



# The Torch

The official newsletter for Indiana state employees

## Barometer on the economy

### Indiana among the fiscally healthy amidst U.S. economic woes

No state in the union has escaped the brutal effects of the economy. The combined budget gaps are estimated to total more than \$350 billion. Indiana, though not spared, remains one of only three states fiscally healthy.

**California** leads the pack of states in financial trouble. It has the distinction of having the worst state budget shortfall in U.S. history, \$42 billion. Its legislators spent 45 straight hours locked in the Capitol before approving the state's budget plan. The budget pact contains \$12.8 billion in tax increases, *nearly as much as the state of Indiana's entire budget.*

**Kansas** nearly shut its doors in mid-February when its bills far exceeded its bank account balance. At one point the state suspended income tax refunds and it looked like state employees would not get paid. It took legislative action to transfer funds between accounts to process the refunds and make payroll.

It also required \$300 million in budget reductions. This was the third time this fiscal year that the state had to transfer funds to keep from bouncing checks. The \$775 million transferred between accounts must be repaid by June. State tax revenue this fiscal year is \$200 million below expectations.

**New Jersey's** governor has called for a two-day furlough of state employees this spring and a wage freeze in July. He also mentioned the possibility

of layoffs. The state now has a \$3.6 billion gap in its current budget. Tax revenues are \$2.8 billion less than projected.

Nearly broke, the state of **Minnesota** has recognized it does not have enough money coming into its coffers to cover spending for the next 28 months. Its deficit through 2011 is projected to be \$5 to \$7 billion.

The governor of **New Hampshire** has proposed laying off 275 to 300 state workers and eliminating another 400 vacant positions over the next two years. He also proposes increasing road tolls by 25 and 50 cents, \$10 surcharge on vehicle registrations to pay for highway work, .75 percentage point increase on restaurant and hotel

taxes and an increase in cigarette taxes by 35 cents. Gov. Lynch also called for the closing of a state prison and a school for students with behavioral problems and eliminated the catastrophic illness program for public health division.

State revenues for **Louisiana** continue to deteriorate. That state's budget shortfall for fiscal year 2009-2010 is anticipated to be \$1.75 billion.

**Utah** is contemplating the early release of 500 prisoners.

In December, the state of **Virginia** estimated a budget gap of \$2.9 billion; that gap has now grown to \$3.7 billion. January's tax revenues were off 15 percent, the worst drop in state revenue in at least 10 years. That decline represents the state's sixth straight decline in tax receipts.

**Wisconsin** is calling for a 13 percent increase in corporate income tax over

(Continued on pg. 2)

#### Check out page 4

Busted budgets beyond our borders and how states are proposing to shore them up

*The Torch takes in-depth looks at what California, Connecticut, Michigan and Georgia are facing.*



*Governor Daniels visited Logansport to tour the Cass County Consolidated Emergency 9-1-1 center. The governor supports the Kernan-Shepard Report recommendation to consolidate public safety dispatch by county to ensure that every Hoosier has access to the best public safety services available.*

#### In this issue

Dirty jobs around the state .....	2
IDOI employee in spotlight..	3
Classifieds.....	5

# Houses on the highway hide surprises

Hoosier Heartland Highway has a pretty ring to it. However, getting the road to match its name takes a lot of work, from surveying the land, to acquiring right-of-ways, to construction of the road and all steps in between. Included in that process is the acquisition and demolition of houses – and some of them are pretty scary.

In order to build the section of the Hoosier Heartland Highway between Lafayette and Logansport, there are approximately 27 houses that need to be secured by the state. That section of the highway is located in the Indiana Department of Transportation's (INDOT) Crawfordsville District.

Once the state secures or takes ownership of the land necessary for building the highway, someone has to oversee the property. That means a thorough check of the houses acquired. Karl Kemp, Engineering Assistant with INDOT's Crawfordsville District Property Management, is responsible for the temporary care of these houses. And he's not always sure of what he is going to find behind that creaking door.

"We've found animal carcasses and the remnants of people who have gotten into the house illegally," said Kemp, a state employee for 18 years and almost three in this position. "You never know what you are going to find when you walk into a house."

"That's right," quipped Bert Herron, Real Estate and Right-of-Way Manager.



"We always secure a dwelling with two state employees, depending on the size and number of structures involved for everyone's safety."



*"The House on Haunted Hill" in Terre Haute, as named by INDOT's Crawfordsville District, is one of the houses demolished to build the SR 641 Terre Haute Bypass.*

There have even been instances of people breaking into houses and using them as methamphetamine labs. If Kemp encounters what he believes to be a meth lab he quickly leaves the house and calls the police to take control of the situation.

When INDOT acquires property, it is a wise move to look at every nook and cranny and every inch above and below ground. You just never know what surprises await you, admitted Kemp.

Securing a dwelling takes more than just putting some boards up on the doors and windows and laying down a few rodent traps. Kemp meets with

each homeowner to walk through the house and the land. It is important for him to know if there are any underground storage tanks (fuel, septic, etc.) or wells on the property and if so, where they are located.

When boarding up a house, a unique type of screw is used to help elude thieves and others from coming into the structure. "During the summer when scrap metal was at a premium, people would break into the houses trying to steal the materials," Kemp said.

Summer is also a time when the houses can, for lack of a better word, get a little ripe. With the house boarded up and the air conditioning off, there is not much opportunity for air to circulate. The condition that the house is left in is also a factor in its scent. Some owners vacuum the houses before leaving while others leave the house in shambles with all sorts of trash and treasures left behind.

Regardless the time of the year, Kemp admitted that this job has taught him to not leave any stone unturned when checking out these properties.

## (Continued from pg. 1) Indiana among the fiscally healthy

the next two years, in an effort to eliminate a budget deficit of \$5 billion. The governor also proposed a tax on hospital revenues, cut \$125 million in state spending and changes to tax laws that would result in more online retailers charging sales taxes.

**Arizona** is looking to close 11 state parks, in an attempt to close a \$1.6 billion shortfall for 2009. The Department of Revenue has issued pink slips to 200 of its 900 employees.

State revenue for **Nevada** is down 38 percent from last year's receipts.

## Department of Insurance employee helps catch the bad guy

Late one evening after 5 p.m. in August 2007, Lisa Harpenau heard phones ringing in other parts of the office. Most everyone at the Indiana Department of Insurance (IDOI) had left for the day.

Another phone rang throughout the office. Then silence. Then another. Then more silence. Finally, Harpenau's main line rang and she picked up.

What ensued was a 30-minute conversation with a man named Charles Kinney from Atlanta, who was complaining in detail about an Indiana insurance agent from Fishers. And none of it sounded good. Harpenau is an attorney and investigator with IDOI's consumer protection unit. She said Kinney provided her with meticulous records, policies and letters detailing the agent's annuities scheme which had cost his parents and others hundreds of thousands of dollars.

"My first impression was that if the facts were true, then this was really bad," Harpenau remembers. "It's not often you get this kind of glaring evidence."

Kinney had alerted authorities in Georgia and Kentucky of the rogue agent. But no one would listen until now. The agent was Marcus Schrenker, who in January made national headlines when he crashed his airplane in Alabama in an apparent attempt to fake his death and run from mounting legal troubles.

Four months after the phone call, eight complaints were filed with IDOI and the state filed civil charges against Schrenker and his company. Prior to hearings, all involved were refunded

all of their original premiums from National Western Life Insurance, the company Schrenker represented.

As a result, the pressure began to build on Schrenker. In subsequent months, various criminal charges were filed against Schrenker by Hamilton County, the state of Indiana and federal authorities. And it all started with the work of a single state employee.

Harpenau, 27 has received her share of attention for her work on the case, which continues today. She's done countless interviews with national and local media: CNN, CBS, The Indianapolis Star and WIBC to name a few. She even received a personal voicemail from Governor Mitch Daniels.

"I do take pride in my work and I feel I work very hard," Harpenau said. "So to get that message was wonderful. I presume that I'm average here and that anyone else would've handled this the way I did. I look at it as another experience in my career and I learned a lot about our procedures while working on the case. It was the first case that I've got to work on from start to finish."

Harpenau had worked at IDOI about five months before all of this started. She had previous jobs as a law clerk and an insurance sales agent outside of state government. She was



*Lisa Harpenau, an attorney and investigator with IDOI, has received national attention for her work in helping bring down Marcus Schrenker. Pictured with Harpenau is IDOI commissioner Jim Atterholt.*

admitted to the Indiana bar in 2008 after completing her law degree at the Indiana University School of Law in Indianapolis.

"It's a great story," IDOI commissioner Jim Atterholt said. "Lisa was a legal intern and was promoted from within. Her work epitomizes our motto of treating our constituents not as gold plated but solid gold."

Atterholt also acknowledged that the case has helped the agency on a much broader scale.

"The attention to this case has helped many citizens realize what we do," he said. "With insurance, many people are not sure who to call. So we're getting more calls and e-mails with people asking questions of us and looking for assistance."



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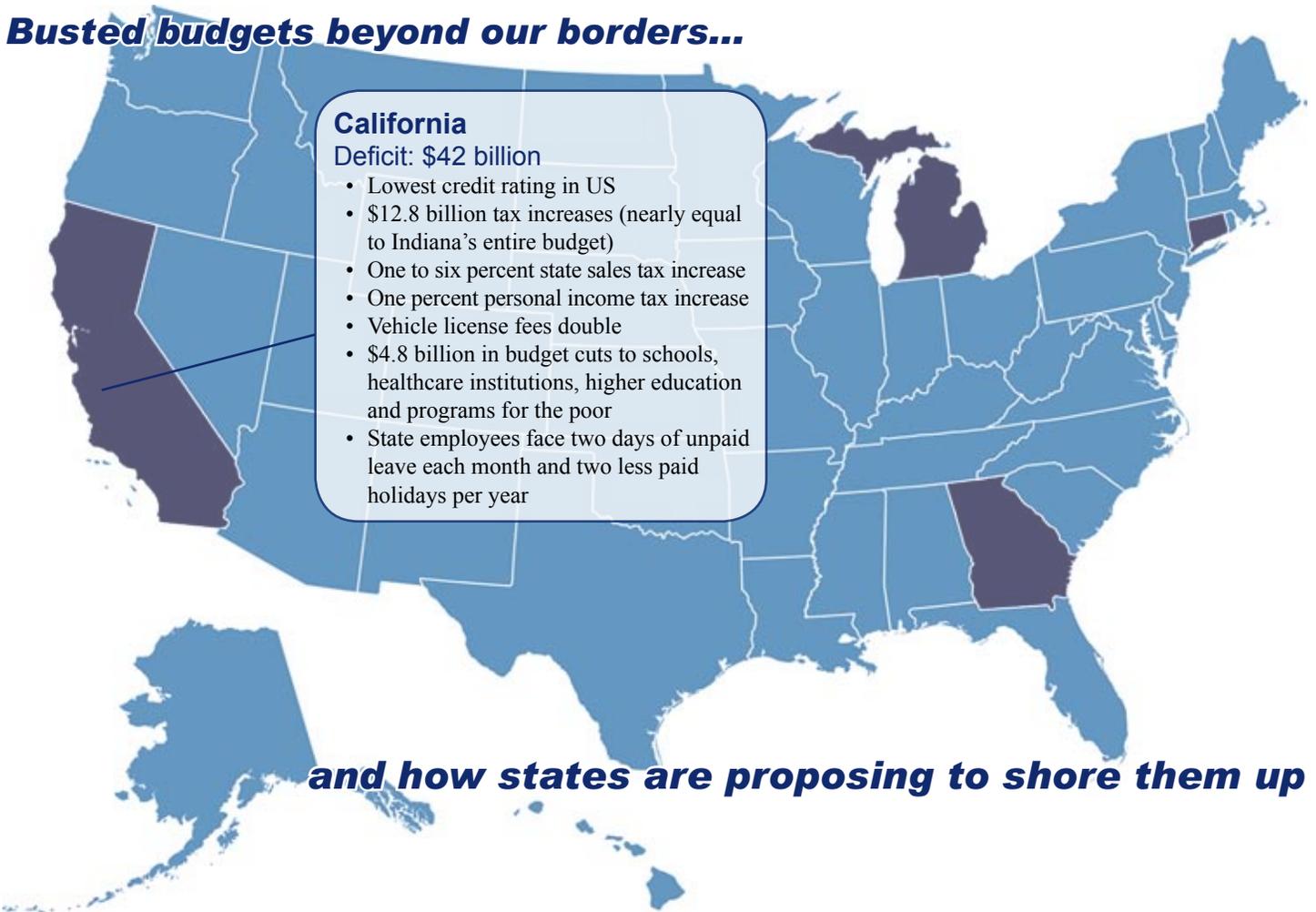


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The Torch is available online at [www.in.gov/spd](http://www.in.gov/spd).



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## Busted budgets beyond our borders...



### California

Deficit: \$42 billion

- Lowest credit rating in US
- \$12.8 billion tax increases (nearly equal to Indiana's entire budget)
- One to six percent state sales tax increase
- One percent personal income tax increase
- Vehicle license fees double
- \$4.8 billion in budget cuts to schools, healthcare institutions, higher education and programs for the poor
- State employees face two days of unpaid leave each month and two less paid holidays per year

## and how states are proposing to shore them up

### Michigan

Deficit: \$1.4 billion



#### Taxes and fees

- Increase permit and state park fees
- Double liquor annual licensing fees and the 32 percent tax on tobacco products other than cigarettes

#### \$670 million budget cuts

- School aid
- Possible early parole up to 4,000 inmates
- Review centralizing budget, purchase and personnel services and cut state government from 18 departments to eight

#### Impact on state employees

- \$28 million in wage and benefit concessions to state employees and 1,500 state employees face possible lay off

### Georgia

Deficit: \$2.5 billion



#### Taxes and fees

- 1.6 percent levy on hospital and health insurer revenues to help fund Medicaid

#### Budget cuts

- Tax relief grant program, \$428 million
- Basic education fund, \$350 million in 2009; additional \$275 million in 2010
- Close four prisons and two probation centers
- Cut funds to clean up hazardous waste sites and illegal garbage dumps

#### Impact on state employees

- Department of Corrections to furlough all employees, including prison guards starting March; prison guards and other 'mission critical' employees would face two unpaid days; others would have four days
- Department of Family and Children

Services employees once-a-month furloughs

### Connecticut

Deficit: \$1.35 billion



#### Taxes and fees

- Increase fees in more than 1,000 separate licenses and permits (driver's licenses, vehicle registrations, liquor permits, fishing licenses, etc.)
- Spend entire \$1.4 billion "rainy day" fund

#### Budget cuts

- Close 81 local probate courts
- Eliminate or consolidate 23 state agencies and 70 commissions

#### Impact on state employees

- Cut 800 from state workforce
- \$570 million in concessions from state employees
- Early retirement incentive to avoid layoffs

## Classifieds

### Please respect the following rules when submitting items:

- Ads are limited to state employees only.
- Contact information must include either a phone number with area code (home or cell, no state numbers) or a home e-mail address.
- Submit ads via e-mail to [spdcommunications@spd.in.gov](mailto:spdcommunications@spd.in.gov), information must be included in the body of the e-mail, no photos or attachments. No bold or italic type, no ALL CAPS.
- Limit one ad per employee per issue; each ad has a limit of three items.
- Deadline is the 10th of the month prior to the next issue.
- No weapons, no animals, no food items.
- No real estate, for sale or rent, including mobile homes, manufactured housing, timeshares, etc.
- No Avon, Mary Kay, vitamins, etc.
- No memberships, businesses or professional services (i.e., tax preparation, car repair, etc.).
- Ads will run for one issue only.
- State Personnel Department staff reserves the right to edit and/or refuse any ads.

1992 Ford Tempo; 4 door. \$1100. Call Dee, 317-821-8715 or 317-529-6353.

2002 Ford F150 XLT 2wd; 6 cylinder, black, cruise, power windows & locks, spray on bed liner, tool box; 75K mi. \$6995 obo. Contact [jbarbennett@comcast.net](mailto:jbarbennett@comcast.net) or 765-585-4237.

Longaberger basket collection, incl. 2000 Hostess laundry basket w/ lid & protector; excellent condition; \$200 for Hostess basket. Contact [auntlaruble@yahoo.com](mailto:auntlaruble@yahoo.com)

Truck bed cover; black, came off 2004 Dodge dually, raises & closes easily, light comes on when cover raised, very nice, used a short time. \$250. Call 812-449-0042 or [lransom1972@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lransom1972@sbcglobal.net)

Old electric train set cars & accessories. \$150. Good used beige carpet; various pieces 500 sq. ft. \$150. E-mail [fajames3030@yahoo.com](mailto:fajames3030@yahoo.com)

2005 Pontiac Grand Prix; silver, 4 door, CD player, all power, very clean, 116K mi. \$6500. Call 317-346-0482 after 5 pm.

Large moveable aluminum framed & fenced play pen or dog kennel; 17x17x4', double door. \$310. Synthetic 8' high double wall arbor/trellis. \$30. 10' u-channel sign post. \$49. Call 317-738-2991.

Solid teak executive desk; 7'x 3', very good condition. \$250. Two 4-drawer lateral file cabinets; very good condition. \$100. Located in West Lafayette. Call 765-491-3539.

Jazzy 1121 Power Scooter; 2 yrs old, used 2 days, brand new, excellent condition, candy apple red, large reclining seat, controls adjustable for left or right hand. \$1200 obo. Call 765-569-2889 or [butler2889@hotmail.com](mailto:butler2889@hotmail.com)

Wedding gown; Juliet style, size 14, worn once. \$125 obo. Prom/bridesmaid dress w/ sheer wrap; pale green, size 12. \$50 obo. Men's Dr. Marten's oxford shoes; size 8, black. \$15 obo. Contact Rachael, 812-344-3657 or [rhfctr@gmail.com](mailto:rhfctr@gmail.com)

2004 Cavalier LS sport coupe; 5 spd manual trans, intake, headers, exhaust, custom painted interior, power windows & locks, sun roof, son went to

military, 63K mi. \$6,000. Contact [pgordy67@aol.com](mailto:pgordy67@aol.com)  
Kenmore refrigerator; side by side, tan, filtered ice maker, water dispenser, good condition, 9 yrs old, 20 cu ft. \$100. Call 317-379-6263.

Exercise bike; holds up to 300 lbs, works great, \$75. E-mail [dmbuhr@yahoo.com](mailto:dmbuhr@yahoo.com)

Kenmore washer & dryer; about 3 yrs old, excellent condition. \$200 for set. Contact [roguecat\\_1@juno.com](mailto:roguecat_1@juno.com) or 317-473-1051.

Kimball Swinger 800 electric organ. \$100. Terre Haute area. Contact [bertindy@aol.com](mailto:bertindy@aol.com) or 317-407-6209.

Cat tree; 6' tall, 4 level, one room, carpet covered. \$75. Contact Nathan, [braveswin@hotmail.com](mailto:braveswin@hotmail.com)

(Continued on pg. 6)



# State Employee Night

## with the Ice

### ALL TICKETS HALF PRICE!

March 28th, 2009    7:30 p.m.    Pepsi Coliseum

Join the Indiana Ice on Saturday, March 28th, 2009 from Pepsi Coliseum for Fan Appreciation Night! All tickets have been reduced to just \$8 or \$6 for all Indiana State Employees! Stick around after the game for a post-game skate with the entire 2008-09 Indiana Ice squad!

## TICKETS JUST \$8 OR \$6

To purchase tickets contact T.J. Davis, Account Executive, at the Indiana Ice offices at 925.4423 x208 or via e-mail at [tjdavis@indianaice.com](mailto:tjdavis@indianaice.com). Or purchase online @ <http://marketmail.sportsfansusa.com/indianaice/groups/stateemployees> group id: indiana

## Welcome home, Lt. Col. Dinn

Indiana Conservation Officer, Keith Dinn, is back working his Miami County assignment after being in Iraq for the last 1½ years.



Keith Dinn

Dinn, who holds the rank of Lt. Colonel with the Indiana National Guard, commanded the 76th Brigade Special Troops Battalion at Contingency Operating Base Q-West and served as its mayor. Part of the Q-West mission was to provide water for the citizens of Al-Qayyarah and other villages, as well as Q-West. Q-West was formerly an Iraqi Air Force base during Saddam Hussein's reign.

Dinn and his soldiers were targeted by improvised explosive devices (IED) no less than five times. While there he was awarded the Bronze Star medal by Brigadier General Michael Lally, Commander, 3rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary).

“Our time away from home and loved ones instilled in all of us a finer appreciation for simple, everyday necessities that we all tend to take for granted,” explained Dinn. “At one point in October, we were all limited to one three-minute shower every three days. That stunk...literally!”

He acknowledged that he received a lot of support from his fellow conservation officers, supervisors and civilians. But he also credited his wife “for holding down the fort, taking care of the kids, all while maintaining her full-time teaching job.”

Dinn has been an employee of the Department of Natural Resources since 1992.

## Learning online offers convenience

Now there is little room for excuse for not taking advantage of training classes, especially those that can be accessed online. For instance, are you aware of the warning signs of a suspicious package?

If not, sign up for the Suspect Packages and Substances course (DHS 0001). This course provides basic information to help protect employees from illness, injury or death from malicious packages or mail delivered to the workplace. Learning the signs of a potential threat and how to respond to those threats can save lives.

Other online courses include:

- IOT – Information Resource Use Agreement training (IOT 00001). If you need assistance completing the IRUAT, call the IOT Help Desk at 317-234-4357.
- OIG Ethics training (OIGETHICS07) – Ethics training sponsored by the Office of the Inspector General and State Ethics Commission.
- SPD Sexual Harassment Refresher (SPD 00001) – Provides state employees with a refresher of concepts from the classroom session of Sexual Harassment Prevention.

To access these courses, you will need to log onto PeopleSoft at this address:

<https://hr.gmis.in.gov/psp/lmprd/EMPLOYEE/ELM/?cmd=logon&languageCd=ENG&>

Once you log onto PeopleSoft and sign in, select “Employee Self Service” from the left menu. If you are an employee of the State Personnel or Homeland Security, go to the “Current Learning” option. All other employees should go to “Search Catalog” and then click the “Search” button (don’t fill in anything). This will take you to the course options.

Once you enroll and finish the course, don’t log out until you print your completion certificate. Make a copy for your supervisor and keep one for your files, as well.

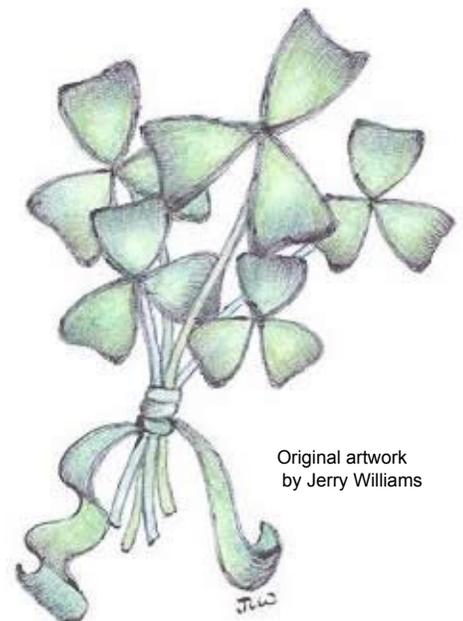
**(Continued from pg. 5)**

### Classifieds

Total Work Out 4000 weight resistant exercise machine; good condition. \$100. Call 219-785-2679, LaPorte County, after 5 pm CST or e-mail Toddler4@verizon.net

Self-propelled Yard Man 21' rotary mower & mulcher; model series 440. rear bag & operator's manual, used a few times. \$200. Contact Erin, kellamer@hotmail.com

Johann Haviland Bavaria China; blue/silver floral print, elegant pattern, 8 4-pc place setting w/ bowls, cups & saucers, meat platter, serving bowls, creamer & sugar, salt & pepper; like new. \$325. 4 4-pc place setting sterling silver ware; never used. \$850. Light-colored oak computer roll top desk w/ 2 2-drawer file cabinets; can be split to move, excellent condition. \$450 obo. Call 317 752-5692 or pan4gold49@gmail.com



Original artwork by Jerry Williams