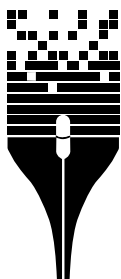


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“QUOTE” OF THE WEEK

“Right now I have the presence of Tom Kromkowski!”

- House Speaker B. Patrick Bauer,
seeking State Rep. Tom Kromkowski’s vote on
full-day kindergarten via a laptop computer

Pastrick, Rokita drive scandal front

Spann appointment a thumb to nose?

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY** in Indianapolis

Question: Who is the most radioactive personality in Indiana politics?

Our answer would be East Chicago Mayor Robert A. Pastrick.

Just months after District Attorney Joseph Van Bokkelen indicted Pastrick’s son, Kevin, and six members of his administration and the East Chicago City Council, there came a curious *Post-Tribune* story in Wednesday’s editions by reporter Michael Puente:

“Perhaps the most loyal of any of Mayor Robert A. Pastrick’s subjects, Noah Atterson Spann, has talked his way out of a forced retirement and will now serve in a new position. Spann, who was convicted of federal crimes when he sat as a Lake County commissioner, will now oversee contracts between community groups and the city. Spann was ... charged by the U.S. attorney with racketeering and conspiracy. He was ordered to serve 20 years in prison and pay a \$25,000 fine, along with forfeiting the money he took as a payoff from two janitorial firms. Spann was later convicted in a 1989 bribery scam associated with the inflated sale of the East Chicago Rehabilitation Center.”

This stunning appointment comes after Pastrick attended Van Bokkelen’s “zero tolerance on public corruption” speech in Hammond the same day federal agents rounded up the mayor’s son and the East Chicago Six.

By appointing Spann, was Mayor Pastrick thumbing his nose at Van Bokkelen? It was an intriguing development.

But if Pastrick is legally radioactive, he still isn’t when it comes to Indiana Democratic Party politics. HPR

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COLEMAN RESIGNS AT BMV: Gov. Joe Kernan today said that he has accepted the resignation of Gerald Coleman, commissioner of the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles. "Gerald has handled some very complicated situations at BMV with extraordinary grace and class," Kernan said. "He has led an agency that has more than 2,000 employees across the state, who touch Hoosiers lives directly nearly every day. It is no small task to lead this state agency. Gerald has overseen the expansion of online services, opened up more license branches, implemented new technology and created new employee recognition programs, and for that, Indiana is very grateful." Kernan added of Coleman, whose last day will be Feb. 27. "I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the Kernan administration, and I would like to thank the governor for the opportunity to serve him and this state," Coleman said. "However, the difficult issues that I have had to deal with at the bureau over the past few months have taken a toll on my family and me. Therefore, I think it is best for me, my family and for the bureau that I leave at this time," Coleman added. Stepping into the commissioner role, Kernan announced today, will be Mary DePrez, currently spe-

has learned that Gov. Joe Kernan recently attended a fund-raiser sponsored by Mayor Pastrick that was attended by the indicted Kevin Pastrick, though Kernan campaign spokesman Scott Downes says that Kevin Pastrick made no donation.

And, on the night of the governor's State of the State address, Kernan and Lt. Gov. Davis hosted the 5th annual mayor's reception "honoring" Mayor Pastrick at the Skyline Club.

Less than a week after Democratic Chairman Joe Hogsett told HPR that, "I haven't really been following what is going on up there" in The Region's rough and tumble legal and political arena, the chairman hired *Indianapolis Star* political editor Terry Burns to be the party's communications director. Burns once headed the *Times of Northwest Indiana's* Statehouse bureau. If Hogsett hadn't been following the cascading drama coming out of Lake County -- including the recently announced legal task force of Attorney General Steve Carter, Lake County prosecutor Bernard Carter and Van Bokkelen -- it might be because he hasn't been reading the *Post-Tribune*, *Times* or the *HPR Daily Wire*, where the story plays out on an almost daily basis and appears to be heading for a sensational crescendo. He might have been relying on the *Star's* coverage of The Region's developments, which has been scant. Perhaps Burns can get him up to speed.

Hogsett and the Democrats, who tried to draw blood on Mitch Daniels over the IPALCO matter last week (with the ham-handed help of Republican Secretary of State Todd Rokita), may be setting themselves up for Region links to the party's hierarchy that could add to FSSA and BMV (where Commissioner Gerald Coleman resigned today). Thus, Burns coming on board the Democratic Party may make sense if the party needs to steer through the unpredictable currents.

The elusive Pastrick

Informed and reliable sources tell

HPR that despite all his radioactivity, Pastrick is still viewed in Democratic Party circles as the mayoral patriarch. One Democratic Party source tells HPR he doesn't believe that Pastrick is a target of the federal investigation. Both Attorney General Steve Carter and Lake County Prosecutor Bernard Carter refused to confirm or deny he is a target.

He is a mayor who has always evaded the legal trap, though three administrative assistants (including Spann) have been sent to prison.

Another Region Democratic Party source tells HPR, "The Marion County D's sit in awe of Pastrick. They don't tell him anything." A key reason for that is that Pastrick has long been the legal teflon mayor and helps the party roll up huge pluralities in Lake County. Even with the legal dust devils swirling around the mayor, Democratic gubernatorial candidates seek his endorsement and reap his fund-raising prowess and the get-out-the-vote machinery.

That's not to say Pastrick does not have survival worries that go beyond DA Van Bokkelen. Region sources tell HPR that despite putting on a brave face, Pastrick is fearful of a looming Indiana Supreme Court appeal on the 2003 mayoral primary mounted by his opponent, George Pabey. It was a "dissertation" by Judge Stephen King in an ensuing civil trial brought by Pabey that kicked off the troika task force now aimed at Pastrick's kingdom. There is speculation that if the Supreme Court orders a new election, Pastrick may decide not to seek a second ninth term in office.

But even that scenario brings out intriguing images. When Lt. Gov. Kathy Davis was inaugurated in the South Atrium of the Statehouse last October, Pastrick was seen to the right of the dais enjoying a friendly chat with four or five Supreme Court justices; the very people who may one day ultimately determine the penultimate chapter to a legendary political career.

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Patterson to Sun-Times

In a related Region note, *Post-Tribune* reporter Steve Patterson, who compared Pastrick's attendance at Van Bokkelen's "zero tolerance" seminar to the baptism scene in "*The Godfather: Part II*," has resigned to accept the City Hall beat job for the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

Patterson and his colleague Puente shared No. 49 on the 2004 *HPR 50 Most Influential* list.

Todd Rokita

On the Indianapolis end of the "Culture of Scandal" front, it was Secretary of State Rokita who really stepped in it last week.

In a move that numerous sources tell HPR was not coordinated with the Mitch Daniels campaign, Rokita "exonerated" Daniels of wrongdoing in the IPALCO sale to AES. That move kicked off a bizarre twist of events and resulted in both Daniels and Hogsett agreeing that Rokita should release Daniels testimony.

Rokita balked, saying it would imperil the rest of his investigation, which had Democrats scoffing over the political connections there. Daniels hosted a September 2002 fundraiser for Rokita.

Hogsett, a former secretary of state, called Rokita's move an "unprecedented and historical act by any secretary of state to, in essence, exonerate an individual in the middle of an investigation."

A gem of a letter from Hogsett to Daniels went like this: "I felt it important for you to personally see what I have said and the tone that I have been using so that there is no misunderstanding on your part. Unfortunately your campaign, through Jim Kittle Jr., issued a press release on Friday accusing me of being involved in a 'political smear campaign.' Nothing is further from the truth. I don't object to the characterization and comments attributed to Jim Kittle. Jim is a friend and he is just doing what someone has asked him to do.

From News to Politics

Here is a recent list of past Indiana media personalities who migrated to political organizations:

Democrats

Tina Noel, from WSBT-TV to Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan/Gov. Kernan.

Doug Davidoff, from *Indianapolis News* to Indiana Democrats.

Phil Bremen from WRTV to Gov. Frank O'Bannon.

Mary Dieter from *Louisville Courier-Journal* (via Eli Lilly) to Gov. O'Bannon.

Susan Dillman, from *South Bend Tribune* to the Frank Anderson sheriff campaign and Indiana Democrats.

Shannon Lohrmann, from Gannett News Bureau to State Rep. David Orentlicher and then the Joe Andrew campaign.

Doug Sword, from *Indianapolis Star* to Mayor Bart Peterson.

Terry Burns from *Indianapolis Star* to Indiana Democrats.

Republicans

Marc Lotter from WGCL-TV in Atlanta to Indiana Republicans.

Larry MacIntyre from *Indianapolis Star* to Indiana Republicans, then to U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar.

However, I certainly did not want you to have any impression other than the one that is truthful – that is, to date, I have been trying unsuccessfully to protect your integrity, clear your name and ask that all documents be released to the public which serve to exonerate you. I am sorry that Secretary of State Rokita has chosen not to defend you in this regard."

Daniels and Rokita might be considered to be on icier terms these days. The *Star's* Mary Beth Schneider caught

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cial counsel to the secretary for the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration.

MECKS CALLS BUDGET NUMBERS 'ALARMING': State tax receipts last month fell \$21.5 million — about 2 percent — below projections that already had been lowered to reflect the state's stagnant economy. State Budget Director Marilyn Schultz called the numbers "disappointing." Senate Budget Subcommittee Chairman Bob Meeks called them "alarming." "These are certainly not good numbers," said Meeks, *R-LaGrange (Louisville Courier-Journal)*. "I think the governor is really going to have to keep his eye on things." The numbers mean that since July 1 the state has received about \$200 million less in tax receipts than lawmakers were expecting when they wrote the two-year state budget. Yesterday Schultz — an appointee of Democratic Gov. Joe Kernan — said the administration is "hopeful" that a national economic upturn will soon result in higher tax receipts. "But in the meantime we will continue to manage a very tight budget," Schultz said. "Over the past several years, as Indiana has weathered this national recession, we've taken responsible and effective

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five steps to meet our obligations. And we will continue to do that."

ESPICH CALLS FOR SPENDING CUT: Rep. Jeff Espich, the fiscal leader for House Republicans, said that's not good enough (Louisville Courier-Journal). He has called on Kernan to cut spending so the state doesn't end up in the red at the end of this fiscal year or the biennial budget cycle, which ends June 30, 2005. In a letter late last month, Espich told Kernan "it is critical that you, as the state's chief executive, provide the leadership to pursue additional efficiencies and savings in state government."

SLOTS BILL PASSES HOUSE: The Indiana House voted yesterday to authorize video gambling machines at Indiana's racetracks and off-track betting parlors in Indianapolis and Fort Wayne (Louisville Courier-Journal). They would not be permitted at the parlor opening this year in Clarksville. House Bill 1188, approved 53-49, now moves to the Indiana Senate, where Republicans leaders have blocked similar legislation in the past. The bill's author, Rep. Scott Reske, D-Pendleton, said this year could be different. "The horse racing and breeding community is doing a lot of grass-roots efforts," he said.

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Daniels in an emotional mood over the weekend. "It is not premature!" Daniels was quoted, slamming his hand on the table. "Not as to me. I don't care if 100 people look at this, they're going to come to the same conclusion. I cast an 'aye' vote in good conscience, in good judgment and in the interests of shareholders."

By midweek, *Star* reporters had combed through 170 pages of Daniels testimony and concluded: "A newly released statement is consistent with Republican gubernatorial candidate Mitch Daniels' version of an IPALCO stock swap but also portrays him as a bottom-line businessman."

The *Star* reported that "the November statement" by Daniels "reiterates what Daniels has said in interviews and in a deposition given as part of a separate federal lawsuit."

The Kernan campaign was not amused. Spokesman Downes told HPR, "The more this continues, the more questions it raises about his judgment."

It wasn't clear whether *Star* reporters were actually viewing the deposition, or an alias of one (to use a computer desktop term). Nevertheless, it was a convoluted situation instead of a clarion declaration of innocence. But the fact is

that after Daniels' display of emotion and Rokita's recalcitrance, the gist of what Daniels told investigators saw the bright sunshine of the free and unfettered press, while Rokita stands in the shadows of Ronald Reagan's woodshed.

If there was any doubt about this, one only had to look in the staunchest Republican medium -- the *Indianapolis Business Journal* editorial page -- to bear witness: "Time will tell the real story behind insiders' sale of IPALCO Enterprises Inc. shares after the local utility was sold to AES Corp. But Republican Secretary of State Todd Rokita's sloppy handling of the announcement exonerating ... Daniels ... invites more questions than it answers and injects politics into the investigation. Reaching conclusions before an investigation is closed seems foolish. When one of those singled out for exoneration is a fellow Republican and running for governor, it smacks of politics at its opportunistic worst. And Rokita can't even prosecute the case if there is one. A prosecutor should make the decision. Unfortunately, Rokita's actions have only served to roil the situation."

Why, David Stockman couldn't have said it any better in the "*Triumph of Politics*." ❖

Another 'fast one' on the Indiana House floortop

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

Ahhhh yes, the ol' fast one.

Coming in a week of fast ones.

Yes, there was Secretary of State Rokita's "exoneration" of Mitch Daniels; the alias IPALCO depositions for reporters; Mayor Pastrick's hiring of Atterson Spann.

But nothing -- *nothing* -- was quite so slick and fast as what occurred on the Indiana House floor Wednesday afternoon.

There was Indiana State Police Superintendent Melvin Carraway with a laptop computer featuring the ailing face of State Rep. Thomas Kromkowski,

unable to vote on the House floor due to recent heart surgery. Kromkowski was home, in the company of a state trooper, when he attempted to vote for full-day kindergarten, Gov. Joe Kernan's top legislative priority. The other three missing Democrats (due to illness and family crisis) were back in the chamber.

The *Evansville Courier & Press* reported that Speaker B. Patrick Bauer then held up a cell phone to a House microphone to register Kromkowski's vote, but all that was audible was feedback from the sound system.

Republicans immediately protested the move and a yelling match broke out.

Republicans protested that Kromkowski wasn't truly present while Bauer held up the laptop shouting, "Right here I have the presence of Tom Kromkowski who voted yes here today!"

It was almost as if Psychic Bauer had produced the ghost of Houdini while gazing into a crystal ball (or, in this case, a laptop computer). Democrats also claimed there was precedent for such a move (*Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*). They contend that in 1947, Fort Wayne Sen. Dorothy Gardner was recorded voting for bills all day despite a journal entry showing flowers were sent to her because she was confined to her hotel room. There is nothing in the journal that directly said she voted from her hotel room.

The *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette* reported in this morning's editions: "House Democrats nearly threw the legislative session into complete chaos Wednesday after an attempted hijacking of a long-standing rule requiring a member to be present to vote."

WTHR-TV's Kevin Rader noted that at a time when "you'd think we'd seen it all" then came Rep. Kromkowski's most interesting vote.

In the ensuing chaos, Republicans were able to prevent the Kromkowski vote. "This ruling makes a mockery of our system of government," State Rep. Jeff Espich said of the vote. "This is making history," said state Rep. Ralph Ayres, R-Chesterton (*Times of Northwest Indiana*). "It's an extremely dangerous precedent."

Some House Democrats were stunned by the move.

"Had they consulted with (fellow Democrats), I think we would have counseled (leadership) not to do this," said Rep. Dennis Avery, D-Evansville. "I'm not happy with the way this transpired" (*Evansville Courier & Press*). And Rep. Dave Crooks, D-Washington, said he was instrumental in getting Bauer to change his mind and withdraw Kromkowski's vote.

Bosma explained later, "The events

surrounding today's vote on HJR 5 were unusual and unprecedented. I am pleased that in the end, the right solution was reached and the Democrats abandoned their plan to allow remote voting by absent members. The vote on funding of the full-day kindergarten proposal is emotionally charged and, unfortunately, has become very politically driven. This was evident with today's attempt to bypass our state constitution and House rules and allow a member who is not present to cast a vote by cell phone and web cam."

The most intriguing aspect of this was Gov. Kernan's willingness to sign off on the controversial procedure. Kernan authorized the use of the state police in trying to forge the vote. "It was worth taking a crack at it," Kernan said.

But Espich had a different view. "You can't cheat and then expect people not to remember a wrong that was done," he said.

Republicans quickly pounced on the political front. "It should greatly concern Hoosiers the depths to which Gov. Joe Kernan and the Democrats will sink to stay in power in Indiana," Republican Chairman Jim Kittle Jr. said. "Gov. Kernan's use of the Indiana State Police in this clear violation of House Rules illustrates candidate Kernan's desperation to pass his pet political project. This kind of politicking is both reckless and irresponsible. Hoosiers deserve a governor who respects and upholds the rules, not a governor who authorizes Clintonesque tactics to circumvent the system."

If Republicans were charging Bauer and Kernan with playing politics, Democrats were also suspecting that political motivations in the context of the 2004 governor's race prompted the eight Republicans who backed the bill on an earlier reading to return to the rest of their caucus in voting the measure down.

It pins on Kernan a legacy that the late Gov. O'Bannon couldn't escape: Defeat of his top legislative priority. ❖

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ABSENTEE BALLOT RESTRICTIONS PASS SENATE: Addressing concerns that absentee ballots have become a tool for election fraud, the Senate passed several bills Wednesday to place restrictions on the process and increase penalties for its abuse. The strongest measure would bar the mailing of absentee ballots to addresses within the county where the vote is held. Supporters of Senate Bill 442, which passed 37-12, said people should only vote absentee if they are disabled or temporarily out of the county (Brendan O'Shaughnessy, *Times of Northwest Indiana*). State Sen. Rose Ann Antich-Carr, D-Merrillville, said she was concerned the measure was too strict but hoped it would be removed when the bill is considered in the House. She said other changes -- increasing penalties for vote fraud, requiring signatures on absentee ballot applications and improving voter registration lists -- were important to restore faith in Lake County politics. "Many people don't care to vote because there's so much fraud they believe it won't count," Antich-Carr said. "This and (another bill) will help reduce voter apathy." State Sen. Earline Rogers, D-Gary, voted against the bill because she said it went too far. She said it's important to encourage participation by making it as easy as

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possible for people to vote. "That's not to downplay the problems we've had in Lake County," Rogers said. "There should be some reaction, but we need to be more careful."

CARSON BACKING DST: Indiana Rep. Julia Carson is asking the federal government to investigate whether the state is losing money by not adopting daylight-saving time. Carson called the current confusion over the time zones inconvenient, and claimed that it would save Indiana families more than \$7 million in electricity rates alone (WRTV). Carson also said changing time zones would be a wind-fall for small and large businesses by allowing lifting barriers to competition, improving communication and commerce and simplifying financial transactions. A bill Carson filed in Congress last year to force daylight-saving time was not successful. Last week, Lt. Gov. Kathy Davis said she wanted the state to adopt daylight-saving time and use the central time zone statewide.

INDIANA SENATE PASSES GAY MARRIAGE BAN: The Senate overwhelmingly approved a resolution that would add a definition of marriage to the Indiana Constitution that excludes the possibility of homosexual marriage (Martin

2004 Racing Form

Trendline: *New York Times* columnist Thomas L. Friedman writes: Personally I don't believe the Bush team will pay a long-term political price for its faith-based intelligence about weapons of mass destruction. The Bush team's real vulnerability is its B.M.D. - Budgets of Mass Destruction - which have recklessly imperiled the nation's future with crazy tax-cutting and out-of-control spending. The latest report from the Congressional Budget Office says the deficit is expected to total some \$2.4 trillion over the next decade - almost \$1 trillion more than the prediction of just five months ago. At a time when the federal government should be building up surpluses to prepare for the aging of the baby boom generation, it is engaged in another reckless experiment with large and permanent tax cuts.

Indiana 2004 Gubernatorial

Governor 2004: Republican: Mitch Daniels, Eric Miller, Petersburg Mayor Randy Harris, Bob Parker. **Democrat:** Gov. Joe Kernan. **1996 Results:** O'Bannon (D) 1,075,342, Goldsmith (R) 997,505, Dillon (L) 35,261. **2000 Results:** O'Bannon (D) 1,230,345, McIntosh (R) 906,492, Horning (L) 38,686. **2004 Forecast:** The good news for Daniels on the IPALCO front is

HORSE RACE

that if there truly is no misconduct on his part, this thing passes in January and February, instead of October. The bad news is that Secretary of State Rokita has muddled the picture and the Daniels campaign has had to make a convoluted response based on letting reports see copies of a Daniels interview. On Kernan's front, he has suffered his first major legislative defeat over full-day kindergarten at the hands of Republicans who say it shouldn't pass during a bad economy, though they also turned FDK down during a good economy (1999). While this may be a great campaign issue for Kernan, the "let's take a crack at it" stance over the Kromkowski internet vote could come back to haunt him. One of Kernan's key attributes is his reputation as a no-nonsense, straight up guy. Voters don't tend to reward slickness and you can bet that's the way Republicans will spin that. **Republican Primary Status:** *Likely Daniels*; **General Status:** *Tossup.*

Indiana 2004 Congressional

Congressional District 3: Republican: U.S. Rep. Mark Souder, William Larsen. **Democrat:** Day Smith, Mark Summers. **Geography:** Fort Wayne, Goshen; Kosciusko, Whitley, LaGrange, Steuben, DeKalb and parts of Elkhart and Allen counties. **Media Market:** South Bend-Elkhart, Fort Wayne. **People:** Urban/rural 65/35%; median income \$44,013; Race: 87% white, 6% black, 4.5% Hispanic; Blue/white collar: 36/52% 2000 Presidential: Bush 66%, Gore 33%. **Cook Partisan Voting Index:** R+17. **2002 results:** Souder 92,566 (63%), Ridgon 50,509 (34%). **2002 Money:** Souder \$518,717, Ridgon \$131,458. **2004 Outlook:** Day Smith, who ran on the statewide ticket in 2000, is considering a challenge. "To have a platform to say some things I think need to be said - I can't base a decision just on that," Smith told the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*. "The money's the real thing because we've had too many campaigns in this district that have been so underfunded that they never had a shot." Smith criticized Souder for supporting the war in Iraq but then not "fighting like crazy" for veterans. Souder reported on his visit with Hoosier troops in Iraq. "From my discussions with our men and women in uniform, it was readily apparent that they are frustrated by, and angry at, how the media have portrayed the situation in Iraq," Souder wrote in a journal he kept of the trip (*Associated Press*). **Primary and general status:** *SAFE SOUDER.*

Congressional District 6: Republican: U.S. Rep. Mike Pence. **Democrat:** Melina Ann Fox. **Geography:** Anderson, Muncie, Richmond; Wells, Adams, Blackford, Jay, Madison, Delaware, Randolph, Henry, Wayne, Rush, Fayette, Union, Decatur, Franklin, and parts of

Bartholomew, Shelby, Johnson and Allen counties. **Media Market:** Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Dayton, Cincinnati. **People:** urban/rural 59/40%; median income \$39,002; poverty 9.7%; race: 93% white, 3.8% black, 1.3% Hispanic; blue/white collar 35/49%; **2000 Presidential:** Bush 58%, Gore 40%; **Cook Partisan Voting Index:** R+10; **2002 results:** Pence 118,436 (64%), Fox 63,871. **2002 Money:** Pence \$1.2m, Fox \$342,987. **2004 Outlook:** Although Republican Mike Pence has not officially announced his intention of seeking a third term in the U.S. House, his campaign is raising plenty of money (Ken de la Bastide, *Anderson Herald-Bulletin*). Pence's campaign committee reported on Thursday to the Federal Election Commission that through the end of 2003 it had \$403,457 in cash on hand. Since then the campaign has raised more than \$167,000 to bring Pence's war chest to surpass \$570,000. He is expected to formally announce his re-election bid in mid-February. **Status:** *Likely Pence.*

Congressional District 9: Republican: Mike Sodrel. **Democrat:** U.S. Rep.

Baron Hill, Lendell Terry. **Media Market:** Evansville, Indianapolis, Louisville, Dayton, Cincinnati. **People:** urban/rural 52/48%, median income \$39,011; race white 94%, 2.3% black, 1.5% Hispanic; blue/white collar: 34/50%; **2000 Presidential:** Bush 56%, Gore 42%; **Cook Partisan Voting Index:** R+8. **2002 Results:** Hill 96,654 (51%), Sodrel 87,169 (46%). **2002 Money:** Hill \$1.144m, Sodrel \$1.62m. **2004 Forecast:** Terry enters the Democratic primary against Hill, but will not pose a credible challenge. Sodrel officially kicked off his campaign last week. **Status:** *TOSSUP*

Indiana 2004 Legislative

Senate District 36: Republican: Sen. Larry Borst, Johnson County Council

President Brent Waltz. **Democrat:** Terry Rice. **1996 Results:** Borst (R) 26,593, Satterthwaite (L) 2,035. **2000 Results:** Borst 24,621, Reno (D) 12,095, Williamson (L) 1,061. **2004 Forecast:** Waltz began his TV campaign on Monday on cable networks in southern Marion and northern Johnson counties, running on Fox News, MSNBC, History and Discovery Channels and HGTV. Marion County slating will take place on Feb. 14 at the Perry Township Government Center. Waltz has not said whether he will participate. Waltz said he had a poll conducted last summer that showed Borst leading 44-35 percent. Borst has also conducted a recent poll, but he's keeping the numbers close to his vest. Waltz notes that Borst has a 67 percent voting record against Pro Life positions. **Primary Status:** *Tossup.*

House District 26: Republican: Tippecanoe County Councilwoman Connie

Basham. **Democrat:** Joe Micon. **Geography:** Lafayette, West Lafayette, Tippecanoe County. **1998 results:** Scholer 5,750, Clapper 4,655. **2000 Results:** Scholer 9,086, Windler 5,186. **2002 Results:** Scholer 5,630, Micon 4,731. **2004 Forecast:** About 150 people attended Micon's campaign kickoff on Saturday. He then made stops at Battle Ground and Independence in Warren County (Lafayette Journal & Courier). "It is far better to build a child than fix an adult," Micon said. He said he is a supporter of full-day kindergarten to close Hoosier children's "achievement gap." He also said he will "fight" to keep property taxes low. **Status:** *TOSSUP.*

House District 46: Republican: Jeff Lee. **Democrat:** Vern Tincher. **2002 Results:**

LaPlante (R) 8,079, Tincher (D) 7,275. **2004 Forecast:** Jeff Lee, a Terre Haute police officer and Baptist pastor, filed as a Republican. Tincher officially filed for the seat on Thursday and was acknowledged on the House floor by his majority colleagues. **Primary Status:** *TOSSUP.*

House District 56: Republican: Richard Hamm, Brian Ingermann, Ed Yanos.

Democrat: Rep. Phil Pflum. **2002 Results:** Pflum 6,511, Hamm (R) 6,096. **2004 Forecast:** This race would have been on the radar even if Pflum hadn't been stricken with cancer this week. He won in 2002 by only 400 votes. Yanos, a Henry County grain farmer, filed last week. "I am not your typical political junkie," said Yanos, who served 12 years on the South Henry School Board and is a past president of the Henry County Farm Bureau (*Muncie Star Press*). Richmond businessman Richard Hamm a perennially losing candidate, and Brian Ingermann, a Wal-Mart supervisor, have filed. **Primary Status:** *Leans Yanos;* **General Status:** *Tossup.* ❖

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DeAgostino, South Bend Tribune). If passed this year by the House and by the next session of the full General Assembly, the measure would be submitted to a public vote. If approved by voters, the constitution would say that marriage "consists only of the union of a man and a woman." It also would say that nothing in state law should be construed to confer marital status or benefits of marriage to unmarried couples or groups. But Tuesday's 42-7 vote may have little effect. House Democratic leaders have repeatedly said they will not consider the measure this year, as they believe current law that states much the same thing is sufficient. Sen. Anita Bowser, D-Michigan City, said the proposal offends the constitution on several fronts, including the equal protection clause and a clause that requires each state to recognize other states' laws. But Bowser, a lawyer and constitutional scholar, said the resolution primarily conveys a sense of misunderstanding and hatred toward homosexuals. "It is a deplorable act of hostility," she said. "I don't hate," rejoined Senate President Pro Tem Robert Garton, R-Columbus.

COOK WANTS PLYMOUTH CASINO TRIPS TO STOP: Bus trips to casinos are popular among senior citizens

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(Post-Tribune). They're cheap, they can provide safety in numbers, and they're convenient for people who would rather not drive. But the mayor of Plymouth, 55 miles east of Merrillville, says his city should stop offering recreational trips to Lake Michigan casinos for seniors. Mayor Gary Cook is concerned that the city could be liable if the seniors gambled and lost money during a city-sponsored trip. Cook could bet that might be a losing argument to the many senior citizens who hop aboard buses to visit any of the five casinos in Northwest Indiana.

KENLEY PULLS TUITION CAP BILL: A measure to cap tuition increases at Indiana's public universities for full-time, in-state undergraduates died Wednesday, but concerns about the rising cost of higher education persist among members of the Indiana Senate (Marc Geller, *Lafayette Journal & Courier*). Senate Bill 262 would have capped increases in tuition and mandatory fees at the greater of 4 percent or the higher education cost of living index for four academic years for four-year schools or two academic years for two-year schools after the academic year in which a student officially accepted an admission offer. Supporters of the measure said it's needed to keep higher education affordable, but opponents feared it would hurt the

COLUMNISTS ON INDIANA

Gary Gerard, *Warsaw Times-Union* -

I have been listening intently to what the Democrats have had to say about W recently during their campaigns. Some of it has merit, but some of it seems just plain silly. One of the more ridiculous developments was the Demos beating up on Howard Dean for his stand on taxes. You see, Dean says he would repeal the W tax cut. His rivals were beating up on him for that. Now, keep in mind that the Democrats for months – well, no, for years – have been telling us that the W tax cuts only benefit the wealthy. The middle class was left out. You've heard that. It's well-chronicled. It's a given. You know, the "wealthy one percent." But now that Dean – who before his self-destructive rant in Iowa was the frontrunner – has said he would repeal them, those tax cuts have middle class written all over them. The more independent Tax Policy Center has calculated tax cuts for middle income earners – those making \$40,000 to \$50,000 – in the range of \$1,012. ❖

Ben Smith, *Fort Wayne Journal*

Gazette - Well. I'M offended. No, not by Janet Jackson's breast. By "Survivor." By a certain beer commercial involving, um, equine flatulence. By the trivialization of national tragedies and Our Boys In Uniform, who have been paraded before us so often at NFL games lately they're perilously close to becoming less a thought-provoking symbol than some sort of desert-camo mascot. On Sunday at the Super Bowl, the first anniversary of the Columbia shuttle disaster was commemorated not the way it should have been - with a dignified moment of silence - but with a tacky spectacle: a song written especially for (and to cash in on) the occasion, and a guy dressed as an astronaut planting an American flag on a phony-moon. And I'm supposed to be appalled by

Janet Jackson's halftime peek-a-boo? ❖

Morton Marcus, *syndicated* - We are concerned with the plight of those who have seen property taxes on their homes rise and now wonder if they will be forced to move. In the aggregate, these may be few cases, but tornados and floods destroy only a few properties and we grieve for the victims. We rush to their aid with appropriate compassion. Note that many saw their property taxes increase, but not all are poor and have problems paying such taxes. We should not rush to assume that all whose taxes rose need or deserve relief, no matter how they complain. The problems now being endured by a small minority of the property owners in the state deserve attention. But we do not have the mechanism for providing aid to those who have seen major tax increases that are equivalent to a significant confiscation of property. The Indiana General Assembly tried to soften the blow of reassessment by using their usual bludgeon approach: increasing the homestead deduction for everyone and shifting school operating expenses to the state's income and sales taxpayers. Now we have one-third of the state's budget devoted to property tax replacement. Those injudicious actions put the state into a fiscal crisis without any improvement in the services citizens receive. Our state administration and our legislators have no idea what effect the reassessment had on property taxpayers. Yet the data are out there. Every county has the data since each county knows how many elderly poor apply for tax relief. Have you ever seen the numbers for your county? I haven't. We could relate tax collections for each census tract or group of blocks to the income reported for those areas in the Census of 2000. Have you ever seen those data? I haven't. ❖

Pence says highway bill collides with deficit

By MARK SCHOEFF JR.

WASHINGTON -- On Capitol Hill In 2004, an irresistible force -- the allure of bringing federal money home to finance road construction -- will meet an immovable object--a huge federal deficit. And the collision will occur in the midst of political campaigns.

Even as its office buildings were closed due to a ricin poison incident, the Senate this week began debating a bill to reauthorize highway spending. The measure's price tag is causing controversy. The House version, which has not come out of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, could total \$375 billion over six years. The Senate bill costs about \$318 billion. The White House proposed \$256 billion in highway money in the budget it released earlier this week. It also projected a \$521 billion federal deficit for the next fiscal year.

One Hoosier conservative is calling for restraint, including reining in highway spending. "I have a lot of concern about the transportation bill. If it is reported anywhere near what (House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee) Chairman (Don) Young is reporting, it would be a good candidate for a veto," said GOP Rep. Mike Pence.

Pence has assumed a high profile in criticizing recent expansions in federal spending like the Medicare prescription drug bill, which Congress approved and the Bush administration supported. The White House recently said the original cost of \$400 billion over 10 years for the drug legislation would increase by \$134 billion.

But putting the federal fiscal house in order doesn't include raising taxes to fund transportation projects, according to Pence, "That would kill the bill, in my view, if it had gasoline tax increases."

If the gas tax isn't increased, the money would have to come out of the general budget. "It's going to take presi-

dential leadership and fiscal discipline in Congress," said Pence. "I'm a road and bridges guy. Other than national defense, there's nothing government should do more than build infrastructure. But that has to be done in a fiscally responsible way."

Democratic Rep. Pete Visclosky, a member of the House Appropriations Committee, views the highway bill through an employment prism. "I support reauthorization of the highway bill because I support working," he said. "If we have an efficient transportation infrastructure, we strengthen the economy, we strengthen national security and put people to work in a long-term sense. It's important that we invest in work and not reward wealth." He estimated that 47,000 jobs are created for every \$1 billion spent on transportation construction. Republican Rep. Chris Chocola, a member of the House transportation committee, declined to comment because the budget and highway bills are amorphous at the moment.

What Pence and Visclosky agree on is that Indiana would benefit from a change in the formula used to dole out transportation funds. Under current law, Indiana gets approximately 90.5 percent of its gas taxes returned for road projects. In the House reauthorization measure, the percentage increases to 95 percent over six years, but the minimum guarantee of total road funds distributed to the states is about 80 percent. This could leave some Indiana projects uncovered.

"We're fighting hand-to-hand combat on the formula," said Pence. "If we lose that battle, it comes down to a fight over earmarks." He concedes that his opposition to a gas tax increase, if it is supported by the GOP chairman of the transportation committee, would decrease the chances that Pence's road project requests are funded. Such is life when the irresistible force and the immovable object collide in Washington. ❖

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quality of higher education and might make it more expensive in the long term. Sen. Luke Kenley, the initial author of the bill, declined to call it for a third reading, citing the time constraints of the short legislative session, uncertainty on whether the Senate would pass the bill and how it would fare in the House, and the intense lobbying against it by Indiana's state schools.

STUDENTS TO RUN HOUSE CAMPAIGN: High school teacher Matthew W. Smith doesn't mind if people vote for him or not (Indianapolis Star). The Republican candidate for the Indiana House of Representatives is more interested in teaching his Seccina High School students a civics lesson: how to become involved citizens. That's why Smith's political bid is being coordinated by the 15 students in his political science class. They will run his campaign -- performing such tasks as establishing his campaign platform and slogan, fund raising and campaigning in the south-central Marion County district. "He's putting his entire campaign into students' hands," said senior Brandon Mitchell, 17, a member of the class. "I think that's cool." Smith formally filed his candidacy Tuesday as a Republican candidate for District 97, a seat held by veteran lawmaker Rep. Ed Mahern, D-Indianapolis.

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