THE HOWEY POLITICAL REPORT

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Democratic willies from the heartland

Liquid scandal situation makes '98 a crap shoot

HPR Forecast: We honestly have no idea what might happen next in the Clinton/Lewinsky/Willey/Jones/Densuk/Browning scandal or what impact it will have.

■■■

INDIANAPOLIS - Remember Mount St. Helens in Washington just before it exploded back in the early 1980s? It had a bulging dome of magma that was awe-inspiring before it ruptured from its side in catastrophic fashion.

That's how HPR views the bizarre sex scandal enveloping President Clinton. At this writing - 48 hours after Kathleen Willey gave the *60 Minutes* interview that was a bookend to the Hillary Clinton "stand by your man" interview six years earlier - President Clinton was sitting on a St. Helen's style 67 percent approval rating. That CNN-*USA Today* Poll was up from 63 percent on March 9.

In the *60 Minutes* interview with Ed Bradley, Willey said that when she turned to President Clinton for help, he hugged her tightly, kissed her on the lips, fondled her breasts and placed her hand on his erect penis.

Indiana Democratic Chairman Joe Andrew described to Richard Berke of the *New York Times* a Kathleen Willey who "was convincing to many in the party because she came off as just the kind of person to whom suburban female Democratic voters can relate."

Andrew told *The Times*, "For those people who relate more to Kathleen Willey than the other accusers that may be dangerous because she fits more into a target audience in certain Midwestern states. Kathleen Willey may be more attractive, believable and credible to that audience than Paula Jones."

While Andrew spoke nationally in stunning candor, there was virtual silence from Indiana female candidates such as Rep. Julia

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"QUOTE" OF THE WEEK

"I don't intend to be a dictator. I am going to be controversial in my role as a leader..."

- Lake County Democratic Chairman Stephen Stiglich, to the Munster Times

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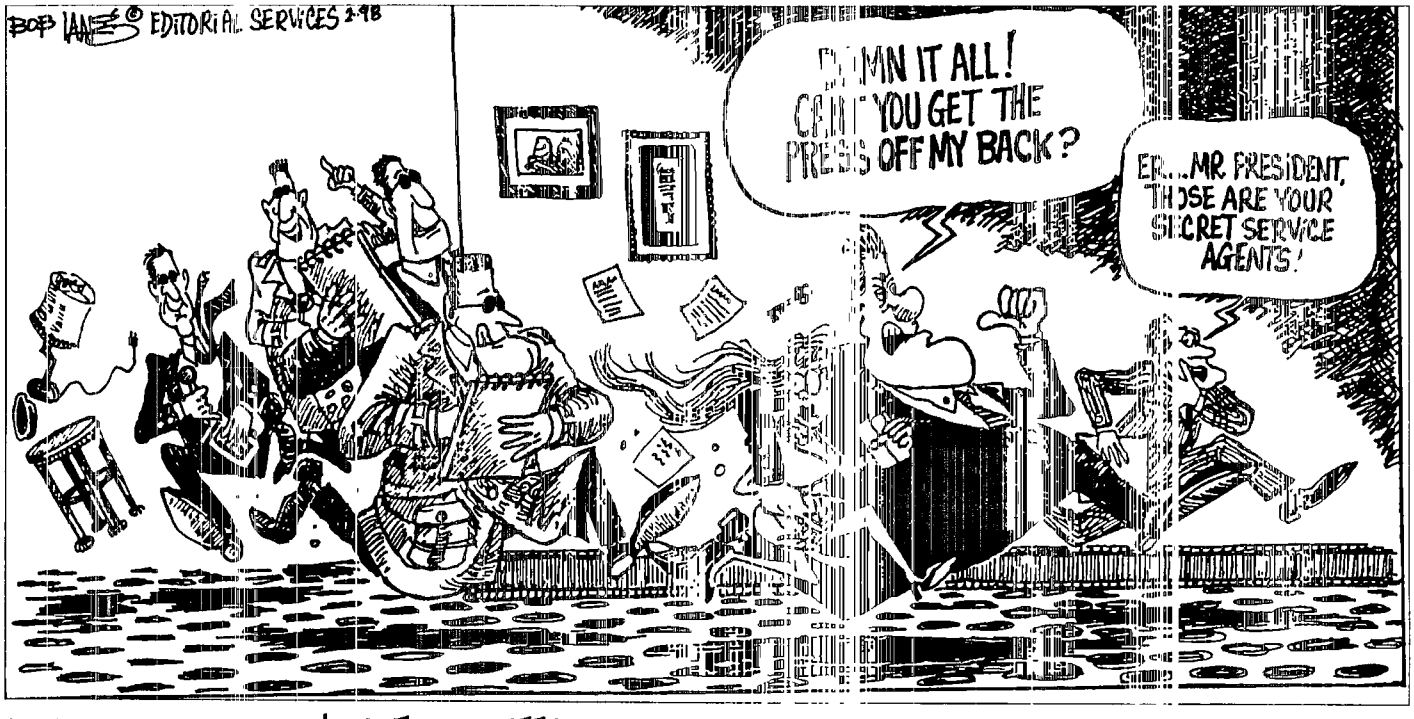
Bob Lang



TICKER TAPE

PLAY OF THE WEEK: While President Clinton dined with British Prime Minister Tony Blair at the White House, toiling in the kitchen glazing honey mango chicken was Bill O'Brien, the executive chef at Elkhart General Hospital. According to the South Bend Tribune, O'Brien's college roommate is John Moeller, assistant chef to the White House. It was that connection that brought O'Brien to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue on a week's contract. "It was a week of hard work," O'Brien told the Tribune. "Sometimes we went in at 6 or 7 a.m. and didn't get out of there until midnight." While O'Brien didn't meet the President, he did

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The willies, *from page 1*

Carson and congressional challengers Gail Riecken, Virginia Blankenbaker and Jean Leising on the topic. There also was from Indiana's virtually non-existent women's advocacy groups.

That wasn't the case in other parts of the country. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported the Willey accusations Sunday night on CBS "have set off a political earthquake among feminists - one that has shaken even longtime supporters."

The *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* reported Willey's "explosive television interview ... was a turning point ... in the view of some area feminists and professional women."

The *Kansas City Star* reported the "rock solid support President Clinton has enjoyed among women is beginning to erode."

And the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* reported that Little Rock NOW president Karin Wiggins is coming to the uncomfortable conclusion that Clinton may well have made unwelcome sexual advances toward women. It quoted Wiggins as saying, "I guess he's got enough denials behind him that it's starting to look suspicious."

Nationally, NOW President Patricia Ireland said on NBC's Today Show, "Perhaps we need to redefine what a good president is, what a good man is - because this is beyond the idea of being the likable rogue or the womanizer and really on into sexual assault, sexual abuse. I think we're heading in sort of very deep water here with this kind of allegation."

Hoosier feminists silent

Most Indiana newspapers did not check the pulse on local feminist movements following the Willey interview.

The most conspicuous Hoosier woman to comment on the subject was *Indianapolis Star/News* political writer Mary Beth Schneider, who pondered the notion in her Sunday column written prior to the Willey broadcast on whether reporters had the duty to snoop into the private lives of politicians. "What are we doing investigating politicians' private lives in the first place?" Schneider asked in the first of a series of questions. "It's a question that has troubled me and many reporters I know for a long, long time. Long before any of us ever heard of Lewinsky, Jones or even Clinton. Back before anyone trailed Gary Hart. Was that out of line? If so, then were the news media right to ignore President John F. Kennedy's sexual flings

that apparently included a mob moll? Does the private character equal public character? Haven't some men, such as Rev. Martin Luther King and Franklin D. Roosevelt, been great leaders, though imperfect men?"

Quayle most vocal Republican

If there has been one outspoken Hoosier on the topic, it has been former Vice President Dan Quayle. He said on NBC's *Meet the Press* that there has been a "pattern of such behavior" with President Clinton and argued that a weakened President Clinton "may be good political advice, but it's not good advice for the country."

Quayle added that the question of marital infidelity "is to some extent" relevant for someone running for high office.

In South Carolina, Quayle was more animated before a partisan Republican audience. The Charleston Post and Courier reported Quayle "raged against Bill Clinton" at a fundraiser Saturday night - prior to Willey on *60 Minutes*. He called the actions of White House officials during the Paula Jones and Whitewater investigations "shameful."

"It is painful to read in the newspapers the conduct that is going on in the Oval Office," Quayle said, adding that President Clinton and his aides were "deliberately trying to hinder independent counsel Kenneth Starr's investigations."

Indiana political impact

Scores of Indiana political candidates now must be wondering, what could happen next.

Charles Cook of the *Cook Political Report* wrote in his last overview, "The Monica Lewinsky situation has created a significant level of political volatility."

Prior to Monica, Cook was looking at a status quo election resulting in a high re-election rate for incumbents - possibly as high as 99 percent. In the worst years, re-election rates were 86.6 percent in 1964, 87.7 percent in 1974 and 88.1 percent in 1966. But Cook adds, "As the depth of the scandal became apparent, the chances of this becoming a 'six-year itch' election for Democrats became a realistic possibility for the first time during this election cycle."

In 1996, Frank O'Bannon clearly benefitted from the "soccer mom" vote in his stunning victory over Stephen Goldsmith. An erosion of that support for Democratic candidates should Clinton reach an embattled state could be painful for incumbent Democrats like Tim Roemer, Julia Carson and challengers like Baron Hill and Gail Riecken.

Riecken, in particular, is going to need every vote she can get next fall against U.S. Rep. John Hostettler. Cook gives a Partisan Voting Index rating (a figure showing how each of the 435 CDs deviated from the national 1992 and 1996 elections) of 2.3 percent Republican in the 8th CD, 4.4 percent Republican in the 9th CD and 4.4 percent Democratic in the 10th CD.

Cook also notes that while Clinton's approval ratings have skyrocketed during his 1998 crisis, the numbers of the First Lady, Speaker Gingrich and Congress all rose. Americans seem to be saying they like the vibrant economy and dominance over Asian upstarts (a far cry from the 1980s) and don't want anything to mess it up. Cook believes that Americans have begun to realize how dramatic the impeachment of a president could be, ranking it with an national traumas of an assassination or wartime defeat.

If and when that changes to disgust over the actions of a President in the Oval Office with a series of women remains to be seen. There are signs the national mood could change. The *New York Times* editorialized on St. Patrick's Day, "This is a peculiar moment in what will surely be remembered as one of the oddest modern presidencies." It continues, "We may see a resurgence of the old conviction that character counts, and that rigorous inquiry into the character of Presidential candidates is not an intrusion but a civic obligation."

Across the page, columnist A.M. Rosenthal wrote, "Most Democratic politicians, feminist leaders and even members of the clergy will probably go on refusing to ask (Clinton) to confront the scandal and talk to Americans about it. And quite likely the American public really prefers the entertainment it is getting now. After all, a good dirty show is hard to find, free and live from the White House."

How Indiana Democrats deal with this could be critical to the their chances next fall.

TICKER TAPE

meet First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, who stopped by the kitchen.

■ ■ ■

Allen County Republicans have scored an interesting coup. Stephen Bailey, once chairman of the county Democratic Finance Committee, has switched parties (Jim Chapman & Leslie Stedman, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). "I've had so many people tell me that my philosphies as a moderate, fiscal conservative Democrat are in tune with what the local Republican base is wanting," said Bailey, who ran for the Fort Wayne City Council as a Democrat in 1995 and lost. He might run again in 1999. Allen County Democratic Chairman Brian Stier responded, "I'm saddened to have Stephen Bailey leave the party. I question whether he will be truly happy in the Republican Party of Allen County."

Indiana Democrats have announced a schedule for 1998 major events. Included are the Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner at the Westin Hotel in Indianapolis on May 9; Indiana Democratic Open Legends of Indiana in Franklin on June 3; Senate Golf Outing at The Links in New Palestine on June 15; State Convention at the Indiana Convention Center on July 11 in Indianapolis;

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Primary Toss-Ups

1st - Lawson v. Katic

22nd - Ruppel v. Tiede, Haupert

39th - Irsay v. Torr

60th - Bales v. Ellington

General Toss-Ups

34th - Vanleer v. Adams

46th - Tincher v. Lohr

53rd - Cherry or Higgins v. Wolf

54th - Saunders v. Hamilton

56th - Bodiker v. Paust or Dickson

97th - Mahern v. Schultz

Open Seats

1st - Tabaczynski
9th - Alevizos
10th - Wilson
37th - Webber
49th - Warner
50th - Stephan
53rd - Gulling
73rd - Heeke

1998 House Racing Form

Primary debate season has commenced

The primary debate season has commenced. Nearly 50 Hoosiers spent a Saturday afternoon at Morrison's Restaurant in Warren to hear six candidates tell them why they wanted to replace Rep. Dan Stephan. All the candidates advocated reforms for education, health care and property taxes.

In a race like the 50th HD, where the field is jammed with seven candidates, debates can make a difference. If a candidate comes off as a buffoon, the word gets out. Officeholders like Huntington Commissioner Kent Maxwell can try to use their government experience as something to separate them from the pack.

HORSE RACE

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 9 percent; **Likely** is 10 to 15 points; and **Solid** means watch out for a landslide.

Top Primary Battles

House District 50: **R Primary:** Kent Maxwell, Gary Dillon, Scott Darley, Rodney Putt, Judy Coleman, Mary Blandford, Ned Yingst. **D Primary:** Raymond Scribner. **Geography:** Huntington and Whitley counties. **HPR General Forecast:** Maxwell v. Scribner. **1994 Results:** Stephan (R) 13,418, Yingst 5,392. **1996 Results:** Stephan 15,856, B. Yingst 5,855. **1998 Forecast:** Seven candidates meet in a debate in Warren last Saturday, prompting the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette to remark, "If a forum is any indication it may be difficult to distinguish them." Huntington County Chairman Bob Brown put it this way, "We're truly blessed to have a group of candidates who are this dedicated." Key issues driving the candidates were: health care and education reform for Coleman; longer waiting periods for abortions and instant background checks for gun permits for Blandford; elimination of bureaucracy and waste from Maxwell; brownfield initiatives from Putt; property tax reform from Darley; and 22 years of public and civic service from Dillon. Coleman, described as a "self-styled victims' rights advocate" as well as an RN, said of the state surplus, "I think the term is overused." Maxwell, a Huntington psychotherapist, told the forum, "There's nothing that can replace righteousness and right behavior. Moral fundamentals first and foremost come from the home." **Status:** *Solid R.*

House District 53: **R Primary:** Councilman Robert Cherry, Mark Higgins. **D Primary:** Sarah Wolf. **Geography:** Greenfield, Cumberland, Hancock County. **HPR General Forecast:** Cherry v. Wolf. **1994 Results:** Gulling (R) 13,945 unopposed. **1996 Results:** Gulling (R) 20,174 unopposed. **1998 Forecast:** Higgins is running what may be the first campaign of its kind - on the Internet. He is issuing a "Weekly Briefing" to campaign supporters, potential voters, and members of the news media. Carl Prine of the *Greenfield Daily Reporter* says that former State Rep. Ray Richardson is calling Higgins the "Sugar Creek Phenom." Higgins is spending his time canvassing area churches, appealing to new voters migrating in from Indianapolis, and promoting his pro-life stance. Cherry, he says, is "spending his duckets shoring up rural voters in Rush and Eastern Hancock counties." Says Prine, "This is a horse race and Higgins is spending more money, campaigning every night, and generally out-hustling Cherry." He also said the Sarah Wolf's campaign "has energized the race" looming this fall. **Status:** *Toss-Up.*

House District 60: **R primary:** Rep. Jerry Bales v. Jeff Ellington. **D Primary:** Open. **Geography:** Bloomington, Monroe County. **HPR General Forecast:** Bales. **1994 results:** Bales 11,825, Anderson 5,210. **1996 Results:** Bales 15,743, Germann (L) 1,931. **1998 Forecast:** Watch for *Herald-Times* to report on tax warrants filed against Ellington on his tree cutting business. But apparently the warrants add up to less than $1,000 and given the constant confusion at the Indiana Department of Revenue these days, that's not a smoking gun politically. Bales has challenged Ellington to 10 debates, but the two candidates will likely attend four candidate forums together, including one by the Bloomfield Chamber and another by the Grassroots United organization. Ellington denies using "killer phone calls," but Bloomington press sources say they have talked

to folks who have received calls suggesting that Bales is a buffoon. Bales was peppered with harassing calls from Ellington supporters when he appeared on WGCL's *Mark Shaw Show*. Watch for Ellington campaign to press him on the partial birth abortion issue. On the Democratic side, Monroe County Democrats successfully get the state election commission to dump Gwendolyn Spice, an unknown IU student who described herself as an "Internet junkie" looking to get electoral experience. The 20-year-old student was knocked off the ballot after it turned out her dorm room was in Rep. Kruzan's district. Dems can slate someone next summer and probably will if Ellington wins. **Primary Status**: *Toss-Up*.

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:** This is a race still devoid of a front-runner. If we had to make a bet today, the money would go on Rusthoven based largely on his money and party support. No polling since December is keeping everyone in the dark. Price announces he will not accept PAC money, but he wasn't expected to get a lot of that anyway. Price is working the religious right. In making that announcement, Price did get some decent media exposure, something Rusthoven and Helmke haven't seen much lately. Helmke picked up the endorsements of Republican mayors in Hammond, Lafayette, Marion, Crawfordsville and Monticello. Helmke wins Grant County GOP straw poll 212 to 83 for Price and 62 for Rusthoven. But his comments to *Washington Post* columnist E.J. Dionne ("I'm proud to know this president") have mystified many in the GOP. The bottom line for Rusthoven, Helmke and Price is that time is running out. The Lincoln Day circuit can be useful, but one of these candidates needs to emerge and get some serious TV time - both paid and earned. **Status:** Likely D

Congressional District 8:

R Primary: U.S. Rep. John Hostettler. **D Primary:** Evansville Councilwoman Gail Riecken. **Geography:** Evansville, Bloomington, Vincennes and SW Indiana. **HPR General Forecast:** Hostettler v. Riecken. **1994 results:** Hostettler 93,529, McCloskey 84,857. **1996 Results:** Hostettler 109,582, Weinzapfel (D) 106,134, Hager (L) 3,799. **1998 Forecast:** Hostettler talks about his nephew, whom he calls a "spirited young man" who gets a job, and then asks, "Is this where I sign up so you can take my money to campaign against my uncle in the next election?" Hostettler used the story to make his case against the AFL-CIO, which dumped close to $1 million into the Bloody 8th in 1996. Lee Hamilton campaigned with Riecken. **Status:** Toss-Up.

Congressional District 9:

R Primary: Jean Leising, Michael Bailey, Cecil Copley. **D Primary:** Baron Hill, Fred Holt. **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:** Leising campaign releases Public Opinion Strategies poll of 350 registered (Feb. 3-4, +/-5.2 percent) showing her with a 35/8 percent fav/unfav ratio and a 64-11 percent lead over Bailey. Same poll has her with a 41-31 percent lead over Baron Hill. Those numbers are prompting Chairman McDaniel to see the 9th as winnable. The POS poll also maintains that Hill has only a 31 percent name ID. "Things are looking real good," said new campaign manager Margaret Menge. "Jean's not an underdog. She's in the lead." But on the money front, money is still lagging. Said Menge, "There are a lot of people who are enthusiastic about the campaign and we just need to get the check in." Hill still has huge money advantage and token primary opposition. But his millstone could be the president. **Status:** Likely D.

Congressional District 10:

R Primary: Virginia Blankenbaker, Gary Hofmeister, Marvin Scott. **D Primary:** U.S. Rep. Julia Carson, Suzanne Fischman. **Geography:** Indianapolis. **HPR General Forecast:** Blankenbaker v. Carson. **1994 results:** Jacobs (D) 58,573, Scott 50,998. **1996 Results:** Carson 90,869, Blankenbaker 69,248, St. Angelo (L) 3,505 . **1998 Forecast:** Blankenbaker campaign releases American Viewpoint poll (300 registered voters, Feb. 22-23, +/- 5.8 percent) showing her with 49 percent, compared to 14 percent for Scott and 12 percent for Hofmeister. What is interesting is the Blankenbaker campaign did not release head-to-head numbers against Carson. We still see Hofmeister as her principal primary opponent. If the AV Poll is correct, then Hofmeister hasn't been able to turn his jewelry store advertising into tangible political results. Look for both him and Blankenbaker to hit the airwaves hard in April. Blankenbaker accuses Hofmeister of "overstating" his FEC report by "at least $47,700." On the Democratic side, Rep. Carson has been very visible lately. She had Rep. Barney Frank in for a fundraiser on March 15. Said Carson, "I am especially honored that Barney Frank would come here for my campaign. Not only is he a champion of human rights issues in Congress, but a highly esteemed national and Congressional resource on issues relating to finance and monetary policy." **Status:** Leans D.

✍ *Brian A. Howey*

TICKER TAPE

Larry A. Conrad Memorial Golf Tournament in French Lick on Aug. 28; the Indiana Democratic Editorial Association convention Aug. 28-30 at French Lick; Election Night Returns and Party at the Westin Hotel on Nov. 3; and the Governor's Holiday Ball at the Indiana Roof Ballroom on Dec. 18.

Delaware County Chief Deputy Prosecutor J.A. Cummins told the Muncie Star Press that he worried about getting a conviction against Superior Court Judge Joseph Edwards because of the role the press was playing in the Monica Lewinsky saga against President Clinton in Washington. Edwards faced charges of forging a divorce decree from a woman who claimed she had exchanged sex for his legal services. "Anybody who's done trials for an extended period should know you need 12 people to agree," Cummins said. "It only takes one, and that one can be influenced by something the other 11 don't see as important. Any current events that can affect jow jurors feel about a case you're trying is always something that attorneys should be aware of." Edwards pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice and official misconduct two weeks before his trial was to have begun. CNN's Roger Cossack

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told the Star Press, "I don't think the same standard applies to the president and a private citizen, even if the private citizen is a judge."

The owner of a typical Evansville home worth $70,000 will pay $90 less in property taxes this year than last, the Evansville Courier reported. That's due to the state providing a higher homestead credit as well as new business and housing developments.

Indiana Tax Court Judge Thomas Fisher has placed additional pressure on the state to fix the property tax system. Fisher ruled earlier this month that Hoosier property owners can begin using "real world" evidence to dispute their property tax assessments after May 11, 1999. That will be two years before the state plans to fix the systems shortcomings take effect. The Indiana Supreme Court is expected to determine by May whether the issue will be determined finally.

Delaware County campaign finance reports will be available to the public via the Inter-net, County Clerk Karen Wenger announced. The clerk's website features a listing of finance reports, including itemized contributions (Keith Roysdon, Muncie Star Press).

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COLUMNISTS ON INDIANA

Larry Shores, *Muncie Star Press* - The biggest mistake made by the 1998 Legislature was raising expectations. When you all but guarantee Indiana citizens that tax relief is in their pockets, you set yourself up for a bad fall. And that's what happened to the General Assembly. "The gang that couldn't shoot straight" was reincarnated as "the gang that couldn't legislate," at least on taxes. There was no shortage of tax-relief plans. All four political caucuses in the Senate and House came up with plans. The governor had no plan, but he nodded amiably whenever the subject came up. Even Larry Bird, probably the smartest guy in Indianapolis, was said to be working on a plan. The problem was that legislators couldn't pull the trigger on any one plan because they were too busy shooting political bullets at each other. In Indiana, it might be assumed that voters who own property turn out more often at the polls than those who don't pay property tax. After all, the former have more to lose - and get mad about. The property tax, as State Rep. Bruce Munson has said, is the most "despised" tax in Indiana. If Republicans can prove to Hoosier voters that they have the most "compassion" on the tax issue, they're more likely to be returned to Indianapolis next year. But first they have to distance themselves from any fault for this year's tax debacle. ✍

Phil Wieland, *Munster Times* - First of all, it's a wonderful thing that Indiana requires high school students to pass a test to qualify for graduation. Too many schools shuttle kids through to graduation whether they even fathom the significance of why Spot is running and why it is so important for Dick and Jane to see him do it. What I want to know is: Why aren't we testing the qualifications of others? Like state legislators. I mention legislators because Sen. Connie Sipes, D-New Albany, asked her Indiana Senate colleagues to take the short form of the ISTEP Plus exam. Sipes, an elementary school principal, originally wanted to lock the Senate doors until everyone had taken the abbreviated language arts section of the test. After objections, i.e. whining, from her colleagues, she said they should take it home and do it over the weekend of Feb. 23. Of the 50 senators, only Lawrence Borst, R-Indianapolis, bothered to take the test. We don't know how well Borst did, but we are left to wonder whether the other 49 ignored the test or looked at it and thanked their lucky stars they were no longer high school sophomores. ✍

Robert Novak, *Chicago Sun-Times* - Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott's impatience with Kenneth Starr's pace likely will be satisfied within three months. The independent counsel, rather than tying up all the loose ends in his investigation of President Clinton, at that point will send a long-awaited report on possible impeachment to the House of Representatives. When it arrives, the report probably will not go immediately to Rep. Henry Hyde's House Judiciary Committee. Instead, Speaker Newt Gingrich is considering a select committee - an all-star team of House Republicans including Hyde - to deal with Starr's findings. They could include Rep. William Thomas of California, House Oversight Committee chairman; Rep. Dan Burton of Indiana, Reform and Oversight Committee chairman; Rep. Gerald Solomon of New York, Rules Committee chairman; and Rep. Peter Hoekstra of Michigan, investigation subcommittee chairman on the Workforce Committee. David Bossie, chief investigator of Burton's committee, could be called on for his remarkable data bank. People like this will be across the table when Starr finally shows his cards. ✍

PERHAPS... WE WANDER

By Brian Howey

O'Bannon future begins to take shape on taxes

INDIANAPOLIS - It's real subtle at this point, but Gov. Frank O'Bannon's political future is now being crafted by a bipartisan Blue Ribbon Commission on taxes.

O'Bannon came out of his first legislation session as governor with a stunning victory over stadium deals and worker's compensation. After those victories and through this year's legislative session, Gov. and First Lady Judy O'Bannon have cultivated an array of largely positive news clips.

That all began to change with the recently concluded short session. For the first time in his governorship, O'Bannon is beginning to get bad press. A number of editorials and columnists from around the state say O'Bannon squandered an opportunity to find a way to return part of a $1.6 billion budget surplus.

O'Bannon didn't push too hard for a tax cut this year because of political timing. With the economy robust and with record unemployment levels, many Hoosiers weren't pining for a return of the money. Having a big surplus gives O'Bannon and the tax commission room to use that money to ease a transition away from high property taxes.

If Republicans try to derail the Blue Ribbon Commission's plans in 1999, both legislators and the governor may not find such a laid back and indifferent public.

Most Hoosier homeowners getting tax bills this May will find modest increases to small drops. Evansville and Vanderburgh County residents will see a drop of between $60 and $45 on a $70,000 home. Residents in Delaware County and the Muncie area are going to see increases in the $16 range.

Last week, Mike Chambers of the *Evansville Courier* reported that a draft proposal by the Blue Ribbon Commission would see property taxes cut by 39 percent in 2000 - the year of O'Bannon's re-election campaign. The plan would boost sales tax by 25 percent, income tax by 23 percent and other taxes to make up the $1.8 billion cut. The plan also expands some sales taxes on some services to raise $264 million. Gross and net corporate income taxes would increase by 30 percent and 18 percent respectively. A pack of cigarettes would be taxed 23 cents, up from 15 cents now.

"I would like to see this be a framework from which we find revenue sources to replace the property taxes cut," said Kurt Zorn, chairman of the Blue Ribbon Commission. "We hope to have a package that provides a blueprint for the legislature and the governor so they can pick and choose what they want."

Chambers' story in the *Evansville Courier* added, "Already, some Republicans on the commission have criticized the plan, saying any overhaul in the state tax structure should reduce state revenues."

The backdrop to this is that by 2000, the Indiana Republican Party is going to be thirsting for gubernatorial power. Should it retake control of the Indiana House this year - a distinct possibility given the potential national dynamic coming out of Washington - O'Bannon may have set himself up for an election eve failure.

Contrast that with a potential opponent, U.S. Rep. David McIntosh, who looks as if he will push an elimination of the marriage penalty tax into law this year. "If we have a tax cut this year, it's going to be in it," McIntosh told Jack Colwell of the South Bend Tribune.

McIntosh took aim at fellow Republicans, calling a Senate GOP leadership proposal for $30 billion in tax cuts "picayune and almost nonexistent." The *Congress Daily* reported that McIntosh told Speaker Gingrich that his "goals for a generation" is not "inconsistent with actually putting something on the calendar this year." ✍

TICKER TAPE

"It's important people see who contributes to campaigns," said Wenger. "It's very important the public have access to this, and the Internet is the vehicle to do it, because people can view this information from their home."

Crawford County Prosecutor Jack Riddle was removed from office last week and has been suspended from practicing law by the Indiana Supreme Court. Riddle, however, is still on the November ballot despite facing two felony charges of Class D ghost employment. The Indiana State Police allege that Riddle hired another attorney to be deputy prosecutor, then had that attorney run his private practice while on the public payroll. Riddle is the only Republican running for the office. "My status is sort of in limbo," Riddle told the Associated Press. "Part of my status is beyond my control, in that I have all of this hanging over me. Its hard for me to figure out what to do. I don't think I did anything wrong, so I'm going to fight it all the way."

Lake County Democratic Chairman Stephen Stiglich pulled support from County Clerk Anna Anton after she voted for a Republican to chair the Lake County Election Board. "What we're doing here is we're

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sending a strong message of party reform," said Stiglich (William Lazarus, Munster Times). "My job as chairman is to be the facilitator of the wishes of the party. I don't intend to be the dictator. I don't intend to be anything but the leader of the party." Anton claimed that Stiglich is getting even with her for defeating him in prior primary elections. She said she considers the election board position to be non-partisan. Stiglich said he is attempting to reform the Lake County Democratic Party after it was controlled for decades by East Chicago Mayor Bill Pastrick. "I am going to be controversial in my role as a leader," Stiglich said.

Brinkman's decision to step down brings the number of political mavericks down to one

INDIANAPOLIS - It's always fascinating to watch conspicuous officials make a determination that it is time to move out of the public spotlight.

This week, State Treasurer Joyce Brinkman will be the latest Hoosier politician to realize the gig is up. Brinkman had what could be characterized as a weird and wacky 1997 when she filed suit against the new Pacers arena, butted heads with Gov. O'Bannon over state employee benefits, and with her goofy suggestion that the Indianapolis Colts could possibly become the Evansville Colts or the South Bend Colts.

Brinkman will be the last in a fairly long line of Hoosier politicians to voluntarily know when to go. She follows State Auditor Morris Wooden, whose tenure in office was - mildly put - ethically challenged. Had Wooden and Brinkman tried to seek re-election, it would have made for a spicey, devisive Republican convention on June 5 and possible fall defeat.

There was State Rep. Tom Alevizos, who finally declined to seek re-election last month after exhibiting numerous symptoms of accumulated stress that you'd actually expect to see more of in the Indiana General Assembly. Same for State Rep. Dan Stephan, who decided to retire after serving as a Republican maverick in the House caucus for the past decade.

Then there is Lake County Auditor Sam Orlich, who also has declined to seek re-election after the Lake County Democratic Central Committee pulled support. Orlich sparked furor when he declined to allocate money the county council had earmarked to be returned to taxpayers following errant tax assessments. That fiasco sparked numerous calls for his resignation and/or removal from office.

The last of the Hoosier mavericks - Rep. Jerry Bales of Bloomington - is fighting for his political life in the Republican primary. If he wins, he may stand alone as the marcher to the beat of a different drummer.

The decisions by Wooden, Brinkman and Alevizos paves the way for several rising stars to come forth. Allen County Treasurer Tim Berry and former Huntingburg Mayor Connie Nass will emerge from the convention as bright new faces. So might Scott Pelath, a former aide to U.S. Rep. Tim Roemer who will likely win the Democratic nomination of Alevizos' seat.

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