



Obama speech did what he had to do

Not his greatest speech, but the new president connected us to history, mapped a new course

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

If you heard the Rolling Stones 30 times in a year - or Yo-Yo Ma - it might be difficult to discern which presentation was the "best." And that was my thought as the two million people gathered on the Mall in Washington cheered President Obama's inaugural address on Tuesday. There was no: "That's the greatest speech I've ever heard." For those I've actually heard, Martin Luther King's "I have a Dream" and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy's impromptu speech in Indianapolis at King's death, along with astronaut Frank Borman's Dec. 24, 1968 talk after returning from the dark side of the moon, are the most moving to my soul.

President John F. Kennedy's inaugural and his and President Reagan's Berlin speeches rank extremely high in



what I've actually heard. So do Winston Churchill's May 1940 speeches that rallied embattled Britain.

In my two decades plus of covering politics, I had never before spent so much time with a presidential

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Government reforms won't be party line votes

By **RENEE ESTRIDGE**

INDIANAPOLIS - Local government reform bills will probably face opposition in the Indiana House and Senate, but the votes won't be based on party membership.

Most of the changes derive from recommendations in the Kernan-Shepard report from the Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform co-chaired by Indiana Supreme Court Justice Randall T. Shepard and former Gov. Joe Kernan. Some of the changes include eliminating township government, changing the three-person county commission into a single county executive and consolidating several smaller schools.

Though the changes are spearheaded by Republican Gov. Mitch Daniels, Democrats and Republicans alike,



"Congratulations, again."

- Chief Justice John

Roberts after swearing in President Obama for a second time out of an 'abundance of caution.'



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Brian A. Howey, publisher
Mark Schoeff Jr., Washington
Jack E. Howey, Editor
Beverly Phillips, Associate Editor

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Call **317-254-0535**.

HOWEY POLITICS INDIANA

PO Box 40265
Indianapolis, IN 46240-0265.

Contact Us

www.howeypolitics.com

bhowey2@gmail.com

Main Office: 317-202-0210.

Howey's Mobile: 317-506-0883.

Indianapolis Fax: 317-254-0535.

Washington: 202-256-5822.

Business Office: 317-627-6746.

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while disagreeing on which reforms are necessary, agree that votes for some of the proposed local government changes will be based more on regional areas than political affiliations.

"It's not exactly a partisan issue anymore," said Sen. Jim Merritt, R-Indianapolis. "It could be a rural versus urban issue or it could be city versus town...but anymore I don't think it's a partisan issue." Merritt said things like the economy and property tax caps are "moving us toward smaller government." He is sponsoring two bills this session that would reform local government in Marion County. One consolidates Marion County fire departments and the other is "an enormous overhaul of all of Marion County government [that will] really chang[e] the approach of elected politics toward appointed politics."

Rep. Dan Stevenson, D-Highland, also said that most votes will not be based on party lines. He does, however, hold different views on changing elected positions to appointed positions, a change recommended by the Kernan-Shepard report that would make several currently elected positions appointed by the county executive.

"I think that a lot of those positions underneath [the county executive] may be something we could look at for consolidation, but taking the election process away from the people is something I don't agree with," said Stevenson, who is sponsoring HB 1406 that would eliminate township government. "If it was saving money to do it, then I would say 'yes,' but...every two years there's an election and it doesn't cost a dime more to throw another name on the ballot and give the people a voice."

Stevenson isn't the only one calling for a referendum. In the other legislative body in the opposite party,

Sen. Mike Delph, R-Carmel, also said that a referendum on many of the local government issues would be ideal.

"It's their government. It's 'we the people,' and they have a right to have a say on how they're going to be governed," said Delph.

Delph, who is sponsoring SB 502 which would implement several of the Kernan-Shepard recommendations including the single county executive and the elimination of township government, said that when it makes a choice, the general assembly should act as one body, despite the differences between legislators and the areas they represent. Legislators "need to support the governor's vision and get behind him," he said.

"We are one state," said Delph. "We're very geographically diverse. We have different needs in the different parts of the state, but we are one government, we're one entity, we're one people."

Rep. Win Moses, D-Fort Wayne, who introduced HB 1234 with Reps. Phil Gia-Quinta and Randy Borrer, both Democrats of Fort Wayne, that would replace the county commission with a county executive, said that legislators will not act as one, but reflect their constituents' interests.

"They will certainly reflect their constituencies in this," he said. "We do not have, at large, legislators whose sole duty is to balance the state. Each represents 60,000 voters, and...they will reflect their districts' interests."

Bills are coming from both parties that would reform local government, but the decisions will come down to more than just political bias. Delph, as well as others, said that the decisions should be about giving the people of Indiana what they want. "Most voters want us to work together across party lines to create modern government that's efficient and effective in [its] delivery of services for them," he said. ❖



REP. WIN MOSES



candidate as I did with Barack Obama in 2008. The observation point was hardly intimate: it was almost always in the presence of huge crowds. I attended a dozen or so of his rallies, along with three press conferences and a 20-minute private phone conversation on May 1 that came 90 minutes after he had cut the ties with the Rev. Jeremiah Wright. CNN's Candy Crowley would call the events of that day the most emotional "No Drama Obama" ever had on the campaign trail. But when we spoke, he was cool, collected and pleasantly conversational. He has a way of putting those around him at ease.

And that's what I was thinking as he concluded his 18-minute inaugural address. He did what he needed to do, which was to converse with the American people, just as President Franklin D. Roosevelt did on March 12, 1933 during his first fireside chat.

But there were no verbal beacons that will be recited in high school history books. No "Ask not what your country can do for you" or "the only thing we have to fear." There was no "until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword" as Lincoln sought to make sense of the American Civil War, or the epochal "with malice toward none, with charity for all."

I found other speeches - his campaign kickoff in Springfield, Ill., in February 2007 and his "arc of the moral universe" address at Wayne High School in Fort Wayne on the 40th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination much more moving. At Springfield, Obama was new and he explained the rationale of his candidacy in a Midwestern context: "It was here in Springfield where North, South, East and West come together, that I was reminded the essential decency of the American people where I came to believe that through this decency we can build a more hopeful America."

There was Obama's epic speech at the American Legion Mall on the eve of his Indiana primary loss to Hillary Clinton that still rings in my ears simply because I was there in the rain and watched thousands of fellow Hoosiers become emotional from the experience. Obama's previous "speech of a lifetime" - his Democratic nomination accep-



Chief Justice John Roberts flubbed the oath of office with the man who voted against his nomination.

tance speech in Denver last August - almost seemed like a letdown and it was quickly truncated by the emergence of Sarah Palin just hours later.

Obama's inaugural address came with huge expectations as well as relief for many that the Bush-Cheney presidency had reached its conclusion. Listening to Chief Justice John Roberts asking "Senator Obama are you ready?" followed by his "Congratulations, President Obama" less than a minute later set the pitch of anticipation that much higher.

Thus, a minor let down when that crisp 10-second soundbite failed to emerge. The cable news and press couldn't seem to fix on the key line. For Howey Politics Indiana, it was the earth moving beneath the cynics. The New York Times cited references to his father and the 60-year racial barrier. The Washington Post (and, subsequently the Indianapolis

Star) latched on to the "we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off and begin the work of remaking America." Still others cited his call for "personal responsibility." So history's first take was muddled.

Obama articulates the crisis

Obama calmly laid out challenges and connected our present predicament into a historical context: "I stand here today humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you have bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors." He made an error in saying that "44 Americans" had taken the oath with Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, Lincoln, Grant, Cleveland, both Roosevelts, Wilson, Eisenhower, Johnson, Nixon, Reagan, Clinton and George W. Bush having done so multiple times.

"The words have been spoken during rising tides of prosperity and the still waters of peace. Yet, every so often, the oath is taken amidst gathering clouds and raging storms," Obama said. "At these moments, America has carried on not simply because of the skill or vision of those in high office, but because 'We the People' have remained faithful to the ideals of our forebearers, and true to our founding documents. So it has been. So it must



be with this generation of Americans. That we are in the midst of crisis is now well understood. Our nation is at war, against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred. Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age."

Thus, Obama set the task at hand.

Then came the "hope" that marked the hundreds of campaign stops he had made in 2008, all with either "hope" or "change" decorating podium and banners.

My favorite part of the speech was when Obama insisted that we are a young empire, but that it is time to grow up: "On this day, we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord. On this day, we come to proclaim an end to the petty grievances and false promises, the recriminations and worn-out dogmas, that for far too long have strangled our politics. We remain a young nation, but in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness."

Obama took on the naysayers - just as Gov. Mitch Daniels attempted to do with his inaugural address the week before. Obama explained, "In reaffirming the greatness of our nation, we understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned. Our journey has never been one of shortcuts or settling for less. It has not been the path for the fainthearted -- for those who prefer leisure over work, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame. Rather, it has been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things -- some celebrated, but more often men and women obscure in their labor -- who have carried us up the long, rugged path toward prosperity and freedom."

Several times, Obama touched on the notion that maintaining the status quo is not an option. Or that too much change can come too quickly. Again, these rhetorical scenarios have been repeated between the governor's office and Democrats in the Indiana General Assembly. It is familiar turf for many of our readers.

Obama explained, "Our time of standing pat, of protecting narrow interests and putting off unpleasant decisions -- that time has surely passed. Starting today, we

must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America." Two paragraphs later he would say, "Now, there are some who question the scale of our ambitions -- who suggest that our system cannot tolerate too many big plans. Their memories are short. For they have forgotten what this country has already done; what free men and women can achieve when imagination is joined to common purpose, and necessity to courage."

A few minutes later, he returned to a familiar theme in Indiana, one that Daniels attempted to meet head on with his "gradualist" comments in his inaugural. Obama explained, "What the cynics fail to understand is that the ground has shifted beneath them -- that the stale political arguments that have consumed us for so long no longer apply. The question we ask today is not whether our government is too big or too small, but whether it works -- whether it helps families find jobs at a decent wage, care they can afford, a retirement that is dignified. Where the answer is yes, we intend to move forward. Where the answer is no, programs will end."

Sandwiched in between Obama's desire to create a change atmosphere was, essentially, a call to action for what ails the Hoosier economy. "For everywhere we look, there is work to be done," Obama said. He said this in Elkhart and Kokomo last year. "The state of the economy calls for action, bold and swift, and we will act -- not only to create new jobs, but to lay a new foundation for growth. We will build the roads and bridges, the electric grids and digital lines that feed our commerce and bind us together." Again, we've seen this type of talk from Gov. Daniels during the 2006 Major Moves debate. Obama continued: "We will restore science to its rightful place, and wield technology's wonders to raise health care's quality and lower its cost. We will harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories. And we will transform our schools and colleges and universities to meet the demands of a new age. All this we can do. And all this we will do."

Obama attempted to open our imagination. Could EnerDel's lithium ion batteries some day be developed in the very labs where Delphi engineers toiled in Kokomo? Can research and development that gave America the internal combustion engine now house green industries of sustainable development? Here a memorable line lingers: "for they have forgotten what this country has already done"

The middle of Obama's speech dealt with national security, but in doing so, he took on the Bush-Cheney



The Obamas dance at one of the 10 inaugural balls. Obama also addressed a concert at the Lincoln Memorial over the weekend.



mentality. "As for our common defense, we reject as false the choice between our safety and our ideals," Obama said. "Our Founding Fathers, faced with perils we can scarcely imagine, drafted a charter to assure the rule of law and the rights of man, a charter expanded by the blood of generations. Those ideals still light the world, and we will not give them up for expedience's sake."

Then came the Obama that began the process of providing the common defense of freedom while seeking to regain America's leadership stature. "And so to all other peoples and governments who are watching today, from the grandest capitals to the small village where my father was born: Know that America is a friend of each nation and every man, woman and child who seeks a future of peace and dignity, and that we are ready to lead once more."

There was backbone: "With old friends and former foes, we will work tirelessly to lessen the nuclear threat, and roll back the specter of a warming planet." Sen. Lugar must have smiled at that line. "We will not apologize for our way of life, nor will we waver in its defense, and for those who seek to advance their aims by inducing terror and slaughtering innocents, we say to you now that our spirit is stronger and cannot be broken; you cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you."

Obama's greatest flare on Tuesday came when he linked national security via the armed services, their sacrifices and how this should translate to a larger slice of society: "As we consider the road that unfolds before us, we remember with humble gratitude those brave Americans who, at this very hour, patrol far-off deserts and distant mountains. They have something to tell us today, just as the fallen heroes who lie in Arlington whisper through the ages. We honor them not only because they are guardians of our liberty, but because they embody the spirit of service; a willingness to find meaning in something greater than themselves. And yet, at this moment -- a moment that will define a generation -- it is precisely this spirit that must inhabit us all."

And in the penultimate moment, Obama addressed race through the dazzling prism of that very moment: "This is the meaning of our liberty and our creed -- why men and

women and children of every race and every faith can join in celebration across this magnificent Mall, and why a man whose father less than 60 years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant can now stand before you to take a most sacred oath."

And this, the invocation of equality and character of content that didn't specifically name King: "They saw

America as bigger than the sum of our individual ambitions; greater than all the differences of birth or wealth or faction."

Finally, Obama poised his own torch for passage: "With hope and virtue, let us brave once more the icy currents, and endure what storms may come. Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested, we refused to let this journey end,

that we did not turn back, nor did we falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations."

Two speechwriters react

Peggy Noonan, the legendary speechwriter for President Reagan, provided the executive summary in Wednesday's Wall Street Journal: "In a time when all wonder if our nation's best days are behind us, we need to know that the answer is no. We continue. We go on. This is not journey's end."

Noonan added, "It was not an especially moving or rousing speech, but the event itself, the first major address of a new president from a new generation and a previously unrepresented race, was inherently moving. The speech was low-key, sober. There was not a sentence or thought that hit you in the chest and entered your head not to leave. But it was worthy, had weight, and was adult. In fact, Mr. Obama lauded a certain kind of maturity."

Veteran journalist Walter Shapiro, a former speechwriter for President Carter, observed in the New Republic: There were echoes of prior inaugural addresses (particularly John Kennedy, but also flickers of Franklin Roosevelt and Bill Clinton) in the new President's words, but repeatedly there were striking phrases and sudden bursts of imagery that made it Obama's own. Whether it was through simple language about the "the still waters of peace" and the





wrote himself into his job.

Shapiro explained further, "There was a glint of steel in Obama's words, displaying a stay-the-course resolve that rarely surfaced during the Democratic primaries. Obama sounded the 'Kennedy-esque' trumpets to bear any burden when he declared in words designed to be heard in the untamed frontier regions of Pakistan, 'For those who seek to advance their aims by inducing terror and slaughtering innocents, we say to you now that our spirit is stronger and cannot be broken; you cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you.'"

Shapiro also liked Obama's "understated" approach to his race. "There were no paeans to Abraham Lincoln (slave-owning George Washington was, instead, the president quoted), no reminders of the role of slaves in the construction of the White House and no explicit recognition



of the aged Tuskegee Airmen visible on the inaugural platform. Instead, there was just a brief but poignant reminder by President Obama that his Kenyan-born father "less than 60 years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant."

Shapiro concluded, "My guess is that Obama's address was a little too cerebral, a little too reflective of recent White House history to reach the standard of greatness. Of course, it seems ludicrous to grump that Obama did not equal Lincoln's second inaugural or FDR's first. What matters is that America, for the first time since the 1960s, boasts a president whose words have weight and whose speeches grow better on second reading. Tuesday afternoon, January 20, 2009, should be remembered as a worthy introduction to the Age of Obama."



WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING

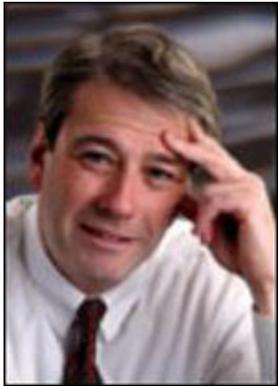


When there was standing room only

By **DAVE KITCHELL**

WASHINGTON - "Taxation Without Representation" is what District of Columbia residents have on their license plates these days, and most Americans in the know can figure out the rest of the phrase ... is tyranny.

Sometime in the future, D.C. residents hope there will be a day when they have the same representation in Congress that Americans in 50 states have. Some of them want statehood, and the signs supporting it can be found in every corner of the district. Days such as Tuesday give Washingtonians hope there will be a more perfect union for them. Sooner or later, the United States has a way of improving its standing and the quality of life for its citizens by reinventing the country as what we have come to call a more perfect union.



There was that sense atop Capitol Hill as Barack Obama took the oath of office as the 44th

president. Obama appeared somewhat humbled and his usually sterling speaking style was sluggish in the penetratingly cold day when temperatures plunged into the teens and Mother Nature produced a Chicago wind chill appropriate for an incoming chief executive from that city.

As great an orator has Obama is, his inaugural address will likely not be remembered as his greatest speech, or for that matter, one of the great inaugural addresses. What he had to say was inspiring, but candid. In essence, he told the world "America is ready to lead" again, but he told Americans they would have to grind out a new generation of innovation that not only propels our Gross Domestic Product, but touches the economies of the world.

Perhaps his most memorable words came during a series of sentences he began with the words, "For us." In each instance, Obama painted a picture of what previous American generations had sacrificed for the current generation. He finished the series of sentences by noting that for America, the men and women of the military have given their careers and lives in service to their country, and that kind of unselfish contribution represents the kind of national commitment Americans must make to move the country forward. It was a roundabout way of saying what JFK said in 1960: "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."

Judging by the vast crowd from the Lincoln Memorial two miles east to the Capitol, there were millions of Americans who are either ready to make that commitment or who think Obama can do something for their country. Combine 10 Super Bowls with a Papal Mass, the Indianapolis 500 and the Rose Bowl Parade without NFL teams, a Pope, a race car or a rose petal and the vision of this crowd comes into focus. What could not have come into focus for those watching this event on television or for those planning it months ago were the sheer numbers of people who were literally left out in the cold, standing outside the mall. Tens of thousands stood at the Blue Gate when it was shut down and security officers became the bearer of bad news. Many had come from several states away to witness an historic event only to find out that standing room only wasn't enough on the Mall.

It was an inaugural that may have produced the worst inaugural poem and the best inaugural benediction. The latter inspired three "Amens" and some personalized blessings for Obama's daughters.

Hundreds shunned at the gates made their way to the Cannon and Longworth Office Buildings to watch the proceedings in congressional offices, and to warm up. The conditions were so bitterly cold, anyone could understand why Indiana's William Henry Harrison contracted pneumonia after delivering an 8,443-word inaugural address and died just 32 days later. Abigail Fillmore, a former First Lady, had the same fate after attending Franklin Pierce's inaugural.

Cold weather inaugurals are a tradition that continues, and the aura of an event that happens as often as the Olympics is one that defies description for security. Only in America could Florida Highway Patrolmen wear winter coats and gloves to direct traffic. Officers from 65 agencies and a reported 16,000 military personnel were on hand. How far security has come since 1801 when Thomas Jefferson walked from his boarding house to be sworn into office.

How far America has come is a conversation starter. Even without the representation Washingtonians want, they have a distinction many Americans don't realize. For many years, Washington has been the only city outside the African continent to have a majority of its residents come from African descent. Now, it has the first African-American president.

Now the question becomes how far Obama can take the country and if the mantra of "Yes we can" can be backed up by actions that speak louder than the words from the greatest pulpit in the free world. ❖

Dave Kitchell is a veteran Indiana journalist who teaches journalism at Ball State University.



McVey challenges CW on Burton challenge

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Not only is U.S. Rep. Dan Burton facing life in the Congressional minority these days, serving under Speaker Nancy Pelosi, but he is also going through the process of taking courtesy calls from Hoosier Republicans who want his job.

One of them is Brose McVey, the former secretary of the Indiana Republican Party and the 2002 nominee in the 7th CD where he lost to U.S. Rep. Julia Carson. McVey paid a visit to Burton recently, formed an exploratory committee and has a campaign website up at brosemcvey.com.

While McVey hasn't made the final decision, he says he plans to "listen to my voters, supporters and friends, revisit and validate we are the right formula for the times."

And McVey is not buying into what he calls "conventional wisdom" that only one key challenger would have a chance against Burton. With State Rep. Mike Murphy, State Auditor Tim Berry, Marion County Prosecutor Carl Brizzi, and former State Rep. Luke Messer all taking a look at the race, the field could be crowded. "But I don't think convention wisdom is quite as obvious in this case," McVey said. "These are strange times. Voters are restless and looking for something new. I want people to have a lot of choices and I think they will."

McVey said that he has maintained a "good rapport" with Burton, who has held the seat since 1982. Burton should know about the durability of conventional wisdom. When his seat was established in the 1981 re-districting, it wasn't created for him. But Burton worked hard in a multi-candidate primary and delivered an upset. He's had an iron grip on the seat ever since, but former Marion County coroner John McGoff challenged him in the 2008 primary and lost by less than 6,000 votes - 45,682 to 39,701. A third candidate, Clayton Alfred, drew 2,742 votes. McGoff, who is on active military duty in Iraq, is also expected to take another look at the race in 2010.

That margin, with many Republicans who might have been inclined to vote for change voting in the Democratic primary for the Barack Obama/Hillary Clinton race, has essentially dumped Burton's blood in the water, with challengers now circling. It's a scenario where the HRCC won't be in a position to save Burton in a primary. He will

have to work hard raising money and working the district, and a number of friends and associates indicate that 2010 might be Burton's last bid for re-election. There are indications that Burton will appoint a successor for 2012 and it wouldn't be anyone who challenges him next cycle.

Some believe that annoitee could be State Sen. Mike Delph, a former aide. One potential candidate told HPI that the risk in not challenging Burton in 2010 is that he could decide not to run right before filing deadline, giving someone like Delph a clear road to the nomination.

Several candidates who have talked with Burton say that the discussions are cordial but that at the end of the conversation, Burton attempts to orchestrate the conclusion: that they won't be challenging. One candidate told HPI that if any in the field were to be pointed in their criticism of the incumbent, the impact would likely be to get his dander up.

McVey believes he will run well in the base of the 5th CD - Hamilton and Marion Counties. He was executive director of the Cornrowers Association and is a Purdue University graduate, parts of his resume be believes will play well in the more rural counties of the district.

When the Howey/Gauge Poll surveyed the 5th CD in late April 2008, Burton had 98 percent total awareness and his fav/unfavs stood at 58/21 percent. In Hamilton County - which is 36 percent of the district vote - Burton had a 58/18 fav/unfav, while in Marion County - the second biggest concentration of district vote with 20 percent - Burton's fav/unfavs stood at 48/35 percent. McGoff had only 48 percent total awareness.

On the re-elect numbers, they stood at 45 percent for Burton in Hamilton County while 31 percent said elect someone new. In Marion County, those numbers stood at 33/51 percent. Burton's re-elect scores were higher with voters who responded that the "economy" was the top issue compared to those who said "taxes" or "jobs and wages" were the top issue.

Burton was criticized by Republican Maron Mayor Wayne Seybold after he voted against a rescue of the Detroit 3 automakers. There is a General Motors stamping plant in Marion and many 5th CD voters are employed by Chrysler and Delphi in Kokomo. How this impacts the district and the residuals from Burton's vote remains to be seen.

Burton was criticized by Republican Maron Mayor Wayne Seybold after he voted against a rescue of the Detroit 3 automakers. There is a General Motors stamping plant in Marion and many 5th CD voters are employed by Chrysler and Delphi in Kokomo. How this impacts the district and the residuals from Burton's vote remains to be seen.

HD38 update

Reports from a reliable source in the Jan. 15 edition that Rep. Mike Murphy would back former State Rep. Heath VanNatter in a May 2010 GOP primary against cur-



Brose McVey during his 2002 challenge to U.S. Rep. Julia Carson. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)



rent State Rep. Jacque Clement were disputed by Murphy's legislative assistant, Stephanie Sample, who called the report "completely false and unsubstantiated." Murphy was unavailable for comment this morning. VanNatter won a cau-

cus in 2008 to replace State Rep, Jim Buck after he moved to the Senate, but on the same night, a second caucus voted for Clement for the Nov. 4 nomination. VanNatter has indicated that he will challenge Clement. ❖

Good intentions don't always yield good ideas

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS - Last week in this space we offered an over-the-top column about on-line networks. Many readers failed to recognize the tongue-in-cheek approach to linking up with others. Instead they interpreted that hyperbolic diatribe as an attack on computers, the modern age, progress and humanity. Your author was described as an isolationist doomed to a lonely old age rather than a poor imitation of W.C. Fields.



Morton Marcus
Column

This brings us to the Obama administration. They have introduced "the Citizen's Briefing Book", www.citizens-briefingbook.change.org. This is "an online forum where you can share your ideas, and rate or offer comments on the ideas of others. The best rated will rise to the top." I see the virtue of being open to the public's concern. I cannot

imagine that the president will give attention to issues based on their popularity. I want to believe that he has a clear sense of which problems require resources and their appropriate urgency.

This web-based popularity poll is "American Idol" in public policy. And who is winning? As of this writing, and this stuff changes by the quarter hour, there are 91,370 points for Ending Marijuana Prohibition. Actually that is a bloated figure; each positive or negative vote is worth ten points.

Is ending the prohibition on the use of marijuana the top concern of this nation? Is an end to government sponsored abstinence education the fourth most important issue? Should we end "economic slavery" by getting rid of the Federal Reserve?

Inexpensive communications are a step forward for society, but they open the door to popular nonsense. Now every idle nutcase may spend hours at a public library computer terminal expressing his/her marijuana-induced views and voting on the worth of ideas submitted by others.

Barack Obama was elected for his leadership skills. Do we want him to take time each night (as promised on this web site) to read the communications of people with no better use of their time than to empty their mental sewerage tanks? Of course this is the direction in which some newspapers are going, following the path pioneered by talk-radio.

Fortunately our new president understands the importance of requesting input from others, even those who disagree with him. He also is a constitutional scholar and understands that this is a republic with representative government, not a democracy run by popularity contests.

As long as we are focused on misguided efforts, consider this: Senator Johnny Nugent of southeastern Indiana has offered SB-12 that "Prohibits a state college or university from regulating in any manner the ownership, possession, carrying, or transportation of firearms or ammunition." The senator says students should be able to protect themselves from killers of the sort seen at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois.

Mr. Nugent has been in the state senate since 1978 and yet introduces bills that have no chance of passing. There is no support for this bill among educators. They understand that more guns on campus provide more opportunities for tragedy.

This bill opens the door for more disturbed students to kill other students. A teacher who gives a failing grade could be signing his/her death warrant. Administrators who disappoint applicants, parents, students, staff, alumni or faculty are put at risk. What happens to the coach who fails to have a winning season?

Every bill introduced clogs the system if it is assigned to committee. It also costs taxpayers money. For example, the Legislative Services Agency has to provide a legal analysis and a fiscal impact study of every bill, no matter how worthless. Not only is the bill a serious error of policy, it is an example of irresponsible pandering to pernicious special interests.

The current drive to reform government should not start with local government but with state government. The best place to begin is with the circus that does not entertain, the Indiana General Assembly. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an independent economist, speaker, and writer formerly with IU's Kelley School of Business. Contact him for speaking opportunities at mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com or 317.626.8853



Senate Committee weighs police pensions

By **EVAN SHIELDS**

INDIANAPOLIS - The Senate Pension and Labor Committee considered nine bills Wednesday morning, one of which would allow police officers and firefighters to purchase two years of pension credit if they have served active duty in the military. Senate Bill 25, sponsored by Sen. Michael Young, D-Indianapolis, provoked discussion but did not result in a vote. Among those favoring the legislation were Doug Todd, an accuary for the public employee retirement fund (PERF); Leo Blackwell, a representative of the Indiana Fraternal Order of Police; Mark Sheerer, a representative from th Indiana Firechiefs'

Association; and Jim Wrigley, a representative for the firefighters. Ann Cottongim, a representative for the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns, raised questions about it. "We like the concept and we are sorry that cities and towns don't have the financial abilities to support any additional costs that could come to the towns," Cottongim said. "Given the financial status of cities and towns right now... we don't have the ability to increase local taxes to support these services." The committee also looked at Senate Bill 535, which would establish the Indiana public retirement system and set up programs such as PERF and the teachers' retirement fund (TRF). Blackwell said he supported the bill in concept but would like a "seat at the table" for negotiations in other aspects of the bill. George Raymond of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce also supported the bill. In other business: Three Senate Bills passed out of committee, each by an 8-0 vote. Senate Bill 173 would lower the number of member needed for a quorum in the law enforcement training board from 11 to nine. Senate Bill 78 addressed several prosecuting attorneys' retirement fund issues. Senate Bill 84 would change the name of the department of workforce development to the department of unemployment insurance.

Bill would legalize mini-trucks: A bill introduced in the House Roads and Transportation Committee on Wednesday would redefine the Bureau of Motor Vehicles definition of mini-trucks and make them street legal. House Bill 1043 would allow local BMV branches to register and legalize mini-trucks on state highways beginning in January of next year. This would not include licensing for mini-trucks to travel on Indiana interstates. The mini-trucks, having both on and off road capabilities meet the BMV definition of a motor vehicle, but do not meet

federal safety code guidelines. The BMVs decision to deny licensing in the past was based on their classification as an "off-road" vehicle. Other vehicles in this category include golf carts and gator utility vehicles. A mini-truck is defined as "a foreign manufactured import truck that is powered by internal combustion engine" and is 60 inches or less in width. In addition, they must weigh 1,600 pounds or less and not reach a top speed of more than 60 miles per hour. They also have to be capable of operation on both highway and off-road travel, and have a locking enclosed cab with heated interior. This differs from other "off-road" vehicles in that the attached cab is able to be both locked and heated. As stated, the bill reads a mini-truck that is titled and registered with the state will be considered legally operational. This bill would require dealers of the trucks to register with the state before the end of 2009. Sarah Meyer, a BMV spokesperson, said internal policy changes within the BMV made it difficult to determine the status of licensing. Meyer said when mini-trucks were first considered for licensing there was no way of telling if they met basic safety standards so registrations in the past were denied. The bill likely will be amended and a vote will be taken on it in two weeks. - **Julie Crothers**

Bill would speed interstate

adoptions: An adoption bill that would simplify out-of-state adoptions for birth mothers living in neighboring states passed through a Senate committee Wednesday. Indiana is a part of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, which requires birth mothers who are citizens of different states to go back to their state of residence even if the child was born in Indiana. The compact also requires the mothers to go through court proceedings there that can take as little as five days if done with Illinois or as much as eight months if in Ohio. The Judiciary Committee heard Senate Bill 280, which would allow birth mothers who are citizens of neighboring states only to stay under the jurisdiction of Indiana courts so they wouldn't have to leave the state if they gave birth in the Hoosier state. Adoption attorney Steve Kirsh testified in favor of the bill. On the other side was someone Kirsh said was a good friend, John Ryan, chief of staff for the Department of Child Services. Kirsh helped Sen. Teresa Lubbers, R-Indianapolis, draft the bill. He said the current adoption delay was unnecessary and doesn't serve the interests of the child. Some states, Kirsh testified, won't always follow the ICPC agreement. Birth mothers can end up waiting as long as eight months for a child they wanted to give to adoptive parents at birth and those parents spend long months waiting for their child. Kirsh said forcing adoptive parents to spend months in a hotel room with the birth mother just provides unnecessary bureaucratic delays. Sen. Greg Taylor, D-Indianapolis, objected to the notion that delays in





the adoption process were a bad thing. "I don't think two months is too long," Taylor said. "I'm looking out for the birth mother." Taylor said the extra delay will help women think closely about one of the most important decisions in their lifetime and give them time to change their minds. Ryan said the bill will affect 20 adoptions out of the estimated 300 private adoptions per year in Indiana. He said maintaining the integrity of the ICPC agreement is important. The ICPC came together because states had no blanket adoption laws for when they crossed state lines. Ryan said changing part of it should happen on a national level, not through individual states. Ryan said he worried the bill would make Indiana an island in a sea of Midwestern states that all comply with the interstate agreement. "We just can't allow Indiana to become the state people jump to because they don't have to go through the ICPC," Ryan said. Kirsh said he would be fine if the bill were amended to just include neighboring counties in other states. The bill passed unanimously and is headed to the Senate floor.

- Whitney Lee

House committee pushes for Hoosiers to "buy American":

The House Committee on Small Business and Economic Development passed a handful of bills Wednesday, two of which will go to the Ways and Means Committee. They all aim to stimulate the lagging economy. The buy-American bill, sponsored by David L. Niezgodski, D-South Bend, gives a \$1,000 tax credit to Hoosiers who buy construction equipment, cars, trucks, tractors or recreational vehicles that includes 70 percent of American-made products. The bill includes foreign companies that produce in the United States. For example, Honda cars made in Decatur County could be included if they meet the 70 percent mark, but General Motors' Avalanche truck, which is made in Mexico, would not give consumers the rebate. State Rep. Mike Murphy, R-Indianapolis, was among those worried that this rebate could actually drive business away from Indiana. Dealers in Indiana that sell foreign-made products could suffer if Hoosiers cross state lines to find products that would give them the rebate, especially if it's a specific type of agricultural equipment. Though Honda is an example of an Indiana-based manufacturer, the bill doesn't guarantee that the vehicle would have to be made in Indiana. The bill isn't intended to help manufacturers sell more, though. It's supposed to encourage Hoosiers to buy more while being able to save some money. "This is about the individual and also the corporation, but mostly the individual," Niezgodski said. The bill passed unanimously and will make its way to the Ways and Means committee. The committee also heard testimony from an Indiana inventor. Bill Keith, of Sunrise Solar Inc. He used to be a roofer. Now he sells a solar powered attic fan that's used everywhere from Hawaii to Greece. He testi-

fied in favor of a bill that will Hoosiers tax credits of up to \$5,000 for using his invention. The attic fan is estimated to save homeowners up to \$75-\$125 each year. That's not the real draw for lawmakers, however. Each attic fan can reduce the amount of CO2 emissions by 1,000 pounds. Terrence Black, of Green Way Supply, estimated that the 100 units his company installed last year reduced emissions by 100,000 pounds. Along with trying to save the environment, going green has added benefits to Hoosiers. "We're hiring people. In this economy, green is the new gold," Black said. Keith agreed. He's shipping his products around the globe, from the Honolulu Airport, to various schools, even to Greece. "We see blue skies ahead," Keith said. "I'm a perfect example of a blue-collar guy going green collar." Purchasing and installing the fans would take an estimated \$1,500, but would be a first step in showing that Indiana is going green. The bill passed unanimously. Another bill aimed at economic recovery passed unanimously, too. The bill, sponsored by Rep. John Day, D-Indianapolis, would give workers taking care of children or dependents a tax credit for childcare or related expenses. Patti O'Callaghan, who does taxes for lower income individuals, said the added credit would help Hoosiers families a great deal, especially in the current economy. There's a similar federal bill that would pay for an estimated maximum of \$2,100 of the estimated \$5,000 childcare costs per family. The state bill, if passed, would give a maximum of \$1,100 per family. Thirty five other states have a similar credit.

- Whitney Lee

Long morning for Health and Provider Services Committee:

After quickly passing two bills Wednesday, the Senate Health and Provider Services Committee bogged down for lengthy testimony over five bills, many of which affected the estimated 250 dental personnel that filled the gallery and hallways for Dental Day at the Indiana Statehouse. The first passed proposal, Senate Bill 307, calls for a sliver alert program. Sponsored by Sen. Patricia Miller, R-Indianapolis, the committee's chair, the bill creates a program much like the Amber alert system for the missing and endangered elderly. This bill adds missing endangered adults to the name of the Indiana clearinghouse for information on missing children. The other bill passed was SB 219. It also passed 7-0. None of the other bills on the docket were voted on.

- Renee Bruck

Bill shoots to give taxpayers option, electronic or print:

Pushing send instead of licking envelopes may be a new option for taxpayers after Wednesday's Local Government Committee hearing. Senate Bill 285's sponsor, Sen. Travis Holdman, R-Markle, called the bill a move into the current times. The bill passed, 9-0.



No private citizens or lobbyist groups testified against the bill during open testimony as well. "Senate Bill 285 has to do with property tax payments in effort to move county government forward into the electronic age," he said. Holdman represents District 19, which includes Allen County and parts of Blackford, Grant and Wells counties. In his district alone, there are 293,000 property tax bills. "If we were able to get only 20 percent of those taxpayers on our e-version," Holdman said, "that would save the counties in my district over \$50,000 annually." Originally, the proposed bill called for sign-ups at voting polls for the "e-version." But Holdman proposed an amendment that leaves it up to individuals to sign up for the program through the county treasurer. If a taxpayer doesn't receive the e-bill, Holdman said, the county will send a printed second notice, which is the same policy in place currently to deal with misplaced bills. The "e-version" is only optional and those who decline to sign up for it still receive the conventional bill, stressed Holdman. Grant County treasurer Roger Brainbridge supported the bill and came to testify at Holdman's request. He said sending e-bills would save a county close to 50 cents for every tax statement that takes advantage of the proposal. "It's a win-win situation," Brainbridge said.

Environment gets spotlight during

House committee: The House Natural Resources Committee met Wednesday to discuss four bills dealing with water, invasive species and state land conveyance. House Bill 1204 calls for money that goes into the clean water Indiana fund to not revert back to the cigarette tax fund, the source of its funding. "There's a need for a lot of those projects," committee chairman Bob Bischoff, D-Lawrenceburg, said of the clean water fund. HB 1203 institutes the invasive species council within Purdue University. A representative from the Nature Conservancy testified that bush honeysuckle was an example of an invasive species that needs to be more carefully monitored and regulated. She said bush honeysuckle affects other resources, like reducing tree growth rate. The committee's vice chairperson, Rep. Dave Cheatham, D-North Vernon, introduced HB 1078. This bill calls for the transfer of four acres of state property in Jefferson County to Habitat for Humanity. Bischoff called this a "very worthy project," but due to fiscal concerns with the value of the property and taxpayer dollars, questions about the Indiana Department of Transportation's cleaning process, and issues with giving state land to a non-profit, private organization, the bill was not voted on. HB 1032 was the final bill discussed. This bill would create a new Wabash River heritage corridor commission fund and the kill the existing one to prevent reversions. It would also prevent its funding from reverting back into the general fund at the end of a fiscal year. HB 1204, HB 1203 and HB 1032 all passed through committee on Wednesday.

- Katie Coffin

Education bills passed: The Senate Education and Career Development Committee heard several bills Wednesday, including one that would extend state college tuition and fee reimbursements to all Purple Heart recipients. At present, only post 9/11 Purple Heart recipients qualify for the reimbursements and exemptions. The committee heard testimony on the bill, but did not vote on it. Sen. Luke Kenley, R-Noblesville, once again has sponsored a bill to limit the number of teachers who can be appointed to serve on school committees. "Over the years I've had a lot of teachers who had seen the bill and written me about it," Kenley said while speaking in favor of SB 13, which passed out of committee on a 6-2 vote. - **Caroline Thomas**

Mortgage foreclosure bill protects

renters: Mortgage foreclosure bills have been flooding both chambers of the Indiana General Assembly. The latest bill passed to the Senate from a committee aims to protect renters if their landlord's property goes into a foreclosure. The bill requires landlords to give notice to tenants if a judgement of foreclosure is reached. The current law could give Hoosiers as little as 10 days to leave their homes. Sen. Greg Taylor, D-Indianapolis, owns a 17-unit rental property. He spoke in favor of the bill, but wanted to amend it to making landlords tell their clients even sooner, when the landlord first learns of a foreclosure proceeding. Twenty percent of the homes going into foreclosure have been rental properties. Under current law, those renters don't have to be notified until very late in the process. Paul Chase, a spokesperson for the AARP, spoke in favor of the bill. He said that older Hoosiers who get kicked out of their homes without enough notice could end up homeless, something this bill aims to prevent. This bill also would let tenants who choose to leave early before the foreclosure a chance to do so without losing their deposit money. - **Whitney Lee**

House committee considers bills to help state employees:

The House Insurance Committee considered bills Wednesday that would allow school employees to have some choices in regard to their insurance plans and require insurance companies to pay for hearing aids. House Bill 1125 would allow school employees to choose to stay with their current health insurance provider or take advantage of the school's plan. The committee discussed but did not vote on the bill. HB 1311 would require state employee health plans to cover hearing aids. The committee did not vote on HB 1311. - **Caroline Thomas** ❖

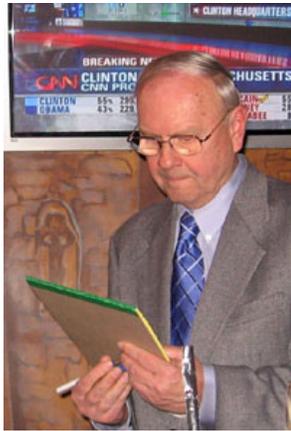


The governor commands Spring to come forth

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND - Though snow and cold as well as unemployment and recession now grip Indiana, Gov. Mitch Daniels proclaimed in his second inaugural address that "we can summon the springtime and command it to come."

Let's do that. "Hey, Springtime, I command thee, come! Move it!"



Perhaps you expected the governor to combat a recession that threatens Indiana especially hard because of its reliance on automotive-related jobs with a more extensive plan. Maybe you thought he would seek in his inaugural and State of the State Address to outline a jobs program, calling for accelerated construction to spur the economy and ways to help hard-pressed cities and unemployed Hoosiers.

Instead, Daniels took a page from Illinois Gov. Rod

Blagojevich.

No, not that page. Our Man Mitch is not a crook. He may have sold operation of the Indiana Toll Road, but he would never seek to sell a Senate seat or do the things that soon could require Their Man Rod to help in production of state license plates.

The common page for the governors is that both turned to a poetic approach in time of turmoil. Blago, countering impeachment, quoted Kipling and Tennyson. Daniels, countering recession, delivered poetic thoughts of springtime and quoted a hamburger entrepreneur and Kermit the Frog.

All those folks left unemployed by the factory closings and cutbacks in Elkhart County can take comfort in the governor's observation that "these present troubles are but a frost in April, a brief chill, before the full flowering of the greener Indiana to come."

Daniels went on to rhapsodize thusly: "A blossoming culture of enterprise foretells the coming vigor of a youthful economy that regenerates new sprouts faster than its trusted old branches decay and fall away."

Yes, he did. He really did.

Despite his usual disdain for environmental concerns, Daniels contended that Indiana "has chosen the green path of change." OK, he's just claiming that he

planted some new garden that will turn green when spring is summoned, not proposing to create jobs through green projects.

He quoted Ray Kroc, famed for hamburgers under arches, as philosophizing: "When you're green, you grow. When you're ripe, you rot." Words to encourage Kokomo automotive workers and anyone concerned with bankruptcy of the state's unemployment insurance fund.

To nail it all down, Daniels quoted Kermit the Frog: "It's not easy being green."

Actually, fighting the recession will be easy. We only need to get together in our call: "Hey, Springtime. I command thee, come! Move it!"

Thus, with Springtime commanded, the governor had no need to call for a jobs program, for anything like accelerated construction. Heck, he wants to halt all construction except for more prison space.

No need to spur job creation in life sciences and other technology sectors and snare research grants with that proposed collaborative effort of IU and Purdue. The governor says delay it. Just await spring.

No need to go ahead with the long-delayed full-day kindergarten effort to get kids off to a better start and deal with deplorable drop-out rates. (The governor did declare forcefully that kids need to behave better in school. Wow.) No need to help local governments faced with severe cutbacks that will leave them less attractive for economic development. (Daniels did call for something in that area, making the tax formula that forces the cutbacks a part of the Constitution.)

No need for a cent from the state's \$1.4 billion Rainy Day Fund to help Hoosiers in a deluge. (House Speaker Pat Bauer says to use some of the fund because it's now raining, pouring. Wrong. It has been snowing, drifting.)

With Groundhog Day fast approaching, Daniels cited that treasured holiday in inspirational advice for dealing with "the frosts of fear."

Said he: "If Hoosiers emerge from our winter's sleep only to see the shadows of our doubts and retreat from them, then winter will return, all the more frigid for the fragile hopes it cuts short. But unlike the groundhog of fable, we have the outcome in our power. If we choose to face forward into the sun, casting our shadows behind us, we can summon the springtime and command it to come."

Yes, we can. ❖

Colwell has covered Indiana politics for more than five decades for the South Bend Tribune.



John Kass, Chicago Tribune: Yes, White Sox Chairman Jerry Reinsdorf knows that President-elect Barack Obama is a lefty—our next president throws a baseball with his south paw—but Reinsdorf doesn't care. "He's going to be our president, and he's a White Sox fan," Reinsdorf told me the other day over the phone. "He's a South Sider. He loves the White Sox. What can be cooler than that?" Reinsdorf is a crafty businessman who has brought seven world championships to Chicago, six with the Bulls and that 2005 White Sox World Series victory that will forever cause Cubs fans to grind their teeth in seething jealousy. But he doesn't fully comprehend the problem. When Obama is inaugurated Tuesday, he won't only be the coolest guy on the planet. He'll be the most powerful Sox fan on the planet. That's pressure. ❖

Rich James, Post-Tribune: Can you imagine Gary with three mayors? Or Hammond or Hobart or Crown Point being saddled with a like triumvirate? That, of course, would be a recipe for disaster and a waste of taxpayer dollars. Or what if Indiana had three governors? Those poor folks in the General Assembly would go nuts trying to write legislation all three governors could support. And what if every one of our courtrooms had three judges? Good luck ever getting a decision. Or how about every police department having three chiefs? You'd have to wonder what direction law enforcement would take. Each of the above scenarios contains its own degree of absurdity. That's why such government by committee won't work. The Chicago Cubs found that out when they had the College of Coaches -- as opposed to a single manager -- for the 1961 and 1962 seasons. They won 123 games and lost 193 those two years. So if three mayors or three governors or a College of Coaches won't work, why in the world do we have three county commissioners? Beats me. The Indiana Constitution calls for the election of a county clerk of the circuit court, auditor, recorder, treasurer, sheriff, coroner and surveyor. I'm not sure why, although I assume it seemed like the right thing to do when the state constitution was adopted in 1851. The constitution goes on to say, "Such other county and township officers as may be necessary shall be elected, or appointed, in such manner as may be prescribed by law." ❖

Doug Ross, Times of Northwest Indiana: When I heard about the new joint purchasing agreement in Evansville on Tuesday, my immediate reaction was a groan. Don't get me wrong. I have nothing against this arrangement between the Evansville school district, the city and Vanderburgh County. I'm just ashamed for Northwest Indiana that Evansville is so far ahead of us in terms of government

reform. Evansville Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel was eloquent in the news release announcing the cooperative purchasing organization. "The city is always investigating more effective and more efficient ways to save taxpayer dollars," Weinzapfel said. "By combining purchasing departments with the EVSC (Evansville Vanderburgh School Corp.), we have a tremendous opportunity to leverage our needs to negotiate lower costs, We are saving money by governing better and smarter." The people in Evansville believe this countywide agreement is the first of its kind -- at least, on such a large scale -- anywhere in Indiana. A simple gesture of decency and subsequent brainstorming is saving the taxpayers in Evansville millions of dollars a year. Compare that to Lake County, where the largest property tax payers funded the expensive Good Government Initiative study that aimed to bring down the cost of government. Yet even the consultants in the privately funded efficiency study couldn't get the public officials to agree to a full-scale joint purchasing agreement like Evansville. ❖



Matt Tully, Indianapolis Star: Once in a while -- occasionally, but not often -- a political speech sticks with me. Something about it stands out hours or even days after I've filed my column on it. That's what happened this week in the days after Gov. Mitch Daniels' State of the State address. After the governor's fellow politicians offered their views on the speech, and after I took my first crack at writing about it, I began to realize the address was even more impressive than it first seemed. Far from ordinary, it was a bold declaration that Daniels intends to spend his second term, as he did his first, leaving an imprint and pushing big ideas. The speech made clear he is finding ways to do so despite an economy that has left many lesser politicians cautioning against doing anything other than the minimum, the mundane or the politically popular. I read the governor's speech, which he delivered Tuesday, several more times Wednesday and Thursday. What's striking is how he offered a detailed and ambitious policy agenda even though the state budget is under such pressure that few would have complained if Daniels had made it his sole focus this year. For instance, while there isn't money for new programs, Daniels pushed again for a much-needed streamlining of Indiana's outdated local government structure. While tax revenues are down, he cast a spotlight on ridiculous local school decisions that, if corrected, could result in a dramatic increase in classroom spending. The two proposals take on entrenched political factions. Victories on both, or just one, of those fronts would be a landmark achievement in any era. Wednesday afternoon, Daniels called me to explain why he had decided to so strongly challenge the inferiority notion. "I just want Hoosiers to be more assertive," he said. ❖



Lugar votes for Clinton

WASHINGTON - As America's top diplomat, Hillary Rodham Clinton likely will improve other countries' attitudes toward the U.S., Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., said Wednesday (Smith, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). But the foundation headed by her husband, former President Bill Clinton, should be more transparent about the donations it receives, particularly when they are from foreign entities, Lugar said in a statement issued by his office. The Senate confirmed Clinton 94-2 Wednesday. Both Lugar and Sen. Evan Bayh, D-Ind., voted "yes." Lugar said the Clinton Foundation does commendable work worldwide but that it "does not trump the vital business of U.S. foreign policy that will be directed by Sen. Clinton." Repeating a point he made during Clinton's confirmation hearing Lugar said the foundation could be a "temptation for any foreign entity or government that believes it could curry favor through a donation."



EPA concerned with IDEM changes

GARY - Recent changes in enforcement at the Indiana Department of Environmental Management are not going over well with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Post-Tribune). The EPA sent a letter to IDEM Tuesday, raising questions about the changes and requesting a meeting. "It has come to our attention that the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) has made or is planning to make several changes to its enforcement program," EPA Acting Regional Administrator Bharat Mathur wrote in the Jan. 20 letter to IDEM Commissioner Tom Easterly. "These changes include eliminating the Office

of Enforcement, revising the Compliance and Enforcement Policy (CERP), and eliminating funding for local air authorities."

Kelty amends report

FORT WAYNE - Matt Kelty agreed Wednesday to amend his latest campaign finance report after being informed it conflicted with his guilty plea last fall (Lanka, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Kelty's report, filed Wednesday morning, listed \$158,000 in debts owed to his committee but no official schedule listing those debts. Kelty, who won the Republican mayoral nomination in 2007, said he did not have his attorney examine his latest finance report before filing it. "I probably should have," he said.

Caroline withdraws

NEW YORK - Caroline Kennedy has ended her quest for the U.S. Senate seat vacated by Hillary Rodham Clinton, halting a campaign that began with popular support but withered quickly over criticism about her experience and her reluctance to answer questions about her finances (Associated Press). Kennedy made the announcement in a terse statement released early Thursday, ending hours of uncertainty surrounding her intentions as she appeared to waver in her decision to seek the office. "I informed Governor Paterson today that for personal reasons I am withdrawing my name from consideration for the United States Senate," she said in the one-sentence statement.

Distressed Unit Board eyes Gary finances

GARY - City Hall's checkbook could be subject to the state's "consistent oversight" under a concept talked about Wednesday by Gary's leaders and members of the state's Distressed Unit Appeals Board (Post-Tribune). Both sides are promising to

work together, but board member Paul Wyman said it will be tough to reconcile Gary's expenses with new property tax caps taking effect across the state this year. "There will not be an easy solution," Wyman said.

Oberlie calls for streamlining

MICHIGAN CITY - Michigan City Mayor Chuck Oberlie made his case for streamlining and restructuring city government to lower costs of serving a reduced population in his 2009 state of the city address, "Reassessing, Rebuilding & Rejuvenating." Oberlie told the city council and members of the audience Tuesday night that the city needs to "more aggressively assess our current department structure" to operate within the fiscal challenges resulting from state legislation capping property taxes. Oberlie has asked city departments to come up with ways to cut spending by 10 percent (Michigan City News-Dispatch). The city is looking to reduce annual operating costs by eliminating duplicate services, combining jobs and cutting down on the number of city owned or operated facilities, Oberlie said.

Ballard funds grow

INDIANAPOLIS - Mayor Greg Ballard has found that it helps to be in charge of city government when you're asking for political donations (Indianapolis Star). Ballard's campaign raised more money in a single night last year than during his entire run for the mayor's office in 2007. A gala Jan. 30 at the Indiana Roof Ballroom -- which some referred to as the "amnesty ball" for those who did not give money before Ballard's election upset over Democrat Bart Peterson -- brought in nearly \$350,000. Ballard ended last year with \$553,191 in cash, or more than 10 times the amount he reported two weeks before the election on Nov. 6, 2007.