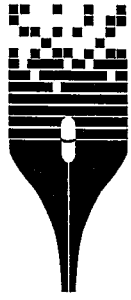
THE HOWEY POLITICAL REPORT



The Weekly Briefing On Indiana Politics

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"QUOTE" OF THE WEEK

"I was asked to fall on a sword, so I did..."

- Robbie Hensler, former chief of staff to Auditor Morris Wooden, on why he was resigning to avoid a State Ethics Commission hearing, in the Indianapolis Star/News

2000 presidential race tracks through

Kemp, Quayle, Bush, Gore, Kerrey headed here

INDIANAPOLIS - This state's capital has been in an identity crisis over the question of whether it is a "major league city" as it grapples with accommodation for the Indianapolis Colts and Pacers.

But a true answer to that question and an additional one - Is Indianapolis an international city? - will be posed this summer and there will be preliminary answers. Ultimately, they may lead to whether Indianapolis can attract and win as a site for a national political convention.

Crucial to the future of the capital as a convention site will be the Republican Midwest Leadership Conference Aug. 22-24. It will play host to between 800 and 1,000 delegates, chairs and vice chairs of 12 other Midwestern states, many of the national committeemen, and probably most of the 2000 presidential candidates. Dan Quayle, Jack Kemp, Alan Keys, Lamar Alexander, Richard Lugar, Fred Thompson and possibly George W. Bush Jr., Elizabeth Dole, J.C. Watts and John Kasich are among those who will speak. It could be the earliest date in a long process of comparison leading up to the 2000 presidential campaign.

It will be a continuation of a political drama in the Indiana General Assembly, where Republicans had to give up a longtime position against worker's compensation reform in order to win money for the Indiana Convention Center (which includes improvements to the RCA Dome). That, says Mayor Stephen Goldsmith, will spark an increase in hotel rooms, which has been a major impediment to even being considered for a national convention.

"When you mentioned Indianapolis, eyes would glaze over," said John Willey, political director for the Indiana Republican Party. "Now, when they see the new mall, the new ballpark, and the fact that we're getting closer to the number of hotel rooms a host city needs, it's going to open some eyes. That's part of why we wanted to bring these people in."

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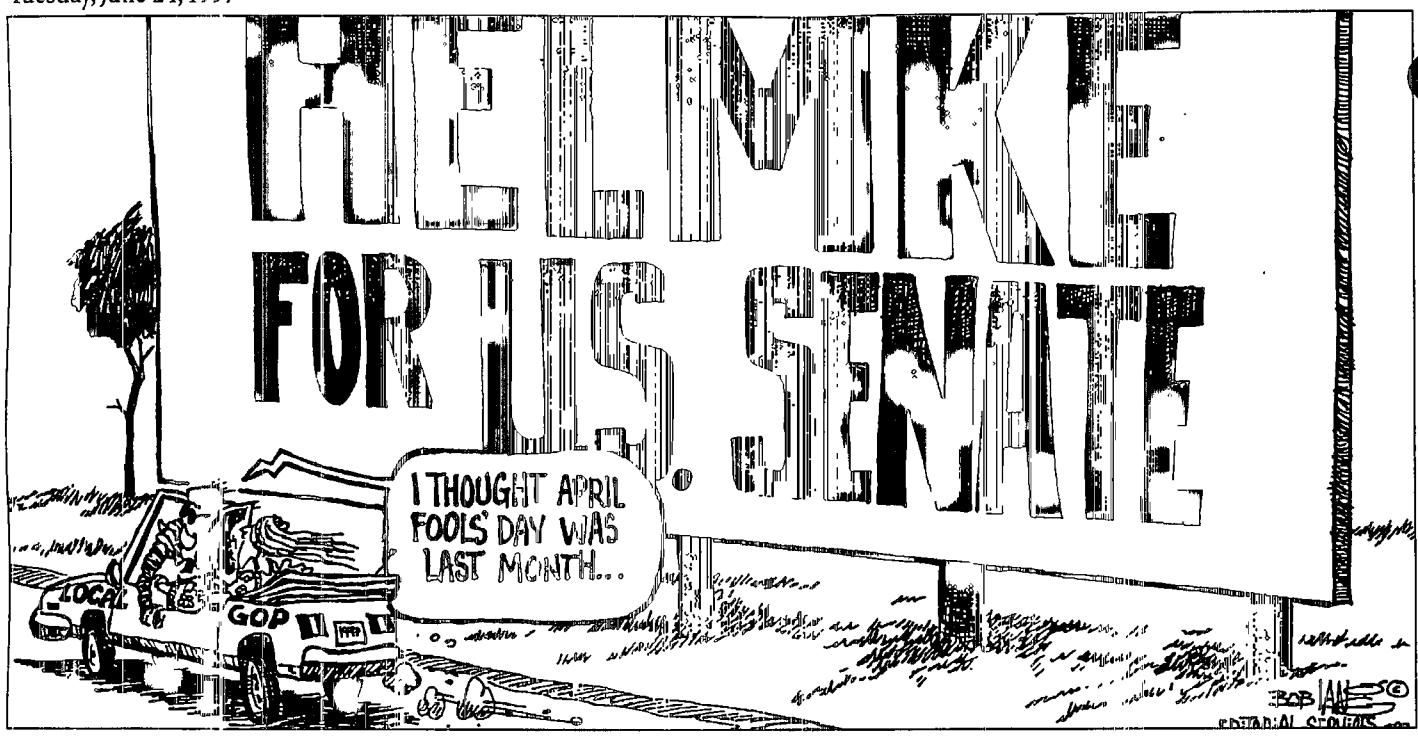

TICKER TAPE

PLAY OF THE WEEK: Secretary of State Sue Anne Gilroy found excess money in the motor voter account that will be used to computerize state election and finance records which went unfunded in the last legislative session. When Gilroy recognized the legislature would not fund that program, she looked and found $250,000 in the motor voter account that would have reverted to the general fund. The budget committee approved it on Thursday in Brown County. Gov. Frank O'Bannon's office reacted by putting a release out Thursday afternoon saying the governor made the request.

A tornado that touched down without warning in Evansville

Continued on page 3

Helmke expected to declare candidacy after July 4; will campaign on his Fort Wayne successes

FORT WAYNE - Shortly after the Fourth of July, Fort Wayne Mayor Paul Helmke is expected to officially announce his U.S. Senate candidacy.

It will be one that is viewed skeptically by both the Indiana news media and much of the hierarchy of the Indiana Republican Party. The GOP bigwigs wanted the party to coalesce around one candidate in order to save resources for Evan Bayh. The media don't think Helmke has a chance.

The reality is that until there is some kind of polling available, no one can say for sure how strong the presumed front-runner - Peter Rusthoven - really is.

Helmke doesn't believe that Rusthoven has paid his dues, having never run for public office in Indiana. Helmke will run on his legacy as mayor of the state's second largest city. He will attempt to show that by increasing the police force from 300 to 390 and with corresponding drop in crime, he has been successful on the law and order front. Helmke will point to keeping Fort Wayne's tax rate low, with no increases in the six years preceeding his 1998 primary run. He will attempt to demonstrate to Republicans that through annexation he has made Fort Wayne a GOP bastion for years to come. He will point to the 1995 Republican take over of the Fort Wayne City Council for the first time since 1971 as proof of that. Helmke will tout an unemployment rate of 2.8 percent, the addition of 5,000 new jobs and community-oriented policing,

"I'm really excited about what's happened over the last nine and a half years," said Helmke. "We've addressed the flooding issue, moved the boundary lines and kept the tax rate low." In 1995, Helmke was re-elected with 64 percent of the vote. On Tuesday, Helmke will become president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the first Hoosier to hold that position since Gary's Richard Hatcher in 1980.

Rusthoven has repeatedly said he will focus on the future in his race against Evan Bayh. He and his backers will be tempted to show that he is a more ideologically pure conservative, a message that played well on the Lincoln Day Dinner circuit that Helmke eschewed this past winter.

Rusthoven will be inclined to accent what he will do. Helmke will run on his record. Regardless of GOP preferences, there will be a race for the Senate nomination.

Wooden's liabilities; McDonald in the 8th CD?

HORSE RACE

TRENDLINE: A huge tactical question facing Indiana Republicans is what to do about Auditor Morris Wooden. He would be a huge liability on the 1998 Republican ticket after an array of news accounts about a plethora of bonuses, his chief of staff Robbie Hensley's resignation over conduct in office. Democrats are salivating over taking Wooden on, most likely with a female candidate. Even Hensley's resignation comment about "falling on his sword" brings on images of male chauvinistic - even phallic - denial that underscore the allegations that he had female office staffers buying birthday presents for his wife. Democrats are still unsettled on a potential challenger. Republican names beginning to emerge include county auditors John Von Arx (from Marion County, who may have to withstand allegations of a cushy part-time job in the sheriff's department for his wife) and Tim Berry of Allen County. That would bring an interesting convention race between the omnipotent Marion County party taking on an active Allen County unit aligned with other out-state delegates.

■ ■ ■

■ **8th CD:** Rep. Brian Hasler's rejection of an '98 run against U.S. Rep. John Hostettler has new Democratic names in play. The biggest name to emerge is Evansville Mayor Frank McDonald, who is extremely popular in the Pocket City. "He's certainly in the mix," said Democratic Executive Director Mike Harmless. "He'd be great." Two other mayors looking at it include Howard Hatcher of Vincennes and Pam Hendrickson of Boonville. "She's done a superb job," Harmless said of Hendrickson. Bloomington Mayor John Fernandez's name keeps popping up, but our sources say he is totally committed to easing his city through the Thomson Electronics crisis. Other names in play include freshmen State Reps. John Frenz and Russ Stilwater.

■ **3rd CD:** Elkhart stockbroker Dan Holtz, who lost the 1996 GOP primary to State Sen. Joe Zakas, is making the most noise on the Republican side for the right to challenge Rep. Tim Roemer. Zakas's big problem in a re-election bid is a $30,000 debt from 1996.

■ **4th CD:** Democrats are still looking at IU Board of Trustees President John Walda challenging Rep. Mark Souder. That would be a great race to follow from an issues standpoint, but we see the district leaning to Souder.

■ **5th CD:** District Chair and Vice Chair Bob Petersen and Michelle Livinghouse, respectively, are working on this. Expect a viable name to emerge soon.

■ **9th CD:** Kevin Shaw Kellems recently addressed Grover Norquist's network of conservatives in Washington on June 4, further evidence that his candidacy would be well received on the national front. CNN pollster Kellyann Fitzpatrick introduced Kellems, who says he is still undecided on whether he will run in a race that already includes Michael Bailey and former state senator Jean Leising.

■ **Secretary of State:** Sandi Huddleston of the Indiana Federation of Republican Women will co-chair Sue Anne Gilroy's re-election campaign. No Democrat has yet emerged as a frontrunner for their nomination.

■ **81st House District:** Allen County Republicans have recruited 38-year-old GTE executive Rickey Nelson to challenge Rep. Win Moses. The district was purportedly shaped for a black Democrat to win, but Moses defeated former Fort Wayne Councilman Charles Redd without spending a dime. Chairman Steve Shine said the race was created for a minority member and said of Nelson, who headed the Black Republican Caucus, "We intend to fulfill their wishes." Moses retorted in the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, "I hope Steve Shine is not saying he wants a campaign based on race."

TICKER TAPE

last week has "resurrected political debate in Washington over National Weather Service radar coverage," reported Gerard Shields of the Evansville Courier. U.S. Rep. John Hostettler "fired off a letter to Vice President Al Gore asking Gore to fulfill his 1994 promise to provide Doppler radar to Southwest Indiana." In 1996, the NWS moved its office from Evansville to Paducah, Ky., as part of a $4.5 billion plan to reduce the number of weather offices. Gore made his promise to Evansville when he came to campaign for Frank McCloskey in the waning days of the 1994 campaign.

U.S. Rep. David McIntosh sat in on a meeting of House Republicans who appeared to be in the initial stages of a rebellion against House Speaker Newt Gingrich. "David is concerned and deeply troubled on past mistakes in strategy," said his spokesman, Chris Jones. "But rather than spend time dissecting the past, he wants to look forward and get the tax package passed." U.S. Rep. Mark Souder took a similar tack. Souder has been a frequent critic of Gingrich and has not hesitated to lock horns with the speaker. But Souder spokeswoman Angela Flood explained, "The congressman is concerned that there's no clarity to the Republican mes-

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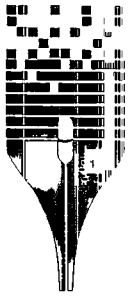
Why coups d'etat probably won't happen in the House and Senate in '98

If there is a revolt, and it fails, those involved will live in fear that their legislation will be blackballed and their chairmanships will be jerked. There would have to be some real momentum built - in this case clear signals from another five or six representatives before many in the House would be willing to risk that.



INDIANAPOLIS - Nowhere has the word "Jakarta" been spray painted on the walls outside of Senate President Pro Tempore Robert D. Garton or House Speaker Paul Mannweiler.

That word - the capital of Indonesia - has become an international symbol of an imminent coup de'etat, marking a 1960s era revolt. Spray painted on buildings in Santiago, Chile, in 1970, it was a terrifying omen for its Marxist president, Salvadore Allende.

There has been lots of talk in the Indiana Statehouse about an overturning of leadership. On the Republican side, the Senate wallowed in an ideological void. It threw out ideas like tax hikes and pay raises as it grappled with what to do with a $2 billion budget surplus.

On the House side, estimates are that between 22 or 23 Republicans might bolt behind new leadership at this point in the game. Many have seen Mannweiler's leadership bring them embarrassment (like his 1995 surprise plan to redistrict) and a compelling lack of political feel. The final straw may have been when House Republicans rejected a budget proposal, paving the way for House Democrats to use the new Pacer and Colts arenas to gain a historic bargain on worker's compensation.

Doubtless many Republican representatives and senators returned to their hometowns this spring only to get an earful from their Chamber of Commerce and manufacturing groups.

HPR foresees little change

But HPR forecasts that there probably won't be a great deal of change during the 1998 legislature and, perhaps, not even in 1999. If nothing else, the Old Guard - while a little befuddled over what all the fuss is about - is digging in. Mannweiler was said to have been considering retiring, but has now announced he intends to seek re-election. Key Republican sources indicate that Garton is truly astounded that anyone would question his leadership, particularly within his caucus. Other influential Republicans like Morris Mills, Larry Borst and Joe Harrison are indicating to friends and allies they will seek future terms.

Last week, Garton announced his appointees to the Legislative Council and they include such dinosaurs as Harrison and Potch Wheeler, along with Pat Miller and Tom Wyss. Garton summed up his council appointees by saying with all the flair of a Kremlin bureaucrat, "With the significant experience and leadership skills of these fine senators, I am looking forward to the direction that the interim and the next session will take us."

That is hardly a signal that Garton will go along with jettisoning Harrison as Majority Leader, as two coalitions of middle-aged and young buck senators have been murmurring about. Garton isn't feeling heat.

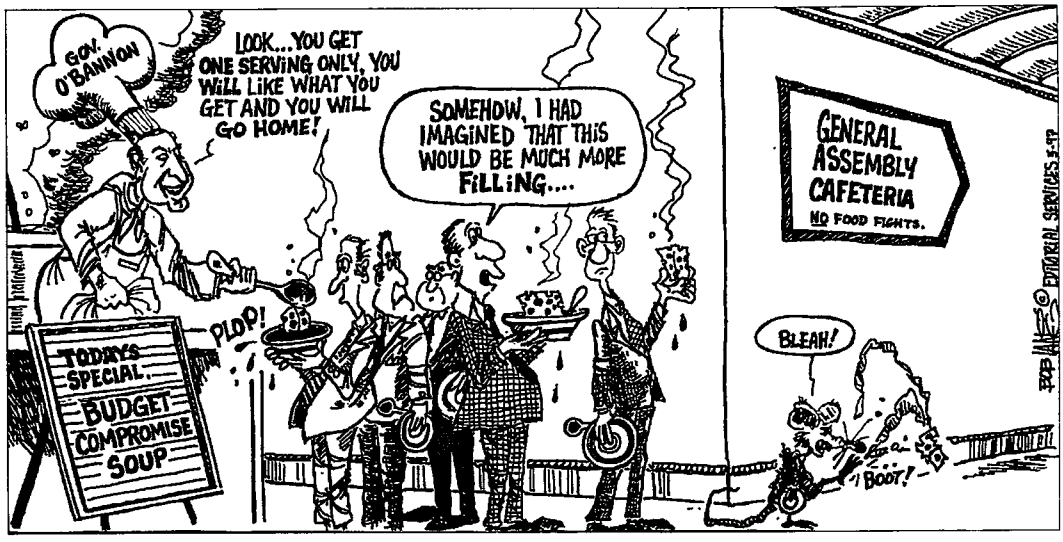
The two key names associated with a Senate insurrection are Luke Kenley and Murray Clark. Kenley is running for governor in 2000 and had a huge opportunity this past session to stand up and be counted as a passionate conservative. Yet, when the time came, he was publicly muted and may have missed the one strategic position that could have made his gubernatorial candidacy a serious one.

The political reality is that it will take 26 House Republicans to force a change there, so the anti-Mannweiler forces are between three and four votes short. This revolt is taking on an out-state versus Indianapolis look.

The reason this probably won't come off in the House leading into 1998 is the very nature of the way that institution works. From the day legislators arrive in the House, there are two historic career goals - getting legislation passed and getting a committee chairmanship or leadership post.

If there is a revolt, and it fails, those involved will live in fear that their legislation will be blackballed and their chairmanship will be jerked. There would have to be some real momentum built - in this case clear signals from another five or six representatives - before many in the House would be willing to risk that.

In the Senate, the Old Guard still main-



tains enough numbers to thwart an open revolt, in part because the two camps of opposition are diffused. Some feel the heir to Garton should be from the three- and four-termers who feel they have paid their dues. But there is another restless group of freshmen and sophomore members who don't want to wait decades for real power to swing their way.

The true swing of power in both Chambers could actually begin on the campaign trail, when both the Old Guard and the plotters will seek to win allegiance from new members who could finally tip the scales.

Spinning the last session

A classic example of the spin legislators put on the session can be found in a recent Munster Times story. Reporter Adele L Mackanos reported that Republican Sen. Sue Landske and Democratic Rep. Robert Kuzman appeared before the Greater Crown Point Chamber of Commerce. Mackanos reported it this way:

"They said that of the 260 bills passed by the General Assembly, only three were vetoed by Democratic Gov. Frank O'Bannon." Translation: Legislators see success in volume of bills passed.

"They said education got the biggest boost as did pensions for state employees, a category that includes educators." Translation: Coming home with the bacon in the form of schools is always a plus.

"Property owners and taxpayers will also see a benefit from a substantial increase in the Homestead Credit." Translation: This is the "tax cut" that will play big in Lake County, where a full-scale tax revolt seems just around the corner.

Interestingly, neither Landske nor Kuzman talked about the two biggest issues - new sports arenas for Indianapolis pro teams and better worker's compensation benefits.

Spinning the last session

The biggest follow-up stories concerning the Indiana General Assembly have been over highway funding. Lake County will be the key beneficiary of highway funding with $116 million targeted for projects there, prompting Mannweiler to say in the Indianapolis Star the "one-time infusions of money for highways" would be to "serve the entire state and not just one county." Obviously, Mannweiler has not driven much in Lake County, where daily traffic can be a nightmare.

That prompted State Rep. Charlie Brown to tell the Associated Press, "Everyone, including Ray Charles, knows that in the last 20 years Marion County - year after year - has received the lion's share of attention in the General Assembly."

The *Munster Times* reported that the money for Lake County came at the expense of Porter County. In Southwestern Indiana, the Evansville Courier also has noted the windfall of highway money heading north instead of south.

Other than highway funding and follow-ups to the Indianapolis arena bills, there has been virtually little reporting on what the Indiana General Assembly did or didn't do.

TICKER TAPE

sage, but he's not in a mode of pointing fingers."

Democratic State Rep. Rolland Webber was indicted by a Marion County grand jury on Monday on tax evasion charges. Prosecutor Scott Newman said that Webber failed to pay taxes on his daily legislative per diem. He is the second lawmaker with ties the the legislature to face indictment this year, joining Republican Sam Turpin.

The FBI has questioned employees of former Vanderburgh County Clerk Betty Knight Smith about whether they were forced to make campaign contributions. "I haven't done anything that anybody else didn't do," said Smith (Alan Julian, Evansville Courier).

"Handguns and violence are typically thought to go hand in hand, but recent statistics indicate that trend may be changing," was the lead of an Evansville Courier atricle written by Dave Hosick. "In fact, local and national sources indicate more people are becoming handgun owners while the rate of violent crime is declining." He quoted Vanderburgh County Sheriff Sgt. Jim VanCleve as saying the "standstill" in local crime rates "is partially due to the ever-

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TICKER TAPE

changing profile of handgun owners. What we are seeing is more single people applying for permits for guns to keep in their home or business."

Mayor Stephen Goldsmith chatted with Indianapolis residents via cyberspace Sunday evening. The mayor sat at a computer and keyboard and carried on "chat room" style conversations with residents.

There have been several changes on the staff of U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar. Press secretary Mark Schoeff Jr has left to become director for external relations for the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Andy Fisher replaces Schoeff, returning to a job he held for several years in the 1980s. Jennifer Cutshall moves from the Lugar Senate office and replaces Fisher as communications director for the Senate Agriculture Committee.

Gary Mayor Scott King joined Chicago Mayor Richard Daley in pitching a crime control plan to President Clinton. "Mayor King has a video of an 8-year-old boy selling heroin on a Gary street corner," said Lake County Prosecutor Bernard Carter, whose brother died of a heroin addiction (Steve Goldsmith, a reporter with the same name as the Indianapolis mayor, Munster

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COLUMNISTS ON INDIANA

Brian Howey, *HPR* - President Clinton campaigned last year on a theme of "building a bridge to the 21st Century" that would empower the people, help the needy, and set new standards of decency and honor. This past week, it appeared President Clinton was more intent on following Sen. Ted Kennedy across quite a different bridge. Kennedy's attempt to cross a bridge called Chappaquiddick in 1969 resulted in tragedy, controversy and a great deal of sadness. The folks of Utica, Ind., and Grand Forks, N.D., have proven to be strong, stout-hearted people. This past week, however, many people in Grand Forks talked about abandoning the city they had tried so valiantly to defend. They were promised help quickly and the idiots running the show in Washington betrayed them. Now, this is one of these political stories that astounds me for the stupidity behind it. Sen. Lott saw it as an opportunity for political gain and Speaker Newt Gingrich proved to be in a total fog at controlling events before they became a public relations disaster. President Clinton was ready to take them on. What were they thinking?

Burns Whitaker, *Munster Times* - I don't know why some people think Indiana is eccentric just because it has four communities named Buena Vista, or four Millersburgs, three Needmores, three Mechanicsburgs, three Jamestowns, three Georgetowns, five Mt. Pleasants, four Salems and two Pumpkin Centers. All the above facts seems to add fuel to the Indiana detractors who think that Hoosiers are just a bunch of clods anyway. But consider these facts: The first car was made in Indiana; the first electric inter-urban line was in Indiana, between Brazil and Harmony; Wabash was one of the first cities in the United States to use electricity for public lighting; Indiana has produced some famous people, among them Hoagy Carmichael, Cole Porter and astronauts Frank Borman and Gus Grissom. Yes, Indiana, instead of being a backwater sort of place with cloddish people, has contributed greatly to the progress and prosperity of the nation. And one of its wisest and most sensible actions was taken when it was one of the states that did not vote for Bill Clinton.

Dave Kitchell, *Logansport Pharos-Tribune* - On the same day Rep. Steve Buyer called for Gen. Joe Ralston to surrender his candidacy to head the Joint Chiefs of Staff, his own alma mater looked like it might be a good time to sound the bugle call for retreat. Only hours after the Monticello Republican appeared on NBC's "Meet the Press" Sunday, "60 Minutes" correspondent Ed Bradley detailed some less than flattering antics at The Citadel. Interviews with one former African-American cadet and a former female cadet reflected a tenor of prejudice. "I never saw it when I was there," he says. Buyer, who had an African-American roommate for two years while at The Citadel, says he did not see the "60 Minutes" segment, but he'll defend the school even though he won't defend the actions mentioned in the segment.

Robert Novak, *Chicago Sun-Times* - Several Republican congressmen, outraged by the Justice Department investigation of Rep. Dan Burton, are vowing to have no more contact with any lobbyist who is a Democratic Party operative. Burton, who heads the committee probing Clinton campaign irregularities, faces possible criminal charges spawned by an accusation from lobbyist Mark Siegel. Siegel says that the congressman threatened him for not raising campaign funds for him and complained to Siegel's then client, the government of Pakistan. Siegel is well-known in Washington as a former Democratic National Committee member and a one-time DNC chief of staff. GOP activist Grover Norquist, who heads Americans for Tax Reform, is urging Republican members of Congress to permit no lobbyist with Democratic ties into their offices. The fact that some lawmakers are complying is bad news for lobbyists, who need access to both sides of the aisle.

PERHAPS... WE WANDER

By Brian Howey

Indiana Republicans should learn a Democratic lesson on topic of media access

MICHIGAN CITY - It was a little less than a year ago that Indiana reporters were treated to one of the most spectacular days in memory.

Free to roam the press room at the Congress Ramada Hotel in Chicago during the Democratic National Convention, they were given rides on a caravan of buses headed to greet President Clinton in Michigan City. The reporters sat with, chatted and joked with Evan Bayh, Frank and Judy O'Bannon, Jeff Modisett, Pam Carter, Joe Kernan and Andy Jacobs.

Party members loaned reporters floor credentials to wander with the Kennedys and media stars. Party regulars shared beers with reporters in the hotel bars and swapped stories.

One of my great political memories was driving from the Fort Wayne International Airport to Arcola, Ind., a 40 minute backseat ride, with Hillary Clinton during the 1992 Indiana primary.

"Access - that's the key," said Mike Harmless, executive director of the Indiana Democrats. "We're an open party. The media expects that."

Now, compare that with Indiana Republicans. Reporters have to be credentialed in advance of any state dinner. Usually the keynote speaker - this past spring it was Jack Kemp - is quickly ushered in and out of an interview room for a 15-minute session with the reporters.

The media then mill around a carefully cordoned off area at the back of the convention center while all the rich contributors eat a fancy dinner, which usually takes more than an hour. Then there is the speech, but by the time it's given the interest level has waned and many of the reporters are gone.

Unlike the Indiana Democratic Editorial Association convention at the end of August each summer, Republicans have no such event where they let journalists roam in a consistent and close proxiemty to their stars, operatives and foot soldiers.

Republican sources tell HPR there are two influences. One is Chairman Mike McDaniel's desire to have his events come off with national sophistication. Another is Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith's general aversion to the news media, which caused him big problems in his 1996 race against Frank O'Bannon.

O'Bannon, on the other hand, groomed his relationship with the news media in the years preceeding his '96 candidacy, and it paid dividends during that campaign. At one point during Goldsmith's accusation of 38 tax increases, O'Bannon exhorted the news media to reveal the truth about the tax increase issue. Many responded.

Republicans, both state and nationally, love to complain about the news media, and use it as a campaign trail whipping boy, as Dan Quayle has done consistently since 1988. That antagonism is being felt here to a point that Mark Lubbers, manager of the Lugar for President campaign in 1996, is working on a new TV show that will critique the news media (which will be so cool, anyway).

Nationally, this past week we have seen the GOP take a blood bath in the media over the political wrangling of the disaster relief bill in Congress. *Congressional Quarterly's* George Hager said of Republican Congressional leaders that "something about President Clinton seems to scramble their political neutrons."

The Republicans closed down Congress in 1995, Clinton blames them, and so did voters by a 2-to-1 margin. On the disaster relief bill, leadership waited through a weekend to send a bill they knew Clinton wouldn't sign, then had no one on duty to, as Hager noted, "counteract the White House spin. Clinton got more unchallenged airtime to patiently paint the Republicans as crazy extremists."

Republicans don't know how to work the media.

TICKER TAPE

Times). King said, "In Gary and Chicago, we see the most severe drug problems. Most of the homicides we see are drug-related and when it comes down to it, most of our societal problems are drug related."

Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith called a powwow of federal, state, county and local police on how to deal with Indianapolis' record-setting homicide pace. Later that week, his police chief, Michael Zunk, placed posters on 37th Street lightposts (just a few blocks away from the Indianapolis Children's Museum) announcing saturation patrols in an attempt to clamp down on gangs and a thriving drug trade.

Gov. Frank O'Bannon and State Rep. Dave Crooks both received dozens of calls in support of a controversial wet milling plant in Daviess County. "I can tell you, the phone lines have been burning all day," Crooks told Doug Sword of the Evansville Courier. The campaign was ignited when Davies County leaders met amid fears of losing a Muscatine, Iowa, company's plans for a $250 million plant due to an environmental dispute. Steve Campbell said the governor received 150 phone calls, 60 fax letters and a couple of e-mails on June 13.

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TICKER TAPE

South Bend Tribune's Susan Dillman wrote of the "Statehouse Saints" - those who hold positions of power and influence and include a South Bend St. Joseph's High School diploma. Included are Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan, Supreme Court Justice Frank Sullivan, governor's aide Craig Hartzer, and Reps. Tom Kromkowski, Pat Bauer, Mike Dvorak, and Michael Murphy.

State Rep. Bruce Munson hinted in the Muncie Star Press that he may not seek re-election.

Indianapolis, from page 1

Indiana's drawback is that its 12 Electoral College votes are not very appealing. But consider Dan Quayle's strategy for his next presidential run - the need to retake the Midwest and California from the Electoral College's Democratic column - and Indiana makes sense. We are as Midwestern as you can get with a generous spirit, an ingrown "cussedness," ancestral roots to both the Northeast and the Appalachians, and within a stone's throw of media markets that reach nearly two-thirds of the electorate.

An added sideshow is Goldsmith's maneuvering to clinch the Indiana Fieldhouse and Convention Center deals. His detractors say Goldsmith wanted to be governor only because he wanted to dodge these types of issues. As of this past week, Goldsmith was delivering on the arenas, even if it meant helping O'Bannon. But in the long run, it may pay dividends for the mayor.

While Indianapolis is not likely to win either the 2000 Republican or Democratic conventions, Willey believes that 2004 and 2008 are possibilities.

Willey said that when RNC operatives scouted out the Convention Center/RCA Dome, they were making comments about how those sites would be far more accommodating than the 1996 site in San Diego.

Indiana Democrats are not to be outdone when it comes to attracting presidential timber. U.S. Sen. Bob Kerrey of Nebraska will be the keynote speaker at the July 25 Jackson-Jefferson Day Dinner. Kerrey is a potential presidential candidate and challenged President Clinton in 1992.

During the same weekend as the Republican Leadership Conference, the Indiana Democratic Editorial Association will convene in French Lick. It has invited Vice President Al Gore to speak and is attracting national talent like pollster Celinda Lake. Gov. Frank O'Bannon and First Lady Judy O'Bannon will remain the focus for Hoosier Democrats at the IDEA weekend. "The governor is the past president of the IDEA and we won't want to take away from that focus," explained the Indiana Democrats' Mike Harmless.

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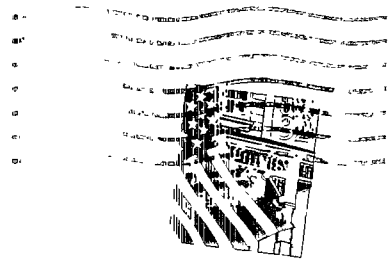

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