



Eyes peeled on Daniels' last reform

Governor finds change runs slower than his proverbial 'freight train'

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - A fact of life for a governor of Indiana is that the walls in his Statehouse office are full of eyes from the past, peering down from bygone eras.

Over the governor's conference table peers Gov. James Putnam Goodrich, who presided over the agrarian state beginning in 1917, overseeing the Great War efforts, along with planning the state's highway system while creating the Department of Conservation. There is Gov. Harry G. Leslie, the former Republican House speaker who was elected in 1928 after the scourge of Gov. Ed Jackson's Ku Klux Klan era and presided over the beginning of the Great Depression, pioneering in Indiana what would become known under President Franklin D. Roosevelt as the Work Progress Administration.

And, of course, there is Gov. Thomas R. Marshall, who attempted to write a new Indiana constitution after the General As-



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Gov. Daniels with reporters on Friday. Portraits of Govs. Orr (top) Marshall and Leslie. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

The politics of Right to Work

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Gov. Mitch Daniels and Republican legislative leaders say that with the unemployment rate continuing to hover at an unacceptably high 9 percent, we need "every tool available" to attract jobs. Thus, the Right to Work legislation has become the No. 1 priority heading into the 2012 short session.



I'm not necessarily for or against Right to Work. But I have a propensity for calling things like they are. Like, if we have casinos in Indiana, they once had to be "riverboats" and developers had to dig inland moats to put them



"Zany is not what we need in a president. Zany is great in a campaign. It's great on talk radio. But in terms of a president, we need a leader."

- Mitt Romney, on Newt Gingrich



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in. Stupid! Or, if marijuana is to be legal, it has to be "medical marijuana." Dumb! Just decriminalize it and treat it like a traffic ticket, or legalize it as 16 other states and Canada have done and tax the hell out of it. What we have now clogs the courts, our jails and prisons.

While Right to Work is a tool in the job development box, it really is the final union-busting maneuver of the Daniels' era. And Republicans can do it because, like a dog licking himself, he does it because he can. Indiana Democrats became so vacuous, so devoid of ideas, this past decade, and so mean at campaigning that Hoosier Republicans have won two straight governor races, have a super majority in the Indiana Senate and a 60-40 majority in the Indiana House, with a good chance of making that a super majority next year.

That's what happens when you have a mind trust like House Minority Leader B. Patrick Bauer.

In the Daniels' era, the GOP has systemically knocked out the supporting trusses of the Indiana Democratic Party. Secretary of State Todd Rokita created a statewide voter file to clamp down on redundant voting. Former District Attorney Joseph Van Bokelen took on the Pastrick Lake Democratic machine with RICO laws, and former Attorney General Steve Carter went after millions of casino-generated East Chicago Second Century funds.

On his first full day in office, Gov. Daniels ended collective bargaining for state employees and watched as unionized membership tumbled by 90 percent. Daniels ended the personal license plate money that used to go to the political parties, costing Indiana Democrats \$750,000 a year. Indiana Treasurer Richard Mourdock – with Gov. Daniels cheering him on – tried to stop the Chrysler/Fiat merger. If Chrysler and General Motors had collapsed, the United Auto Workers – one of the biggest funders and

phone-bankers in Indiana gubernatorial politics for decades – would have been neutered.

Now the historic opportunity is to end mandatory union membership with Right to Work. My Democratic sources acknowledge that should this occur, union membership across the board could plummet in the 50 to 75% range. The UAW and the Indiana State Teachers Association – the massive funders of gubernatorial, Congressional and legislative campaigns in Indiana – won't have nearly their historic clout.

So there is a significant political component to Right to Work, and anyone who denies it has a bridge to sell you in the Arizona desert.

I have viewed the unions and the business organizations like the Indiana Chamber and the Indiana Manufacturers Association as bookends. Both have Political Action Committees that fund gubernatorial and legislative races. They've been doing this for decades, and while Indiana is known as a "Republican state," the two parties compete at the gubernatorial, legislative and Congressional levels. If you're a Republican, Right to Work will crimp the unions and, thus, the Democratic Party. When they peer into the future, they envision a "Gov. Mike Pence" and two super majority legislative houses. In that scenario, you can kiss moderation goodbye.

Why do I think Right to Work will be more like a little crescent wrench in the economic development tool box, as opposed to a power drill or a pneumatic nailer?

Because Indiana has seen its union membership drop over the last half century from the 40% to about 10% today. And the jobs that Indiana is trying to grow and attract – life sciences, logistics, advanced manufacturing, orthopedics, agri-science, nanotechnology, information technology – aren't unionized segments of the economy. The Indiana Chamber and legislative leaders like to point out that



a third to a half of the firms looking relocate, cross Indiana off their lists because of our current Right to Work laws.

But I can't think of a recent company relocating here during the Daniels era that has been unionized. Not Honda, not Medventure, not Amazon, not Dreyfus. When InterPac announced it was moving in from New Jersey to Lawrenceburg recently, Gov. Daniels said, "InterPac's decision is further proof that Indiana has the best business climate in the country. This decision will bring important new jobs to Dearborn County and continues a national trend of companies relocating to Indiana and reaping the benefits of our low-tax economy and highly skilled workforce."

State Rep. Tom Dermody, R-LaPorte, became one of the first Republicans to line up against the measure. He used the country club analogy, telling the Michigan City News-Dispatch, saying, "It is as if the members pay dues because they want to use the golf course, but they let other people who don't pay dues use the course too." Dermody said economic development bodies have never cited

Right to Work as an issue when deciding whether to locate in LaPorte County. "They want to know about taxes, about a competent workforce, about good schools," he said.

The Indiana Chamber counters by saying local officials never hear about such companies because they are crossed off the lists of states without Right to Work before they explore.

I've heard many Republicans over the years talk about true job creation that comes in small businesses and homegrown companies like Conseco and Cook Group that began as little startups and grew into Fortune 500 status. And these types of companies don't tend to be unionized either. An NPR "This American Life" story several months ago on state and local economic development describes a small pool, with municipalities cannibalizing each other to add a sliver to the economy and get some big headlines.

Right to Work is likely to pass in January. But it's more about politics than job creation. ❖

Governor, from page 1

sembly refused his call for a Constitutional Convention. The proposed Marshall Constitution would have increased state regulatory powers, set minimum wage, protect unions and provide for referendums.

Directly across the room from Daniels' desk is Gov. Robert D. Orr, who offered Daniels the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by Vice President-elect Dan Quayle in December 1988. Did Daniels, the first 21st Century Hoosier governor reformer, order in the eyes of Marshall, Goodrich and Leslie?

"Honestly, no," Daniels said Friday afternoon, three hours after he unveiled his reform-drenched final legislative initiatives. "I said, 'Bring Bob Orr in here.' Orr was one of those who came after me to run in the first place." With the others, Daniels had one simple criterion: "Make sure they are all reformers, and no crooks."

Gov. Orr not only helped convince Daniels to come back and run for governor, he was a frequent caller to HPI in the years prior to his death in 2004,

nine months before Daniels would take office, consistently calling for a reform agenda to help transform the state into a powerhouse at the Crossroads of America.

Daniels is now facing his final legislative session, dogged by a persistent 9% jobless rate, his party's secretary of state under fire for election fraud, and campaign finance ties to indicted Tim Durham and John Bales cast-

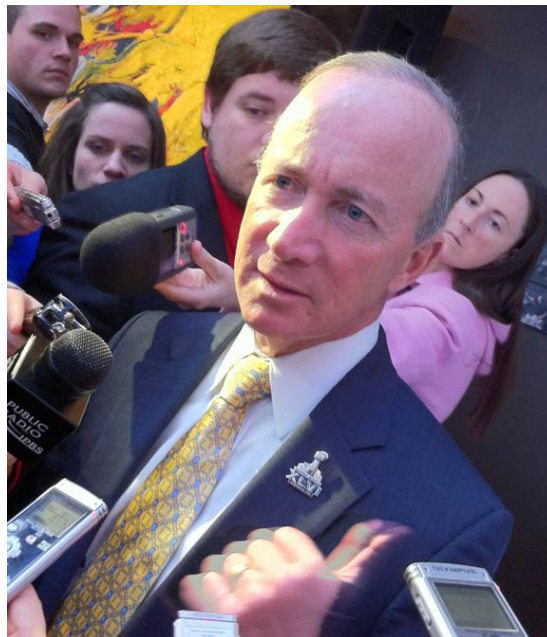
ing an unwanted eye on the grimmer aspects of campaign finance.

He made headlines twice last week: Backing the controversial Right to Work legislation that many believe has the potential of devouring the upcoming legislative session, before launching one last stab at the Kernan-Shepard reforms, a statewide smoking ban, and, possibly but unlikely, criminal sentencing reforms.

Daniels is coming off of seismic education reforms earlier this year that position the state as a leader in a category that also counts President Obama as more than willing to take on the status quo.

But, like Marshall, Daniels has learned that the "stacist" forces know it's easier to defeat an idea than to get one passed.

"I've come to the conclusion in this particular area that we're going to have to eat the elephant one bite at



Gov. Daniels talks about his legislative agenda with reporters Friday at the Skyline Club. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)



a time and move forward incrementally," Daniels said. He responded to complaints by mayors to advocate the conflict of interest scenarios for municipal employees who also are elected to the councils and commissions that set their salaries. "If you talk to the mayors around the state, they really believe it's a problem and it's just wrong to have people in essence double-dipping. Sitting in judgment on their own departments, budgets, their own salaries and things like that."

He will push for a single county executive to replace the three commissioners, reduce nepotism, and seek to eliminate township advisory boards. He's had conversations with government reform committee chairs Connie Lawson in the Senate and freshman Kevin Mahan in the House. Both are coordinating, planning identical bills and count significant committee support.

He also observed that the property tax caps are now "permanent" and were devised to crimp the flow of money to government, which he envisioned would prove to be a catalyst for consolidation.

"That's the best driver of local government reform," he said. "Now you're beginning to see places doing things as simple as schools that were never interested before coming into the state procurement system. You're beginning to see townships talk about consolidating, towns and townships consolidating. I think ending the era of open-ended taxation will help some of these good ideas happen that might not have happened."

Repeatedly in speeches before the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns and the Association of Indiana Counties, Daniels has urged local officials to reform from the "ground up." But here in his 11th hour as governor, he realizes it's not happening. There are merger talks underway in Evansville, Brownsburg, Kokomo and Posey County, but it is hardly the "freight train of change" he envisioned.

"Honestly, I did," Daniels responded to HPI ques-

tions about whether the consolidations have unfolded much slower than anticipated. "I underestimated the tenacity of the system and the attachment of folks on both sides of the aisle to the system. It's easier to stop something in the legislature than pass it. Nobody starts a torchlight parade for something like this. Therefore it's easier to stop it. We tried to build a reasonably good grassroots and editorial

momentum behind this, but it didn't pan out very well."

As for nepotism, Daniels faces a force that appears ingrained in the base level of Hoosier civil service. As one former county association official observed, "God didn't just send Jesus to save mankind. He sent his one and only son."

"If I had the magic answer, we'd have gotten it done by now," Daniels told the Kiwanis at the Skyline Club earlier in the day. "People in the General Assembly who disagree about absolutely everything else can come together to defend township government."

On criminal sentencing reform – which is not one of the gov-

ernor's stated priorities this session – he believed he was poised for a breakthrough last spring. "We were awfully close. We had a great bipartisan agreement," the governor said. "I thought we had everybody, the players in law enforcement. We lost one piece, but unfortunately it was a critical one. The prosecutors."

While the townships provide urban party foot soldiers and are a rural feeder system, prosecutors instill fear in legislators who love to pass mandatory sentencing to appear "tough on crime." As Daniels put it, "Legislators on both sides are very hesitant to do anything for fear some prosecutor will say they aren't tough enough. Unless we can unlock that particular problem, we may not get there this year."

The sentencing flaw can actually have unintended consequences. "Our correction folks told me back away, 'You know, a very high percentage of our prisoners are in



Gov. Mitch Daniels signs books for Kiwanis Club members at the Skyline Club on Friday. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)



the state system six to 12 months. They say we just have them long enough to get their DNA, their fingerprints, and introduce them to some real bad guys.' We waste money, but it also prevents our doing a better job reintegrating people into society. The second thing about money is I always believe that savings should be put back into better community corrections for the reason I just stated."

The troubling dynamic Daniels faces comes with Right to Work. He held off on a full-throated endorsement last session and watched as House Democrats walked out to Illinois for five weeks.

"One reason that I didn't think we should rush some judgment on this is we ought to have a year in which we study and examine the claims like that one," Daniels said. "It doesn't bear out. There are 22 Right to Work states – this is not some radical notion; the states that have it are adding jobs and income faster than the ones that don't."

He put it this way before the Kiwanis: "This is costing Indiana jobs. We've had over 1,000 transactions and we've had record-breaking years, even in the bad years. When we get a chance to compete, we are going to miss a quarter to a half the time if we don't have this law. If we were at full employment, I wouldn't be recommending this. But I think this step is necessary." In our interview, Daniels said he was tired of "tripping over" site selectors who eliminate the state just over Right to Work.

Asked if it was really about union busting and keeping wages down, Daniels countered, "If you ever cover an IEDC meeting, when it's time to establish a report, the first slide is how many job commitments and the second one is, do they pay. I don't remember a company we've brought in – and we've brought in over a thousand – that was unionized unless, as some companies do, preferred it. I'm not arguing for their point of view. I'm just saying it's a fact of life. We're dealt out of way too many opportunities, a quarter or more because this is seen as a prerequisite. I'm not defending that decision on the part of the investing companies. I'm just telling you I'm tired of tripping over it."

Asked by HPI if there was a "carrot" Daniels could offer Democrats, he responded, "Maybe. Most of the things I listed today I would hope there would be a lot of Democrats interested. Some of them are their issues. The smoking ban is a Charlie Brown issue as much as anybody's. So, maybe a little ironic, I see the potential for bipartisan

cooperation this year. Obviously not on this one topic, but on the rest of them. If they've got things they'd be interested in doing, let's hear about them."

Bauer appeared to dismiss the notion of a walkout this session, but the word "filibuster" was used Friday after Daniels spoke. "Entering its final year of rule of state government, it can be safely argued that the Daniels Administration has come down with leadership fatigue," Bauer said. "There is nothing in this governor's program that offers any kind of long-term help for Hoosiers beyond the end of his time in office.



"House Democrats continue to weigh our options in addressing this radical anti-Hoosier agenda," Bauer added. "Our plan asks for investments designed to meet specific goals: getting Hoosiers back to work, giving our children the quality education they deserve, and protecting families. It calls for targeted, lasting tax relief for families, job creation that focuses on small businesses and helping veterans and unemployed Hoosiers, increased attention on early education, a commitment to detecting and preventing child abuse, and a renewed focus on ending the kind of scandals that seem to be plaguing this administration."

Daniels emphasized that he intends to "keep the pedal down," and noted that in the short sessions of 2006 (Major Moves and telecommunications reforms), 2008 (property tax caps), and 2010 (local government reform), the administration had an ambitious agenda.

"The fact is, we've got a pretty ambitious agenda here," he said. "I hope this will always be the case in Indiana. I'm

starting to get letters and emails from people who say in different words they think there is a different expectation now. I hope that will linger on. It's a new year: What are we going to do to make the state stronger? That's always been our approach, whether it's in the legislative session or after they leave town."

A century ago – 1911 – Gov. Marshall pressed the General Assembly for a new constitution, watched it pass, only to see it rejected by the Indiana Supreme Court. Gov. Leslie struggled to put Hoosiers back to work as the Great Depression lingered.

And Gov. Orr? He used the 1987 session to pass the first major education reforms with his Primetime and A Plus plans.

All eyes are now on Mitch Daniels in his gubernatorial twilight. ❖



Parker survives in a Rasputin sequence

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Longtime Democratic party observers are reportedly "stunned" by a turn of events Saturday that saw embattled State Democratic Party chairman Dan Parker hold on to his position by the thinnest of margins.

HPI has learned that Parker had been asked some two weeks ago by Democratic governor candidate John Gregg to step aside so that Gregg would have a state chair in place viewed as closer to his campaign. Parker, sensing he was being 'iced out' by the Gregg campaign, submitted his resignation Monday which began a roller coaster series of events capped off by his rescinding his resignation Saturday and barely surviving what amounted to a "no confidence" vote by his own state committee.

When former secretary of state candidate Tim Jeffers withdrew from consideration Thursday, the contest settled into a two person race between former Democratic House staffer Joel Miller and Parker's chosen successor, IDP legal counsel Sara Riordan.

"This has been the strangest two weeks of my life," Parker told HPI Sunday night. "What I can tell you for sure was my office was blank Friday. There was nothing on my walls. I was fully prepared to hand it over Saturday."

Parker said that he was scheduled to speak briefly at a Friday evening fundraiser, and it was there that candidates and committee members began appealing him to stay on. Parker said that party leaders were comfortable with the idea of Baron Hill or Tim Jeffers leading the party. But there were questions about the experience of Riordan and Miller. "They were telling me, 'This is a delicate time to be turning to a new leader.'"

Meanwhile, 8th CD Chair Tony Long was telling HPI the Central Committee would no longer be told who to install in power. "Those days are over," Long said.

Parker began changing his mind around midnight Saturday, just hours before the Central Committee was to meet.

Reliable sources report that Parker chose to withdraw his resignation when he realized that Miller (backed by both the Lake and Marion County chairs) had solid commitments from 10 of the 18 voting members of the

state committee and would likely defeat Riordan. Saturday morning saw Parker tender a withdrawal of his resignation, which reportedly served to anger two additional voting members of the state committee which then boosted Miller's likely total to 12.

However, after what was described as a "brutal" and "nasty" meeting among state committee members, a key procedural vote was held on whether to permit Parker to withdraw his resignation letter. Parker, a partisan described as having "sharp elbows" knew that such a procedural vote would include other members of the state committee beside the district chairs and vice chairs including national committeepersons and various interest group representatives, many of whom had been appointed by Parker.

Even with the larger group "stacked" in Parker's favor, the critical vote to allow Parker to stay on was only won by a count of 15 to 13 ½ - hardly a resounding vote of confidence. Sources tell Howey Politics Indiana that National Committeeman Dean Boerste and 8th CD Chairman Tony Long, along with recently resigned 2nd CD Chairman Butch Morgan, who was at the committee meeting as an announced proxy, supported withdrawing Parker's resignation.

What stunned observers was that governor candidate John Gregg was present and actually stated that Parker should be allowed to remain. Having set the process in motion that would see Parker resign, both the Marion and Lake County chairs were described as "furious" that Gregg would leave them "hanging" and that he would now aid efforts to save Parker.

Parker told HPI, "John came to the meeting and asked for the committee members to accept my decision."

One longtime party observer wondered aloud about Gregg's judgment in "pulling back" from having Parker ousted. A source who was at the meeting told HPI that even with the larger group voting, "there were still enough votes to deny Parker's request until John Gregg got up. I don't know who John thought he was helping. Once you insist the Chairman step down, you don't then back down and leave your friends sitting buck naked out on Main Street."

Another active state Democrat told HPI that Dan Parker "isn't going to be able to pitch today's events as 'unifying' for our party. He barely survived this vote from a stacked committee. Joel Miller clearly had the votes to win on a fair, straight up or down vote of district chairs and vice chairs but Dan Parker wasn't going to allow his chosen candidate, Sarah Riordan, to go down to defeat."

An Indianapolis Democrat who was part of the effort to elect Joel Miller told HPI, "Give the devil his due. Parker is like Rasputin. You poison him. You shoot him. You think he's dead and somehow he lives again. The prob-





lem is that our party has suffered under his leadership and we desperately needed a change to position us for 2012. I just wish Dan would be as effective fighting the Republicans as he is fighting to save his own job." Indiana Democratic Chairman Dan Parker had his resignation rescinded Saturday before an executive committee of the Indiana Democratic Central Committee.

The move appeared to be designed to head off the election of Joel Miller, who had support of Marion and Lake county members. Multiple sources said that Miller had 12 votes as he waited outside of the contentious meeting at

the offices of Barnes & Thornburg.

"I'm embarrassed to be a part of this party," said Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr., who is also the Lake County Democratic chairman and had been complimentary of Parker in the past. "I'm stunned. I really did believe in the Democratic process."

Miller, who sat outside the tumultuous meeting in the lobby, told the Indianapolis Star that there won't be lasting divisions. "I'm a Democrat. I'll always be a Democrat. This was a fight within the family. The fight is over." ❖

The Parker era: a chair between two trees

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Two of the most successful Hoosier politicians in modern politics – Evan Bayh and Mitch Daniels – shaped and defined the seven-year tenure of Indiana Democratic Chairman Dan Parker that most of us thought had ended this week. He became the party man who had to ski the political moguls in whiteout conditions, sometimes on sheer ice.

On Saturday, Parker's Monday resignation was rescinded as the establishment chosen successor - legal counsel Sarah Riordan - didn't have the votes and Joel Miller didn't get the vote he was hoping for with the entire Indiana Democratic Central Committee. It turned out to be yet another twisted chapter in a career that has had an array of forks, dead ends, cutbacks and few victories.

Sen. Bayh elevated the two-year Executive Director Parker to the chair, with the acquiescence of the Democratic Central Committee, just as the Daniels juggernaut began its famed ride on the freight train of change. Parker kept the party shop in order as Bayh flirted with a presidential run, and then abruptly withdrew in December 2006 as Barack Obama rose to prominence.

Bayh then schemed for the vice presidency, backing Hillary Clinton in September 2007 when she was the "inevitable nominee," and took the Indiana Democratic establishment, with Parker in tow, along with the former First Lady.

Then came the Clinton-Obama showdown in Indiana, with an intriguing subplot where Jill Long Thompson battled the second establishment-backed candidate, Jim Schellinger, for the gubernatorial nomination. Parker backed Clinton and Schellinger. Both races ended in May 2008 with fingernail scratches on the party fuselage, with Parker seeking to manage the flotsam and jetsam.

There was the second Bayh veep flirt that summer. He "colored within the lines," as David Plouffe would observe, before Obama chose Joe Biden. When 2008

came to a close, Indiana would go Democratic for the first time since 1964, but Chairman Parker would soon find the nation's first African-American president a literal electoral millstone despite the fact that Obama would save the Indiana domestic auto industry. Strangely, the saving of Chrysler and GM eluded the 2010 Democratic campaign themes.

Thus, the seeds were sown for yet another uproarious chapter in the Parker sandwich: Bayh's abrupt President's Day

decision in February 2010 to not seek a third term. It came just four days before filing deadline. U.S. Rep. Baron Hill was 30,000 feet over Afghanistan, Rep. Brad Ellsworth was kicking off a series of 8th CD town halls, State Rep. Trent Van Haaften and State Sen. Bob Dieg were preparing for another week's business at the Statehouse.

Parker had to help orchestrate the Chinese fire drill we came to know as the "Bayh dominoes:" Ellsworth fills in for Bayh, Van Haaften for Ellsworth, Dieg for Van Haaften ... whew! When the dust settled in 2010, Pat Bauer was the squat party poster boy. Parker could only look at how a Brent Waltz could take out a Larry Borst and Greg Walker a Bob Garton and wonder if such change would ever settle at the Indiana Statehouse.

If there was a bag of dog doo set ablaze on





Parker's doorstep that Halloween, it would be filed in the "that figures, what next" folder. As the acrid smoke billowed through the neighborhood, Daniels was cuing up the final electoral chapter of his "Aiming Higher" series that would bring Republicans two new congressional seats, a stunning 60-40 Indiana House majority, and a super majority in the Indiana Senate. The Democratic Party's long hold over Southern Indiana at the state, legislative, county and city levels was being overrun like General Lee on the road to Appomattox, just as the Deep South was presidentially a generation earlier. Republican legislators represented places like Clark, Posey and Warrick counties. There were Republican mayors in Jeffersonville, Jasper and Evansville.

Parker, Speaker Bauer and Indiana Democrats, feeling the heat, launched a mean-spirited, desperate ad campaign that HPI would liken to "political porn" it was so tawdry. Pharmacist Steve Davison would become an over-the-counter abortionist. Matt Ubelhoer would be a polluting coal miner. A year later, a Democratic Party mailer on behalf of Mishawaka mayoral candidate Craig Fry accusing Mayor Dave Wood of employing a child molester would be a prelude to Fry's bizarre 76-24% defeat.

Through it all, Parker coped with the towering figures above him from both parties. Daniels orchestrated the end of personal license plate money to the state parties, costing Democrats \$750,000 a year. He was able to keep the party solvent and "competitive." Parker had to preside over a party that beyond Evan Bayh and Frank O'Bannon, couldn't win a statewide race, though he notes Joe Pearson came close to upsetting Secretary of State Todd Rokita in 2006. The ultimate last laugh on the statewide front could come after Parker is replaced if Judge Louis Rosenberg tosses Secretary of State Charlie White out of office and installs Vop Osili. Parker instigated that court case.

The drought at the statewide level goes back to 1996 when Jeff Modisett was elected attorney general (and he resigned before his term was up). Because of the futility, Parker talked of state government reform where the statewide offices would become part of the gubernatorial cabinet. He wondered at one point why there were 11 school corporations in Marion County when Perry Township MSD schools were laying off teachers and facing huge deficits.

His decision to not challenge U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar in 2006 not only set a precedent above the Mason-Dixon line, but it earned him the enmity of Marion County Chairman Ed Treacy, who saw his straight-party ballots plunge. When rumors surfaced that Treacy might want to replace Parker, he denied them. Who might replace Parker? Treacy didn't know and was somewhat prophetic: "Nobody wants that job."

Thus, Parker would note, when he got the job he received "condolences." When he gave it up on Monday,

the "congratulations" flowed.

After Saturday, who knows.

But it came just weeks after the St. Joseph County presidential petition forgery case surfaced following an investigation by Howey Politics Indiana and the South Bend Tribune, and he urged Butch Morgan to resign, prompting heaps of scorn that he had thrown Morgan "under the bus." Parker denied any connection, saying, "I'm still talking to Butchy." In fact, Morgan was at the Saturday meeting.

And there were the mayoral losses in Indianapolis and Evansville, where the party pulled late TV money for Rick Davis.

"I love the Indiana Democratic Party, and it has been my great honor to serve as its chair for the past seven years," Parker wrote in a letter distributed to all committee members. "Since elected to serve in November 2004, I have worked each day to make our State Party more inclusive and diverse, more open, more efficient and more successful at the ballot box. We have achieved many of the goals we set out to achieve, and we are widely recognized by the Democratic National Committee as one of the best State Parties in the nation."

Parker had told HPI he was looking to move on this year. But there was that disastrous session last winter and spring when Democrats saw Republicans make decisive education reforms while curtailing abortion rights. He ended things on a relative high note, seeking to avoid the Thompson-Schellinger civil war by helping to orchestrate the John Gregg and Joe Donnelly gubernatorial and senatorial nominations, sans primary opponents.

As any chairman after seven years would, Parker has his detractors. But so did Gordon St. Angelo, Gordon Durnil and Mike McDaniel.

Being a state chairman is almost as tough as being a mayor. Sometimes a chairman doesn't really know when it's a good time to leave. ❖

Register endorses Romney

The Des Moines Register, the largest and most influential newspaper in Iowa endorsed the presidential candidacy of former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney Saturday evening.

"He stands out in the current field of Republican candidates," writes the Register's editorial board in the endorsement. "Rebuilding the economy is the nation's top priority, and Romney makes the best case among the Republicans that he could do that."

Schererville Republican Dan Domezich, who is leading Mitt Romney's Indiana campaign, is confident the former Massachusetts governor will have the nomination locked up (NWI Times). "I think we're going to have an answer a lot sooner than most people think," Domezich said. ❖



Daniels causes a twitter stir, but wouldn't do his Gen. Sherman

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Gov. Mitch Daniels got the inevitable question at the Kiwanis Club Friday afternoon. A club member asked him if he might change his mind about the presidential race.

"I told you the acoustics not are not too good in here," Daniels said to laughter. "Let's talk about Indiana if we can."

But that set the Star's Mary Beth Schneider and WISH-TV's Jim Shella a-tweeting that Daniels didn't say no. Could it still be, Run, Mitch, Run? Sadly, no.

During the following press scrum, Daniels was pressed and he answered, "I just didn't want to take the time in the crowd. I don't have any different answer than I did before. I'm looking for other ways to contribute, as I have been."



When he met with reporters a couple hours later, he was asked again. "No one will ever know that," Daniels said of his own candidacy, with many believing he would be the frontrunner by now. "There's nothing new to say about it. My concerns about the situation the country is in are pretty well known now. There's this book you can read that will tell you about it. I do hope that our party will really present a candidate and positive alternative and level with the American people about the problems and be very specific about what we can do for the good of all that will address them."

The attention turned to the muddled presidential race and whether there would be a Republican version of the historic Obama/Clinton showdown in 2008.

"Maybe, yeah," Daniels said. "I thought it was terrific last time in every way. It got a lot of people engaged, got the attention of this state and brought a few dollars to this state. It was great to matter. If it can happen again, there are reasons to think it might. If this field stays a little fragmented, there's no winner-take-all voting for the first couple of months, yeah, we might matter and that would be good."

And what about a brokered convention, if no nominee emerges by June? "I told someone today I would never use that term. I don't think it would be brokered, it would be a truly deliberative convention. I can't say for sure, but maybe. Maybe it would be good for the country, by the way. I know one, thing, it would be good for you

2012 State Presidential Polls

	Date	Gingrich	Romney	Paul	Perry	Santorum	Bachmann	Huntsman	Spread
Iowa									
RCP Average	12/11 - 12/13	23	17	18.7	10.7	7	10	4.7	Gingrich+4.3
Rasmussen	12/13 - 1/13	20	23	18	10	6	9	5	Romney+3
Insider Adv	12/12 - 12/12	27	12	17	13	7	10	4	Gingrich+10
PPP	12-11 - 12-13	22	16	21	9	8	11	5	Gingrich+1
CNN/Time	11/29 - 12/6	33	20	17	9	5	7	1	Gingrich +13
ABC/WPost	12-06 - 12-06	33	18	18	11	7	8	4	Gingrich +15
New Hampshire									
RCP Average	12/10 - 12/13	22	33.3	15.7	1.7	2.3	3.3	11.3	Romney +11.3
Insider Adv.	12/12 - 12/12	24	29	21	1	2	4	11	Romney +5
Rasmussen	12/12 - 12/12	22	33	18	3	3	3	10	Romney+11
Suffolk/7	12/10 - 12/13	20	38	8	1	2	3	13	Romney+18
CNN/Time	11/29 - 12/6	26	35	17	2	2	3	8	Romney +9
South Carolina									
RCP Average	11/27 - 12/6	41	21.7	6.3	8	3	6	1.7	Gingrich +19.3
NBC/Marist	12/14 - 12-16	42	23	9	7	2	7	3	Gingrich +19
CNN/Time	11/29 - 12-6	43	20	6	8	4	6	1	Gingrich + 23
Winthrop	11/27 - 12/4	38	22	4	9	3	5	1	Gingrich +16



guys. It would be a field day for political journalists, you should be rooting for it.”

(Publisher’s Note: I am.)

“The formula has been, you need someone to lock it up early and then they can raise money for this and that. But I said, ‘Well, but only if the person locks it up early, and only if it’s the best person to carry the flag. Soooo, probably won’t happen. Probably won’t. The requirement is for delegates to vote one ballot for whoever won the primary means the primaries once again settles all of this. But wouldn’t a genuine convention be fascinating? Absolutely. Would it lead to the strongest nominee? Maybe. The people there would be looking for the strongest nominee. It would probably not be a nominee with one-issue zealotry. So I could imagine that being good for a party and a national standpoint.”

Rhodes Cook, a senior columnist for Larry Sabato’s *Chrystal Ball*, wrote, “The elongated layout of the nominating calendar this time provides the opportunity for a late-starting candidate to emerge. Should Mitt Romney stumble badly in the January events in Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina and Florida, another establishment Republican could enter the race in early February and still compete directly in states with at least 1,200 of the 2,282 or so GOP delegates. Many of them will be up for grabs after April 1 when statewide winner-take-all is possible. Similarly, should non-Romney alternatives led by Newt Gingrich, Michele Bachmann and Rick Perry fall flat in the January contests, there would be time for the conservative wing of the party to find a new champion to carry its banner through the bulk of the primary season. In some respects, the layout of the 2012 primary calendar resembles that in 1976, starting in the dead of winter with events in Iowa and New Hampshire and building to a crescendo with California in early June. That year, President Gerald Ford and former California Gov. Ronald Reagan battled delegate for delegate until Ford prevailed at the convention that summer in Kansas City. It was the most closely contested and longest-running Republican nominating contest in the last 40 years.”

He added, “There are arguably a few prominent Republicans ... who could mount a competitive, late-starting candidacy in 2012. These could include one of the establishment non-candidates who Republican elites pressured to enter the race earlier this year, such as Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels, Rep. Paul Ryan (WI), ex-Florida Gov.



Jeb Bush or New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie (although Christie has already endorsed Mitt Romney).”

HPI asked the inevitable hypothetical: a brokered convention with a wave of delegates turning into a draft movement to a new face like Daniels or Christie - the ultimate draft.

HPI reasoned: you’re then talking about a three-month slog as opposed to the 18 month harrowing march for candidate and family. Would Daniels give his “General Sher-

man” statement?

“Well, there’s just no way,” Daniels said dismissively. But it still fell short of Gen. Sherman.

U.S. Senate: Lugar presses pipeline

The Senate has passed by a vote of 89-10 year-end legislation that includes Sen. Dick Lugar’s bill that forces President Obama to make a decision on construction of the Keystone XL oil pipeline. The only legitimate way the President can avoid permitting pipeline construction within 60 days is to determine that oil trade with Canada is not in the national interest of the United States.

The bill is part of an end-of-year legislative package that will also include an extension of the reduction in payroll taxes for two months.

“This bill will stop President Obama’s delaying tactics. This is a tremendous victory for our security and for creating jobs. It is absolutely incredible that President Obama wants to delay a decision until after the 2012 elections apparently in fear of offending a part of his political base and even risking the ire of construction unions who strongly support the project. It is the largest shovel-ready infrastructure project in the United States,” Lugar said.

“The President will no longer be able to duck his responsibility to American Workers. He must now make a decision.”

Lugar introduced his bill on November 30. Led by Lugar, a bipartisan group of 41 Senators have cosponsored the Lugar-Hoeven-Vitter legislation that would compel the Obama Administration to act on a construction permit for the Keystone XL pipeline in 60 days.

The House of Representatives included the Lugar language in the payroll tax reduction bill that passed the House of Representatives on December 13 by a vote of 234-193.

A likely Bob Thomas entry into the Indiana Senate



race means trouble for Richard Mourdock's insurgent bid to unseat Sen. Dick Lugar (Politico). A Howey Politics Indiana report signaling a move just after the New Year swiftly prompted a drop of support on Thomas. Documents provided to POLITICO show that Thomas, a wealthy auto dealer, has had a checkered voting history. Thomas did not vote in primary elections in 2008 and 2011 and failed to cast a ballot in the 2010 general. Going back further, he appeared to be more inclined to skip primary votes. In the past decade, he showed up just once to participate in a primary — and that was in 2010 when he was running for Congress. An email to Thomas' campaign account was not returned. Mourdock's team should see Thomas as a real threat. His entry likely divides the anti-Lugar vote, squashing the best chance at bringing down the six-term GOP incumbent.

Scott Minier, formerly with the Indiana Senate Majority Caucus, has joined the Friends of Dick Lugar U.S. Senate campaign.

Indiana State Treasurer and U.S. Senate Candidate in the 2012 Republican Primary Richard Mourdock is calling for Justice Elena Kagan to recuse herself from the legal challenge to ObamaCare scheduled for next spring at the U.S. Supreme Court. Justice Kagan was the Solicitor General within the Department of Justice, which represents the federal government's position before the federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court. "I add my name to a growing list of Republicans calling for Justice Elena Kagan to immediately recuse herself from considering the pending legal challenge to the Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act, a takeover of the private healthcare industry by the federal government," stated Treasurer Mourdock. "Justice Kagan headed the office responsible for drafting the legal defense of ObamaCare, which is clearly a conflict."

Mourdock's U.S. Senate campaign has a new website at <http://richardmourdock.com/> (Howey Politics Indiana). The campaign notes: Reflecting the campaign's energetic grassroots support, we re-designed our website to add a new events section, provide easier access to our blog, and we are now proudly displaying our donor and volunteer numbers.

2nd CD: Blue Dogs endorse Mullen

The Blue Dog Coalition announced last week that it has endorsed Brendan Mullen in his race for Indiana's 2nd Congressional District. Mullen is one of the first five candidates across the country to earn the support of the moderate and conservative Democratic coalition. "The Blue Dogs have always represented the common sense middle and mainstream values of American politics. We've fought for balanced budgets, private sector economic growth, and to support our men and women in uniform," Rep. Jim Matheson (D-UT) Co-Chair of the Blue Dog PAC said. "We know that Brendan Mullen shares those commitments and won't

hesitate to stand up to party leadership, on either side of the aisle, for what he knows is right. We could not be more pleased to endorse Brendan." Mullen, a South Bend native, is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Iraq War veteran, and entrepreneur. "As a small business owner and job creator, I know the importance of fiscal discipline and common sense, and I am running for Congress because these Hoosier values need to be heard in Washington," said Mullen. "I'm glad that the Blue Dogs, the voice of fiscal conservatism in Congress, recognized our campaign to put Indiana on a strong economic path, and I'm honored to have their support."

6th CD: Messer picks up Hancock support

Luke Messer picked up the Hancock County endorsements of State Senator Bev Gard, State Rep. Bob Cherry, Hancock County Prosecutor and Republican Party Chairman Michael Griffin and Greenfield Mayor-Elect Dick Pasco.

8th CD: Crooks gets party nod

From cities, farms and the towns in between, Democrat leaders of the "Bloody 8th" named Dave Crooks their man for 2012 (Boyce, Terre Haute Tribune-Star). The lobby inside Vincennes University's Indiana Center for Applied Technology building bubbled with participants at last week's Democrat Party Caucus. Thirty-eight delegates from the 19 counties contained within Indiana's 8th Congressional District caucused beginning at noon to determine who they would support in the 2012 race against incumbent Rep. Larry Bucshon. Candidates included former congressional aide Patrick Scates, Warrick County Democrat chairman Terry White and former state Rep. Dave Crooks of Washington. Caucus proceedings were closed to the public, but by 1:53 p.m. the speeches had been heard, questions answered and votes tallied. Members of Crooks' staff hugged in the hallway outside the meeting room, announcing they'd won. Crooks, who turned 48 Tuesday, is a Graysville native and graduate of Sullivan High School. According to information provided by the campaign, Crooks' working life began at the age of 9 when he took a job at a gas station down the street from his home. Taking his first position at a radio station at the age of 17, he followed that career path through adulthood, eventually coming to own stations in both Daviess and Knox counties. Between 1996 and 2008 he served as representative for Indiana's 63rd House District, before deciding to retire. His decision to run for the U.S. Congress was announced earlier this spring. "I'm very humbled to be the nominee of the 8th District candidates," he said after the caucus announced its decision. "The message is we can win this election," he said amid congratulations and cheers. ❖



What were they thinking?

By **RUSS STILWELL**

BOONVILLE - After reviewing all of the attention being focused on Right to Work in our Hoosier state by the proponents and opponents, I realized the obvious: Gov. Daniels and our Republican legislative leaders want the same things that I do.

One might ask, how can that be? After all, Russ Stilwell is a passionate labor advocate, former member of the House Democrat caucus and an outspoken opponent of most of the anti-labor agenda items the Republican leadership is delivering to our state.



Yep, it's true. They want good-paying jobs that support a family. They tout jobs with benefits like health care and a vacation every now and then. And a job that just might provide a little retirement nest egg.

And guess what? That's exactly what almost every union job provides. It just does not make any sense that this is the same gang that sets out to de-

stroy labor unions and our middle class.

The Republican-controlled legislature and their leadership team cannot call our Hoosier state a great place to live when they place the blame for our economic peril and high unemployment on our public servants who educate our kids, pick up our trash and clean their offices.

When they seek to eliminate unions, end collective bargaining and initiate Right to Work, they are seeking to undermine the middle class as we know it.

They are destroying the only segment of our society that demands that Hoosier workers are paid a fair wage, have a safe place to work and share in the fruits of their labor. Many of our prominent presidents and national leaders seem to agree:

"Every advance in this half century – Social Security, civil rights, Medicare, aid to education, one after another – came with the support and leadership of American Labor." – President Jimmy Carter

Only a handful of reactionaries harbor the ugly thought of breaking unions and depriving working men and women of the right to join the union of their choice. I have no use for those, regardless of their political party, who hold some vain and foolish dream of spinning the clock back to days when organized labor was huddled, almost as a hapless mass.

"Only a fool would try to deprive working men and women of the right to join the union of their choice." –

Dwight D. Eisenhower

"Our labor unions are not narrow, self-seeking groups. They have raised wages, shortened hours, and provided supplemental benefits. Through collective bargaining and grievance procedures, they have brought justice and democracy to the shop floor." – John F. Kennedy

"If I went to work in a factory, the first thing I'd do would be to join a Union." – President Franklin D. Roosevelt

"There are no rights and no work in Right to Work." – Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

I recognize that only about 12% of Hoosier workers are in unions. But that 12% sets the standards across the board in salaries, benefits and working conditions. If you are making a decent salary in a non-union company, you owe that to a union.

And now our illustrious legislative leadership has proclaimed that the implementation of Right to Work will produce more jobs, bring in more companies and treat workers with dignity and respect. Give me a break. Don't think most Hoosiers are ready to start drinking that Kool-Aid.

I'm sure that these same leaders must have supported the ill-fated Herman Cain presidential campaign. They must have loved his 9-9-9 plan. After all, it sounds just like the recently implemented Hoosier 25-25-25 plan: Cut unemployment insurance (UI) benefits for workers by 25%. Cut corporate and business UI taxes by 25%. Cut corporate income tax 25%. There are many Hoosiers who believe

that unions might be the last line of defense for workers and keeping the middle class.

These same folks

also don't buy into the theory that the implementation of RTW is because of some economic advantage.

They see it as I do. It's a political assault to put labor unions out of business in our state. It's a final stake in the heart of those who, for the most part, support the "other political party."

We constantly hear that Indiana ranks fifth in the nation for a great business environment. Yet these same folks blame unions for not having enough jobs. Their solution? Destroy unions, pass RTW and pass another tax break for folks who just don't need them.

RTW is a simple but divisive concept. I guess that most of the General Assembly members don't fully understand it.





RTW is no more than mandating that there cannot be a union security clause in any labor agreement. It is not about protecting workers from paying mandatory dues.

I keep hearing the Chamber of Commerce, that great institution of workers' rights, defending Hoosier workers against forced unionism. It's the first time I've heard the Chamber defending workers' rights in a long, long time. And they got it all wrong.

Workers in union shops do not have to belong to the union. But they do have to pay a "fair share" for having representation and benefits of a union contract provided by their union.

Right to Work actually means that a worker in a union shop would not have to pay any fees for union representation, but get all the rights and privileges of the union contract.

And the union must represent these non-paying workers in all contractual matters, just like they do for their co-workers who pay union dues. And get this. They can even sue the union if they believe they don't get fair representation.

This isn't about fairness for Hoosier workers. This is about pay-back time. It is all about the business community and their Republican allies banding together to weaken unions and help make our state union free.

Each time the House Republicans overreached, they paid the price in the next election. Yep, history does repeat itself. They did it with prevailing wage in 1995 and lost in '96. They did it again in 2005 and lost in '06.

And they are doing it again in 2011 and will pay the price in 2012. Yes, we do have referendums in Indiana. They are called elections.

My predictions? Right to Work legislation will slow the 2012 session of the Indiana General Assembly to an absolute crawl so broad and consuming that Hoosiers will think it has come to an absolute halt.

There will be more protests, more lobbying and more television and news shows focusing on this one single issue than all other issues combined in past years. RTW will take the breath out of every other issue before the legislature.

I predict that national pundits will set up shop in Indiana (both from the right and the left) and make our Hoosier state the centerpiece of what's wrong with America. And just in time for the Super Bowl week with an international audience!

And I predict that at the end of the day, folks will be asking, "Why didn't we talk about jobs? Why didn't we talk about our schools?"

And as the 2012 session begins and explodes, they will ask the old question: "What were they thinking?"❖

Stilwell is a former Democratic majority leader in the Indiana House.

2012 looks like it will be a wild political ride

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE – In December of 1995 I drove to Florida with my sons for a bowl game. The government was shut down because the Democrat President wanted to spend more than the Republican Congress did. Here it is December, over 25 years later, and – as Yogi Berra would say – "it's déjà vu all over again." Back in 1995 we were headed to the Notre Dame-Florida State bowl game. Back then IU was winning basketball games. Back then Newt Gingrich was the center of all Republican attention. Hmmm.



However, it is not exactly the same. For one thing, 21 years ago, Richard Lugar had just won reelection in 1994 at the age of 62 having served 18 years. In 2012 he will be seeking another six years on top of his already served 36 years and would be 86 when completing his term.

One of the top Indiana stories of 2012 will be whether Indiana Republicans will renominate our most legendary senator, but one who has crossed swords with the solidly conservative wing of the party and will be, to say it nicely, rather old. His current opponent, Richard Mourdock, has the activist support which would normally mean that he could get up to a third of the vote. He's run statewide, which should help, but his funding thus far suggests that Lugar could bury him in dollars.

Sen. Lugar has also shown muscle in getting party regulars back in line and a sure sign of the blowing wind is the fear of elected officials not to be seen allied with him, including Tea Party favorite Congressman Marlin Stutzman, whose most publicized efforts in Congress thus far are with Lugar on agriculture reform.

The Lugar network, more accurately "networks," are everywhere in the state. Other than women, universities, foundations, agriculture, elected officials, health care, sports, Indianapolis, and all major businesses, the Lugar networks may not be that strong.

Indianapolis businessman Bob Thomas is now considering getting into the race as well. He has run very successful Ford dealerships in Fort Wayne for many years, as well as his Indianapolis dealership. He faces several major obstacles, in addition to the Lugar network and banked assets.



Bob Thomas ran against me in the 2010 primary because he could not get the signatures for his planned Senate race. He still faces a challenge in that area. The South Bend people who are skilled at hired signatures aren't available right now. There is a pretty good chance that others who used this approach might be a tad intimidated.

Available volunteers

that aren't part of a relatively weak GOP organization are with Mourdock. (It isn't the same as when few women worked and the license bureau was patronage heaven.) It is unlikely that homeschoolers, gun advocates, evangelicals and pro-life activists will desert Mourdock for Thomas. Bob will get support from auto dealers and other frustrated entrepreneurial business people who believe that the solutions in Washington are simple if the politicians weren't so stupid. Unfortunately, they tend not to like to collect signatures or go door to door.

The potential Thomas core support could be valuable for financial support, but they often are not major donors because they prefer to do their risk-taking in business. In other words, Bob Thomas can be a real potential threat to Lugar if he is willing to spend three to five million of his personal dollars as other car dealers have done nationally. And he still would need a lot more to win. To be a serious contender will take lots of millions in available cash, not money raised. Potentially several million could come from outside groups, but that would not be enough. Sen. Lugar knows that there is no general election for him without a primary victory.

When Bob ran against me, he had no issues record. Contrary to what has been said, he was slipping in the polls, not closing, as his positions became known. He effectively used videos and appeared at many meetings during the two active months. Though he is extremely bright, it was all new to him and as his positions became more clear, I exploited them. Sen. Lugar will as well.

Thomas also had another huge benefit in that race. Northeast Indiana, other than Fort Wayne, is in a Republican cycle right now so Democrats vote heavily in the Republican primary. Polling and the results suggested that a minimum of 25% of the Thomas voters also voted for President Obama, and saw it as the only chance to get me out. That will not happen against Sen. Lugar. Crossover votes northeast, and likely around the state, will mostly be

for Lugar. And, of course, Mourdock and Thomas will split the "Lugar is too old" vote.

Things can change, but Lugar is likely to win solidly unless things do change a lot. That is actually good news for Mike Pence and the Republican presidential nominee, especially if it is Newt Gingrich. Not very long ago it



seemed that Indiana would be a lock for Mike Pence and the Republican presidential nominee. Now, with the intense Republican splits and a significant possibility of a real third party threat to the Republicans, Indiana could be back in play for the President.

Mike Pence is still likely the winner for governor, possibly easily, but if Obama wins the state and a divided party rejects the more moderate Lugar, the Pence race is more at risk. For the record, I chaired Ed Whitcomb's 1976 Allen County primary campaign against Lugar. While I have tremendous respect for Sen. Lugar – even when we disagreed I always studied his views – I belong to the more conservative faction of the party. This analysis is my political analysis, not about my personal views.

But I will say this: the most important thing for conservatives in Indiana is the election of Mike Pence as governor. We need to make sure we don't blow it. Regardless of your personal views, all signs do point to a very interesting 2012 in Indiana. ❖

Souder is a former Republican congressman from Indiana.



Weighing the GOP race in Iowa

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND - No Republican presidential candidate in the Jan. 3 Iowa caucuses is likely to come anywhere close to beating Jackie Walorski.

Jackie for president! No. Walorski is a Republican candidate for Congress in Indiana's 2nd District. Just as she was in 2010, when she got 88,803 votes. And lost.



The winning Republican presidential candidate in Iowa is unlikely to beat the losing total for Walorski in her race in a district containing a ninth of Indiana's population.

Back in 2008, about 120,000 voters participated in the Iowa Republican caucuses. Mike Huckabee won with 40,954 votes.

Estimates on the turnout this time vary. Maybe it will be significantly larger than in '08 if Iowa Republicans are enthusiastic over prospects for defeating President Obama. Maybe it will be less if a lot of them were turned off by a field of Republican prospects that engaged in some less than uplifting debates.

Even if the total climbs, it once again will be a relatively small number of Iowa voters who could have a huge impact on the eventual selection of the president.

Likely Iowa Republican caucus goers are bombarded with conflicting messages.

They hear calls to define the soul of the Republican Party by rejecting Mitt Romney as too moderate, not an unwavering conservative.

They hear calls to go with Newt Gingrich, despite past wavers and baggage, because he is best equipped to tear apart Obama in presidential debates.

They hear calls to select Romney because national polls show he is the Republican with the best chance to sway independents and beat Obama in the general election.

They hear calls to forget national polls that have shifted from one flavor of the month to another in the Republican race and go with someone they like, maybe libertarian Ron Paul or feisty Michele Bachmann.

Herman Cain is done. Rick Perry seems to have done himself in. And Rick Santorum hasn't been able so far to get going.

Back in '08, the huge impact was in the Democratic caucuses, with Obama overtaking presumed nomination

front-runner Hillary Clinton, who actually came in third, even a bit behind the now infamous John Edwards.

The Iowa caucuses have become the traditional first step in the presidential nominating process since 1972, when George McGovern gained attention there. In 1976, Jimmy Carter virtually lived in Iowa in order to begin his climb from little known to known as "Mr. President."

So, while many of us are still returning Christmas gifts and before the college football champion for the 2011 season has been determined, some Iowa voters venturing out on a winter night just over two weeks from now will have impact way beyond their state.

They could send a winner on with momentum to become the Republican nominee. Someone who will win the presidency? Someone who won't?

They will help or hurt Gingrich and Romney and perhaps signal to Republicans around the nation to seek somebody else.

A search for somebody else has been going on for months, particularly among Tea Party enthusiasts and others staunchly conservative. The search led to the flavor of the month, as first one alternative to Romney and then another moved in front in polls and then crashed - Donald Trump, Bachmann, Perry, Cain.

Gingrich, not long ago written off, now has zoomed ahead in polls.

Iowa results will indicate whether he is just a December flavor or a likely nominee. If he wins impressively in Iowa and goes on with momentum to come close in New Hampshire and win big in South Carolina, Gingrich will be a clear front-runner, even if the Republican establishment does fear he couldn't win in the general election.

If Romney, not expected to win in Iowa, comes in a very strong second or third, as Gingrich wins narrowly or maybe as Paul pulls an upset, Romney will be in position to win big in New Hampshire and go on to the nomination.

If nobody looks especially strong, could the party turn to somebody else? Jon Huntsman?

While the Iowa vote will have big national impact, remember that the winner in the Republican caucuses almost certainly will fail to beat Jackie Walorski's losing total in just one district in Indiana. ❖

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



Remembering Bill Cook

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. - "Oh wow, oh wow, oh wow."

That was the most intriguing quote of 2011. Those were Apple creator Steve Jobs' last words before skipping the surly bonds, according to his sister. What was Steve seeing? God? Jesus? Buddha? The iCar? A Higgs boson?

We will never know. Harry Houdini left special instructions for communication beyond life. After a fist in the gut, a sudden death, no one ever heard from Harry again.

This all got me thinking of Bill Cook.

Bill passed away this year and here was a Hoosier who left an indelible legacy, not only with his contribution to the medical community, but his commitment to the restoration of the splendid past into a sprawling future. I was most intrigued by the West Baden Hotel. When I first came upon it, it was a ruin. A good part of



a whole five-story wing had collapsed. It was in terrible shape. It was built in 1901 by Harrison Albright, after a fire that same year destroyed the first resort built in 1851, named West Baden after a famous German spa. Albright designed the largest free-standing dome in the world that wouldn't be surpassed until the Houston AstroDome construction began in 1962. Ownership by the Sinclair family eventually passed to Charles Ballard. Growing up in Peru, Ind., I lived in a subdivision adjacent to the huge Ballard estate there. Under Ballard's leadership the hotel flourished until the stock market crash in 1929 and it was forced to close. West Baden steadily deteriorated for the next five decades.

I was sad about the condition of this fabulous hotel. I never dreamed it would be restored and I remember taking one tiny tile from the main atrium as a souvenir. It sits in a special place near my office.

But Bill and Gayle Cook, along with Indiana Historic Landmarks, stepped in and restored the West Baden Hotel. It is a magnificent place today. I remember writing a column at twilight at the bar in the atrium, sipping a Stella, watching dusk wander into night, the lights low, the voices hushed. My computer was hooked into the World Wide Web.

The Cooks pumped tens of millions into its restoration.

When I was writing for NUVO Newsweekly, I had

the wonderful opportunity of meeting Bill Cook. As we gazed skyward, Cook explained, "I'm in awe. It's like I'm a stranger in something I've done."

This is a man who didn't often search for words. But the wonder of the hotel left him pondering in beautiful fragments: "It's just ... the same sensation ... that I have ... such a magnificent building."

I was truly moved.

More than a decade ago a friend and I took our kids to the partially restored West Baden. We packed a picnic lunch and a blanket and drove there. We spread out on the lawn and watched a huge Sikorsky S-64 Skycrane lift four prefabricated towers on the four corners of the hotel. It was a lovely experience, the completion of the exterior in the most grandiose of fashion. I was moved when the Sirkosky chopper took off from the ground several hours after the final tower had been affixed. It lifted slowly away and the massive rotors thumped our chests. Everyone stood up and gazed into the sky as it rose above the building, hovering for a moment, and then it did a 360 around the hotel, nose at a downward angle, the crew taking one last look at its magnificence.

It was a stunning, definitive moment that still leaves me breathless.

I saw Bill Cook in 2010, after giving a speech to some of his Cook Group employees. Afterwards, we talked for about 10 minutes on the Monroe County Courthouse Square about the economy, and journalism, and I thanked him for what he and Gayle did at West Baden.

In August 2003, I was next door to the old hotel at French Lick Springs, and Gov. Frank O'Bannon was giving the keynote to the Indiana Democratic Editorial Association that night. I had heard the Governor speak many times, and when he began talking this night, I wasn't taking notes. But then Frank began talking about

the West Baden Hotel and I picked up my pad and pen and began scribbling notes. He told the story of how the architect - Harrison Albright - stood atop the dome when the workers pounded away the supports. Folks gawked below, wondering if the whole thing would really stay up thar, or whether Mr. Albright would plunge to his death.

Of course, we know what happened. Albright survived, as does his splendid hotel today. But those would be Gov. O'Bannon's last public words. He passed away a few short weeks later.

Why do I write this today? In hopes that in some Indiana garage or basement, some genius is bringing a fantastic idea to life and market, and that the next Bill Cook or Steve Jobs stands like a seed among us, leading us deeper into the 21st Century.

Oh wow, Oh wow, Oh wow. ❖





A report from Afghanistan

By U.S. REP. MARLIN STUTZMAN

WASHINGTON - This past week, I traveled to Afghanistan with Congressman Paul Ryan and fellow colleagues on the House Budget Committee. Since the first day of the 112th Congress, we've aimed to set aside political rhetoric and let the facts steer the conversation. As American foreign policy re-focuses on Afghanistan, our nation's \$15 trillion debt will force more difficult choices. Moving deeper than the budget tables, graphs, and CBO analyses, the trip offered an indispensable "boots-on-the-ground" perspective for the debates to come.

Our country is paying a dear price for success in Afghanistan. After ten years, we've spent \$444 billion and lost nearly 2,000 American lives. This sacrifice for a peaceful future has created real hope. Along with our NATO allies, we have the Taliban on the run—no small feat in some of the harshest terrain on earth. Now, with the warmer fighting season behind us, our forces spend the majority of the winter months working toward stable government and sustainable economic development.

Unfortunately, without a responsible transition of authority to the Afghan people, our military will be immersed in local affairs for the foreseeable future. While this is a grave concern to Americans, many Afghans view this reality favorably. While discussing troop levels with local leaders in Sangin, one gentleman told us that he would be happy to see U.S. soldiers in his country through 2025. This, we assured him, would not be the case.

In an effort to hand over responsibility to the Afghan people, U.S. strategy pursues three goals—security, food, and education. Successes in each of these areas will not only support a more peaceful and free Afghanistan, they will alleviate our nation's obligations.

Lasting security is built on trust. To develop that trust, Americans are embedding themselves in local communities. Through a bottom-up approach, we enter a village and make it known that Americans have come to help, whether that means eliminating Taliban activity or clearing the logistic hurdles for development projects. The strategy widens the gap between insurgents and the population and has been met with success. Communities that appreciate the tangible benefits of our daily cooperation are more likely to partner with Special Forces targeting insurgent leaders.

Although insurgents are significantly weakened, they are still capable of much disruption. Pakistani safe havens offer lifelines to an enemy that finds fewer and fewer sympathizers in the civilian population. Economic and political fragility threatens our military progress, which is why we're also focused on food and education.

Agriculture will be an essential element to an independent, sustainable Afghanistan. Broadly speaking, we face two significant challenges.

First, we're introducing families to the long-term costs and benefits of crop choices. By choosing to grow wheat and corn instead of opium, Afghans open the door for construction projects like roads, schools, and irrigation systems. Opting to participate in the drug trade only excludes them from these hefty advantages.

Second, we're working to develop commercial agriculture in a country more accustomed to a subsistence based economy with a yearly GDP of only \$27.3 billion. Americans are training the Afghan people the farming practices that supply commodities for larger markets.

Education ensures that the successes we see today are not eroded tomorrow. At Camp Eggers in Kabul and Camp Leatherneck in Helmand, I found an enthusiastic Afghan National Army. It's clear that the Afghan people value American support and want to fight the Taliban. That spirit has shown results, as their "Effective with Assistance" rating rose from 52% to 72% in just a year. However, those successes are directly correlated to increased literacy.

It gave me pause to think that, in a country that's struggling to establish a fair and independent judiciary, we've set a goal to bring recruits and officials up to a third grade reading level in their own language. In the last year, the Afghan National Security Forces, the national police force, produced its 100,000th graduate—an important milestone but a modest start in a country of over 28 million.

In Kabul, our group had an opportunity to observe police training. One recruit told me that he joined after the Taliban killed his family. Yes, his story is inspiring. But, more importantly, it's characteristic of a nation in the process of rebuilding itself. Afghans like him will decide the future of their country.

As the 2014 deadline for a peaceful and democratic transfer of power approaches, the efforts I saw were welcome signs. As the work in Afghanistan accelerates, this target may be prudent. However, decisions to broadcast any strategic timetable lack foresight. We have paid too high a price for the Taliban to lick its wounds, bide its time, and return in force.

We have a tough road ahead of us. I'm convinced that we're making progress and our strategy is producing results. We have a solemn obligation to honor the sacrifices that our fighting men and women have made. The Afghan people have no less of an obligation to accept responsibility for their own future. Meanwhile, our \$15 trillion debt continues to threaten our nation's future as we search for cost-saving measures in Washington. Every step toward establishing security, developing agriculture, and educating Afghans reduces our long-term fiscal commitments. ❖



Time for HPI Power 50

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - What a year 2011 was. It set the stage for what will be a historic 2012, the so-called "rubber match" year between President Obama, his Democrats, and Republicans like Mike Pence who hope to overturn the federal health reform mandates while restoring the economy.

As we've done every year since 1999, Howey Politics Indiana is asking its readers to help weigh in and choose who will likely shape this year's events, who will star on the headlines and newscasts, and who will add (or detract) in the public policy and political arenas.

The 2011 list was a budget year, the long session of the Indiana General Assembly, there were congressional showdowns and we had city elections. It was dominated in legislators, congressional members, mayors and municipal challengers. The state was ravaged by the Great Recession with its jobless rate hovering between 8.5 and 9%. Normally we publish the Power 50 list in the first edition of the year. We waited until the Feb. 7 edition last year for two reasons: to calculate the political plans of Pence, who flirted with a presidential bid before deciding to run for governor, and Evan Bayh, who considered a return to gubernatorial politics. This year, we return the list to early January - it will be published on Thursday, Jan. 5.

Old mayors will drop off the list, new ones arrive, and we are in the twilight of the Daniels administration, with established players like Pence and John Gregg preparing to battle it out for the office on the Statehouse second floor. We will see an intense U.S. Senate race, both in the Republican primary and in the general election. And there will be the candidates' political operatives who will help shape the events of the coming year.

The Power 50 is designed to spotlight those who will play major roles in the coming year, as opposed to simply those with a prominent or hefty resumes.

HPI readers historically have participated in two ways: nominating specific people, or compiling their own lists. We will seriously consider all who weigh in, and you can help determine who has the clout, the imposing points of view, and who will be the movers and shakers. Please send us your lists or nominations to: bhowey2@gmail.com by Dec. 31.

To view other Howey Political Report/Howey Politics Indiana Power 50 lists, you can go to the Indiana Digital Archives and Howey publications also can be reviewed as an individual collection www.indianadigitalarchives.org/TitleInfo.aspx?TID=107 that is searchable by keyword, date and author.

2011 HPI Power 50

1. Gov. Mitch Daniels

2. U.S. Rep. Mike Pence
3. U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar
4. House Speaker Brian Bosma
5. Senate President David Long
6. U.S. Rep. Joe Donnelly
7. Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard
8. Melina Kennedy
9. Sen. Sue Landske and Rep. Eric Koch
10. Supt. Tony Bennett
11. Ways & Means Chairman Jeff Espich
12. Evansville Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel
13. State Sen. Mike Delph and Treasurer Richard Mourdock
14. Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry
15. State Sen. Luke Kenley
16. House Minority Leader B. Patrick Bauer
17. Marty Morris
18. U.S. Sen. Dan Coats
19. Republican Chairman Eric Holcomb
20. U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky
21. U.S. Rep. Dan Burton
22. U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman
23. U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita
24. U.S. Rep. Todd Young
25. U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon
26. Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr.
27. Budget Director Adam Horst
28. State Sen. Brandt Hershman
29. Attorney General Greg Zoeller
30. Carmel Mayor Jim Brainard
31. Indiana Democratic Chairman Dan Parker
32. State Rep. Ed DeLaney
33. U.S. Rep. Andre Carson
34. Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman
35. Earl Goode
36. Betsy Burdick
37. Lawren Mills
38. State Reps. Chet Dobis and Steve Stemler
39. Marion County Democratic Chairman Ed Treacy
40. Evan Bayh
41. Chris Chocola
42. Senate Majority Leader Connie Lawson
43. Kokomo Mayor Greg Goodnight
44. Howard County Republican Chairman Craig Dunn
45. Chamber President Kevin Brinegar and IMA President Pat Kiely
46. ISTA President Nate Schellenberger and AFL-CIO Nancy Guyott
47. State Sen. Ed Charbonneau
48. John Gregg
49. Brad Ellsworth
50. Luke Messer ❖





Rich James, Post-Tribune: When the General Assembly convenes on Jan. 4, the eyes of the nation may well be on Indiana. Not because the state remains the best in the nation when it comes to high school basketball, but because there will be an unwarranted attack upon organized labor. The Republicans, who do the bidding of corporations and other businesses, will seek the passage of a right-to-work bill. The bill would force organized labor to represent workers who refuse to pay union dues. The bill also would be a significant step by Republicans to destroy the unions that built America. The Republicans say right-to-work will clear the way for additional businesses to relocate to Indiana. Those are the very same businesses that have no desire to deal with unions. They want to drive down workers' wages and increase corporate profits and power. Statistics show the average worker in a right-to-work state makes about \$5,333 a year less than workers in other states. Twenty-one percent more people in right-to-work states don't have health insurance. And the list goes on. Do Republicans care? Of course not, although they will try to tell you otherwise. And they wonder why they can't get the union vote. Republicans contend corporations have shipped jobs overseas because of the cost of dealing with unions. Don't buy it. It's about greed. Republicans also will tell you that Democrats oppose right to work because of the money that unions contribute to their party. While there is truth to that, there is a bigger issue involved here. It is about quality of life for the middle class — a group that has been declining in numbers because of attacks like the one planned by Republican legislators. Unions aren't perfect, but they provide quality craftsmanship and are an integral part of a community. Gov. Mitch Daniels keeps boasting that Indiana is one of the most attractive states in the country for new business. If that in fact is the case, and I have no reason to doubt it, why the push for right-to-work? I guess the easy answer is that they can. **Editor's note:** James was laid off from the Post-Tribune earlier this month. ❖

Doug Ross, NWI Times: Democrats in the Indiana Senate pounced right away on the major accounting error that hid \$320 million in state revenues. Who can blame them? The Democrats want an investigation into what went wrong, when it was discovered and why it took so long to make this information public. Again, who can blame them. But comparing that missing/now found money to the \$300 million in K-12 education funding that was pulled by the state during the budget crunch is a bit of a non sequitur. All aspects of government have been clobbered because of reduced revenues. Education is a vital government function, don't get me wrong. Acquiring a good education is a tremendous boost not just to an individual's wages and

economic prospects, but also to the community and the state as well. Poorly educated people tend to require more social services. And a high educational attainment level is important in attracting high-paying jobs. The state's \$320 million windfall should be used for something that will have a significant impact. Carve out \$30 million to pay the state's share of the Cline Avenue bridge replacement. But what should be done with the rest of that money? I could make a good case for investing a substantial portion of that windfall into pre-K education. That's one area where Indiana has been losing ground. Or Indiana lawmakers could make sure full-day kindergarten is fully funded. But the biggest risk, perhaps, is that higher education in Indiana could become elitist, with Indiana and Purdue universities deciding to put more emphasis into being global schools for students from around the world than into educating Hoosiers. If you want to look at what aspect of education has taken the biggest hits in state funding, though, look at higher education. Funding to state-supported colleges and universities, as a proportion of total income, has been dropping for years, not just because of the recession. ❖



Andrea Neal, Evansville Courier & Press: The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates the United States needs \$2.2 trillion of infrastructure spending over the next five years to upgrade its bridges, highways, waterways, etc. It's an unmanageable amount considering that Congress is supposed to be finding ways to trim \$1.2 trillion from the deficit. Backing up Daniels' claims is a fascinating case study of two construction projects on Elkhart County Road 17, one subject to federal mandates and the other not. The study was conducted in 2009 by Dulcy Abraham and Varun Kishore of Purdue University's School of Civil Engineering and sponsored by state and federal transportation departments. The road underwent a major upgrade beginning in 2002. One stretch of the improvement, heading north toward Michigan, was completed using all local dollars. The other segment, heading south from County Road 18, was financed mostly by federal taxpayers. Both projects used competitive bidding. Both followed the same lane and shoulder width, lane slope and pavement thickness standards. Both were done by the same contractor. Here's the part that will make taxpayers sick. After adjusting for inflation and project differentials, researchers determined the cost per mile of the local project was \$1 million. The cost per mile of the federal project was \$2.8 million — and that's despite the economies of scale that come with federal purchasing power. ❖



Key Daniels aides to stay into 2012

INDIANAPOLIS - A group of senior state executives who've led agencies under Mitch Daniels took office and intend to remain until he finishes his second term generally agree on one thing: They joined the public sector because of the Republican governor and they have stayed because of him. The Journal Gazette reported Sunday the group includes Indiana State Police Superintendent Paul Whitesell, Gaming Commission Executive Director Ernest Yelton, Inspector General David Thomas, Environmental Management Commissioner Thomas Easterly, and Director Jim Payne of the Department of Child Services. He says his tenure at the Gaming Commission "has been one heck of a ride" and he intends to stay on until Daniels' term ends at the end of 2012. Yelton was a trial court judge for 25 years before he joined the Daniels administration. He says his tenure at the Gaming Commission "has been one heck of a ride" and he intends to stay on until Daniels' term ends at the end of 2012.



Spec. Hickman the last to die in Iraq

GREENSBORO, N.C. — To find Army Spec. David Emanuel Hickman on the morning after his unit returned to Fort Bragg from Iraq, you had to drive 100 miles north, to his home town. Up Highway 29, less than two clicks from the northeast Greensboro cul-de-sac where he grew up, Hickman was in Lot 54 in the Garden of Peace at Lakeview Memorial Park Cemetery (Washington Post). Freshly turned red

soil covered his coffin, which went into the ground two weeks and a day before he was due home. There were two shriveled carnations on the damp dirt. There was no marker yet, no indication that this was a soldier's grave. Hickman, 23, was killed in Baghdad by a roadside bomb that ripped through his armored truck Nov. 14 — eight years, seven months and 25 days after the U.S. invasion of Iraq began. He was the 4,474th member of the U.S. military to die in the war, according to the Pentagon. And he could have been the last. With the final U.S. combat troops crossing out of Iraq into Kuwait, those who held Hickman dear are struggling to come to terms with the particular poignancy of his fate. As the unpopular war that claimed his life quietly rumbles to a close, you can hear within his inner circle echoes of John F. Kerry's famous 1971 congressional testimony on Vietnam: How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?

Boehner presses for new tax bill

WASHINGTON - House Speaker John Boehner says he opposes a Senate-approved bill extending a payroll tax cut and jobless benefits for just two months and wants congressional bargainers to write a new measure that would last an entire year (Associated Press). The Ohio Republican said on NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday that the Senate's two-month bill would be "kicking the can down the road." He mentioned items in the House version of the bill that were not in the Senate legislation, including restrictions on Obama administration curbs on industrial pollution. Boehner's comments came a day after the Senate easily approved a compromise payroll tax cut bill. But in a conference call among House Republicans later Saturday, many complained bitterly

about the \$33 billion Senate bill, saying it lacked serious spending cuts.

Dole endorses Romney

WASHINGTON - Republican elder statesman and former Senate leader Bob Dole on Sunday endorsed Mitt Romney to be the Republican presidential nominee, a day after the former Massachusetts governor received the backing of Iowa's main newspaper. In an open letter to Iowa voters, Dole - himself a former presidential candidate - said a great deal was at stake on January 3, when Iowa votes in the first nominating contest for the 2012 presidential election. "A number of my friends are currently candidates seeking the GOP nomination. But the time has now come for us to decide who among them can defeat Barack Obama in 2012. I've made my decision, and I believe our best hope lies in Governor Mitt Romney," Dole wrote.

Judge to rule on NC mayoral home

NEW CASTLE - A Delaware County judge is set to rule this week on a bid to overturn Democrat Greg York's landslide victory in last month's mayoral election in New Castle (Muncie Star Press). The issues in litigation raised by York's Republican opponent, John Mark Nipp, must bring back less-than-fond memories for that judge, Linda Ralu Wolf. Because more than a decade ago, the judge faced nearly identical allegations from political opponents here in Muncie. While York won 75 percent of the votes cast in a three-candidate race on Nov. 8, Nipp alleges the Democrat isn't an authentic resident of New Castle.