

THE HOWEY POLITICAL REPORT



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“QUOTE” OF THE WEEK

“People think being in the legislature really opens doors for you. In the current climate, it closed a lot of doors....”

- State Rep. R n Tabaczynski f Hamm nd wh
ann unced he w uld not seek a fourth term, t the
Munster Times

‘Jerry Maguire’ tax cut a motherlode?

Dems may have discovered populist goldmine

■ **Talking Point:** Indiana House Democrats may have hit the motherlode with the Jerry Maguire Tax Cut: *Just show me the money.*

■ ■ ■

INDIANAPOLIS - In this age of the quick soundbite and the ability to convey a simple concept, Indiana House Democrats and, ultimately, Gov. Frank O'Bannon, may have struck the populist goldmine for the second consecutive year.

Their “Nothing Funny; Just the Money” pitch to spend down a \$500 million budget windfall shows signs of completely outflanking legislative Republicans not only in the halls of the Statehouse, but where it really counts: The miles and miles of territory stretching in all directions from the center of Indianapolis to the state lines.

In dozens of informal settings with audiences ranging from blue bloods to blue collars, HPR has asked this simple question: Which would you rather have: a \$100 rebate from the government, or property tax reform?”

Without exception, Hoosiers opt for the money.

“Show me the money,” said Indiana Democratic Political Director Robin Winston. “That’s what people like to hear. It’s simple. Direct. And there is empirical data that says that a vast majority of people don’t think they got a tax cut after last session. They think taxes went up with the license plate fees.”

Hoosier Democrats took notice of the near upset of Republican New Jersey Gov. Christine Todd Whitman, who ran as a tax reformer, but nearly succumbed to the issue last November when any gains were obscured in an array of other elements bombarding voters, including high automobile insurance rates.

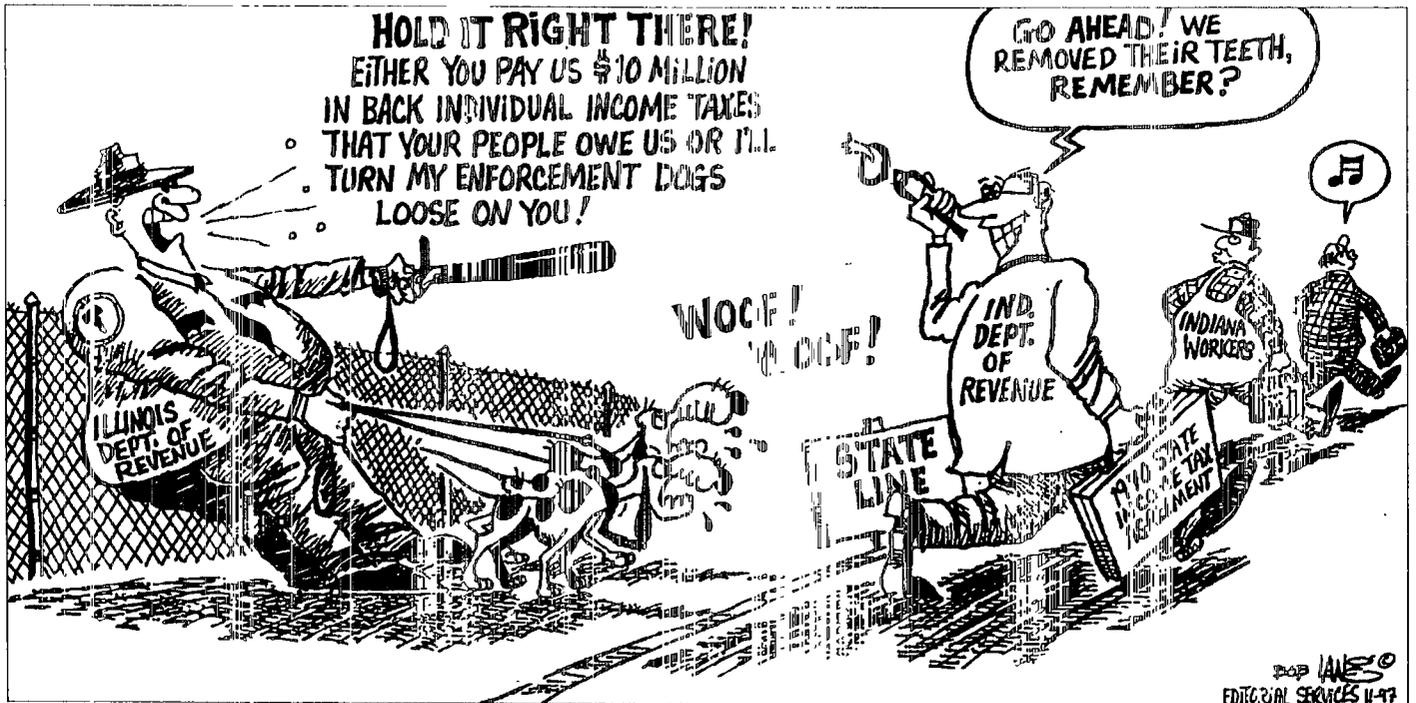
The Democratic plan has utter populist appeal. Said Winston, “It’s the check is in the mail. The money is in the wallet. It will be an identifiable, tangible thing.”

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Bob Lang



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PLAY OF THE WEEK: House Democrats for the \$100 tax rebate and \$50 per school child for book rentals. It seems like a real good idea to most regular folks HPR has come in contact with over the last week. House Republicans are going to have to make the case that property tax reform - which leaves out a significant part of the population - is a better route to take.



Only 11 more months until the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Taxes makes its report to the public.

State Rep. Ron Tabaczynski, in announcing he won't seek re-

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From a political standpoint, House Ways and Means Chairman B. Patrick Bauer told HPR that such a check would be mailed out to Hoosier voters sometime next September or October, just in time for the next election. With the House split 50/50 and the success of his governorship riding on the Democrats taking one seat so he can steer through what will likely be an historic tax reform package in 1999, the stakes for O'Bannon surrounding this purely populist appeal couldn't be higher.

In fact, HPR can't remember a single time in Hoosier history where a legislative proposal would result in rebates being mailed to voters just in time for the next election.

Tuesday night during Gov. O'Bannon's State of the State address, he at first seemed to embrace the House Democratic rebate position. "Hoosier families should not have to wait to share the benefits of this year's higher-than-expected reserve," O'Bannon said. "After all, it was created largely by their tax dollars. Let's get their money back to them directly. I believe the best way to do this is to send every Hoosier taxpayer a check."

At that point, the Democratic side of the House chamber exploded into applause.

"But," O'Bannon continued, "I recognize this isn't the only way. There are other serious proposals on the table, and I will work with the legislature to find common ground."

That prompted Republicans to cheer. In fact, all four chambers have tax proposals. But none is as simple or can be related to voters more succinctly than the Democratic plan announced by Speaker John Gregg and Bauer.

Senate President Pro Tem Robert Garton commented that he was "pleased the governor has indicated some flexibility. He is more than willing to consider our tax plan."

Gov. O'Bannon didn't lay out a blueprint for the legislature. He played into his '97 form. He will stay above the fray until the final days of the session, looking to seize any GOP vulnerability and leverage it for a deal.

If anyone took a hard line against the O'Bannon position, it was Secretary of State Sue Anne Gilroy, who said of the \$1.8 billion surplus, "I'm not sure this is our money. It's the people's money. When I was growing up in Wallace, Indiana, if you found a wallet on the ground, you'd give it back."

Gilroy, a potential O'Bannon challenger in 2000 if she wins re-election this year, added that "It isn't a surplus. It's a slush fund."

1998 Racing Form

Congressional update; two more open House seats

Horse Race unveils its Congressional Racing Form this week, in addition to changes in several Top 20 legislative races. On the legislative front, two more open House seats emerge, bringing the total to five after State Reps. Ron Tabaczynski and Rolland Webber announce they won't seek re-election. Webber's decision is particularly good news in light of his indictment. His decision not to run and popular two-term Madison County Sheriff Scott Mellinger stepping in will bring this seat off Horse Race 20 hot seats. Democrats should have little problems hanging on to the Tabaczynski seat. On the Republican side, Rep. Jerry Bales may be in for more than a primary race than we initially expected judging from the events that took place in Bloomington last Saturday.

In our status report, **Toss-Up** means the race is within a statistical margin of error or we're on to something; **Leans** is just outside the margin of error and up to, say, 9 percent; **Likely** is about 10 to 15 points and a good gut feeling,, and **Solid** means watch out for a landslide.

Indiana Congressional Races

U.S. Senate : R Primary: Fort Wayne Mayor Paul Helmke, Peter Rusthoven, John Price. D

Primary: Evan Bayh. HPR General Forecast: Toss-Up v. Bayh. 1992 Results: Coats 1,267,972, Hogsett 900,148. 1998 Forecast: Anyone who thinks a "front-runner" has emerged in the GOP primary is nuts. Yes, Rusthoven will have about a \$100,000 money advantage on Helmke, but remember, Helmke is a wealthy man from a powerful family. A Coats endorsement of Rusthoven would make a huge difference. Mason-Dixon numbers for Bayh seem low in both 57/15 fav/unfav and head-to-heads against Helmke (53-28) and Rusthoven (54-26). Lends credence to notion that his support is wide, not deep. Toll Road/Argosy probes could present problems. GOP will have to run a perfect campaign with some good luck to beat Bayh. Status: *Likely D*

Congressional District 1: R Primary: Open. D Primary: U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky

Geography: Northern Lake, Porter County. HPR General Forecast: Visclosky. 1994 results: Visclosky 68,612, Larson 52,920. 1996 Results: Visclosky 132,430, Petyo(R) 56,205, Crass (L) 3,122. 1998 Forecast: This is the Democrats' safest CD. Visclosky is quiet, but effective. Status: *Solid D*.

Congressional District 2: R Primary: U.S. Rep. David McIntosh. D Primary: New Castle

Mayor Sherman Boles. Geography: Muncie, Anderson, Richmond, Shelbyville, Columbus and East Central Indiana. HPR General Forecast: McIntosh v. Boles. 1994 results: McIntosh 93,592, Hogsett 78,241. 1996 Results: McIntosh 122,288, Carmichael (D) 83,478, Zimmerman (L) 4,662. 1998 Forecast: Don't see this being competitive. McIntosh will have a huge money advantage, gets lots of national exposure and because of his role in the Insurrection Against Newt, can avoid the Newtoid Robot tag. Boles will report \$50,000 raised later this month. Watch for McIntosh to run a major TV campaign next fall in the Indy TV market with his eye on a 2000 gubernatorial race. Status: *Solid R*.

Congressional District 3: R Primary: Dan Holtz. D Primary: U.S. Rep. Tim Roemer.

Geography: South Bend, Mishawaka, Elkhart, Northern Indiana. HPR General Forecast: Holtz v. Roemer. 1994 results: Roemer 72,497, Burkett 58,787. 1996 Results: Roemer 114,381, Zakas (R) 80,748, Taylor (L) 2,331. 1998 Forecast: Roemer only votes with Clinton 55 percent of the time, and that plays well in this district that voted for Bush and Dole. Off year helps Roemer, but could get in trouble if national dynamic (i.e. a Clinton indictment or an Asian blow to the economy) goes strong for the Republicans. His '94 win over Rich Burkett was less than inspirational. Holtz is an Elkhart stockbroker who finished second to Joe Zakas in the '96 primary and should be more seasoned this time out. Last congressman from Elkhart County was instrument maker C.G. Conn a century ago. Status: *Leans D*.

Congressional District 4: R Primary: U.S. Rep. Mark Souder. D Primary: Mark Wehrle.

Geography: Fort Wayne, Huntington, NE Indiana. HPR General Forecast: Souder v. Wehrle. 1994 results:

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election, tells Kevin Corcoran of the Munster Times that he is disillusioned by the Lake County political climate. "He vividly recalled a day local officials from around the state were invited to the Statehouse. As Michigan City officials lobbied their local legislator for a much-needed project, Lake County officials put the squeeze on Tabaczynski for NCAA basketball tickets and a state flag," the story said. Tabaczynski was quoted, "That was really frustrating. Many local elected officials have a poor understanding of what the legislature does."

U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar made it official: he'll run for re-election in 2000 and not for president. He told Statehouse reporters that he intends to "concentrate on farming and nuclear control issues in the Senate."

Lake County Prosecutor Bernard Carter is investigating whether there are grounds to remove county Auditor Sam Orlich from office. Orlich failed to set aside \$10.6 million in a special fund established by the Lake County Council to credit taxpayers for 1997 overpayments. Last Wednesday, the Munster Times called for Orlich to resign or be impeached. The tax controversy occurred when Orlich omitted \$71 million in new construction from the tax

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Legislative Open Seats

- 1 - Ron Tabaczynski
- 9 - Tom Alevizos
- 10 - Esther Wilson
- 37 - Rolland Webber
- 73 - Dennis Heeke

Rematches

- 34th - Vanleer v. Adams
- 46th - Lohr v. Tincher
- 80th - Becker v. GiaQuinta
- 67th - Goble v. Duncan
- 94th - Hinman v. Marendt

Off the Hit List

- 33rd - Ron Liggett
- 37th - Scott Mellinger
- 52nd - Dale Sturtz

Souder 83,466, Long 65,956. **1996 Results:** Souder 118,344, Houseman (D) 76,152, Bisson (L) 4,743. **1998 Forecast:** Souder is a consummate politician who plays well to his district. Dems' best hope was IU Board of Trustee President John Walda, who has opted out. Wehrle, president of a bottled water company, presents token opposition. **Status: Solid R.**

Congressional District 5: R Primary: U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer. D Primary: Open.

Geography: Kokomo, Marion, Peru, Monticello, Lowell, Northern Indiana. **HPR General Forecast:** Buyer. **1994 results:** Buyer 108,575, Beatty 43,619, Alfred (L) 1,328. **1996 Results:** Buyer 133,604, Clark (D) 67,125, Lehman (L) 5,255. **1998 Forecast:** This sprawling district is served by five media markets and Buyer is extremely in sync with voters. Former Howard County Sheriff and '94 nominee J.D. Beatty is weighing a rematch. Hard to see this as competitive. **Status: Solid R.**

Congressional District 6: R Primary: U.S. Rep. Dan Burton. D Primary: Open.

Geography: Greenfield, Franklin, Tipton, Indianapolis collar counties. **HPR General Forecast:** Burton. **1994 results:** Burton 136,876, Bruner 40,815. **1996 Results:** Burton 189,461, Dillard-Tramell (D) 58,362, Peterson (L) 5,295. **1998 Forecast:** The *Almanac of American Politics* lists the 6th CD as the second most Republican district in the nation. Burton won with 74 percent last time out. He could get indicted and be discovered shooting pumpkins off the top of the RCA Dome and still be easily re-elected. Democratic District Chair Alan Rachels had considered a challenge, but backed out. A couple of others are looking at it, but a likely challenger will not be as credible. **Status: Solid R.**

Congressional District 7: R Primary: U.S. Rep. Ed Pease v. Doug Hess. D Primary: Open.

Geography: Terre Haute, Lafayette and Western Indiana. **HPR General Forecast:** Pease. **1994 results:** Myers 104,359, Harmless 55,941. **1996 Results:** Pease 150,010, Hellmann (D) 72,705, Bourland (L) 7,125. **1998 Forecast:** Primary challenge to Pease by Doug Hess, an Indiana State University financial aids department staffer, has a better chance of freezing in hell. Democrats aren't in play this fall. **Status: Solid R.**

Congressional District 8: R Primary: U.S. Rep. John Hostettler. D Primary: Evansville

Councilwoman Gail Riecken, Shelburne Clerk-Treasurer Jay Southwood. **Geography:** Evansville, Bloomington, Vincennes and SW Indiana. **HPR General Forecast:** Hostettler v. Riecken. **1994 results:** Hostettler 93,529, McCloskey 84,857. **1996 Results:** Hostettler 109,532, Weinzapfel (D) 106,134, Hager (L) 3,799. **1998 Forecast:** This is the Democrats' best shot at a pick-up in Indiana, but it will be tough. Hostettler inoculated himself from Newtoid Robot status by voting against Gingrich as speaker. He defeated a thematically wandering Weinzapfel campaign by a mere 3,000 votes in 1996, although labor poured in close to \$1 million. He runs PACless, barebones campaigns and gets the church buses rolling on Election Day. Riecken will be an extremely credible challenger, having raised \$170,000 with \$121,500 cash on hand at year end report. She can also count on a lot of AFL-CIO money to spill in on her behalf. That can be a double-edged sword. Labor's scare tactics on Medicaid in 1996 backfired. Labor has been advertising against Hostettler almost nonstop since. This race in the Bloody Eighth will likely go down to the wire. Or as they say at the high school gym, a "barn-burner." **Status: Toss-Up.**

Congressional District 9: R Primary: Jean Leising v. Michael Bailey. D Primary: Baron

Hill. **Geography:** New Albany Jeffersonville, Madison, Nashville and SE Indiana. **HPR General Forecast:** Leising v. Hill. **1994 results:** Hamilton 91,459, Leising 84,315. **1996 Results:** Hamilton 128,885, Leising 97,747, Feeney (L) 2,315. **1998 Forecast:** Hill has consolidated Democratic support, received endorsements from Lee Hamilton and Gov. O'Bannon and will likely exceed \$250,000 by year's end with \$240,000 cash on hand. Leising fund-raising is languishing. And she can't take anti-abortion activist Michael Bailey lightly. He upset the party-endorsed candidate in '92 and ran court on a core support of pro-life supporters in a low-turnout GOP primary. **Status: Likely D.**

Congressional District 10: R Primary: Virginia Blankenbaker v. Gary Hofmeister. D

Primary: U.S. Rep. Julia Carson. **Geography:** Indianapolis. **HPR General Forecast:** Blankenbaker v. Carson. **1994 results:** Jacobs (D) 58,573, Scott 50,798. **1996 Results:** Carson 90,869, Blankenbaker 69,248, St. Angelo (L) 3,505. **1998 Forecast:** The GOP primary could be a doozie. We give Blankenbaker the early edge given her ballot history and a relatively close race against Carson in '96. But Hofmeister should not be underestimated. We expect him to be fully funded and it will be crucial for him to strike his themes effectively in March and April. He also has high name recognition due to his jewelry store ads. As for the general, Carson is one of these politicians who can break all the rules, campaign in a non-traditional manner, and win. In fact, she is undefeated. She will report \$180,000 raised later this month. WTHR-TV's expose on the dilapidated house she owned that the city had to tear down would have sunk most Congressional candidates. But it will be risky to attack Carson, as Blankenbaker found out in '96, even though the house issue may offer the best opportunity

to score points with the district's white voters. **Status:** *Leans D.*

Thursday, Jan. 15, 1998

Indiana Legislative Races

House District 1: R Primary: Open. D Primary: Kathleen Pucalik **Geography:** Hammond, Lake County. **HPR General Forecast:** Kathleen Pucalik. **1994 results:** Tabaczynski (D) 6,644 (unopposed). **1996 Results:** Tabaczynski (D) 11,860 (unopposed). **1998 Forecast:** Rep. Ron Tabaczynski announces his retirement at age 33 after three terms. Most likely successor is Kathleen Pucalik, an ally of Lake County Sheriff John Buncich, who challenged Tabaczynski in the '96 Democratic primary. Republicans will not contest this seat in the fall. **Status:** *Solid D.*

House District 9: R Primary: Open. D Primary: Scott Pelath, Dennis Matheny. **Geography:** Michigan City, LaPorte County. **HPR General Forecast:** Pelath. **1994 results:** Alevizos (D) 11,202 (unopposed). **1996 Results:** Alevizos 15,424 (unopposed). **1998 Forecast:** Derrick Lubs is not running, which may give Scott Pelath, an aide to U.S. Rep. Tim Roemer, a better advantage. He was thought to be the early front-runner after Rep. Tom Alevizos bowed out, but Lubs and Matheny brought in an element of factionalization that may have hurt Pelath. We'll take Pelath over Matheny in the primary. **Status:** *Solid D.*

House District 33: R Primary: Open. D Primary: Rep. Ron Liggett. **Geography:** Redkey, Jay and Randolph counties. **HPR General Forecast:** Shoemaker v. Liggett. **1994 Results:** Liggett 10,161, Thornburg 7,701. **1996 Results:** Liggett 11,480, Shoemaker 9,325. **1998 Forecast:** Sam Shoemaker is out, having to deal with his wife's illness. No other logical Republican is in the wings even though the state party wants to punish Liggett for igniting worker's comp budget sucker punch last year. **Status:** *Likely D.*

House District 34: R Primary: James Vanleer. D Primary: Rep. Tiny Adams. **Geography:** Muncie, Delaware County. **HPR General Forecast:** Vanleer v. Adams. **1994 Results:** Vanleer 8,491, Elliott 7,522. **1996 Results:** Adams 9,630, Vanleer 9,241. **1998 Forecast:** Adams and Vanleer appeared at Association of Concerned Taxpayers and framed the tax issue last Saturday. "We should be looking at permanent property tax relief," said Vanleer in the *Muncie Star Press*. Adams supports the House Democrats' tax rebate plan, but adds, "in all honesty, we don't have a surplus." Adams won by only 209 votes in 1996. **Status:** *Toss-Up.*

House District 35: R Primary: Rep. Bruce Munson. D Primary: Charlotte Sheppard. **Geography:** Muncie, Delaware County. **HPR General Forecast:** Munson vs. open. **1994 Results:** Munson 9,505, Eddy 7,694. **1996 Results:** Munson 10,827, Errington 9,493. **1998 Forecast:** The new element this week is Ball State University alumni office staffer Charlotte Sheppard is still considering a run. **Status:** *Leans R.*

House District 37: R Primary: Steve Chapman v. Robert Steele. D Primary: Sheriff Scott Mellinger. **Geography:** Anderson, Madison County. **HPR General Forecast:** Chapman v. Mellinger. **1994 Results:** Webber 8,700, Chapman 7,958. **1996 Results:** Webber 11,097, Chapman 9,346. **1998 Forecast:** Webber announces he won't seek re-election, facing indictment, and endorses popular two-term Madison County Sheriff Scott Mellinger. "Scott believes in the working people of Indiana," Webber said. "The working people of Indiana will continue to be represented in the 37th District." Thus this race is headed for the Off The Hit List category. With Mellinger running, the GOP has virtually no chance to pick this up. **Status:** *Solid D.*

House District 60: R Primary: Rep. Jerry Bales v. Monroe County Councilman Jeff Ellington. D Primary: Open. **Geography:** Bloomington, Monroe and Greene counties. **HPR General Forecast:** Bales. **1994 results:** Bales 11,825, Anderson 5,210. **1996 Results:** Bales 15,743, Germann (L) 1,931. **1998 Forecast:** Last week we said this race was a joke. Now we're taking a hard second look. This might be the most interesting primary. Monroe County GOP establishment numbering 200 turns out for County Councilman Jeff Ellington's announcement last Saturday, including George Witwer and David Lohr. Lawrence County Chairman Jerry Adams also endorses Ellington. Taxes, I-69, schools and basic Republican principles will be weighed against Bales' voting record. They seem to be fed up with Bales' maverick status and antics such as doing election advertising with Democrat Rep. Mark Kruzan. Bales has always attracted plenty of Democratic and independent support in Bloomington. The crucial question is? What will he do in a sparsely voted GOP primary if the establishment is aligned against him? **Status:** *Leans Bales.*

House District 67: R Primary: Rep. Cleo Duncan. D Primary: Ed Goble. **Geography:** Decatur, Ripley, Switzerland counties. **HPR General Forecast:** Duncan v. Goble. **1994 Results:** Duncan 9,672, Goble 9,369. **1996 Results:** Duncan 12,598, Kellerman 9,474. **1998 Forecast:** The news here is that 9th CD Chairman Mike Jones is not going to run, securing a Duncan-Goble rematch. **Status:** *Leans R*

✉ Brian A. Howey

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base, ultimately inflating the 1997 tax rates and bills. The tax base that year was understated by \$205 million. Orlich is also under a federal investigation for deals he allegedly made with land title companies.

The Association of Concerned Taxpayers in Muncie is calling for the lowering of the cap on local property tax increases (Rick Yencer, Muncie Star Press). ACT President Gordon Osterhoff noted the 5 percent local government tax controls and said, "It should not be automatic."

A heart attack has claimed the life of Lake Station Democratic city chairman Charles Keathley.

Good news for incumbents: Mortgage rates are at a 23-year low with the average 30-year fixed rate at 6.9 percent. Wholesale prices have also dropped for nine straight months. ABC news reported that for the first time in nearly five years US consumers paid down their debts last November.

CNN/USA Today/Gallup reports President Clinton's fav/unfav stand at 59/32 percent as of Jan. 6-7.

Indiana Democratic Chairman

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Joe Andrew has been selected to head the DNC's 2000 convention site selection committee. Andrew told the Indianapolis Star/News that Indianapolis will not be viable, lacking in luxury hotel rooms.

Secretary of State Sue Anne Gilroy has proposed legislation that would reduce fees that she says will save 300,000 Hoosiers an estimated \$2.5 million annually. She also announced that beginning this summer, business transactions with her office will be available via the Internet.

Former Vice President Dan Quayle kept a conspicuous presence at U.S. Rep. Sonny Bono's funeral last week.

Hoosier environmentalists are outraged at a U.S. Forest Service plan to clear 2,000 acres in the Hoosier National Forest (Gerard Shields, Evansville Courier). The service said the clearing is designed to help the survival of the Indiana bat species.

Gail Riecken's campaign RV in the 8th CD is literally a moving billboard, with a photo of the candidate on the spare wheel cover on back. Last week, someone stole the wheel cover.

Curt Smith, spokesman for U.S.

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PERHAPS... WE WANDER

By Brian Howey

Crack's grip on Hoosier cities may be a roller coaster ride

FORT WAYNE - About that light at the end of the crack cocaine tunnel: Is it the sun beginning to appear after one of Indiana's greatest social catastrophes?

Or is it an oncoming freight train?

A number of Indiana cities have experienced record homicide rates over the past five years. Crack came to Fort Wayne in 1985. After an epidemic of burglaries over the first three or four years, the turf wars began with the characteristic drive-by shootings between gangs. Then the record homicide rates spiked up. Fort Wayne reached its record homicide rate of 39 in 1994. And then, as it did in scores of other major metropolitan areas like New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, it declined. In 1996, Fort Wayne had 16 homicides.

Crack came to cities like Indianapolis, Elkhart and South Bend in the early 1990s. It is fascinating to watch what is happening in these cities. Elkhart County has seen its homicides decline from 18 deaths in 1994, to 13 in 1995, six in 1996 and four in 1997. The city of Elkhart had only one homicide last year. South Bend crested at 21 homicides in 1996, followed by 17 in 1997. But a terrible October when 22 people were gunned down in 16 incidents resulting in six homicides was troubling.

Gathering the most attention has been Indianapolis, which posted its bloodiest year ever. There were 160 homicides in Indianapolis in 1997, which includes both Indianapolis Police Department and the Marion County Sheriff jurisdictions - the second consecutive record homicide year.

Television viewers in Central Indiana were given an almost nightly array of violence and mayhem.

Then last November, Marion County Prosecutor Scott Newman released a tantalizing statistic: Drug Use Forecasting statistics indicated that crack cocaine found in males booked at the county jail had gone from 50 percent testing

positive in 1994 to 27 percent for the third quarter in 1997.

"We are cautiously optimistic from these new statistics that the crack cocaine epidemic is slowly declining in Indianapolis," Newman said. "We've seen this in other major cities such as Portland, Chicago and Cleveland."

The news wasn't entirely good, however. Incoming female inmates, who had tested positive for crack at 60 percent at the 1994 peak had only declined to 46 percent in late 1997.

How do we put these statistics into context?

The theory is that after homicide rates reach an apex they decline, usually due to an array of converging reasons. Police gear up and respond with saturation patrols and warrant searches, contending that 90 percent of the crime is committed by only 7 percent of the population, according to Allen County Sheriff Joe Squadrito.

Many of the major crack players are either dead or in jail.

The Marion County female statistic is history repeating itself. In Fort Wayne, the early users and pushers of crack cocaine were predominantly males back in the mid to late 1980s. By the early to mid 1990s, the epidemic began creeping into other demographic groups. Child Protective Services and welfare agencies noted that some middle class families and professionals had succumbed to the drug. Smaller communities around Fort Wayne began experiencing sale and use of crack that many earlier figured would always be relegated to the inner city.

The theory that cities would reach an apex in homicides connected to the crack cocaine trade may be simply that. While Fort Wayne experienced its record homicide years from 1992 through 1994, and then saw a deep decline, in 1997 it saw its homicides spike back up to 37 - just two short of the record.

Indiana's crack ride may not be on the way down. It may be a roller coaster. ☞

COLUMNISTS ON INDIANA

Phil Wieland, *Munster Times* - With a song in his heart, a spring in his step and Cheez Whiz for brains, the Amazing Wielando returns with his warped Ouija board to give his annual vision of the region's future. His prognostications will be preserved by being photographed by the Lake County recorder's office document cameras and placed in a used napalm cannister beneath the No. 13 blast furnace at USX Gary Works. I predict the Blue Ribbon Committee appointed by Gary Mayor Scott King to look for ways to counteract the negative publicity resulting from a number of reports saying the city is dangerous will decide the best way for people to think positively about the city's image is to change the name to Green Bay, Wisconsin. ♪

Harrison Ullmann, *NUVO Newsweekly* - William Dowden is a Rat's Ass Republican. Say, you ask, who in the hell is William Dowden? Dowden is a member of the Indianapolis City-County Council, a guy from Geist who is a senior member of the permanent Republican majority in Unigov's legislature. And say, you ask, what do you mean by a Rat's Ass Republican? I mean it the same way you mean it when you say, "We're going to do this my way because I don't give a rat's ass what you want." And that's exactly what Dowden and the rest of the Council's Rat's Ass Republicans said when they finally got hold of the proposed ordinance that would establish a civilian board that would conduct civilian review of civilian complaints against an Indianapolis Police Department that lately seems to be causing much more of the crime than it investigates. ♪

Dave Penticuff, *Muncie Star Press* - It could have been one of those movie moments that shows history changing in a few minutes of witty dialogue. House Republicans were engaged a couple of years ago in trying to decide the direction of the United States Congress and whether to retain Newt Gingrich.

It was a tense meeting, remembered Rep. David McIntosh, filled with people gravely considering the future of their party and nation. Then, in a way more similar to Jimmy Stewart in *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, than a clownish TV husband of Cher, Sonny Bono, spoke. "Everyone was so serious. Sonny broke the tension by telling us when things get bad, they can always get worse." ♪

E.J. Dionne, *Washington Post* - Wherever you stand on abortion, there is something reprehensible about trying to create copies of human beings and then "throwing out" the ones that are flawed. There is something petrifying, Frankenstein-like, about bringing flawed copies of human beings to life. I'm uneasy about interfering with the advances of science and the freedom of scientists. But I'm even more uneasy about tampering with the "moral and social" sense of what it means to be a human being. ♪

Robert Novak, *Chicago Sun-Times* - While FBI Director Louis Freeh in congressional testimony last month distanced himself from Attorney General Janet Reno, he also raised troubling questions about his relationship with the Justice Department that since have been pursued by House investigators. Freeh was summoned by the House Government Oversight Committee Dec. 10 to explain why he disagreed with Reno about an independent counsel to investigate President Clinton on 1996 campaign fund-raising. But with Freeh under oath, Chairman Dan Burton asked about veteran FBI agent Jack Wickman's taking retirement rather than succumb to Justice Department demands for the name of a Chinese source. Freeh at first denied, definitively, any validity to this report. Yet, weeks earlier, Freeh was privately asked about Wickman by a senior member of Congress (not Burton), and FBI sources say he was well aware of the situation before that. ♪

TICKER TAPE

Rep. John Hostettler, said the congressman has not made an endorsement in the U.S. Senate primary and doesn't intend to. Some in the Hostettler camp bristled at John Price's recent assertion in HPR that he had the support of Hostettler's 8th CD team.

The Brazil Times reports that U.S. Rep. Ed Pease is "currently debating whether to run again in 1998" and will make a decision in February. State party sources tell HPR they are planning on Pease running.

Geoff Paddock of Fort Wayne is said to be taking another look at running for state treasurer as a Democrat. Bob Hill of the Indiana Development Finance Authority is also considering a run.

State Democrats say that potential secretary of state candidates include '94 nominee Tim Jeffers, State Sen. Cleo Washington of South Bend and former State Sen. Kathy Smith of New Albany. Democratic Political Director Robin Winston told HPR, "We're still in the recruiting mode. We haven't really focused" on those races. Winston added, "There's still a potential that we won't mount a total slate. But I'm not saying we won't, either."

An American Counsel on

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TICKER T A P E

Education survey found that just 27 percent of the nation's 1.6 million college freshmen believe that keeping up with political events is important (Associated Press).

The Chicago Tribune reported on Tuesday that Illinois riverboat casino revenues dropped 6.8 percent in 1997 compared in 1996. They site the five new riverboat casinos in Northwest Indiana as the main reason. One analyst said the Chicago gambling market has been "redistributed." Another said the Blue Chip Casino in Michigan City "did not generate new customers, but siphoned them off from existing casinos."

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