



Messer seeks GOP ‘common agenda’

Fifth ranking Republican surveys post-Boehner House; calls for a plan

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. – Five days after House Speaker John Boehner resigned and six days after Pope Francis urged Congress to find common ground, U.S. Rep. Luke Messer, the fifth ranking Republican, talked with Howey Politics Indiana about

these extraordinary events.

The Shelbyville Republican peppered his analyses with sports analogies, beginning with the torpid Indianapolis Colts and ending with Dan Dakich’s wisdom to Darryl Thomas in the book “Season on the Brink.” It was an appropriate metaphor as Americans hold Congress and its leadership in deep derision, while a Socialist and



U.S. Rep. Luke Messer, the fifth ranking House Republican, believes the party needs a persuasive agenda. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

billionaire are finding the most traction in the presidential race.

Messer will stay in his current leadership position as head of the Conference Forum for Policy Development, an extraordinary rise to power for a second term Republican. He now finds himself as in a unique and historic position of trying to steer his party and his institution into a more productive place.

Here is our conversation, which took place mid-Tuesday afternoon, just hours before the House Republican caucus was to meet and sort out

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The thud of Jud

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. – Eyebrows arched about a year ago when State Rep. Jud McMillin was elevated to majority leader of his super majority House Republican caucus. On Tuesday, thanks to lowered pantaloons, an uploaded sex video, an ignominious end to what seemed to be a GOP rising star wrapped in a bundle of contradictions came to pass.



McMillin was a member of the Class of 2010 which helped Speaker Brian Bosma to retake the House majority and laid the foundation for today’s 71-seat super majority. The class of ‘10 produced Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann, along with State Reps. Kevin Mahan,



“He treated that responsibility the way he did everything else, with passion, creating opportunities, and not just in his district. He had an eye toward the entire state.” - Former Gov. Joe Kernan, on the passing of Chairman William Crawford



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Wendy McNamara, Ron Bacon, Bob Heaton, Mike Karickhoff, Cindy Kirchofer, Matt Ubelhor, Rhonda Rhodes and Steve Davisson. There was quick speculation as to who would emerge as a future leader out of this class. And there was little doubt about the unbridled ambition of McMillin, an attorney from Brookville who defeated long-time Democrat Bob Bischoff.

But of everyone in this class, McMillin uniquely carried baggage. In a sprawling post on the website Bilerico, McMillin had been linked to a teenage traffic fatality and was apparently dismissed from Ball State University after an alleged theft. After graduating from the University of Mississippi, McMillin became deputy prosecutor in Montgomery County, Ohio. The Dayton Daily News reported in 2005 that McMillin admitted he had a relationship with the complainant in a domestic violence case he prosecuted, but he insisted the relationship began after he stepped off the case Sept. 9. The Daily News reported that McMillin resigned from the prosecutor's office Sept. 16, his personnel records show, otherwise he would have been fired.

And McMillin's elevation

to majority leader came after a 2013 FBI probe into his role with the Lawrenceburg Regional Grant Committee. An IndyStar investigation found that millions of dollars have been wasted on risky start-up companies, many of them with ties to government officials, and some of the firms had business ties to his Brookville law firm. The Star reported that McMillin advocated for a \$600,000 grant in 2012 for a project involving Destination Brookville, a company he started in August 2010.

He resigned from the Grant Committee in December 2013, telling the IndyStar, "In those roles I will work to help foster this new era of economic development by attracting

new partners in addition to promoting transparency and integrity in the grant approval process to ensure that southeastern Indiana as a whole will have a strong and united future."

After his resignation from the grant committee, there was little news about the FBI investigation. McMillin's ethical encroachments were well documented and the Brookville attorney did not publicly dispute any of them.



In the bizarre turn of events on Tuesday afternoon, when House Republicans issued a press release from Bosma acknowledging the McMillin resignation and praising him for his service, the first jump to conclusion

was that the other shoe on the FBI probe was about ready to drop. The one clue from Bosma was his comment that "we fully support his decision to step down in order to focus on his family." That's usually a precursor to a domestic problem.

About a half hour later, McMillin's statement to HPI read, "The opportunity to serve the 68th district has been one of the greatest honors of my life. However, after five years of dedicated service I have decided the time is right for me to pass the torch and spend more time with my family. I hope that the work I have done in Indianapolis and in Southeastern Indiana has made the state and the communities I represent a better place. Now I want to focus all of my attention on making my family's world a better place."

And then came word of a text message McMillin had sent to other Republican caucus members, reading, "My phone was stolen in Canada and out of my control for about 24 hours. I have just been able to reactivate it under my control. Please disregard any messages you received recently. I am truly sorry for anything offensive you may have received."

Multiple caucus and Republican sources told HPI that McMillin

missed a caucus meeting last week, and that members were told about the stolen cell phone and a video that sources say were with the majority leader and a woman

The terse way Bosma handled the McMillin resignation was similar to how the last majority leader, Eric Turner, was handled: In an abrupt fashion.

When asked for a statement, the House Republican Communications Director Erin Reese simply forwarded McMillin's cell phone number.

McMillin's voicemail box was full, and did not return an email from HPI, but he posted this on Facebook Tuesday evening: "I make mistakes. When I do, regardless of how big or small they are, I do my best to admit them, own up to it, and then start doing my best to remedy them. That's what I am doing right now with my family. With that being said I will never understand the need for some people to spew hatred. I hope it makes those people feel better about themselves because there is no other discernable benefit. What a sad place for society to be. On the other hand, I am constantly amazed at how good hearted so many people are. The outpouring of support I have received from so many gives me faith and hope in humanity as a whole. To those who choose this path, I encourage you to maintain your approach not only towards those you agree with and like, but towards those you disagree with as well. This is the only approach that can possibly help make the world a better place."

As for the "spew hatred" comment, I don't believe anyone in the Statehouse community woke up Tuesday morning determined to destroy McMillin's political career. This was a completely self-inflicted and stupid error on his part. Let me repeat ... stupid. Responsible public officials would never have that type of information on a cellphone.

Since taking the helm of the House in November 2010, Bosma developed a reputation for transparency and inclusiveness. His appointment of Dr. Tim Brown over Turner to head the Ways & Means Committee seemed to reflect wariness of some of the controversies surrounding Turner and his family business. He had also elevated Democrats to committee chairs.

The McMillin elevation to majority leader was a caucus vote, and not a Bosma appointment, though if the

speaker feared the baggage, he could have (and might have) articulated those concerns. But once established, the reaction from many Statehouse sources was one "playing with fire." At the same time, many acknowledge McMillin's legislative talents, playing a key role, for instance, in the recent legal sentencing reforms. He also co-sponsored the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, an epic blunder that could take down Gov. Mike Pence.

Since the Indiana Senate scandals of the early 1980s, the General Assembly has hewed within most ethic and legal boundaries under the stewardship of Senate Presidents Robert Garton and David Long, and House Speakers J. Roberts Dailey, Michael K. Phillips, Paul Manweiler, John Gregg, B. Patrick Bauer and Bosma. They weren't perfect, but the basic integrity of the institution had been protected.

The dwindling Statehouse press corps and the likely passing of the current guard over the next five or so years represents a turning point for the institution. The prospects of a Bosma gubernatorial bid in 2020 would have placed McMillin at the cusp of power in the second most commanding station in Indiana government.

And this prompted speculation that the era of General Assembly operating within legal bounds might be at stake in the not-so-distant future. In the wake of this scandal, the House Republican caucus faces a serious decision on what future leadership will look like.



Multiple sources are telling Howey Politics Indiana that Deputy Speaker Pro Tempore Matt Lehman (pictured, left) of Berne is the leading candidate. Others have suggested Ways & Means Chairman Tim Brown, though it would appear to me that Bosma would rather

keep him at his current, critical post, as well as State Rep. Sean Eberhart.

The coming decision could have far-reaching and critical implications for the integrity of the institution. ❖

Messer, from page 1

leadership

HPI: It's been an extraordinary week. Give me an overview of what's going on.

Messer: The Colts may be easier to figure out. It's hard to run an offense when you they can blow you up between your two guards. If you can stop people from blowing us up between our two guards, maybe we could run an offense. I was telling my eight-year-old that if we can blow through these three (divisional) games and then

upset the Patriots, everything will be OK.

HPI: What we've seen over the past five days or so has been nothing short of sensational, with the Pope addressing Congress, then Speaker Boehner resigning, and then his "Face the Nation" comment about "false prophets" in the Republican Party. Give me a narrative from your standpoint of what's going on.

Messer: A lot of my situation cleared up last night when Cathy McMorris Rogers announced she wasn't seeking the majority leader job.

HPI: With Rogers staying put, that means you're also staying in your current leadership role?

Messer: That’s right. The one position I was interested in was the House Conference chair. That’s the position Mike Pence was in before he ran for governor. It was actually a position Speaker Boehner once held back in the Gingrich era. With Cathy not running for leader, that position won’t open up until the end of the term. I may look at it then, but I’m not going to run for one of the other leadership positions.

HPI: So let’s talk about Speaker Boehner.

Messer: John Boehner is a good man. I believe that by stepping aside he did the right thing for the right reasons. The institution will remember him well for it. John also had a very hard job. It is not an easy caucus to lead. We also know is that one of the consequences of leadership is that you are held accountable. Fair or not, John was in a very difficult spot. I think the potential challenge we face as a party ... this is an opportunity to come together. I think it’s important to recognize that while nobody is inspired by all of this soap opera and palace intrigue, it doesn’t come from no place. The reality is that many folks are disappointed with the results in Washington. Most folks realize there won’t be a new president any time soon. It’s a year and a half. The Senate minority leader isn’t going away any time soon. And that leaves us with folks calling for a change in the House. The challenge we have now is to put the reverse on it. While I think Speaker Boehner did the right thing for the right reason, his resignation is no silver bullet. We still have President Obama in the White House, still have Harry Reid in the Senate. We still have to find a way to govern in that scenario. Some of that comes up against expectations of what can be done. The challenges are with the loudest and most persuasive voices in our party. We can’t just shout louder, we have to persuade more.

HPI: There have been the more than 40 votes to repeal Obamacare, when there was no way that was going to happen. To me those were statement votes. I just went in for my physical and talked to my doctor and we talked extensively about Obamacare, some of it good, some of it bad, and he said that it needed to be tweaked and in some cases overhauled, and that’s not happening. It isn’t going to be repealed. It almost seems like it’s an all or nothing scenario.

Messer: Well, yeah. If you read Eric Cantor’s op-ed in the Wall Street Journal, he said he’d never seen a football team’s winning strategy based on just hail Marys. The idea has emerged in our party that if we just all light ourselves on fire we can persuade the American people. I’m essentially a bridge within our caucus. I’m a strong conservative who voted often to repeal Obamacare, but I also I think we have to do both. We have to vote showing what we believe, and we also have to recognize the reality

of a Democratic president and a sizeable Democratic minority in the Senate, and when possible come together on policies that would move our country forward. It does take two people to shake hands, and the President by and large has not been willing to compromise. Folks in our party are frustrated by that. But you’re right. To me the road out of this for our conference is really two things. As you’ve commented often in your writing, the reality of shrinking paychecks is all too real for most Americans. The statistics over the past years show that middle income Americans wages have virtually flatlined. Jobs are going overseas. They’re concerned about national security and health care. Often our party has not been able to come forward with a clear explanation of what we’re for. The second thing, and I really believe, and it fits your view, we need to reexamine our rules in the House. The powers in the executive branch have expanded exponentially over the past 40 years. But the rules of the House haven’t changed in a couple of centuries. Your typical state legislator has far more ability to influence debate in their state than a typical Member of the House because of our rules. In a state legislature, if you’re willing to fix your name on a sheet of paper and hold it up for an amendment, you’re going to have a debate and you’re going to get a vote. There are procedural hurdles, but even then you’ll get a vote on the ruling. Yet in the House it is virtually impossible for a rank-and-file member to push a policy onto the House floor. I think we need to open up our suspension calendar to empower individual members, which then empowers the

SUMMARY TABLE OF IMAGES – BY D/S (POSITIVE – NEGATIVE)

	TOTAL POSITIVE	TOTAL NEGATIVE	D/S
Planned Parenthood.....	47	31	16
Joe Biden.....	40	28	12
Bernie Sanders.....	32	22	10
Ben Carson.....	29	21	8
Carly Fiorina.....	27	20	7
Barack Obama.....	46	40	6
The Democratic Party.....	41	35	6
The Black Lives Matter Movement.....	32	29	3
Hillary Clinton.....	39	47	-8
Jeb Bush.....	24	39	-15
The Republican Party.....	29	45	-16
Donald Trump.....	25	58	-33

American people.

HPI: I’m looking at the NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll (graphic above) that just came out and Donald Trump is at the bottom, just below the Republican Party at 29/45%. Trump and the Republican Party are well below Hillary Clinton, President Obama, and way below Vice President Biden and even Planned Parenthood. Does this kind of feedback have any impact on the more radical part of your caucus? They seem to be saying “My way or the highway” and I don’t mean to be quoting Sen. Donnelly. Do they understand how the American people are perceiv-



ing this?

Messer: I have a slightly different take. I think there's something of a one-sided debate within our party over the last several years. Some of the loudest and most persuasive voices in our party have articulated strategies that just won't work. We don't serve anybody well by pretending that constantly sending up hail Marys is a viable strategy. We all have a responsibility to articulate an alternative approach. So what I think you will see in our party, emerging from the House, is a stronger effort to develop an alternative for Obamacare, a consensus on immigration reform, efforts to deal with shrinking paychecks. While one take is, geez, this is kind of the Donald Trump approach, if we just thought better, we'd get all of this figured out. The truth of the matter is our voters are responding to what they hear. We all have a responsibility to come forward with a governing strategy that works in the real world.

HPI: Internally, in the House conference, are you articulating what appears to be a very common sense approach, Luke? Are there a lot of your colleagues nodding their heads in agreement? Describe the internal dynamic, understanding that there's a lot you can reveal due to confidentiality.

Messer: There is an awakening within our conference with John Boehner resigning, probably the first Speaker in modern history to resign without a major scandal. The challenge is opening up the process, which sounds great. But if you open up the process, we'll vote more and I believe that would be good for our country. But for the average member, you'll vote more on the issues support, and you'll vote more on issues you disagree with. For the health of the institution we have to. We just have to change things. We've all heard the adage that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting a different outcome. What I've been trying to do internally is have a broad debate; we're meeting this afternoon at 5 o'clock, and we will discuss some of these issues. I do believe that the next majority leader who best answers this dilemma of empowering, how do we best empower the American people by empowering their member in Congress.

HPI: Speaker Boehner's "false prophet" statement just jumped off the screen at many of us. Did that have a smack-in-the-face impact?

Messer: You've heard me say John Boehner is a good man; he's a difficult guy to dislike, if you knew him personally. He had a very difficult job. It would have been great to have the sort of clarity in the debates over the last several years

HPI: What is your relationship with Kevin McCarthy, who looks like he will be the next Speaker.

Messer: Kevin is clearly the favorite to be the Speaker. He's worked very hard over the last nine years to develop relationships throughout the caucus. He's shown himself to be very collaborative and has the unique ability to bring people together. He has a fascinating story. When he was a young man, he won the lottery and was able to open up a sandwich shop back in Bakersfield, Calif. But Kevin will have a very hard job, too, because the tensions within our caucus remain, because the tensions within our party across the country remain. Our members tend to be more like thermometers than thermostats. They tend to reflect the concerns of people they represent.

HPI: Does McCarthy bring a different skill set than Boehner? What is the intangible difference between the two where McCarthy might be able to get more traction than Boehner? Or is it just too early to know?

Messer: John was an old-school guy who was really of a different generation. Kevin is 50 and someone who I think can relate better throughout our caucus. I grew up a huge IU fan in the era of Bobby Knight. Somewhere in Bobby's career, kids had just changed. He couldn't tell them to run through a brick wall and expect them to do it. New coaches like Coach K have a better approach. I can't avoid sports analogies, but what we need in Congress is more of a pro-sports coach than a college coach. You can't just tell a member of Congress what to do. Each of them is a leader in their own right. Kevin will understand that. In addition, he is really one of the most gifted people interpersonally that I've ever seen. I don't know Bill Clinton personally and I'm sure Kevin wouldn't like the comparison, but he's that kind of gifted leader interpersonally.

HPI: Keith Bulen once told me that Bill Clinton was the best politician he ever saw, heard or dreamed of, so I don't think the comparison will rub McCarthy wrong.

Messer: This is a meteoric rise, nine years. The least tenure in a century.

HPI: Back in 1994-95, Newt Gingrich came up with the Contract for America that the Republican Party was able to coalesce around. A lot of that got done. Does McCarthy need to do something similar to bring disparate parts of the party together?

Messer: We will never win on the big policy issues of the day unless we persuade the American people that we're right. Your point of having a common agenda helps. I learned in elementary school that no one cares what you know until they know how much you care. We have to have an agenda that tells the working American we're on their side. One thing I learned in working with Mitch Daniels, when I was in House leadership and executive director of the party, is if you run on an agenda, then you have a moral authority to execute that agenda. One of the mistakes in the last couple of cycles in the House is we decided to run on no specific agenda at all. That's become more difficult when it came time to govern and we didn't have a compass. Does that make sense? With Gov. Daniels, we had a compass. In 2012 and 2014 we did not put forth a clear agenda. It's important to help convince the American people we're on their side and it gives us a moral compass.

HPI: I was watching Donald Trump on "Sixty Minutes" and I was with people who watched and reacted with open derision. But I told them that Trump was speaking to many Hoosiers, many Americans. He resonates with them, even if he's for a single payer health system and tax increases on the rich. Could you support Trump as the Republican presidential nominee and is he saying things



that resonate with your 6th CD constituents?

Messer: It's my expectation that I will be supporting the Republican presidential nominee. There's a lot of time between now and whether that nominee will be Donald Trump. Here's my take on that. Remember the book, "Season on the Brink?" There's that line where Dan Dakich tells Darryl Thomas, "You've gotta listen to what Coach says, and ignore how he says it." I've thought about that line a lot in recent weeks as we've seen the presidential polling. If I had said to you four months ago that there would be a situation in America where the leading candidates would be an avowed Socialist and Donald Trump, you would have thought that was impossible. And yet that's where we are. Maybe we ought to ignore how it's being said and what the American people are hearing: The status quo isn't good enough. They're tired of Washington that doesn't work. They want their elected members to work for them. I think when you get into the details Bernie Sanders stands for and what Donald Trump stands for, they may have a hard time actually getting their party nominations, but elected leaders ignore what the voters are saying at their peril. People are angry. The essential reason they are angry is because they feel like the American dream is being ripped up and they feel Washington is dithering while that happens.

HPI: I don't have confidence my kids will live a better life than I did, and I've had a pretty good life. And yes, there is dithering that abounds.

Messer: We've got to change that. That's what I'm working to do. ❖

McCarthy Benghazi Clinton comments creating firestorm; Brooks defends panel

WASHINGTON – Democrats on Wednesday accused House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy of having admitted the Benghazi investigation committee was created to politically damage Hillary Clinton, after he seemed to link her dropping poll numbers to the committee's work (Fox News).

But U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks of Indiana defended the panel as "fact-based."

McCarthy, considered the front-runner to replace retiring Speaker John Boehner, made the remarks in an interview with Fox News' Sean Hannity Tuesday night. Describing how he would be different as speaker, McCarthy, R-Calif., said he'd be a "conservative speaker that takes a conservative Congress that puts a strategy to fight and win." He added: "And let me give you one example. Everybody thought Hillary Clinton was unbeatable, right? But

we put together a Benghazi special committee, a select committee. What are her numbers today? Her numbers are dropping. Why? Because she's un-trustable. But no one would have known any of that had happened had we not ..."

"I have to tell you," Mrs. Clinton said on MSNBC, "I find them deeply distressing," because "I knew the ambassador that we lost in Benghazi. Along with him, we lost three other brave Americans who were representing us in a very dangerous part of the world."

Rep. Brooks, who is a member of the panel, told Howe Politics Indiana this morning, "This has always been a fact-based investigation into the events of September 11, 2012, in Benghazi, Libya. This is not an investigation of Hillary Clinton. In fact, the Select Committee has interviewed 50 witnesses to date, most have never been interviewed before and only four have been with people who are directly connected to Hillary Clinton. As a former federal prosecutor, I remain focused on the facts and committed to conducting a thorough investigation, which includes the role and knowledge of these events of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton."❖

Speaker: Not worth a warm bucket of spit

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE – Former Texas Speaker of the House John Nance Garner referred to being vice president of the United States as “not worth a bucket of warm spit.”



This also fits the current situation in the Republican House. Anybody want to lead?

Of course that is a very liberal definition of the word “lead” and, as we all know, right now anything liberal in the Republican Party is almost as bad a word as RINO. RINOs, as you may have heard, are political odd-toed ungulates who occasionally talk with Democrats. They are even known to

have a friend or two who is only 92% conservative.

John Boehner is among the more famous of the Republicans In Name Only. The fact that he enjoyed the support of the overwhelming number of the Republican members of Congress merely demonstrates that the whole bunch of them must have tricked the voters into thinking they were actually Real Republicans and not just in name.

As he announced his exit, closet Democrat Boehner invoked the Word of God in describing his critics: “The Bible says beware of false prophets.”

It is a bit tense right now.

No Republicans outside the Capitol building and the connected House Office Buildings view the replacement of Boehner with “everybody move up one slot” as anything but worse. Regardless of how good the replacements are – and Kevin McCarthy is a very skilled traditional politician whose skills I admire – there would be not much real change except that the critics are even more emboldened.

Paul Ryan perhaps could inspire some confidence among the disaffected, though he walks on very thin ice having run for vice president on the ticket with RINO Mitt Romney. If Ryan had run for Speaker, more stuff would have come out such as the key fact that Boehner appointed him Budget and then Ways and Means chairman. Ryan wisely realized that he was more popular in the abstract, so he decided to graciously cede the warm bucket to other people.

Trey Gowdy, whose ability to summarize lists of

conservative grievances as well as aggressively use his prosecutorial skills in questioning, was another potential “man on the white horse” capable of rescuing the Republicans. Gowdy has the skills most needed by Republicans nationally right now: The ability to make his points clearly backed up with significant brainpower. Many Republicans right now are walking around sounding like they are reciting talking points hand-written by other people. Which, of course, is exactly what they are doing.

But Trey Gowdy, in spite of efforts to draft him, has been playing it coy as in “I am not running” but not saying that he wouldn’t accept the position of majority leader if the Republican members become gridlocked. So what is going on under the surface?

First, Ryan and Gowdy are friends of Kevin McCarthy. McCarthy is an excellent listener. He is likable. He has experience running the daily business of scheduling the floor as majority leader and formerly House whip, the most powerful internal organization.

When you have 247 members in your party, as the Republicans do in the House, it is not easy even in less turbulent times to satisfy everyone. Even with its veto-proof 71 members in the Indiana House, the U.S. House Republican Conference has three and a half times more members than the Indiana House Republicans. “Listening” to everyone all the time would cause your ears to fall off.

It is the job of the whip organization to be the official “listeners.” A network of members, a pyramid system built around approximately one designee tracking five members, talks to members during votes with a “poll” on upcoming votes about which the leadership has any concern about passage (are you for, against, uncertain). Then your whip designee asks, if sensing any hesitancy, for further information.

If your answer wasn’t “yes,” your assigned person or someone a step higher in the whip structure, will “visit” you to discuss your “concerns.” I was a member of Tom DeLay’s whip team, but not a daily checker. I was brought in to help fix problems, usually to get more information out of people or try to persuade them short of threats.

Simply put, in politics (and all things) information is power. The whip is at the top of the information pyramid. Newt Gingrich, Tom DeLay, Dennis Hastert, Eric Cantor, and Kevin McCarthy all moved up the ladder from the whip position. Interestingly (perhaps significantly), John Boehner did not. The whip not only

understands listening, but has an organized, hand-picked network as well as information about how every member thinks on key issues.

But being a whip is not the same skill set required to define an agenda, inspire people, or be an effective



House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy in Kokomo last year. (HPI Photo by Craig Dunn)

communicator outside Washington. For example, Steny Hoyer, a consummate insider, has failed to topple Nancy Pelosi as leader of the Democrats though he is so good that he is second in command in spite of their conflicts.

Trey Gowdy is looking at all this and basically saying that the re-arrangement of the deck chairs recognizes that whoever is in charge must govern under a Constitution-determined system where a Democrat President with enough congressional allies can block conservatives. Thus Gowdy says, "Thanks, I don't want this warm bucket either but ..."

McCarthy has the inside skills. Steve Scalise, the current whip, is running for majority leader with the backing of social and defense conservatives in particular. Tom Price is running with the backing of the more budget-oriented conservatives. Neither inspires those outside of the corridors of Congress, if they have even heard of them. Gowdy will not run unless he senses two things: 1) There is a demand by a very clear majority of the Conference that someone whose primary skills are external politics, but not internal politics is needed; and 2) that outside groups will give some space to leadership and lower unrealistic expectations. The third reason could be out of a begrudging sense of duty because the whole place is about to explode and Gowdy decides to take a suicidal post anyway.

In an interesting twist Wednesday, a Louisiana Republican floated a rumor that Gowdy was not going to run for reelection and thus presumably isn't a realistic choice for the majority leader post that fellow Louisiana Republican Scalise is seeking. Gowdy's staff denied that he wasn't going to seek reelection. Then someone floated that outgoing Speaker Boehner had met with Gowdy, urging Gowdy to run. Whether this was floated by Boehner, friends of McCarthy, a Gowdy ally, or a Gowdy opponent trying to discredit him to outside conservatives (the most likely scenario), it demonstrates how nasty the personal competition is becoming and the threat that Gowdy represents to the deck re-shuffle.

This is a fight among brands of conservatism, and strategy, not between RINOs and conservatives. Such fighting occurs among people in corporations and labor unions, in education and volunteer organizations, inside hospitals and newspaper offices, and among owners of professional sports teams. Politics is not limited to politicians. But politicians tend to fight with sharper knives, do it more constantly, and are generally very skilled at it. If they aren't, they lose or voluntarily quit. It is not a profession for the faint of heart.

When all is said and done, the odds are that it will be a deck re-shuffling, the base will assume the RINOs still rule, and the Presidential candidates will wisely continue to bash Congress. This is why the top congressional posts in America aren't worth a warm bucket of spit right now. ❖

Souder is a former Republican congressman from Fort Wayne.

Stutzman accuses Young as 'status quo'

By MARK SCHOEFF JR.

WASHINGTON – Rep. Marlin Stutzman may be trying to leave the House of Representatives, but turmoil among House Republicans is becoming an issue in his quest for the Republican Senate nomination. Stutzman, R-3rd CD, is a member of the House Freedom Caucus, a group of conservatives who have been a thorn in the side of outgoing House Speaker John Boehner. As House leadership elections approach next week, Stutzman said he and his colleagues are looking for a "fresh face" to lead the party.



"There is so much frustration – I hear it on the campaign trail – with our Republican leadership," Stutzman said in an

HPI interview on Wednesday. "If we just move everybody up a notch (on the leadership ladder), people will be very frustrated with us."

Stutzman accuses one of his competitors for the Senate nomination, Rep. Todd Young, R-9th CD, as being part of the status quo among House Republicans who has failed to advance a sufficiently conservative agenda. "Todd Young has been part of the current leadership and supportive of the current leadership," Stutzman said. "He's going to have to decide is he going to support reform and change in Washington or keep going with what's happening so far, which hasn't been working well."

Young's campaign countered by implying that Stutzman is a backbench rabble rouser who has defined himself more by conservative rhetoric than conservative achievements. A Young aide touted his boss' "wins on conservative priorities," such as regulatory and tax reform and repealing parts of the health care law.

"As more leadership candidates emerge, Todd is withholding judgment until he can evaluate who will not only talk about conservative principles, but will actually work to advance them," Trevor Foughty, Young's campaign manager, said in a statement. "Washington already has enough politicians who are content on angrily yelling from the back seat, and it needs more leaders willing to drive the car."

Both Stutzman and Young voted on Wednesday against a short-term appropriations bill that would keep the government open until Dec. 11. The measure, approved by the House, 277-151, did not contain language to defund Planned Parenthood, a priority for many conservatives and a flashpoint that led to Boehner's resignation.

Boehner's departure announcement last week

helped clear the way for approval of the short-term continuing resolution. But it did nothing to quell the intensity of conservative resistance to what they see as more of the same government-spending policies.

Stutzman and Young used similar language to blast the measure. They said that it failed to cut federal programs and did nothing to curtail Planned Parenthood, which has been the at the center of a controversy over the group's alleged practice of selling body parts of aborted fetuses.

Critics say that conservatives who insist on curbing Planned Parenthood within a continuing resolution are essentially voting to shutter the government.

Stutzman sidesteps that charge by putting the blame on President Barack Obama, who along with other Democrats has sought a "clean" spending bill. The government "should not be shut down over Planned Parenthood funding," Stutzman said. "What I'm pressing for is to defund Planned Parenthood. If the president wants to shut the government down over that, that's his choice."

By opposing the short-term continuing resolution, Stutzman and Young have aligned themselves with the person they're trying to replace, retiring Republican Sen. Dan Coats. Coats voted against the bill when it came before the Senate earlier in the week.

The third major candidate in the Senate race, former Indiana GOP Chairman Eric Holcomb, took a different approach than Stutzman and Young on the question of whether to turn out the government's lights over Planned Parenthood funding. "Public servants should never set a goal to shut down the government and yet still draw a pay check on the back of taxpayers," Holcomb said in a statement. "Hoosiers won't tolerate it."

He noted that National Right to Life opposes a shutdown. "When public servants shut down public services, the very issues the protestors care most about are the first to suffer," said Holcomb, a former state director for Coats. "In my book, two wrongs never make a right."

The only Hoosier House Republican to vote in favor of the short-term CR was Rep. Susan Brooks, 5th CD. "While this measure is not what I want, it was important to pass a funding bill and avoid a government shutdown that would only do harm to our country," Brooks said in a statement. "Political uncertainty coming from Washington



U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman charged that Senate opponent U.S. Rep. Todd Young is "part of the status quo." Both voted against the Continuing Resolution on Wednesday that keeps the federal government open.

and the threat of another government shutdown creates instability for Hoosiers and all Americans."

U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita joined the other Republicans in voting no. "This Continuing Resolution is a Senate product that according to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell exists because the President "made it very clear he is not going to sign any bill that includes defunding Planned Parenthood." Under that logic, why have a Congress at all? "The American people expect Congress to exercise its "power of the purse" and otherwise work its will in representing them pursuant to the Constitution. I did that today."

Although enough Senate and House Republicans followed the same approach as Brooks and kept the government running, most right-wing conservatives are agitating for confrontation not only with Obama but also with House and Senate leadership.

Holcomb doesn't put himself in that camp. He intends to "confront the status quo in Washington" by cooperating with the

opposing party. He cited his experience as a top aide to former Gov. Mitch Daniels. He said that he worked with unions and Democrats to promote major transportation initiatives as well as tax, ethics and health care reform.

"Don't tell me it can't be done in Washington, D.C., because I was part of a team that that got results in Indiana," Holcomb said. "We didn't blame just to score political points. We didn't drone on about bills that go nowhere year after year."

As House turmoil continues in Washington, droning on about what's wrong with Washington will continue to be at the center of the political conversation. ❖

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Trump potential to eclipse INSen race

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. – Many Hoosiers ended up outside last Sunday evening, watching the spectacular “blood moon” rise spectacularly over the horizon. And just after 10, there was the full lunar eclipse, a rare celestial double-header.

These, of course, followed Sunday’s “Sixty Minutes” episode on CBS featuring an amazing double header of its own, Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin. These two

men are reshaping both domestic and geo-political politics in emphatic and profound ways. If you’re Marlin Stutzman, Eric Holcomb, Todd Young or Mike Pence, you have to be transfixed by these events that, placed in context of Sunday evening, seem

to originate from “The Ten Commandments.” The narrated soundtrack begs for Yul Brynner.

Just as Putin has interjected himself into the Syrian catastrophe that has exposed President Obama’s searing international

weaknesses, Trump is completely reshaping the American political landscape, the repercussions looming large over what will already by sensational gubernatorial and senatorial races. There is a growing sense in Republican circles across the nation that Trump is not going to fade. At this writing, any assumptions heading into the Indiana U.S. Senate primary would be risky to make. If a full-blown presidential primary race (or two) come to Indiana, TV ad time becomes scarce, and oxygen fueling campaigns becomes thin.

Political analyst Stuart Rothenberg of the Rothenberg/Gonzales Report, observed in late August, “It probably goes without saying that there is little chance that the multi-millionaire real estate mogul and self-promoter will be the Republican presidential nominee next year. Even if Trump were to win an early contest or two, a majority of Republicans would rally around a more preferable alternative. Given that, the greatest danger for the GOP almost certainly remains an independent bid by Trump, who could decide at any time and for any reason that he has been

mistreated by the party establishment.”

A Trump independent bid, Rothenberg explained, would “seriously undermine the party’s chances for a White House victory next year.” That’s the good news.

The bad news? “If Trump were to be the Republican nominee, he’d be a disaster for his party. GOP candidates for the House and the Senate would be forced to respond to an endless number of media questions about his candidacy and his off-the-cuff remarks, which would both take them off message and force them to either disavow Trump or to embrace him.”

A viable Trump campaign coming to Indiana could be especially problematic for Stutzman. An unsettled presidential primary would bring Trump and the remnants of the field into the state. Rothenberg writes that low-turnout elections tend to “help more ideological candidates,” in this case Stutzman. A full presidential show could bring the kind of turnout we saw in the 2008 Clinton/Obama campaign.

In the NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll released on Sunday, the reasons are clear on what a potential disaster Trump would be if he’s still viable during the Indiana primary. On total positive/negative responses, Donald Trump is at the bottom at 25/58%, or a total of -33. This compares with the Republican Party (29/45%), Jeb Bush (24/39%), Hillary Clinton (39/47%), President Obama (46/40%), Bernie Sanders (32/22%), and Planned Parenthood (47/31%).

Trump had the “bad week” following the Sept. 16 debate, in which he was chastised by upstart contender Carly Fiorina. He was booed at a conservative event for calling Sen. Marco Rubio “a clown.” He went to war with Fox, AP, the New York Times and CNN after photos emerged of a rally that had with empty seats. And after all of that, enough flotsam and jetsam to sink an established candidate, he still led the latest NBC/Wall Street

Journal Poll released last Sunday, 21-20 over Ben Carson, who distinguished himself for declaring that a Muslim should never be elected president.

On the “Sixty Minutes” interview, Trump came out for a single-payer health care plan after promising to repeal Obamacare. “Everybody’s got to be covered,” Trump began. “This is an un-Republican thing for me to say because a lot of times they say, ‘No, no, the lower 25 percent that can’t afford private.’ But I am going to take care of everybody. I don’t care if it costs me votes or not. Everybody’s going to be taken care of much better than they’re taken care of now.”



Asked who pays for it, Trump responded, "The government's gonna pay for it. But we're going to save so much money on the other side. But for the most it's going to be a private plan and people are going to be able to go out and negotiate great plans with lots of different competition with lots of competitors with great companies and they can have their doctors, they can have plans, they can have everything."

On his immigration plan, Trump explained that he will build a wall, "It'll actually be a wall that will look good, believe it or not, 'cause what they have now is a joke. They're ugly, little and don't work." And for illegal immigrants here, he said, "We're rounding 'em up in a very humane way, in a very nice way. And they're going to be happy because they want to be legalized. And, by the way, I know it doesn't sound nice. But not everything is nice. It is practical. It's going to work."

And his plan for dealing with ISIS? "If you look at Syria. Russia wants to get rid of ISIS. We want to get rid of ISIS. Maybe let Russia do it. Let 'em get rid of ISIS. What the hell do we care?"

In the New York Times book review by James B. Stewart on Michael D'Antonio's book "Never Enough: Donald Trump and the Pursuit of Success," the review notes that "one thing is undeniable: Trump is a master of self-promotion, unrivaled by even the likes of the Kardashians. Trump figured out early on that fortune follows fame, which is all but indistinguishable from notoriety."

This political reality show has turned everything on its head. Trump helped drive 24 million viewers to the Fox News debate during the dog days of August. Stewart observed, "Blithely flouting all conventions of presidential debate and decorum, Trump indulged in name-calling, personal attacks and one-liners that have vaulted him to the top of the polls."

D'Antonio pegs Trump as a classic case of narcissism, and cites textbooks where Trump serves as an example, including "Abnormal Behavior in the 21st Century" and "Personality Disorder and Older Adults."

So while the polls show Trump leveling off nationally, leading Ben Carson 21-20% with Fiorina and Sen. Rubio at 11% (and remember, Jeb Bush is sitting on more than \$100 million, which may be peanuts to the self-funding Trump worth somewhere between \$45.5 billion and \$9 billion), and while the pundits are still predicting a Trump collapse once Republicans decide to stop living vicariously through his bluster, there is still a chance that Trump comes to Indiana next March or April, the ultimate bull in a china shop.

He's been here before. Trump companies once owned a Gary riverboat casino for nine years. It went bankrupt and he sold it for \$253 million. He tried to build a casino at French Lick, but then-Gov. Mitch Daniels successfully blocked him. "When I was first elected, he was going to be the operator of one of our casinos and there were problems with it. So we transferred the license to somebody else," Daniels told the Huffington Post in 2011 when

both were weighing presidential runs. "Somebody said to me: 'You're the first person to say, 'Donald – you're fired.'"

Pence, Stutzman, Holcomb and Young could only wish they have that kind of power for what could be a political tornado (and reality show) potentially playing out next year.

Senate: More endorsements

Another group of elected and political leaders from across Indiana today announced their support of Eric Holcomb's candidacy for the United States Senate. The round of endorsements includes: Adam Bujalski, vice chair, Elkhart County Republican Party; Dan Dernulc, councilman, Lake County; Bruce Kimball, councilman-elect, City of Carmel; Barb Knochel, 4th District vice chair, Indiana Republican Party; Anderson Mayor Kevin Smith; and State Rep. Randy Truitt. "We've done it in Indiana and I know with the right leaders we can do it in Washington, D.C., too," said Holcomb. "I'm honored and excited to have these exceptional leaders on my team as we work together to offer Hoosiers a solutions-oriented campaign filled with Indiana-grown ideas to make America safer, stronger and freer."

The Senate campaign of U.S. Rep. Todd Young continues to tout support from the "Daniels wing" of the GOP. A fundraiser next Monday at the home of Al and Kathy Hubbard includes former Republican chairs Murray Clark and Jim Kittle, former FSSA Secretary Mitch Roob, Chuck and Jenny Schallioli, along with Dan Evans, Devin Anderson, Doug Rose, Jeff Kittle, Beth Boyce, and Paul Mullin. Event hosts are paying \$10,800 and other sponsors range from \$5,400 to \$250.

Indiana is witnessing an unusual public rift between two members of its congressional delegation (Berman, WIBC). Republicans Todd Young and Marlin Stutzman are both seeking the Senate seat being vacated by Dan Coats. A Stutzman fundraising letter attacked Young as a special-interest candidate "who will say anything to get to D.C." Former state GOP chairman Murray Clark, who's part of Young's steering committee, says members have typically maintained a working relationship. He says as chairman, he arranged meetings of Indiana's Republican congressmen, a tradition he says Gov. Mike Pence, a part of those sessions, has continued. Clark says he was "a little surprised" at the sharp tone of the fundraising letter. But he notes there can be tension when two members are seeking the same committee seat, much less running against each other in a primary.

Governor: Pelath, Lanane endorse Gregg

More than seven months before the Indiana primary, Democratic leaders of both state legislative caucuses held a press conference Tuesday to announce their members are ready to "rally around" the John Gregg gubernatorial campaign to the exclusion of any other potential candidates (Mark Curry, Howey Politics Indiana).

Senate Democratic Leader Tim Lanane (D-Anderson) and Indiana House Democratic Leader Scott Pelath (D-Michigan City) admitted the move was unusual but said several "missteps" by Republican Gov. Mike Pence has the party more energized than it has been in a long time. Standing behind a lectern with a sign that read "Fire Pence," each took turns denouncing the current administration and praising Gregg. "The incumbent is stuck in the past," Sen. Lanane said. "John Gregg will move Indiana into the future." Gregg, who served as Democratic Speaker of the Indiana House from 1996 to 2002, lost to Pence by less than 4 percent of the vote in the last election. When asked why the upcoming contest should be any different, Rep. Pelath said Pence's performance in office has unified the Democratic party. Throughout the 25-minute conference, both Democrats repeatedly found fault with the Pence administration, citing the handling of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, the state's lagging wage rate, "scandals" at the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, and more, including ongoing battles with the state's Superintendent of Public Instruction, Glenda Ritz. Rep. Pelath stated the party is working to recruit and elect viable candidates for state races, explaining the party hopes to elect Democrats in numbers that will serve to amplify a Democratic governor's agenda. He told the half-dozen reporters in attendance that he is "very happy" with current recruitment. "Now is the time for change," Sen. Lanane said.



Minority Leaders Scott Pelath (left) and Tim Lanane endorse John Gregg for governor on Tuesday. (HPI Photo by Mark

Pence business summit as pastors mobilize

Gov. Mike Pence has invited business leaders from across the state to meet Monday for a discussion on legislative priorities for next year's session, a spokeswoman said (IndyStar). Possible topics include education, early childhood education, infrastructure investment, ongoing fiscal responsibility, talent development and workforce development. And there's one more issue on the agenda that has captured the attention of many in the business community this year: Indiana's Religious Freedom Restoration Act, or RFRA. Regardless of whether Pence wanted to talk about it, as political scientist Andy Downs pointed out, it's a topic likely to continue coming up. "It is the massive 800-pound gorilla that has to be part of the conversation," said Downs, of IPFW's Downs Center.

Informed and reliable sources tell Howey Politics Indiana that the Indiana Pastors Alliance has been holding regional meetings that have drawn significant attendance. One source said the Alliance is planning a demonstration at the Indiana General Assembly Organization Day in November.

3rd CD: Rothenberg/Gonzales Report analyses

The Rothenberg/Gonzales Political Report offered up an extensive look at the Republican primary. Some nuggets:

Pam Galloway: The former Wisconsin state senator ran in 2010 and defeated Senate Majority Leader Russ Decker. IN 2011, Democrats attempted to recall a half dozen Republican senators and "turned their sights on Galloway and others, including Gov. Scott Walker. In 2012, "she resigned abruptly in order to move closer to ill family members. Galloway's critics say her timing was convenient to avoid the recall. A Republican held her seat in the special election. Galloway and her husband moved to Warsaw, where her husband found a job. In 2014, Galloway actively helped Curt Nisly knock off State Rep. Rebecca Kubacki. Now Galloway is a candidate once again and has hired Brand Innovation Group out of Fort Wayne. Galloway has focused the first part of her campaign on building relationships. Through the end of June she raised less than \$2,000, put in \$50,000 of her own money and finished the month with \$26,000 in the bank. The former legislator appears willing to spend considerably more personal money on a race that could cost at least \$500,000.

Kip Tom: He is described as a "wealthy agri-businessman" and managing partner of Tom Farms LLC, one of Monsanto's largest seed corn producers. In 2005, Gov. Mitch Daniels appointed Tom to the Indiana Economic Development Corporation board of directors. Local sources believe Tom could spend significant money on a race through fundraising and personal money.

Sen. Jim Banks: He interned for former U.S. Rep. John Hostettler "and even managed one of the fundraising-challenged incumbents races." He served as Whitley County Republican chairman and on the Whitley County Council before winning an open state Senate seat in 2010. Banks represents about 60,000 people in the southwest corner of the district. The Banks campaign team includes media consultant Scott Schweitzer of The Strategy Group, Wilson Perkins Allen for polling, and Axiom Strategies for direct mail. Banks told HPI that internal calling by his campaign reveals that once candidate resumes are explained to voters, his support improves dramatically.

Sen. Liz Brown: She "stole some of the early media coverage" with a poll by Mark It Red showing her leading the field 34% followed by Banks at 11%, Scott Wise at 5% and Galloway at 3%. "But the poll looks like a reflection of initiation name ID. Brown also described how Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry on her first month on the city council "called me and asked for my support to retroactively increase property taxes for Fort Wayne because he needed the extra money." Brown explained in a

News-Sentinel column, "I believe in him, I trusted him and I voted to raise your taxes." She went on to "voice disappointment in Henry for not cutting enough and for choosing to increase spending." According to Brown's allies, the senator "doesn't hide from the vote but believes it is an outlier compared to the rest of her record."

Geography: While the race is just getting started, geography can't be ignored. State Sen. Liz Brown is the only Fort Wayne-area candidate, while State Sen. Jim Banks, Galloway and Kip Tom come from the western, less populated parts of the district. They will need to overperform in areas outside of Fort Wayne and east into Brown's base in order to compete.

The bottom line: Tom's entry could shake up the race, particularly if he decides to spend considerably from his own checkbook. The race also looks primed for outside spending." After this was published, the Club For Growth announced it will support Banks. Rothenberg/Gonzales also noted: "Brown is better known and comes from the population center of the district, but Banks has a considerable constituency and may attract some outside help. Galloway should not be dismissed because of her background in Wisconsin. But she started from behind and running against at least two candidates who looked poised to run credible campaigns. Between Brown, Banks and Galloway, Republicans will add either a woman or an Afghan war veteran. It's just not precisely clear at this point which one is coming to Congress. **HPI Horse Race Status:** Leans Banks.

Mayor

Evansville: Riecken eyes task forces

The fate of two popular attractions, one dormant and shuttered and the other needing replacement in a few years, would hinge on appointed task forces if Gail Riecken is elected Evansville mayor on Nov. 3 (Langhorne, Evansville Courier & Press). Riecken, a Democratic state legislator, would create a mayoral task force to choose a location and a funding plan for an indoor competitive swimming facility to replace the aging Lloyd pool. "If we wait too long to have this plan before us, we won't be prepared when this (Lloyd) pool goes down," Riecken said. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Winnecke.

Elkhart: Farm Bureau endorses Neese

The Elkhart County Farm Bureau has endorsed Republican Tim Neese in his challenge to Mayor Dick Moore. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Neese;

New Albany: Mayor Gahan skips debate

A sparse crowd listened to two of three mayoral candidates share their vision for New Albany on Tuesday night (Louisville Courier-Journal). Independent candidate Roger Baylor and Republican Kevin Zurschmiede answered questions from a four-person panel at New Albany High

School. Incumbent Mayor Jeff Gahan was invited to the debate hosted by Leadership Southern Indiana, but his campaign chose not to participate. Gahan's campaign committed to two debates during election season, but all three mayoral candidates won't debate on the same stage before Nov. 3. The candidates also echoed each other on criticism of Gahan's administration for a lack of transparency. "The current administration has completely shut people out of the picture," Zurschmiede said. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup

Richmond: Candidates debate, talk plans

Richmond's three mayoral candidates offered their visions for their administrations if elected during a debate Wednesday night at Indiana University East (Richmond Palladium-Item) Republican Kyle Ingram, who called himself "the only candidate who has the necessary skills to take this city and move it forward," cited four "abilities" of leadership: approachability, believability, credibility and dependability. Democrat Dave Snow said he's helped generate forward momentum for the city and being mayor is the next step in that momentum. He said he sees the mayor's role as having a vision for the city, bringing the right people together in a team and keeping them focused on achieving the vision. Snow said, "When we LEAD, we succeed," to describe the four facets of his plan for the city: labor force, existing business, attracting business and developing the right kind of city.

Ingram was asked to address critics who say he is a figurehead of a political action committee that has backed his candidacy. "The critics don't know me, because I'm nobody's puppet," said Ingram, who added that other candidates, including Snow interviewed with the PAC.. Snow responded that he spoke to PAC members with the understanding he would not accept their backing. "I did not interview," he said. "They use me as part of their marketing. Now that they've used me multiple times, I have to question the integrity of the process." Ingram later revisited the topic. "I find it amusing he can look dead in the camera and tell a bold-face lie that he did not interview with the political action committee," Ingram said. Ingram said the role begins with finding out what existing businesses need to strengthen them, then utilizing what he called "ocean-front property" along Interstate 70 to attract new businesses. He said Indiana is growing its business, and compared that to the state throwing a party. "For whatever reason, Richmond has decided not to attend the party," he said. "I'm going to take the old girl to the party." **Horse Race Status:** Likely Ingram.

Terre Haute: FOP endorses Bennett

Republican Terre Haute Mayor Duke Bennett was endorsed by the city's Fraternal Order of Police on Wednesday. Bennett is facing a challenge from Vigo County Councilman Mark Bird. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Bennett ❖

As Crawford passes, original 'Black Lions' fade from legislature

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The "Black Lions" are passing from the Indiana General Assembly.

Over the weekend, former Ways & Means Chairman William Crawford died at age 79. He followed State Rep. Earl Harris of East Chicago, who passed away during the General Assembly session. This comes after African-American pioneers that included U.S. Rep. Julia Carson and State Sen. Glenn Howard, who forged new roles for minorities beginning in 1972.

Crawford and Carson were elected to the House that year in the era of multi-member districts that literally left scraps for Democrats. Their arrival in the General Assembly was not easy. It came during the Nixon landslide year, with Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern weighing down the ticket. African-American representation in the General Assembly between World War II and 1972 was sketchy and certainly lacked clout.

Amos Brown, the WTLC-AM radio commentator and Indianapolis Recorder columnist, further explained the hurdles Crawford, Howard and Carson faced. "Bill and Glenn were outsiders and they had to break the slate to break through the primary process," Brown said Wednesday morning as he prepared a tribute show for Crawford that featured Govs. Mike Pence and Joe Kernan, Purdue President Mitch Daniels and former Indianapolis Mayor Steve Goldsmith. "There were times when Julia would have to break the slate to achieve the community objectives."

Brown saw them as pioneers coming via Indianapolis and Northwest Indiana. "Bill's generation, Julia's generation, Charlie Brown, that's the generation that was forged through the civil rights movement. They had direct links to the activism of the 60s and 70s. Bill was unique in that he was revolutionary but he used the system in trying to make revolutionary change. He was the kind of person working for a living, but he was interested in street issues."

Crawford was in the Indianapolis crowd when U.S. Sen. Robert Kennedy announced Dr. Martin Luther King

had been assassinated on April 3, 1968, during the Indiana presidential primary season. "That changed the course of my life," said Crawford in a 2011 interview with WTHR's Scott Swan. "Just led me to believe that I had to translate my religion into action and as Dr. King said, to serve."

Crawford was a high school dropout who eventually got his GED. He served in the U.S. Navy, worked at the post office, and he challenged the status quo. "I was considered a radical," he explained to Swan. "I had the big afro."

In Crawford's view, it wasn't until the multi-member districts were ruled unconstitutional and Democrat Evan Bayh was elected governor that he began getting traction in the warrens of Statehouse power. Bayh, he said, "opened doors for opportunity to African-Americans in the state of Indiana that is unparalleled with any administration."

Brown told HPI that Crawford became a compromiser. "Bill was also a generation who were used to and comfortable with compromise. The way he thought, he would say 'I can't get everything I want now, but if I can get No. 1 and No. 3, then I'll try to get No. 2 and No. 7 next session.' Bill was able to find common ground with Republicans and sometimes he had to chastise white Democrats. Sometimes it was harder to get things done



State Reps. Julia Carson and William Crawford both entered the Indiana House in 1972, overcoming the Nixon reelection landslide. Both would go on to define modern African-American legislating and community stewardship.

within his own party."

Brown remembers being dispatched to Pearl's Lounge for a community meeting back in the 1980s. "I walked into this meeting and I was a young kid, 27 or 28.

It was a smoked-filled room and there was Bill Crawford, Glenn Howard, the head of NCAAP, Sam Jones, Tom Binford, the head of water company. There was smoking and drinking and everyone was using four-letter and 12-letter words. It was about trying to find common ground. Sometimes you have to have some of those meetings where you let it out and put it on the table."

He called Carson "a sweet, warm woman sometimes and a hard-nosed bare-knuckle politician" at others. "Hillary Clinton could learn from Julia," Brown said. "Julia Carson and Bill Crawford were servants first, and politicians second. They had the mindset of serving their communities, but they did it with hard-knuckled politics."

When Indianapolis Mayor Bill Hudnut proposed the Hoosier Dome, he said on the "Afternoons with Amos" Wednesday, "If Bill Crawford had opposed the Hoosier Dome, it would have been a lot harder to get it through. He not only voted for it, he co-sponsored the legislation. He created a bipartisan scenario."

Crawford made history when he assumed the chair of the House Ways & Means Committee in 2006. "People didn't think he could chair Ways & Means, that he couldn't do it," Brown recalled. "I remember a Mary Beth Schneider story in the Star on how everyone was amazed that Bill Crawford was a reasonable leader. He had been on that committee from day one and knew it was a different role when you get the chair."

Former Gov. Joe Kernan said Wednesday afternoon, "He was the first African-American to become chair of Ways & Means, and that was no small task when you're talking about how many other members were in that caucus. He treated that responsibility the way he did with everything else, with passion, creating opportunities, and not just in his district. He had an eye toward the entire state."

Purdue President Mitch Daniels, who worked with Crawford as governor with the chairman, called him a "profile in courage" and added that he "integrated ideas into society."

U.S. Rep. André Carson recalled Crawford's "encyclopedic knowledge" and added that, "He fought for worker's rights, fought hard for ex offenders and veterans. He kept his authenticity. He believed in investing in young people. It's rare these days to see that kind of selflessness."



His legacy prompted House Minority Leader Scott Pelath to say, "He was a giant among men. He was a legend, even as he lived. No one in the history of Indiana was a stronger voice for the voiceless. The echoes are everlasting. I will never forget these things. Most of all, I will remember his winning smile, which could fill and illuminate an entire room."

House Speaker Brian Bosma reacted, saying, "Bill Crawford was a deeply respected colleague in the Indiana House of Representatives, a consummate gentleman and constant advocate for Central Indiana. I had the honor to serve alongside Bill for many years. As a former chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee and the longest-serving African-American legislator in our state's history, Bill leaves behind a sterling legacy of selfless public service. He will be truly missed."

And Gov. Pence explained, "Bill Crawford served as a member of the Indiana General Assembly with distinction. For four decades, his leadership brought about extraordinary accomplishments such as the Second Chance Act, the Minority Teachers' Scholarship Fund and so many others. A veteran of the United States Navy and the first African-American lawmaker to serve as chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, Bill Crawford was a true public servant dedicated to improving the lives of Hoosiers." It's worth noting that Crawford's backing of the Second Chance Act came in an era of the Republican House super majority.

With the passing of the torch from Chairman Crawford to State Reps. Robin Shackelford, Cherish Pryor and Gregg Taylor, Brown said, "If there's any concern I have, and I've said this about Indy civic leadership, I think we've lost some of that servant. We don't come together as often to solve problems." ❖

McCarthy is not an ordinary politico

By CRAIG DUNN

KOKOMO – House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy is poised to be the next Speaker of the United States House of Representatives. Last year, I had the great fortune of spending some time with him in Kokomo.

Most high ranking government officials get a little squeamish in the springtime as the seemingly endless string of rubber chicken and dried beef dinners that we Republicans fondly know as our annual Lincoln/Reagan Dinners roll around. In addition to generally questionable food for the masses, we subject our Republican leading lights to a barrage of questions and comments delivered



up close and personal by folks exercising their rights to free speech. The hand that moments before held the chicken wing now pumps the hand of the guest speaker and John Q. Public grills them on the more remote aspects of the law, religion, government or pop culture.

The typical Lincoln/Reagan Dinner experience leads the average politico to want to

rush in, rush out and get another calendar page turned. Obligations fulfilled. No damage done. I've seen my share of political "dine and dash" and in 2014, at our Howard County Lincoln/Reagan Dinner, I expected to witness another.

When 4th District Congressman Todd Rokita contacted me to see if Howard County would be interested in hosting United States House Republican Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy as our Lincoln/Reagan speaker, I jumped at the opportunity. You see, there is this basic formula when it comes to political events: Big name speaker equals big attendance, equals big cash flow, equals less begging for bucks later on. A House majority leader definitely filled the equation!

To be honest, I expected Kevin McCarthy to arrive late with an entourage like the Pope, give a short canned speech and then leave before the locals had time to ask him if his job was anything like Frank Underwood's on House of Cards. Boy, was I wrong!

McCarthy arrived with Rokita when the doors of the banquet hall opened. He mixed and mingled, shook

everyone's hand, answered tough questions with candid responses and then asked his own questions of our Republican faithful. After the pre-dinner reception where he obligingly posed for photos with everyone, he moved into the banquet hall and worked the crowd tirelessly. He absolutely wowed the Lincoln/Reagan Dinner crowd with his friendly demeanor and willingness to rub elbows with them. Kevin McCarthy was no ordinary politico.

McCarthy's meteoric rise is the story of legend.

The son of a staunchly Democratic firefighter, McCarthy was another of those who were brought to the Republican Party by President Ronald Reagan. An entrepreneur at an early age, McCarthy found a way to buy and sell used cars at a profit while still in high school. He cashed in big when he was one of the first winners of the California lottery. McCarthy invested his \$5,000 winnings into a sandwich shop and launched a successful business career at age 19. Through the process of running his business he acquired his interest in government. Nothing quite exposes a person to bureaucracy, taxes, onerous regulations and governmental roadblocks to success like owning your own business. McCarthy learned quickly that, despite what President Obama believes about who is responsible for your success, when you run a business, it is you against the world.

If there was one theme that I believe sums up McCarthy's political philosophy, it would be an Abraham Lincoln quote the majority leader used. Lincoln said, "Property is the fruit of labor. Property is desirable, a positive good in the world. Some shall be rich shows that others may become rich and hence an encouragement to industry and enterprise. Let not him who is homeless pull down the house of another, but let him labor diligently and build one for himself and thus by example assuring that his shall be safe from violence."

Kevin McCarthy's advice to President Obama may reveal his own managerial philosophy. McCarthy advised the President to make decisions and expect results. Expect subordinates to succeed, replace them if they don't and reach beyond the typical to find success. I don't expect McCarthy, if he ascends to the Speaker's position, to go down the well-worn path of gridlock and no results. He impressed me as a man of action who is willing to take calculated political risks to achieve a greater good.



U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita (left) with House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy in Kokomo last year. (HPI Photo by Craig Dunn)

McCarthy also emphasized that our governmental leadership should be focused on the next generation. He expressed a distinct objective that our children and grandchildren enjoy the same privileges that we have all enjoyed. He also called upon the President to stop the finger-pointing, stop the class warfare and stop harping on wedge issues and unite the country. I didn't get the feeling that Mc-

Carthy was merely talking the talk. He struck me as a man who has a servant's heart and will act in the best interests of his country. He also strikes me as a man who knows that to make an omelet, you need to break a few eggs.

The United States Congress is full of people who have made their careers by playing to narrow interests, who refuse compromise and put their own interests ahead of the country. P.J. O'Rourke calls it the "Parliament of Whores." Kevin McCarthy will need to deal with a caucus where some are flexing their muscles and crowing over their destruction of Speaker John Boehner, while at the same time needing to coordinate strategy with a Senate

that offers the same challenges faced by Boehner. Getting his own house in order will be his first business before he can hope to forge a productive relationship with the Democrats in the House, let alone a lame duck President.

I wouldn't bet against Kevin McCarthy. If past is prologue, he will find success in the Speaker's chair. I know that he will have 300 to 400 friends in Howard County rooting for him! ❖

Dunn is chairman of the Howard County Republicans.

What mayoral candidates should say

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Candidates for mayor are campaigning all over Indiana, struggling to be known and favored by Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 3. Some of these earnest people are incumbents who have held the job for a few or many years. Others are members of city councils who want the top job. Still others are government novices who know what a mayor should do because they have insight into the job based on their experiences and observations.



Most candidates tell us they are good folks, blessed by good families and respected by their neighbors for their good deeds. All of them love the community they seek to lead. All of them are guided by the values they learned from their parents and their religious training.

Most candidates seek to inspire us with their vision of the city as it will be under their leadership. They assure us they will be honest, frugal and wise in spending the people's money. A stronger, better city in the future, widely known for its peace and prosperity, its culture and convenience, can be guaranteed by casting our votes for them.

It's all most stimulating to the mind and spirit. Yet, they scare me every time I see their ads, read their handouts, or hear them speak. When candidates talk about jobs, schools, and workforce development, I know they are blowing smoke because there is little most mayors can do about those important matters. Yes, they can have some marginal influence on businesses and education. However, they would do best to leave the bully

pulpit and spend time ensuring that the building codes and health/environmental regulations are enforced.

I want to vote for a person who is focused on being the mayor rather than the visionary leader of my city. I endorse those who are concerned about garbage removal and recycling of our wastes. Give me the candidate who will see to it that the snow is removed promptly when needed, the pot holes not just filled, but fixed.

Can I depend on the candidate to treat city workers with respect and to pay them fairly? Will the nieces and nephews of the mayor's friends, family and followers be denied special favors? Are city contracts going to be given to the competent rather than the connected? Will the indolent and ineffective be fired?

A responsible candidate does not promise to keep tax rates from rising. S/he tells voters the truth: The Indiana General Assembly has usurped the powers of our cities and towns. In addition, tax rates need to go up to repair the neglect of the past and build for the future. Structures, parks, roads and sewers need maintenance. Meanwhile, we require new ways to manage energy and increase our connectivity with the world.

It is certainly good to have vision. However strategic plans, blue ribbon commissions and focus groups are poor substitutes for effective management of basic city functions. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist, writer, and speaker who may be reached at mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com.

Trump plays the villain hand

By PETE SEAT

INDIANAPOLIS – Donald Trump went into the second Republican presidential debate underwater in favorability ratings but surprisingly buoyant in horse race match-ups against his competitors. While the resiliency of those numbers confounds political prognosticators seeking logical solutions to this political mystery, Trump's rivals determined it was time to knock him from his perch.



What those would-be heroes – a group I like to call the Justice League Republicans – did was dare to reject a societal obsession that has become a political reality and their risk, so far, is paying off.

Americans simply love villains and in Donald Trump they have found one. Now, I understand not everyone possesses the same definition of what constitutes a villain. In politics, especially, villainy can be subjective. The villain is always the other guy (or gal) in the race. In the case of Trump, however, his villain bona fides are perhaps subjective but corroborated in both empirical and anecdotal data.

For instance, Trump has long found kindred spirits among villains. His reality television show *Celebrity Apprentice* was built as a refuge for the despised. He plucked entertainment villains (Andrew Dice Clay) and sports villains (Dennis Rodman) and political villains (Rod Blagojevich) and villains of his own creation (the *Apprentice*'s Omarosa) out of exile and gave them a chance to redeem themselves in prime time.

And it worked. *Celebrity Apprentice* brought in respectable ratings and revived the careers of many contestants. Now a candidate for president, Trump is looking to use his Midas touch on himself on his march to brand the White House the Trump House.

But why do we have an infatuation with villains like Trump? Aren't we supposed to cheer the knight in shining armor here to save the day?

Predictable stories are boring and leave little to the imagination. Guy meets girl, girl runs off to marry another guy, original guy finds girl again, they fall in love, yada yada yada, and everyone lives happily ever after. That formulaic story line has become trite. Cheering for the villain, however, adds an element of intrigue and suspense.

Underneath this infatuation is the desire to figure the villain out. What are the villain's motives? What makes them tick? Why do they do what they do? Rather than only asking these questions of the characters of *Breaking*

Bad or *House of Cards*, voters are asking themselves these questions about Trump. What does Trump get out of running for president? He's so rich; does he really need to be president, too?

Already a man of incredible self-confidence, Trump, in classic villain fashion, began to view himself as invincible following the first debate. Trump's unrestrained bravado and kneejerk insult factory of a mouth had already attacked Hispanics, veterans of the military, FOX News host Megyn Kelly, Carly Fiorina's appearance, Ben Carson's medical acumen and other people and things up to that point. And with each barb and every jab his poll numbers only went north, never south.

But the Justice League Republicans decided to give Trump a dose of his own nasty medicine in the second debate, starting with Carly Fiorina.

The former U.S. Senate candidate and Hewlett-Packard CEO, who has been viewed more as a potential side kick, showed she was no Robin in going after Trump from the get-go. Fueled by his attacks on her appearance in a *Rolling Stone* interview, Fiorina went hard and went strong hoping to appeal to the approximately 70 percent of Republican primary voters supporting someone other than Trump.

The others joined in as well. Given an opportunity to respond to a side swipe from Trump, Rand Paul questioned whether the real estate mogul's "careless language" would be a detriment when conversing with Russia's Vladimir Putin. Then Scott Walker, who days later made himself a martyr by dropping out of the race altogether in an attempt to coalesce the field in favor of a non-villain candidate, practically forced himself into the conversation to label Trump an "apprentice," adding, "We don't need an apprentice in the White House. We have one right now."

Zip! Pow! Bang!

CNN's post-debate poll showed signs of the gambit working. Trump slipped 8 points and Fiorina gained 12 points. Even so, it is yet to be seen if the would-be heroes were successful in their chivalrous, and perhaps selfless, attacks. But with their combined efforts, there are reasons to believe the populace is finally starting to turn on their beloved villain. ❖

Pete Seat is senior project manager at the Indianapolis-based Hathaway Strategies and author of the book, "The War on Millennials." He was previously a spokesman for President George W. Bush, U.S. Sen. Dan Coats and the Indiana Republican Party.

Rich James, Howey Politics Indiana: It would seem there is no end to Gov. Mike Pence's efforts to control the state's education system. And that direction includes his ongoing campaign to push Glenda Ritz, the state superintendent of public education, into the background. Pence this week announced the appointment of seven Hoosiers, all of whom are involved in education, to the Education Commission of the States. The commission tracks trends in education policy, applies academic research and provides unbiased advice and creates opportunities for state education leaders to learn from one another. Perhaps, not surprisingly, just one of the seven appointees is a Democrat. State Sen. Earline Rogers, D-Gary, is a retired Gary schools teacher and administrator, and the ranking Democrat on the Senate Education Committee. "Serving on this commission will be a valuable exercise in continued education as we share what ideas best work for our state and nation," Rogers said upon being appointed. The others, all Republicans, are state Reps. Robert Behning of Indianapolis; Tim Harmon of Bremen and Sen. Dennis Kruse of Auburn; Teresa Lubbers, Indiana higher education commissioner; Chad Timmerman, Pence's education advisor, and Pence himself. Ritz, the state's highest ranking elected education official, won't be going to the commission meetings. The appointments, or lack thereof, give Democrats another campaign tool to use against the governor over the next 13 months if they so choose.

Shunning Ritz and naming just one Democrat is in keeping with Pence's perceived desire to take over education in Indiana. The governor previously named his own board of education and stacked it with well-paid Republican cohorts. The move was accomplished without approval of the Legislature. He even pushed and then signed legislation to remove Ritz as the chair of the State Department of Education. Because of the ongoing assault, Ritz announced her candidacy for governor but backed away after state Democratic leaders, including Lake County Democratic chairman John Buncich, said they were backing John Gregg as the governor nominee. Instead, Ritz will seek reelection as superintendent rather than seeking to be the lieutenant governor candidate as some had speculated. Who will be the lieutenant governor candidate remains far from settled, but there are rumors one of the potential candidates is in Lake County. ❖

Matthew Tully, IndyStar: Matthew Tully, IndyStar: So after all that, it looks like we'll have the rematch most people long ago predicted. Mike Pence versus John Gregg. Round Two. Only likely more interesting this time. It took a while to get here. For Democrats, it took a long list of big-name Democrats, from Evan Bayh to Brad Ellsworth, taking a pass at taking on Pence. It took the demise of the oh-so brief campaigns of Glenda Ritz (wow, did I give that one too much credit) and state Sen. Karen

Tallian. And, finally, it took Tuesday's announcement by former Bayh aide Tom Sugar that he would not wage a campaign he seemed quite eager to wage. And on the other side, it took the non-emergence of that much-discussed but never-seen moderate Republican challenger to Pence. It's not too late for more candidates to jump into the race — technically, at least -- but the reality seems to be that the 2016 lineup is set. Mike Pence versus John Gregg. A politically damaged incumbent versus the guy whose folksy 2012 campaign left Democrats from Gary to Evansville frustrated. A conservative standard-bearer whose conservative agenda has hurt him versus a conservative Democrat who sure isn't talking much these days about his conservative record. It should be fun. Or at least interesting. And, in all likelihood, it's going to be rough. On one hand, it seems Gregg will spend much of the next 13 months painting Pence as the ideologically obsessed architect of a social agenda that, for a while at least, left the state in tatters. And you only have to look at how hard Democrats have hit Pence over the I-65 mess and other embarrassments to see that this isn't going to be a hope-and-change kind of campaign. For his part, Pence has already suggested that he'll abandon nearly two decades of campaigning without negative attack ads. Some believe his kid-gloves strategy against Gregg nearly cost him a close 2012 race, and there's an even greater sense that it would cost him dearly this time around. In the end,

here's what I love about a 2016 rematch: The person who runs the better campaign will likely win. ❖



Charlie Cook, National Journal: A few weeks before the 2010 election, I ran into then-House Minority Leader John Boehner at a reception. President Obama's approval ratings were tanking, the Affordable Care Act that had passed earlier in the year was exceedingly unpopular, and, unsurprisingly, Democrats were in a free fall. Boehner saw me, walked over, leaned in, and said quietly, "We're going to win this thing." Then he paused and turned it into a question, "Aren't we?" I laughed and replied something like, "Yup, I think you are." Boehner's response was, "Damnedest thing I ever saw." Republicans were about to recapture the majority they had lost four years earlier, and only because Democrats were self-destructing. When Boehner announced last week that he was stepping down from the speakership and resigning from Congress next month, I thought about that conversation. This year it seemed like, in very different ways, both parties are at risk of self-destructing. Republicans seem hell-bent on committing self-immolation on both the presidential and congressional levels. Democrats, who pretty much settled on a presidential nominee early on, now find their front-runner hopelessly mired in (depending on your perspective) a scandal or a controversy, one that is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon and has raised legitimate questions about how electable she'd be. ❖

Russian hackers aimed at Hillary

WASHINGTON – Russia-linked hackers tried to hack into Hillary Clinton’s private email at least five times, emails released on Wednesday reveal (Telegraph). Mrs Clinton was US secretary of state at the time of the attempted breaches.

It is unclear if she clicked on any attachment and exposed her account. Mrs Clinton received the infected emails, disguised as speeding tickets,

over four hours early one morning in August 2011. The emails instructed recipients to print the attached tickets, which would have allowed hackers to take control of their computers. Security researchers who analysed the malicious software have said that infected computers would transmit information from victims to at least three server computers overseas, including one in Russia. That does not necessarily mean Russians were responsible. Nick Merrill, a spokesman for Clinton’s Democratic presidential campaign, said: “We have no evidence to suggest she replied to this email or that she opened the attachment. As we have said before, there is no evidence that the system was ever breached. All these emails show is that, like millions of other Americans, she received spam.”

Daniels discusses student debt load

INDIANAPOLIS – College students may soon have the option of trading a portion of their future incomes for an investor-paid university education. U.S. Sen. Dan Coats, R-Ind., presiding Wednesday over a congressional hearing on the nation’s student debt crisis, seemed to embrace the idea of income-share agreements as an alternative to loan-funded higher education (Carden, NWI Times). The need is urgent, Coats said,

because the \$1.3 trillion in outstanding student loan debt — more than twice the amount of Americans’ credit card debt — threatens the future of the U.S. economy by deterring young workers from purchasing homes, cars or starting a family. Purdue University President Mitch Daniels explained to members of Congress’ Joint Economic Committee that income-share agreements offer the best shot at a debt-

free college education. Under the plan, originally proposed in 1955 by Nobel Prize-winning University of Chicago economist Milton Friedman, a student who signs an income-share agreement (ISA)

would have his or her college tuition paid by investors, in exchange for the investors getting a percentage of the student’s future earnings over a to-be-negotiated number of years. “For students, the clear advantage is that their education payments will never be more than the agreed portion of their incomes, no matter what life brings, including unemployment, underemployment and health issues,” Daniels said.

Statehouse traffic pattern changes

IINDIANAPOLIS – As construction work continues on Robert D. Orr Plaza in preparation for the installation of Bicentennial Plaza, permanent changes in traffic patterns on Robert D. Orr Plaza and Senate Avenue are planned. Beginning on or after Friday, October 9, 2015, the following changes will go into effect: Robert D. Orr Plaza will be closed to all vehicular traffic except for emergency vehicles or vehicles authorized by IDOA and/or ISP. Senate Avenue will be designated as one-way between Ohio Street and Washington Street, running southbound. A newly created turnaround area will easily allow traffic entering Robert D. Orr Plaza from West Street to return to northbound West Street. This area will be marked with signs. There will be no parking along Robert D. Orr Plaza

except for daycare drop-off areas near the west end. Media may enter Senate Avenue from Ohio Street and park along Senate Avenue south of Orr Plaza. These areas will be designated with signs.

Redman next Warrick assessor

BOONVILLE – The Warrick County clerk will become the next Warrick County assessor (Evansville Courier & Press). With no other candidates filing for the position, Sarah Redman will be the assessor for at least three years, finishing Angela Wilder’s term. Redman will be officially sworn in by a Republican Party caucus at 8:30 a.m. Saturday. Redman sent her resignation letter as Warrick County Clerk to Gov. Mike Pence Wednesday.

IU prankster Leon Varjian dies

BLOOMINGTON – Former notable Bloomington resident Leon Varjian died unexpectedly Tuesday at his New Jersey home. He was 64. The last 27 years, Varjian was a beloved high school mathematics teacher in Midland Park, New Jersey. Varjian’s cousin, Barbara Sabonjian, told the Wisconsin State Journal that Varjian did not show up for work Tuesday and was found dead by police at home. A campus clown and political prankster, Varjian was revered for his wicked sense of humor. In the 1970 as an Indiana University graduate student, he ran for student government vice president on the “Birthday Party” ticket and hosted the Banana Olympics in Dunn Meadow. In the May 1975 Bloomington primary elections, Varjian ran for mayor on the Democratic ticket, against Frank McCloskey, Charlotte Zietlow and Earl Polley. Varjian came in third and garnered 776 votes. He ran on the “Fun City” platform, vowing to transform the downtown square into a Monopoly board, the city into a Disneyland-like tourist center and the IU campus into an amusement park.

