular. The straight ticket propensity in the 2nd CD is much greater than, say, the 9th CD

where some supporters of U.S. Rep. Baron Hill could easily vote for John McCain and Daniels.

Another highly motivated group is African-Americans. There are about 278 heavily Democratic precincts in Indiana (about 175 of them in Lake County) where Democratic turnout is normally in the 25 to 40 percent range. Multiple Democratic sources tell HPI that many of these precincts will see turnout in the 90 to 95 percent range.

Again, this would appear to be a harrowing route for Daniels. Holcomb points out that Daniels has made 65 trips to Lake County since taking office and has built many relationships north of U.S. 30. In Indianapolis, he counts the support of people like Sam Carson, brother of the late congresswoman, who is extremely influential in the African-American community. At the Circle City Classic last weekend, an event both Daniels and Thompson worked, Holcomb was struck by the number of people wearing Obama T-shirts who posed for pictures with the governor. And, Holcomb said, "We have highly targeted out-

reach plans."

In addition, Holcomb said that campaign volunteers made 37,000 out-calls last weekend and 39,000 the weekend before. Finally, the campaign, which has purchased media already for much of October, has at least \$1 million to purchase additional media. And, today, it was announced that Daniels will be honored by Governing Magazine as public official of the year on Nov. 12.

Holcomb acknowledges, "This is unlike any election he, you or I have ever experienced." Essentially, this is the Best Laid Plans Vs. Freak of Nature.

**GUBERNATORIAL NOTES:** Thompson appeared at the Obama rally at the Indiana State Fairgrounds on Wednesday (though not with him) and vowed to aggressively take on Daniels. "I'm going to hold Mitch Daniels accountable for all the jobs we've lost and the horrible privatization in this state. He's not going to like what I have to say." Thompson quoted President Truman on giving hell. "Over the next four weeks I'm going to tell a lot of this and raise a little hell." Daniels was honored by the Manhattan Institute on Wednesday and will soon be named "Governor of the Year" in an announcement coming in the next few days. **Status:** LEANS DANIELS. ❖



Gov. Daniels with Ball State students at a recent football game. (Daniels Campaign Photo)





## JLT poised to pull off upset?

By **CHRIS SAUTTER**

WASHINGTON - In politics sometimes it is better to be lucky than good. Ask Bart Peterson. Although a good mayor for two terms, he had the misfortune of running for re-election during a property tax revolt.



Peterson had geared up to run a conventional re-election campaign, outspending his little known opponent by millions of dollars while touting his many accomplishments as Indianapolis' mayor. But in the final weeks of the campaign, his message proved to be distinctly out-of-sync with voter fears about skyrocketing property taxes. Suddenly, in what was considered the biggest political upset in recent times, an unknown rookie

candidate named Greg Ballard was the Mayor.

It is said that lightning doesn't strike twice in the same place. Yet once again an under-funded challenger is being lifted up by intense voter anger. If the Indianapolis Star, South Bend Tribune, and WISH-TV polls of the past couple of weeks are accurate, Jill Long Thompson is trailing Governor Daniels by between 1% to 4%. In a competitive race the challenger will garner as much as 90% of the undecided vote. Those voters who have not already been persuaded to vote for Mitch Daniels after four years in office and more than \$12 million in television advertising are not likely to move to him at the last moment. In other words, there is a strong possibility Long Thompson would win if the election were held today.

But the bad news for Daniels doesn't end with horse-race numbers. According to the WISH-TV poll, 22% of African American voters have not yet decided. Does anyone really believe a Republican will be winning over many of the usually loyally Democratic black voters in this political year? What's worse for Daniels is that the WISH poll shows Long Thompson's favorable—unfavorable numbers are slightly better than Daniels'. Unlike with Ballard, a significant percentage of voters actually know Long Thompson and at the moment seem to like her. The reality is the current media polls mirror the same polls taken in April and May of this year when focus on the Indiana primary produced a Democratic surge in the state.

**All of this is a far cry** from just a month ago when the Jill Long Thompson campaign seemed to be in meltdown, laying off workers and yanking TV spots off the air. The fact that the race has moved from a double-digit advantage for Daniels to a near statistical tie during a period in which Long Thompson ran no commercials speaks to the power of voter anger over America's economic crisis. Voters are ready to punish the politicians they believe are

responsible for them losing jobs, homes, and retirement. Right now, with George W. Bush's ratings at a record low, voters are aiming their ire at Republicans. Tracking polls for Indiana House candidates are showing a surge for Democratic candidates up-and-down the ticket. And, like Bart Peterson, a once appealing Mitch Daniels is now striking more and more voters as out-of-touch. Simply put, Daniels sounds like John McCain when he claims Indiana's economy is fundamentally strong.

**But Daniels is not just** a candidate who is in the wrong place at the wrong time. He has direct culpability for the country's disastrous economy. As Budget Director in the early days of this Administration, Daniels was one of the chief architects of the economic policies that have led us to near economic chaos. Daniels then brought the Bush Administration's approach of laissez faire economics and rewarding Corporate America at the expense of working people to Indiana. With cascading job losses, Hoosiers are no longer buying Daniels' claims that Indiana is an "island of growth"

It is unclear what will actually happen in the final three and a half weeks rather than what today's polls suggest could happen. What is clear is that voters want to know how the gubernatorial candidates will address the current crisis, just as they want to hear the same from the presidential candidates. Daniels could come forward and demonstrate the kind of leadership he often claims he has provided the state. But the Governor has been conspicuously silent during this economic nose-dive. Long Thompson, for her part, finally got on track last week with a solid proposal to deal with Indiana's mortgage foreclosure crisis.

**When Long Thompson** gets back on TV, she would be well-advised to avoid the temptation to launch an attack on Daniels. The national anti-Republican political wave has been doing her dirty work more effectively than she ever could. Besides, if this trend continues, Mitch Daniels will soon feel the need to try to define Long Thompson just as Peterson tried with Ballard. If Long Thompson is able to hold back on the attack ads until Daniels strikes first, the results are likely to be the same as with Peterson and Ballard when Peterson came across as desperate and out-of-touch. Instead, Long Thompson needs to convince voters she is the better alternative to Mitch Daniels. She should explain directly and simply how she would bring positive economic change to Indiana. She needs to say how she would create jobs for small and medium sized businesses throughout Indiana rather than reward a few large corporations which are taking jobs and profits out-of-state, as Daniels has done. As James Carville said, "It's the economy stupid! (and don't forget about health care)."

In politics, twenty-six days is an eternity. But if Barack Obama becomes the first Democrat to carry Indiana since Lyndon Johnson did in 1964, he just might bring Jill Long Thompson across the finish line with him. ❖



## Obama returns to Indiana for homestretch

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Hoosiers have been hearing about the financial collapse, golden parachutes, bailouts and rescues. Earlier this week on The Drudge Report, there was a report that the entire Western financial system was on verge of collapse "within days." Mad money man Jim Cramer told viewers on the Today Show to sell all stock if they needed their money within five years. That followed record losses on the Dow, Nasdaq, S&P that quickly spread across the globe.

It was within this extraordinary crisis that Barack Obama came to the Indiana State Fairgrounds on a gloomy, muddy, rainswept Wednesday. He brought with him variations on the messages of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and candidate Ronald Reagan.

"We meet today in a moment of great uncertainty," Obama said. He described a "full-blown global financial crisis" and then took a page from FDR and tried to reassure a scared crowd. "I know we can steer out of this crisis. Our destiny is not written for us, but by us," Obama said. "That's who we are."

He mimicked another president - Ronald Reagan - and offered a variation of his "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" used in his 1980 campaign. Obama said that with the global financial markets under deep duress, "At this pace, we should we be asking are we better off than we were four weeks ago?"

It came less than a day after he said in his debate with McCain that the crisis "is the final verdict on the failed economic policies of the last eight years." It was Obama's sixth visit to Indiana since he lost the Democratic primary to Hillary Clinton by just over 1 percent last May, and the 42nd trip to the state this year. A number of polls show the race here in Indiana could be as much of a barn burner as the primary.

**Asked how he would help** middle class families during the debate in Nashville Tuesday night, Obama talked of tax cuts for those making under \$250,000 a year, a rescue package "for homeowners so that they could stay in their homes." Obama once again echoed Gov. Daniels' Major Moves program, talking of "helping state and local governments set up road projects and bridge projects that keep people in their jobs."

And, Obama said, "Then long-term we've got to fix our health care system, we've got to fix our energy system that is putting such an enormous burden on families."

**McCain answered that** he would would "order the secretary of the treasury to immediately buy up the bad home loan mortgages in America and renegotiate at the new value of those homes, at the diminished value of those homes and let people be able to make those ... payments and stay in their homes." He asked, "Is it expensive?" And answered, "Yes, but we all know, my friends, until we stabilize home values in America, we're never going to start turning around and creating jobs and fixing our economy. And we've got to give some trust and confidence back to America."

Teresa Finch asked a question that many Hoosier reporters asked U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh prior to the bailout: "How can we trust either of you with our money when both



parties got us into this global economic crisis?" The question touched on a topic hot on conservative talk radio: that Obama is actually a big spending liberal.

**Obama started "with** a little bit of history," saying, "When George Bush came into office, we had surpluses. And now we have half-a-trillion-dollar deficit annually. When George Bush came into office, our ... national debt was around \$5 trillion. It's now over \$10 trillion. We've almost doubled it." He explained, "So here's what I would do. I'm going to spend some money on the key issues that we've got to work on. You know, you may have seen your health care premiums go up. We've got to reform health care to help you and your budget. We are going to have to deal with energy because we can't keep on borrowing from the Chinese and sending money to Saudi Arabia. We are mortgaging our children's future. We've got to have a





different energy plan. We've got to invest in college affordability. So we're going to have to make some investments, but we've also got to make spending cuts. And what I've proposed, you'll hear Sen. McCain say, well, he's proposing a whole bunch of new spending, but actually I'm cutting more than I'm spending so that it will be a net spending cut."

**McCain responded** to the question by saying, "Do you know that Sen. Obama ... is proposing an \$860 billion of new spending now? New spending. Do you know that he voted for every increase in spending that I saw come across the floor of the United States Senate while we were working to eliminate these pork barrel earmarks? He voted for nearly a billion dollars in pork barrel earmark projects, including, by the way, \$3 million for an overhead projector at a planetarium in Chicago, Illinois. My friends, do we need to spend that kind of money?"

At the Indiana Fairgrounds, Obama reiterated his plan for a tax cut for 95 percent of Americans. He talked of a \$15 billion investment in green technology that will create 5 million new jobs. "Those factories that make steel are going to make wind turbines. Not in Japan, Not in South Korea, but right here in Indiana," Obama said. A few hours after Obama spoke, Gov. Daniels announced 450 new jobs in Muncie doing just that.

**Obama took aim at McCain's** health care plan, deriding the \$5,000 plan, saying that it would be taxed while the "average health care plan costs \$12,000 not \$5,000." Obama went on the attack, saying, "We're not going to be hoodwinked, not bamboozled. We're not going to let them get away with it."

McCain has only visited the state twice in 2008, the last coming at a fundraiser in Indianapolis last July. With almost every recent poll showing Obama either at or within the margin of error, Republicans should be concerned that for the first time since 1964, the state is slipping away. ❖

**Democrats coalesce around Obama: Robin Winston, Birch Bayh, Andre Carson, Judy O'Bannon, Jill Long Thompson and Tom Sugar.. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)**

## Will white voters back Barack Obama?

**By JACK COLWELL**

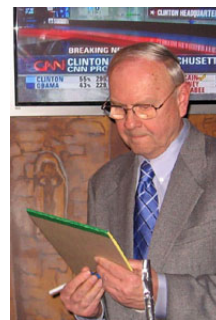
SOUTH BEND - In the stormy waters of presidential politics, cross currents of race and age, each potentially powerful and neither easy to forecast, will determine the winner.

One current, just the discussion of which offends advocates of political correctness, involves race. Will white voters in significant numbers in significant states decide that they cannot bring themselves to vote for a black in the White House? If the answer is "yes," it could pull Barack Obama under the waves.

The other current involves age, and not so much ages of the candidates. Will young people, who traditionally have a low voter-turnout percentage, actually go to vote in large numbers this time? If the answer is "yes," it could be John McCain who is pulled under.

**Let's look first at the race** current, so powerful in the past in American election history. Though neither as strong nor as easily detectable now, it still flows.

In the just-released Tribune/WSBT poll, 4 percent of white respondents said they would not vote for a black for president and another 11 percent said they weren't sure. While this pales in comparison with the 85 percent of







whites in the statewide poll who said they could vote for a black, the negative responses show a problem for Obama in a contest that could be decided by small percentages in key states.

Del Ali, respected professional pollster who conducted the Tribune survey, also cites significance in a follow-up poll question: "Do you think your neighbors would vote for a black person to be president of the United States?"

In response, 14 percent of whites said "no" and another 10 percent weren't sure.

Ali says this question may tap the Bradley effect. That refers to the 1982 California election for governor.

Tom Bradley, an African-American, a popular mayor of Los Angeles, was well ahead in the polls for governor but lost. Analysis indicated that a decisive percentage of voters said to pollsters \_ and perhaps believed \_ that they would vote for Bradley but then couldn't do so inside the polling place.

A similar effect has been seen in other elections.

Ali says some poll respondents might hesitate to tell a pollster or anyone flat-out that they would not vote for a black, lest they sound bigoted, but that the reference to "neighbors" not doing so could actually reflect what they really will do on election day.

The pollster, however, detects a cross current to this current. He likens it to an effect that helped Ronald Reagan win by more than polls had indicated over Jimmy Carter in 1980. It's just the opposite of the Bradley effect.

**He finds indications** of surprise Obama support among working-class white voters who have been voting for Republicans for president due to disgust with Democrats on social issues, including a perception of Democrats coddling blacks.

"They may never tell anybody that they're going to vote for a black guy," Ali explains. But some of them "have had it" with President Bush and the economy and when it comes to voting for another Republican for president, "they just can't do it anymore."

He likens it to the way similar working-class voters in 1980 who had been voting Democratic decided as they went to the polls: "I've had it with Carter. I can't do this (vote Democratic) anymore." Those decisions turned what appeared to be a close race into a big Reagan win.

## Howey-Gauge Poll Briefing Noon, Monday Oct. 20 Barnes & Thornburg Auditorium

### Obama-McCain Daniels-Thompson-Horning Congressional Indiana House

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Now, the age current.

Ali says his polling across the nation shows that young people, ages 18-29, are heavily for Obama. But will they vote?

**Record voter** registration, much of it on the Democratic side, has been swelled by young people.

Still, it's older voters who traditionally get to the polls, no matter what, while the young find excuses or distractions or lose interest.

Ali, whose poll found Obama trailing by single percentage point in Indiana, says McCain may well carry

the state. Even if he does, Ali adds, if the TV networks haven't declared Indiana for McCain by 10 p.m. on election night, it will show the currents flowing nationally are propelling Obama, not McCain, to the presidency. If Indiana again is the first state colored Republican red, it will show that the currents instead are running strong for McCain. ❖

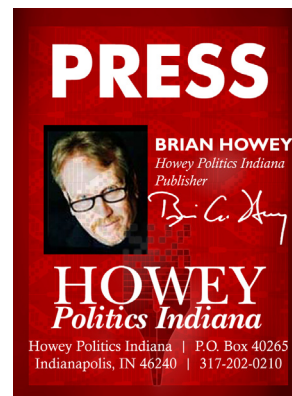
**Colwell has covered Indiana politics over five decades for the South Bend Tribune.**

## Gov. Sixpack (wink-wink)

**By BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - I swear that during the vice presidential showdown between Sen. Biden and Gov. Sixpack, I was really watching two different debates.

Biden came off as he is, an old Washington hand. Gov. Sixpack is the fresh Alaskan face that has reinvigorated the Republican base. And, hey, why concern yourself with the questions. Early on, it seemed as if Biden was having trouble even dealing with the plane of thought Gov. Sarah Palin was espousing. This was before she





winked at us. My wife was startled. "Did she just wink?" Moderator Gwen Ifill said at one point, "Governor, please, if you want to respond to what he said about Sen. McCain's comments about health care?"

Gov. Sixpack: "I would like to respond about the tax increases. We can speak in agreement here that darn right we need tax relief for Americans so that jobs can be created here. Now, Barack Obama and Sen. Biden also voted for the largest tax increases in U.S. history. Barack had 94 opportunities to side on the people's side and reduce taxes and 94 times he voted to increase taxes or not support a tax reduction, 94 times. Now, that's not what we need to create jobs and really bolster and heat up our economy. We do need the private sector to be able to keep more of what we earn and produce. Government is going to have to learn to be more efficient and live with less if that's what it takes to rein in the government growth that we've seen today. But we do need tax relief and Barack Obama even supported increasing taxes as late as last year for those families making only \$42,000 a year. That's a lot of middle income average American families to increase taxes on them. I think that is the way to kill jobs and to continue to harm our economy."

**Of all the things** that have come out of Sarah Palin's mouth, that was one of the less controversial ones. She has gone from a veepstakes long-lister, to John McCain's shocking selection, to the deer in Katie Couric's headlights, to a language mangler, and, finally this past week - briefly - a "pitbull" who tried to switch the topic from that pesky Wall Street meltdown to rekindling the war with the SDS and the Weather Underground. In Palin's world, it's time for a regular, small town gal to ascend to the vice presidency. Who needs a passport or experience and rapport with world leaders?

The timing couldn't be worse. The United State is involved in two wars, with the one in Afghanistan spilling over into the ungovernable regions of nuclear Pakistan. The U.S. is preparing to sell neighboring India nuclear technology. The western financial institutions are on the verge of collapse. This comes without Osama bin Laden having to level another skyscraper. The American health care system is on life support. The national debt is now over \$10 trillion. The deficit is half a trillion.

**And now we have a novice** on the Republican

ticket, about three years removed from being mayor of Wasilla. She calls Alaska a "microcosm" of America when it is anything but. This ticket now wants to change the subject from the economy and bring in the 21st Century version of Willie Horton, the Pledge of Allegiance, flag burning and gay baiting. Lee Atwater is one happy ghost.

It was interesting that last Saturday, Palin said in Colorado, "Our opponent ... is someone who sees America, it seems, as being so imperfect, imperfect enough, that he's palling around with terrorists who would target their own country." In a similar speech in Clearwater, Fla., her remarks sent the crowd on a tirade against reporters, some calling out racial slurs. MSNBC's Chris Mathews believes this is all about reaching the "low information voter" by injecting fear about the "foreign" sounding Obama in a crisis atmosphere. Mathews called the McCain-Palin tactic "brilliant politics."

Then there was Palin's attempt to bring back the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, the issue that probably kept Obama from winning the Indiana primary. It is an issue that, if it persists, stands to reignite enough racial tensions as to prevent an African-American president. On April 23 in North Carolina, McCain denounced the issue. "I'm making it very clear, as I have a couple of times in the

past, that there's no place for that kind of campaigning, and the American people don't want it."

But in a Bill Kristol New York Times column, Palin said, "To tell you the truth, Bill, I don't know why that association isn't discussed more, because those were appalling things that that pastor had said about our great country, and to have sat in the pews for 20 years and listened to that - with, I don't know, a sense of condoning it, I guess, because he didn't get up and leave - to me, that does say something about character. But, you know, I guess that would be a John McCain call on whether he wants to bring that up."

Well, during McCain's debate with Obama in Nashville, it didn't come up.

**Asked by Coric** if she had ever negotiated with Russia, Palin answered, "As Putin rears his head and comes into the air space of the United States of America, where, where do they go? It's Alaska. It's just right over the border." Uh-huh.

And then there was this little gem in Cedar Rapids: In answering a question, the second -banana-to-be re-sponded, "That's exactly what we're going to do in a Palin



**Gov. Sarah Palin during her debate with Sen. Joe Biden.**





and McCain administration." Right, the Palin-McCain ticket. This is one ambitious hockey mom.

And that brings me to the point of this column. McCain is 72 years old and is a cancer survivor. There is a 20 percent actuarial chance that if elected, there really will be a "Palin administration."

**What is striking to me is that** I know a lot of smart, savvy, patriotic Republicans who believe that Sarah Palin is the perfect choice for the vice presidency. That is astonishing and scary. Gov. Sixpack can barely handle freshman level foreign policy issues let alone the complexities of the failing financial system that is costing millions of Americans their life savings while cutting off credit to millions of businesses. She makes Dan Quayle look like a statesman. And within the next four weeks, there are a

number of very realistic scenarios where we could find her a heartbeat away.

Asked about the duties of a vice president during the debate, Biden said the constitutional duties were to preside over the Senate and to break ties. Palin responded that the Constitution gave "flexibility" that could actually bring her greater authority. "We will do what is best for the American people in tapping into that position and ushering in an agenda that is supportive and cooperative with the president's agenda in that position," she said.

**In July, before her ascension,** Gov. Sixpack told CNBC's Kudlow & Co., "As for that VP talk all the time, I'll tell you, I still can't answer that question until somebody answers for me what is it exactly that the VP does every day?" And now ... let us pray. Wink. ❖

## Indiana congressional roundup finds 2 races

INDIANAPOLIS - Of Indiana's nine congressional districts, only two - the 3rd and 9th - appear to be in play. Here is a roundup four weeks out from the election:



**1ST CD:** Democrat: U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky. Republican: Mark Leyva. Libertarian: Jeff Duensing. **2008 Outlook:** Visclosky is safe as safe can be. **Status:** SAFE VISCLOSKY

**2ND CD:** Democrat: U.S. Rep. Joe Donnelly. Republican: Luke Puckett. Libertarian: Mark Vogel. **2008 Outlook:** Donnelly appears to be on his way to a second term. Despite some of the grassroots protests over the federal economic bailout, Donnelly voted yes, saying he feared that credit would evaporate for district businesses. Donnelly has a 53-35 percent lead over Puckett in a 2nd CD poll by Research2000. Puckett, 18 points down, said the numbers were encouraging. "Here's a guy (Donnelly) who's run three campaigns in District 2 now, and spent literally millions of dollars in northern Indiana, and only 53 percent of the people want him to go to Washington, D.C., now," Puckett said. "I have spent literally no money on any advertising in the general election - no TV commercials, no radio - I've begged, scratched, tried to get any kind of media in the South Bend media market, and literally, I'm at 35 percent right now." **Status:** SAFE DONNELLY

**3RD CD:** Democrat: Michael Montagano. Repub-

lican: U.S. Rep. Mark Souder. Libertarian: William Larsen. **2008 Outlook:** This was our outlier race for this sequence and with congressional approval at 13 percent, this continues to be worth watching. We have no statistical evidence that Souder is in any trouble although the DCC moved the race into its "Red to Blue" program. Souder said his office has received nearly 2,000 phone calls and e-mails - sometimes multiple messages from the same person - asking him to vote against the bill (Smith, Journal Gazette). The calls ran 10 to 1 against the rescue plan, and several callers or writers promised they would vote against Souder in the Nov. 4 election if he voted yes. "My favorite," Souder said, "was, 'If you vote for the bailout, I will vote for the student



U.S. Rep. Mark Souder on WSBT-TV after his financial bailout vote for the package.

council guy." Some of Souder's campaign commercials say the election is for a member of Congress, not a student council president. The line is a reference to an assessment



by a nonpartisan Washington-based election analyst who described Souder's opponent, Democrat Michael Montagano, as "more like an overly enthusiastic undergraduate running for class president than a member of Congress." Montagano has not publicly discussed his position on the bailout and did not respond to The Journal Gazette on Friday. Souder said voting against the rescue plan would have been an "incredibly easy thing to do" from a political standpoint because the legislation is unpopular among northeast Indiana residents. "A significant percentage of average people, particularly the conservative Republican base, believes this is a Wall Street bailout because it's what they keep hearing on talk radio," Souder said. On Tuesday, Souder grilled AIG CEO Maurice "Hank" Greenberg. "You took incredible risk without warning people," Souder said during the congressional hearing. "One accounting rule change put your company under. How does an executive leave your company so vulnerable?" We'll continue to watch this race closely. If Montagano shows traction, it could be an indicator of a national wave developing. **Status:** LEANS SOUDER

**4TH CD:** Democrat: Nels Ackerson. Republican: U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer. **2008 Outlook:** Ackerson has run the most conspicuous Democratic campaign in memory here, but this is such a Republican district that it is hard to envision Buyer losing. Having said that, Buyer appears to have let Ackerson get under his skin, blasting his opponent at a joint appearance for comments made about the congressman's wife. **Status:** SAFE BUYER

**5TH CD:** Democrat: Mary Etta Ruley. Republican: U.S. Rep. Dan Burton. **2008 Outlook:** Burton will easily win this election in one of the most Republican districts in the nation. He will be safe until the 2010 primary when he will almost certainly face a well-funded Republican challenger. **Status:** SAFE BURTON

**6TH CD:** Democrat: Barry Welsh. Republican: U.S. Rep. Mike Pence. Libertarian: George Holland. **2008 Outlook:** Pence led the fight against the financial bailout, saying he was responding to many of his constituents. There is no statistical or anecdotal evidence that this will turn into a battle. "I did not come to Washington to ask working Americans to subsidize the bad decisions of corporate America," Pence said Friday after casting a second "no" vote on the package. Lee Hamilton, former Indiana congressman and current president of the Woodrow Wilson Institute, endorsed Welsh. "Our nation is at a crossroads, and on November 4 each of us must choose the path we think our country should take. We need new leadership and a new direction, and that is why I have endorsed Barry Welsh," Hamilton said. "Barry is the kind of individual we need representing us in Congress at this critical time in our nation's history. Barry is a 'forward thinker' who is serious about finding real solutions to our very real problems. Barry listens to the opinions and wisdom of others before making a judgment and taking action, just the traits we

need in a representative. I hope you will join me in supporting Barry Welsh in this crucial election. Make sure you spread the word to your friends that now is the time for change. Barry Welsh is part of that change. It is up to each of us to take a stand and help do our part to get our country back on track. **Status:** SAFE PENCE

**7TH CD:** Democrat: U.S. Rep. Andre Carson. Libertarian: Delbert Suits. Republican: Gabrielle Campo. **2008 Outlook:** Carson will easily win this race. He was the only member to flip on the financial bailout. Carson originally faulted the bill for not expanding the stock of modestly priced homes and for increasing the national debt. Friday, he said he voted for it because a series of tax breaks was added. **Status:** SAFE CARSON

**8TH CD:** Democrat: U.S. Rep. Brad Ellsworth. Republican: Greg Goode. **2008 Outlook:** Democrats say internal polling shows Ellsworth with a commanding lead. Goode has been unable to raise much money. Ellsworth was confident enough about his first re-elect that he voted for the financial bailout despite considerable doubt expressed by constituents. The economy was one of several issues the candidates spoke to at Vincennes University's Red Skelton Performing Arts Center



GREG GOODE

(Evansville Courier & Press). Ellsworth defended his recent vote for the \$700 billion financial rescue package, saying it was necessary to help small banks and business owners trying to get loans. His opponent, Republican Greg Goode, said the package supported by Ellsworth rewards people who made bad decisions. "Quite frankly, I think he should be back in Congress addressing this problem," Goode said. Ellsworth and Goode agreed on several issues, such as opposing the granting of amnesty

to illegal aliens and privatizing Social Security. But there was a clear split on the financial rescue package. Ellsworth, 50, of Evansville, said the federal government will get its money back. If that doesn't happen, he said, then the government will make sure that the financial institutions are held accountable. "When a crisis hits, that's when a government is supposed to go into action," Ellsworth said. "If I had thought for one second that this was a bailout for Wall Street, I never would have voted for this. ... There is





a lot of blame to go around, but we don't have time to do that." **Status:** SAFE ELLSWORTH

**9TH CD:** Democrat: U.S. Rep. Baron Hill. Republican: Mike Sodrel. Libertarian: Eric Schansberg. **2008 Outlook:** Ninth District Republican Party Chairman Larry Shickles on Wednesday proposed the political polygraphs for Hill, Sodrel and Schansberg. The three are scheduled to debate Oct. 21, but an official with a debate co-sponsor said lie detectors won't be included. "While this format may be unusual, I feel strongly that voters need to be able to make a clear decision without all the usual spin," Shickles wrote. Sodrel's campaign said he would agree to the proposal, and Schansberg said he also would agree to wear a lie detector. Hill declined to comment. SurveyUSA for Roll Call/WHAS in the 9th CD (601 Likely Voters - MoE +/- 4% Oct. 4-5) had Hill leading Sodrel 53-38 percent with Libertarian Eric Schansberg at 7 percent. Sodrel actually lost ground by 1 percent from the previous poll while Schansberg gained 2 percent and Hill 1 percent. Sodrel has launched his first television commercial of the race, a biographical ad that pokes fun at the "Millionaire Mike" name Democrats have used to attack him (Louisville Courier-Journal). "They should call him Million Mile Mike," the ad says, referring to Sodrel's trucking company. The commercial shows Sodrel climbing into the cab of a truck as the voice-over calls him "a self-made man who put a million miles down a lot of roads. With real buses and a dream, Mike Sodrel started his business from scratch." Sodrel's campaign manager, Ryan Reger, said the ad is meant to "show the contrast between the real Mike Sodrel and the one his opponent has created." The campaign of U.S. Rep. Baron Hill, the Democrat in the race, declined to comment on Sodrel's commercial. Hill voted against the \$700 billion plan when it was defeated in the House narrowly and said he was worried about tax cuts and other measures tacked onto it by the Senate adding to the federal budget deficit on the Friday revote (Columbus Republic). "All this amounts to about 150 billion additional dollars that we have to go out and borrow," Hill said in a phone interview. "I'm hoping

## Indiana House Horse Race

### Democrats

51

HD26 (Open) Polles vs. Truitt  
HD63 (Open) Messmer vs. Burger  
HD46 Tincher vs. Heaton

HD5 Fry vs. Miller  
HD17 Demobowski vs. MacKillop

HD36 Austin vs. Burrows  
HD68 Bischoff vs. McMillin  
HD62 Blanton vs. Tarr  
Robertson vs. Hunt

### Republicans

49

#### Tossups

HD15 Lehe vs. Sutton  
HD31 Harris vs. Pearson  
HD44 Thomas vs. Michael  
HD89 (Open) Swatts vs. Barnes  
HD97 Elrod vs. Sullivan

#### Leans

HD20 Dermody vs. Cooley  
HD35 Lutz vs. Mengelt  
HD4 Soliday vs. Chubb  
**HD92 Hinkle vs. DeKemper**

#### Likely

HD38 Clements vs. Snow  
HD37 Reske vs. Gaskill  
HD52 (Open) Yarde vs. Papai  
HD70  
HD48 Neese vs. Hardy

#### Safe

**Democrats:** Lawson, Harris, C. Brown, Bauer, **Cheatham**, Niezgodski, Dvorak, Pelath, Stevenson, Reardon, Dobis, V. Smith, VanDenburgh, Bardon, Klinker, Herrell, Tyler, Grubb, Kersey, Pflum, Pierce, Welch, Battles, Goodin, Stemler, Cochran, Oxley, Stilwell, Avery, Van Haften, Riecken (Open), GiaQuinta, Moses, DeLaney (Open), Pryor (Open), Bartlett, Porter, Crawford, Summers, Day.

**Republicans:** Borrer, Wolkins, Walorski, Ruppel, Friend, McClain, J. Thompson, Richardson, Turner, Davis, Torr, Steuerwald, T. Brown, Borders, Foley, Culver (Open), Leonard, Dodge, Cherry, Saunders, Knollman, Eberhart, Burton, M. Smith, Koch, Duncan, Crouch, Lehman (Open), Espich, Bell, Pond, Noe, Bosma, Murphy, Behning, Frizzell. ❖

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we can get this stuff out of here. This was not to be turned into a political Christmas tree like it is." Hill said the stock market reaction in recent days made him less concerned about the need to rush the package through Congress. Nonetheless, Hill said the credit crunch was causing troubles in the economy. He said a commercial developer in Bloomington told him this week about an inability to borrow money. "They tell me a year ago that there wasn't any problem getting a loan at all," Hill said. "They had people beating down their doors trying to be their creditors, and now they can't get a loan to build one commercial project that is a no-brainer in terms of profitability." He said during a stop in Madison that he still had much reading and talking to do before deciding how to vote, but was troubled by the \$149 billion in tax breaks the Senate put in its bill to make it more acceptable to House Republicans (Madison Courier). "That tells me they're trying to buy votes from Republicans, and I don't like that," Hill said. "From my first look at it, I don't like what I'm seeing." **Status: LEANS HILL**



## Behind the curtain

By **DAVE KITCHELL**

LOGANSPORT - "My friends," we heard repeatedly from Sen. John McCain Tuesday night during his town hall debate with Barack Obama.

One Navy veteran in the crowd treated him as if he was a friend, but debate observers were not so friendly. CNN reported only 30 percent of its independent debate observers thought McCain won, compared to 54 percent who thought Obama did better.



That's ironic. When McCain challenged Obama to a town hall series earlier this year, Obama never took him up on the offer. There is no denying the format diffuses Obama's speech intensity. Even at that, it wasn't enough to give McCain a tonic he needs in this campaign.

McCain did well, but as one observer said before the debate began, it's difficult for a candidate behind in the polls to come from behind in a single debate appearance. McCain has one shot left, but he needs more than a format to help him at this point. He needs a Gerald Ford moment, and needs Obama to have it.

For those who don't remember Ford's famous 1976 gaffe, Ford contended there was "no Soviet domination of Eastern Europe" which Jimmy Carter turned to his advantage late in the campaign and cruised to a November victory. I can still see Max Frankel following up with Ford by saying, "Did you say there is no Soviet domination of Eastern Europe?"

Today, there may not be Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, but there certainly is a threat from the old Soviet guard running the Russian Republic. And the greater threat for McCain is the Wall Street mess which exploded into this campaign. The timing was incredibly poor for McCain who had just uttered the words that may follow his biography forever: "The fundamentals of our economy are strong."

**For him, the truly tragic** thing is that he maybe was the best Republican candidate eight years ago. When George W. Bush was viewed as a well-financed slam dunk for the GOP, a more experienced McCain was relegated to

touring the country in a bus to draw attention to a dissenting voice in the party. Now that's really being a maverick.

Unfortunately, he's not the only one. He repeatedly made a point Tuesday to say that Obama has never stood up to his own party leaders, yet Obama took on Hillary Clinton for the party nomination at a time when she was almost a prohibitive favorite.

**And McCain also didn't** benefit from a comment by Sarah Palin at a Pennsylvania rally Wednesday. Palin said Obama tried to run against the Bush administration, a tactic that's growing old.

Much of what we heard from both candidates Tuesday we've heard many times before. If Obama scored with anything he said, it had to be with his jab to McCain's health care proposal. If McCain's proposal goes through, health care benefits would be taxed for the first time to pay for a health care plan for the uninsured. And who benefits from the tax? Insurance companies who would receive tax credits from the government.

What neither candidate seems to talk about is the additional jobs that would be created if more Americans were insured, not to mention the profitability of hospitals and health insurance companies if more Americans know they can simply afford treatment.

Both candidates spent considerable time talking about the economy Tuesday night, and talking about each



other as if the Wizard of Oz was warning in one of the final scenes of the movie, "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain." Toto revealed a lot of bells and whistles, all run by a man who had convinced an entire land he

was something greater than what he was.

**In slightly less than a month**, the men and women behind curtains in voting booths all over the country will be paying attention. Absent an absent-minded moment from Obama, the junior senator from Illinois will be walking down his own yellow brick road that ends at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. ❖

**Dave Kitchell, a veteran Indiana columnist who was the CNHI columnist of the year in 2007, resides in Logansport and teaches journalism at Ball State University.**





### **Rick Richards, Michigan City News-**

**Dispatch:** Washington, apparently, cannot help itself. In trying to fix a broken economy, the Senate passed a bill that wraps duct tape around a crumbling foundation, but does nothing to fix the problem that caused the collapse in the first place. The \$700 billion bailout - with is actually closer to \$850 billion once tax breaks to a lucky few are included - will come out of our pockets. There's a line from the movie "The Outlaw Josie Wales" that's appropriate for what just happened to taxpayers, but since this is a family newspaper, I can't quote it verbatim. Let's just say what our leaders have wetted the backs of our necks with isn't rain water. We're being fed a crap sandwich, all right, and we're all going to have to take a big bite. Get used to it, because it's going to be on the menu for long time. ❖

### **Sylvia Smith, Fort Wayne**

**Journal Gazette:** the level of suspicion aimed at President Bush and his team goes beyond due-diligence skepticism into mistrust. And that's from members of his own party. Congress should ask tough questions. But the display of those questions clearly telegraphs that the lawmakers are bipartisan in their mistrust of Bush. Why? Because Bush long ago exhausted the deep reservoir of trust all presidents start with. He cried wolf so many times in the past 7 1/2 years that despite the undeniable reality of our economic house of cards collapsing, Congress and the American public had no confidence in Bush's proposed rescue. Rushing to war in Iraq on baseless assumptions displayed his impetuosity. His rush to do away with civil liberties after 9/11 underscored his lack of judgment. His gut-based approval of Vladimir Putin proved his fallible instincts. And his and his administration's misstatements ("Iraq has weapons of mass destruction," "mission accomplished") cultivated wariness among the public. When a president is known for impetuosity, poor judgment, lousy instincts and a casual regard for the truth ... well, trusting him will not be most Americans' first, second or third response. My point is not to throw darts at Bush; his 23 percent national approval rating shows clearly that he's about as low in public opinion as it's possible to get. (In fact, 76 percent don't trust Bush on the economy.) Instead, here's the lesson: The next president must see all this as a cautionary tale for how not to conduct business. Don't run a White House on secrecy. Don't stovepipe information so that counter-indicating data or questions are shunted aside. Don't isolate Congress from the key decisions. Don't tell the American people things that are clearly not true or are later exposed as false. ❖

**Rich James, Post-Tribune:** I've always had a lot of respect for you, John Curley. I still do, but ...what's

with this talk about suing the Lake County Election Board to halt the use of early voting sites in Gary, Hammond and East Chicago? You may, by now, already have filed that lawsuit. As county GOP chair, you have that right. But you're wrong. The Election Board voted fair and square, 3-2, to open the three sites. Your two GOP appointees voted against it. Hey, that's democracy. There are a couple of things wrong with your grand stance, John. You said you are against the satellite sites because they could open the door for vote fraud. Let's talk about why you and I both

know that's wrong and why you are talking out of both sides of your mouth. Do you remember when all the evidence of vote fraud spilled out of the 2003 East Chicago mayoral primary? Remember how it led to a lawsuit and one of the biggest black eyes in Lake County Democratic history? Remember that 99 percent of that vote fraud was through the absentee-ballot process, not voting on actual machines? Remember how you and the late Democratic chairman, Stephen

Stiglich, set out to make sure it never happened again? Remember how you and Stig purged the voter rolls and set up a virtually fool-proof system to prevent future absentee-ballot fraud? Remember how proud you were of what you had accomplished? Remember how, in some subsequent elections, that Secretary of State Todd Rokita, a man of your own party, camped on the edge of Lake County on election eve, poised to send his teams into East Chicago and Gary? Remember how upset you got about Rokita poking his nose into Lake County when you knew that you and Stig had straightened things out? ❖

### **Leslie Stedman Weidenbener,**

**Louisville Courier-Journal:** It was just last month that the spokeswoman for Rep. Baron Hill's congressional campaign told me how well voters were reacting to the Democrat's positive campaign commercials. Katie Moreau, who worked in Hill's congressional office until leaving for the campaign, said the reaction had been overwhelming and bipartisan. It's not surprising, given that Hill's past races against Republican Mike Sodrel had been bloody affairs, with attacks flying from both sides. This year Sodrel has yet to go on television with commercials, while Hill has aired several ads that focus on issues. Voters have probably been just plain relieved. So that's why it was a little disappointing that the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the political arm of Democratic candidates for the U.S. House, entered the fray with a negative commercial. Now, I'm the first to say that negative is in the eye of the beholder. An ad that refers to an opponent's view on an issue isn't necessarily an attack. But this ad harkens back to the "Millionaire Mike" label Democrats have used in past commercials against Sodrel. It also misrepresents Sodrel's position on Social Security. ❖





## **Governing names Daniels top official**

INDIANAPOLIS - The independent magazine *Governing* today announced that Governor Mitch Daniels has been selected as one of the recipients of the 2008 Public Officials of the Year award for achievement in government service. Among the state's successes under Daniels' leadership highlighted by *Governing* are infrastructure improvements, landmark health care legislation, and improved government efficiency. Every year since 1994, the publication has honored individual state and local government officials for outstanding accomplishment by naming them Public Officials of the Year. The magazine names one governor each year. Previous winners have included Govs. Mike Huckabee of Arkansas, Zell Miller of Georgia, Howard Dean of Vermont and John Engler of Michigan.



## **Obama outspends McCain in Indiana**

WASHINGTON - Democrat Barack Obama is outspending Republican John McCain on television advertising in battleground states, according to the University of Wisconsin Advertising Project (*Indianapolis Star*). The Obama campaign spent nearly \$17.5 million on TV advertising last week compared with nearly \$11 million spent by the McCain campaign and the Republican National Committee. Obama outspent McCain in Indiana \$614,000 to \$179,000 from Sept. 28 to Oct. 4. Those figures include ad buys in individual states and nationally. Ken Goldstein, University of Wisconsin-Madison professor who directs the ad-tracking project, said 10 of the

15 states where both sides are advertising were won by President Bush in the 2004 election. The 10 are Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, North Carolina, New Mexico, Nevada, Ohio and Virginia. Political handicapper Charlie Cook said Obama is leading not just in ad spending but also in the latest national polls. He cited a Gallup poll taken Oct. 5-7 that gives the Illinois Democrat an 11 percentage-point lead.

## **Pence would end contract with law firm**

INDIANAPOLIS - Attorney General candidate Linda Pence today announced she will close the revolving door in the Attorney General's Office by ending a contract with Indianapolis law firm Lewis & Wilkins. Pence's declaration stems from the Attorney General's decision in late 2004 to outsource the office's Tort Litigation Division to the division chief's newly formed law firm, Lewis & Wilkins. According to newspaper reports, the division chief, John Lewis, helped provide key information to the team drafting the request for proposal, and incorporated his firm while still employed by the Attorney General's Office.

## **Rokita on 45-county election tour**

INDIANAPOLIS - Despite the potential for a record voter turnout, the state's polling locations are ready to handle the work, Secretary of State Todd Rokita said Wednesday (*Manly, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*). Rokita, as the state's chief election officer, spoke about Indiana's readiness for the Nov. 4 election to about 80 members and guests of the Anthony Wayne Rotary Club. About 30,000 volunteers statewide are expected to work at polling locations on Election Day, and Rokita said he is on a 45-county tour making sure poll workers are well-trained.

## **NYT reports Indiana made improper purge**

NEW YORK: Tens of thousands of eligible voters have been removed from rolls or blocked from registering in Indiana and five other swing states, and the voters' exclusion appears to violate federal law, according to a published report. The *New York Times* based its findings on reviews of state records and Social Security data. The *Times* said voters appear to have been purged by mistake and not because of any intentional violations by election officials or coordinated efforts by any party. States have been trying to follow the Help America Vote Act of 2002 by removing the names of voters who should no longer be listed. But for every voter added to the rolls in the past two months in some states, election officials have removed two, a review of the records shows. The newspaper said it identified apparent problems in Colorado, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Nevada and North Carolina.

## **2,500 ACORN ballots alleged as fraud**

CROWN POINT - As many as 21,000 Hoosiers turned out in the rain Wednesday to cheer on Barack Obama at the state fairgrounds (***Chicago Sun-Times***). But in Lake County, Ind., a nonprofit group Obama once represented as a lawyer, ACORN, filed an estimated 2,500 fraudulent voter registrations in the past two weeks, county election officials say. Indianapolis and Gary gave Obama his highest vote totals in the Indiana primary, along with college towns such as South Bend and Bloomington. Lake County, as in other parts of the country, Obama backers say they have signed up thousands of voters inspired by Obama. ACORN, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, has participated in many of those registration drives.