



Long on new power in the Senate

New Pro Tem brings in female leadership

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - A bust of President Abraham Lincoln peered over the shoulder of Senate President Pro Tempore David Long in his Statehouse office this week. He had just passed the halfway point of the first session since 1980 without Robert Garton sitting in that chair, calling the shots, deciding which bills lived or died.



HPR had watched Long's career more than a decade ago when he served on the Fort Wayne City Council. In the 1992 race between Sen. John Sinks and Geoff Paddock, Long helped the long-time senator fend off the challenge, only to follow Sinks into the Senate four years later. By 2002, the change of the



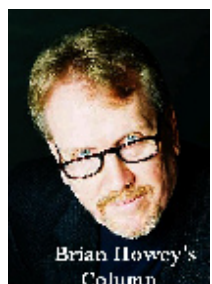
guard in the Indiana Senate had begun when Morris Mills

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Head trauma of war

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - You would have thought, when President Bush launched the U.S. on military adventures in Afghanistan and Iraq, that somewhere, someone like the president himself, or Vice President Cheney, or Defense



Secretary Rumsfeld would have put the memo out: We are the richest nation in the history of the world; we have the greatest military; we have the finest medical system in the universe. Under no circumstance should any of our wounded soldiers ever receive anything but the best, most technologically advanced, timely, clean and compassionate health care. Period. Don't slip up or



“I’ve got this new lady I want to have some life with, and I can’t even see her.”

- U.S. Rep. Dan Burton, answering criticism of missing a committee hearing on Walter Reed Medical Center



heads will roll.

If Washington sounds like a bowling alley these days, it's because heads at the Pentagon are rolling. The Walter Reed Medical Center scandal is the latest despicable chapter in the on-going cluster-screwup of Iraq.

A couple of weeks after the **Washington Post** broke the story, U.S. Rep. Joe Donnelly toured four buildings of the Walter Reed complex and reported, "in more than one building, we found mold, peeling paint and non-functional or old ventilation, heating and air conditioning systems. The problems are not unique to Building 18, the building that was the focal point of the **Washington Post** stories. It is crystal clear that extensive renovations are needed."

The thing that puzzles me the most about this Iraq fiasco is that many Hoosiers and other Americans are so willing to applaud the political leaders who got us into this mess, and who did so little to equip our men and women properly, and now through collective malfeasance have allowed these wounded soldiers to languish in slumwards.

We may be getting the first glimpse of the political fallout in Indiana's 5th CD, where Dr. John McGoff is challenging U.S. Rep. Dan Burton in the May 2008 Republican primary, unleashing withering criticism over the congressman missing congressional hearings on Walter Reed.

After "winning" our bombing campaign over Serbia without a casualty, and the relative cakewalk through Kuwait and Southern Iraq in 1991, perhaps Americans, Congress and the Bush administration got drunk on the notion of early and easy victory in Iraq. After severing the head of the Saddam regime, there was no plan and the void allowed a lethal insurgency to flourish. It was mission accomplished and bring 'em on.

The WMD rationale can at least be assigned to multi-nation intelligence failure. But the lack of troops for the occupation, or sealing the borders, or providing our troops with

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proper vehicle and body armor is an outrage that continues to claim American life and limb to this very week.

There can be no excuses.

These men and women who volunteered for our military are coming back not on airliners or in body bags. They are surviving head traumas that decades ago would have made them eligible for Arlington. They are coming back without eyes, arms, legs, and sometimes with brains that have been savaged by g-force and shrapnel. There have been more than 25,000 wounded, but the **New York Times** notes that the "signature injury of this war" is brain trauma with 1,882 cases being treated to date, according to the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center.

Last Sunday on ABC's **This Week**, moderator George Stephanopolous interviewed former U.S. Sen. Bob Dole, who was appointed by President Bush to investigate this national shame. This is not a situation that is going to fade. "You'll be dealing with this brain injury for 30, 40, 50 years," Stephanopolous noted.

Dole, who earned a Purple Heart during World War II, answered, "Right. And I haven't made any judgments, but it seems to me that, if the VA is not equipped and Department of Defense hospitals are not equipped to deal with these very complex brain injuries, then they ought to go to some private hospital where they are equipped and where they've been do-

ing it for 30, 40, 50 years."

Besides expressing your outrage - are you outraged by how our brave veterans and their families are being treated? - there is one thing Hoosiers can do ... now.

Deep in HB 1001, Indiana's biennial budget, Section 65 calls for an \$18 fine (though supporters want it at \$10) on some moving traffic violations that would fund brain trauma and spinal cord injury research. There is a direct correlation between motor vehicle accidents and traumatic spinal cord and brain injuries, particularly among those ages 16-24, which is, of course, the age of many of our wounded soldiers from Iraq.

During a period ending in 2003, of 194 research project grants awarded nationally, Indiana received only one for brain and spinal cord injury research. Indiana didn't receive any National Institutes of Health grants for training and career development.

Hoosiers need to be preparing for the decades of care that some of our soldiers are going to need.

Many among us were gung ho to go on the offensive in the War on Terror. But there will be an ongoing price to pay for the sacrifice these men and women are paying.

And there is no excuse for their recuperation in anything but the best and most advanced medical facilities our rich nation has to offer. ❖



and Potch Wheeler retired, followed by the 2004 primary upset of Senate Finance Chairman Larry Borst, the equally stunning loss of Garton two years later, and Sen. Joe Harrison's retirement. During this period of transition, Long steered through a couple of palace coup attempts by Sens. Murray Clark and Luke Kenley to become Garton's majority leader, then maneuvered through the messy issue that doomed Garton and Borst - legislator health care for life - that included a couple of winter 2006 press conferences that almost defied logic.

With Garton's defeat in May 2006, Long spent six months playing golf with potential rivals such as State Sen. Tom Weatherwax, and in intense dialogue with other caucus members. It was an October meeting with the six female caucus members - Sens. Teresa Lubbers, Sue Landske, Beverly Gard, Connie Lawson, Vaneta Becker and Patricia Miller - and their subsequent bloc endorsement several days later that delivered Long to the Pro Tem. It is no coincidence that the Old Man Old Guard has given way to Long, Assistant Pro Tempore Landske, Majority Floor Leader Lawson and Assistant Majority Floor Leader Lubbers. Never in the state's history has there been such a conspicuous display of female power in a place where it can matter the most - the Indiana Senate.

And it completed a virtual wholesale change of leadership in the Indiana executive and legislative branches since 2004: Gov. Mitch Daniels from Joe Kernan; Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman from Kathy Davis; Speaker B. Patrick Bauer from Brian Bosma. Ways & Means Chairman Bill Crawford from Jeff Espich. Sens. Luke Kenley and Bob Meeks from Larry Borst.

But the most dramatic change is the emergence of Gov. Daniels, and now Long in the Senate, taking the reins from the autocratic, protective Garton. HPR sat down with Pro Tempore Long on Tuesday morning to assess the change of the guard in this exclusive HPR Interview.

HPR: Did you ever dream you'd end up here?

Long: When I was on the City Council, I thought I would serve one more term and go back to practice law. Then Sen. Sinks decided he was going to retire. I decided that would be something interesting. I had helped him with his campaign in 1992. So I knew and understood more about this process. But when I came here, my goal was not to become the president of the Senate. I wanted to do good and serve eight years and then go back and practice law. I've been very fortunate to be in this position where I can do the most good for the people of Indiana, the people of my district and my kids and grandkids. I'm a firm believer that we have an obligation to leave this state in much better shape financially, economically and any other way we can, by the time we leave here.

HPR: As a journalist, I feel the same way. We are stewards of the process and we hope to hand it off in better shape than when we came.

Long: Because, otherwise, why are you here? Right? We do the best we can and also appreciate having the opportunity. That's my focus. I didn't see myself here, but now that I am here, I intend to do the very best I can.

HPR: When you arrived in 1996, it looked like the two titans - Sens. Borst and Garton - would be here a long, long time. It appears that the Senate has been through a lot of shock, grief, denial, anger and reconciliation in the wake of their defeats. How has that changed the process?

Long: Most of the reaction was shock for those who had been here a long time. There were a group of senators here who, just like I had, grown up with this same group leading the Senate. Some of them had been here twice as long as I had. To have that leadership group change, and it's not just Sen. Garton, it was Sen. Harrison, Sen. Wheeler who retired in '02, Sen. Mills who left in '02 I believe ... that group of senators really ran things here with an iron fist. With this leadership group, there is a substantial



The faces of new Senate leadership include (from top left) assistant Pro Tempore Sue Landske, Majority Floor Leader Connie Lawson, Assistant Majority Floor Leader Teresa Lubbers, and Senate President Pro Tempore David Long.



leadership change in the Senate. It is truly a shock when people reflect on that and how quickly it changed. I had the greatest respect for each of those individuals. It is a fact of life that change does come and hopefully I can add some things that are effective and over time will improve things for the Senate, for my senators, and for the people of Indiana. I think we can take things to the next level. That's my charge and I have the opportunity to do that. Anytime you change long-term leaders there's an opportunity to change things in a positive way.

HPR: I've heard from more than one of your colleagues that when Sen. Garton took power, the Senate was embattled after the Edwards-Gutman scandals. In a way, he was handcuffed to its history and that led him to rule in a certain way. You don't have that kind of binding. Obviously you want to maintain the decorum and the integrity of the process. But does that put you on a different track?

HPR: Bob Garton came in during very trying circumstances and he always felt it was his job to keep the Senate from slipping back down into that abyss again, of two leaders being indicted. I think he upheld that. He was above board, without question, but I think over time Sen. Garton established his own style. Ultimately it was a style he was comfortable with and in many ways was a very effective process. I will be a little different than Bob. I have my own style of dealing with people. Anybody who's sat in this chair will have their own style. People would expect that. I want to respect the best things he did and maintain that, hopefully, make improvements where I think they need to be made. I'm more comfortable with technology than Sen. Garton. It's a generational thing. I was used to staring at a camera while I was on the City Council. If I hadn't had a camera staring me in the face every day, I might have been different. But I'm comfortable with it and having the Senate on the Internet. There's creating the state network that I'm working on for all Hoosiers that can be a positive thing. It will bring government closer to the people. That's my approach to it anyway. There is some fear, some people say "why would you want to do that? People will use it against you." I think Sen. Garton was very protective of his fellow members. I think that threat is overstated. Modern technology continues to evolve in such a way that makes it

easier to do. I'm comfortable putting us as much as possible on the Internet. Hopefully we'll have all our committees on the Internet, which is where we're headed with all of this in such a way that people in Fort Wayne and Gary and South Bend, Evansville and Lafayette can get the same kind of coverage that they get today in Indianapolis. There is much more saturated coverage of the legislature here. The TV stations cover it and the Star covers it and the people are much more educated down here because of that. In Fort Wayne and elsewhere, the coverage is understandably lighter. There's one reporter from the Journal (Gazette) and

occasionally the TV stations get down here. But you don't have the same coverage and the same understanding. If we can bring technology to the people and bring the legislature to them, we should try and do that. Sen. Ford, as our technology guru, is working on that and we'll work with whoever the Speaker designates. It's becoming crystallized as to what can be done. This has been mentioned to the executive branch and the judicial branch and I hope that we could. It would be like CSPAN.

HPR: When I talk to senators, I hear words like "open mind" and that it's easier to state a case without worrying precisely about language that Sen. Garton would turn back



Then-Senate President Pro Tempore Bob Garton (left) and Long during a February 2006 press conference in which Garton defended the health care for life perk for legislators. Long said he was there to support the caucus position, but as Pro Tem, advocates an above-board approach to wages and benefits. (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey)

on them.

Long: That's something that has to do with the germaness rule. He was led on by the Constitution that required a single subject matter. When I first came in as a senator, I thought it was being wielded as a weapon. But I truly believe he was keeping the Supreme Court from coming in and intervening in our bills. I think that's always a very real danger. The Constitution says that legislation should be single-subject matter only. My attorney and I are following a germaness approach. We are trying to be consistent with that, but I do believe that, perhaps, I'm slightly less anxious with certain verbiage than Sen. Garton might have been. I'm more relaxed, but I am still quite vigilant.

HPR: Many people are watching how you delegate your authority and responsibility. What is your philosophy?

Long: The people who came in with me are reflective of the talented caucus that we have. In some cases, there are people with great talents that we want to utilize. I'll give you an example. Sen. Lubbers is known for educa-



tion, but she has a real acumen for communications. I came to understand that over the last couple of years when I worked with her. So I asked her to become the new assistant majority floor leader for communications. We had an opening for the communications job. I charged her with going out and filling this, starting from the top with the right people, and she's done an outstanding job. We needed to modernize substantially and in doing that, she made a great hire in Scott Minier. That's an example where I gave talented people a job to do and let them do it. I am not laissez-faire by any means. I want to know what's going on, but I don't micromanage people doing their jobs. David Ford is our technology guru but he knows a great deal about economic development aspects of technology. There are two examples. Brandt Hershman is a rising talent in our caucus and I created the whip job to become more in line with how they do it in Washington. I gave him more responsibility. He checks on amendments daily. I came in with the Class of '96 with Connie Lawson. She goes about her tasks in a way that is thorough, complete and effective. She's the kind of person who spends extra hours at her desk that's required of leadership, particularly her job.

HPR: During the 2004 campaign, Gov. Daniels constantly reminded people not to mistake the edge of the rut for the horizon. With the change in Senate leadership, is there now a tendency to let bygones go and not worry about the paybacks that often steered legislation? Is there more of a clean slate now?

Long: I have a good relationship with Pat Bauer. I respect him and I think the feeling is mutual. I'm not suggesting there won't be tough times, as there always are. I do understand that things get political now and then. But I also believe the lines of communication will be open between us, as it will be with the governor's office. I think it's incumbent on me to keep it that way. We can disagree and disagree strongly, but showing respect for each other is incredibly important to the process. I will always try and maintain that here. We all have different visions on what needs to get done and we'll try and find common ground. My job is to get people together and find out what's possible. A lot of things get done in that 12th hour because you stick with it and you don't worry about what somebody thinks of you. I do believe that Speaker Bauer and I will be able to work that way.

HPR: I just finished reading Doris Keans Goodwin's book on Lincoln "Team of Rivals" ...

Long: That's a great book.

HPR: Going into this session, the rumors in the building were how Sen. Long was going to have a hard time

working with the conservatives and how fractious the majority caucus would be. But I've talked to some of the conservatives in the caucus and I'm not hearing a lot of angst.

Long: You need to treat somebody fairly and not categorize them in a certain way. Sometimes people are labeled in a certain way. Sometimes people don't believe their leadership is going to give them a fair shake. That may or may not be accurate. I believe in treating people with respect and I expect that in return. You have to have a vision of what you want to do here, make it meaningful when you are here. That's part of being a leader and hopefully that rubs off in the right way. People will have their say. We're here to get things done. That's my bottom line. They are elected officials. They fought hard to get here, they have a tough job to do and it's my job to help them find success in that job.

HPR: One of the other big changes as Sen. Borst's defeat in 2004 was splitting Senate Finance into two committees. How is that working with Sens. Kenley and Meeks?

Long: I think they are doing a great job together. That was one of the things I was looking to see, whether that would continue to evolve. They are both talented guys, they bring different talents to the job and they compliment each other. We have a fiscal analyst in Dan Noverske who works beautifully with those two guys. Sen. Ken-

ley is working very hard on a property tax bill that is visionary and will give true, meaningful property tax reform. That opportunity will be there. Sen. Meeks has his arms around this budget right now and is focused on where he needs to go with it. They're both working on the budget with Sen. Kenley working on the school funding formula. It works well for us. It's worked much better than many people thought it would. Sen. Garton had two guys who wanted finance and he split the job in half. But it works. It really has.

HPR: What should we expect out of Sen. Kenley's property tax reforms?

Long: The basic concept is that you have to include schools. If you're not including schools, you're not getting at meaningful property tax reform; you're not really attacking it the way it needs to be attacked. Look for schools to be included in his proposal. As far as tax controls, I think we agree with the House, though what that looks like remains to be seen. But there will likely be some kind of local tax control board. Somebody's got to look out for the little guy out there. Some management of the projects that doesn't exist today and that's best done at the local level. Indiana's property taxes, and many people won't believe this, are lower than in most places in the country. That is an advan-





tage for us economically. A state like Indiana can become the leader nationally and I think that will make us look much more attractive. This all plays to our advantage if we are vigilant and maintain that. Keeping the cost of government low is a very important goal. I think we can be very, very attractive to companies that used to look only at the Sunbelt. It's incumbent upon us to keep our taxes low. The property tax proposal will be a very key element. Obviously that gets into whether the state picks up any services. We're still seeing circuit-breaker discussions. I think if we're going to have success with property taxes, Luke Kenley's concept is going to be close to it.

HPR: How does your local government experience on the Fort Wayne City Council color your perceptions and goals as we head into this?

Long: I still am basically a home rule guy. I still believe in that. We are far from that today. Local governments can decide what's best for them. I've always believed that. I just don't believe in giving them a blank check to do it. I think there need to be some controls. Because we have the ability to help set up better controls, it would be responsible to help set that up. That would give municipalities flexibility for what they need and they are less reliant on property taxes.

HPR: Will this be unveiled in the next week or so?

Long: It should be out soon. Meeks and Kenley are the hardest working guys. Their staffs are coordinating

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Young gives Long good marks

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Senate Minority Leader Richard Young believes that President Pro Tempore David Long is off to a good start.

"I have tremendous respect for Sen. Garton," Young said. "I understand where he came from, why he did what he did. A lot of it came from when he came in, filling in for Gutman and Chip Edwards. He felt he was called upon to protect the body. That did impact on his whole career and what he was trying to accomplish. David doesn't come in with that legacy. To some extent, it's freed him up a little bit. So far our relationship has been very good."

Young used an example of when he went to Long requesting a staff attorney. "He said go ahead. We're getting bills heard. We've talked about those issues. To the degree that he can, he'll work with us. He's talking to the members. We're getting bills heard in committee now. I don't know all of the difficulties he has working with the people who supported him and those who don't. There's got to be conflict there because there's conflict always with me. I know it's there, I just don't know the inner dynamics. He's feeling his way through some of these."

Young has been concerned about Rules Committee. "I've talked to him about some changes in the rules that I would like to see," Young said. "One is that we wouldn't have the Rules Committee where we would have one person - the President Pro Tem - report it out. We would have full-blown hearings on everything except when he and I would agree that we would move something if it was at the last minute and we needed to change the rules to get something moved forward that would keep us going into special session. But other than that, there would be full-blown rules committee hearings for everything going into rules. Although he was receptive to the idea, he wasn't sure what the implications of it were and he wasn't quite sure what power he



Senate Minority Leader Richard Young

would be giving up or not. He might want to. He said, 'Let me have it for a year. Let me see how my job works and whether I want to change that. I don't want to give it up until I know.'"

Young also said it is easier to communicate with Long as opposed to Garton. "So far we have had a very good working relationship. He comes over to visit me; I go over to visit him," Young said. "He is so open minded. If I have some concerns, he can be very forthright. I don't have to be creative in how I might present it because I'm not working against some precedent that's out there that Bob might have been afraid to break. David doesn't have those precedents, so I don't have to be creative. Sometimes I had to be very creative in how I presented a particular situation with Bob. With David, I don't have to do that. A fish is a fish, what can we do about it? On all things, he's willing to talk about it; consider the point of view. On some of them, he's pointed out to me, "We don't want to do them that way." It's been a very good dialogue." ❖



and there are only a couple weeks left to do it.

HPR: You've been on a leadership track for several years before Sen. Garton's defeat. Yet watching you and Sen. Kenley during those press conferences on the health care for life issue last February made me wince. Sen. Garton and Borst paid a political price for that. What did you learn from that whole process? Did it make you a better leader?

Long: Sen. Kenley and I were up there, we were in leadership and it was the caucus position. Our caucus made that call. All along, I felt that if there was ever going to be a bridge to Medicare, which is what this originally started out as, I think it got off track, there's no question. If we're going to do anything, we should do it for all state employees. We're trying to do that with the pay raise issue, which you criticized. You didn't like the idea that we would get an automatic pay raise if the state employees got it.

HPR: That was the **Indiana Law Blog**. I raised some hell over the cigarette tax defeat in the House. I do think that legislators are underpaid. It just should be above board, none of this 11th hour, sneak it into a bill without anyone knowing.

Long: We've modified the health care statutorily. Our pay is tied to the judges pay. That's what all four caucuses agreed on. It used to be tied to the governor's pay, but (House Speaker) Bob Dailey decoupled it in '85. What matters is that we get a set amount. We have to go through another election. It won't be effective until 2009. If state employees get a pay raise, legislators will only get what they get. As long as there is a system like that, I don't think people will have a problem with it.

HPR: I don't think they will either.

Long: When I was on the city council, we did the same sort of thing. Ultimately we're using that same sort of concept today. They would rather see you get a salary, keep it there and tie it to the cost of living like everybody else. I think it is politically short-sighted (to do nothing). That puts us right back where we were. I believe the other three leaders believe this just as much as I do. We owe it to the future of the legislature to make sure that we have enough of a wage here to attract people from all walks of life and not just retirees and wealthy people. I believe that from the bottom of my heart. I couldn't disagree with that person from the Indiana Law Blog any more; that we should have to come back for pay raises.

HPR: What do you think will happen to the governor's health care plan? Property tax reform? Full-day kindergarten?

Long: One thing we need to focus on is we need to keep our budget balanced. Michigan Gov. Grandholm is

facing almost a billion dollar budget this year and \$1.5 billion next year and there's no consensus on how to deal with it. They are spending a lot more than they are taking in and they are paying a price for it.

HPR: And if we have a recession next year?

Long: They are in big trouble. That's why it is so important to stay the course now that we have gotten back to controlling our spending. We have to do that. It's never a happy situation, but it's incumbent on us to follow the path now that our budget is balanced and our spending is under control. We are not in the position that Michigan is in and we can talk about doing some of these new things, but to do that, we are going to have to look at alternatives.

The governor has talked about leasing the lottery. It's controversial after Major Moves, but you know what? The way Luke Kenley has reworked that bill, working with the governor's office, it is dealing with some serious problems we have here in Indiana. It could really, really have tremendous influence on the Indiana economy. Those ideas are important, but they can't be part of the budget; we don't have the money for that.

HPR: What about full-day kindergarten?

Long: If it comes in, it will come in incrementally. We've got 40 percent of our kids on full day K. We have federal dollars that match that, that's important to remember. We want to make it non-mandatory and make sure we are intelligent in the way we implement it. Districts are concerned about the costs right now. I do see something happening, I am hopeful it will, but I do think it will be incremental. That's the best I can see right now.

HPR: What is your philosophy on the Rules Committee. The way Sen. Garton had it, it was the chairman who reported bills out, meaning it was mostly a graveyard for bills.

Long: I'm not using it very much to stick bills in there right now. Sen. Garton used it as much as a way to keep track of everything. He trained it through the caucus and the Rules Committee, and I think that's important. It's a way to make sure there are no surprises. That's why at this point, I'm going to use it the same way, but as a control mechanism so we know what's going on with all the things that come out of conference committee.

HPR: Democrats are pleased that most of the bills are getting heard.

Long: Yes, I believe in that. I have used it for a daylight-saving time bill and legislation that would have peeled off Major Moves money for local use. Big projects couldn't get done otherwise. If we don't stick to that ...

HPR: You end up with the Build Indiana Fund.

Long: You got it. ❖





Okeson views Long's ascension as a 'seamless transition'

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Working in the Statehouse trenches for Gov. Mitch Daniels, senior legislative liaison John Okeson has watched the Indiana Senate intensely for a second time.

Last year, he had to deal with Senate President Pro Tempore Robert D. Garton, who the previous summer had lashed out at the Daniels administration over the closing of the Hope, Ind., license branch. Yet, when it came to pushing Major Moves through to a successful conclusion with two Democratic votes, Daniels could rely on Garton. At times during the Governor's maiden 2005 session, he found himself out-of-sync with Garton and then-House Speaker Brian Bosma. In 2006, "The governor very much looked to those guys as the process unfolded. Sometimes you didn't know what was coming next, but they proved to be very astute."

A little more than a month after Major Moves passed, the Statehouse establishment was greeted with its second stunning May primary development in two years: Greg Walker's defeat of Pro Tem Garton.

With the emergence of President Pro Tem David Long, Okeson has witnessed the inevitable change. "It has changed in a way that is consistent with the ways things change in the Senate," said Okeson, who hails from Fort Wayne and has watched Long's political career progress from its beginning. "It hasn't come ... perceptibly. Change has come ... not gradually ..." Okeson pondered for a minute, looking for the correct word.

Incrementally?

"Yes," Okeson said. "Incrementally. David is an extremely astute leader. David has made changes that I suspect the caucus was ready for. More bills are being heard and discussed. He's not just changing just to put his stamp on things."

"The current leader is leading in the best tradition of Senate leaders. The caucus insists on decorum and places high value on debate."

Okeson described the recent deliberation on SB 577 - the highly controversial Hoosier Lottery franchising bill. "They were proud of the quality of the debate in that chamber as they've ever been. They are hearing and considering things they might not have heard or considered in the past."

Okeson characterized the leadership changes as a "seamless transition," which is noteworthy in a chamber that hadn't seen much turnover between 1980 when Garton took charge and 2002.

Asked about the change of the guard that has included four females - Lt. Gov. Skillman, Majority Leader Connie Lawson, Assistant Pro Tempore Sue Landske, and



Senate President Pro Tempore David Long with Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman and Gov. Mitch Daniels just prior to the State of the State address in January. Since 2004, there has been a wholesale change of leadership in Indiana's executive and legislative branches, capped by Long taking the top position in the Senate late last year. (HPR Photo)

Assistant Floor Leader Teresa Lubbers - giving the Senate a historic gender twist, Okeson said he had hardly thought about that part of the transition, in that it seemed so natural, certainly a hallmark of credibility and finesse.

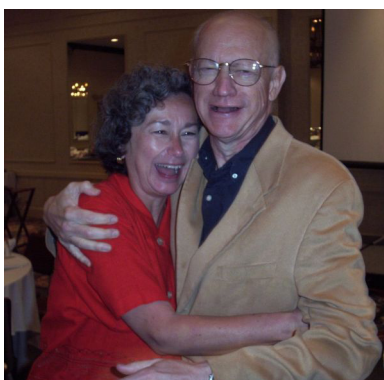
Okeson said that Pro Tem Long and Gov. Daniels had developed a good working relationship before either one had reached their current station. "They do have a good relationship," Okeson said. "That goes back to when it was candidate Daniels and Sen. Long."

Ultimately, the earliest scrutiny of Long's leadership will begin to foment after this biennial budget session ends, presumably on April 30. "The pace of this session is a little different than 2005 and 2006, when it was very fast paced," Okeson said. "This is more the pace of traditional sessions. I think they'll get a lot done." ❖



2008 Indiana Governor

Governor 2008: Republican: Gov. Mitch Daniels. Democrat: Senate Minority Leader Richard Young, Jim Schellinger. **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 Results:** Daniels (R) 1,302,912, Kernan (D) 1,113,900, Gividen (L) 31,644. **2008 Forecast:** State Sen. **Vi Simpson** said Monday evening that she will not seek the Indiana Democratic gubernatorial nomination in 2008. "I spent a lot of time talking with people who really care - family, friends, supporters. There was a lot of encouragement. That's very humbling." But Simpson said that with her husband retired, a third grandchild on the way, "At this point in my life, the timing was not right. For me, the real question is about priorities. I believe I can do more as a state senator. This doesn't mean I'm walking away from public service." As for interest in a possible lieutenant governor nomination in 2008, Simpson responded, "You never close doors." Simpson called her brief 2003 campaign for the '04 nomination "The highlight of my life." Simpson dropped out of that race when Gov. Joe Kernan re-entered, deciding to seek a full term. **Thompson** was meeting Democrats from around the state this week. An official candidacy announcement from **Schellinger** could take place next week. Schellinger told us Monday night after a day in Fort Wayne that he had talked with Sen. Simpson. Former First Lady **Judy O'Bannon** will host a fundraiser for **Young** at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 3 at the Scholar's Inn in downtown Indianapolis. Donors to Young's gubernatorial campaign are asked to give \$500 and \$1,000. **Primary Status:** Tossup. **General Status:** LEANS DANIELS.



Sen. Simpson during her 2003 gubernatorial campaign with the late congressman Frank McCloskey shortly before his death. (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey)

People: Urban/rural 73/27%; median income \$40,381; Poverty 9.5%; Race 84% white, 8% black; 5 Hispanic; Blue/white collar: 34/50%. 2006 Republican Primary Result: Burton 61,150, Alfred 6,869, Wakley 4,822. **2006 General Result:** Burton (R) 133,118, Carr (D) 64,362, Sharlow (L) 7,431, Miller (I) 18. **2008 Forecast:** HPR believes that **Burton** could be in real danger of an upset. In **Dr. McGoff**, he is facing his first significant primary challenge since 1982 when he came out of a crowded field and upset GOP Chairman Bruce Melchert. Burton hasn't had to sweat a credible general election battle since taking what is considered one of the most Republican seats in the nation. But McGoff appears to be raising money and he has put Burton on the defensive over missed hearings and votes. After being plagued all week with questions about why he missed a congressional panel hearing on substandard conditions for wounded U.S. troops recovering at Walter Reed Medical Center, Burton was quoted in the Indianapolis Star saying, "I've got this new lady I want to have some life with, and I can't even see her." He defended himself at a youth leadership conference in Kokomo, explaining to students the reason he missed a hearing last Monday in Washington was because he spent the weekend in Indiana. "And I talked to the chairman, because I couldn't get back for that hearing that quickly and so I asked him to give me a complete report on the hearing," explained Burton. It would be an understatement to say that the Burton congressional operation is not primed in crisis communication and if that doesn't change, he could be headed for the political graveyard that has claimed State Sens. Bob Garton and Larry Borst during the last two primary cycles. This lack of communication comes from the top - Burton himself - who was in denial over how potent an issue this could become. "Who wouldn't want to spend more time with their family rather than going to work?" McGoff responded. "In the emergency department at the hospital, I work a strange schedule that sometimes requires me to work at nights, weekend and holidays. That cuts into the time I get to see my wife and daughter, but I've never skipped a shift to do so because there are sick and injured people that need me to be there for them. But can you imagine what our military would be like if soldiers went AWOL because they wanted to go home for a few days to see their wives?" McGoff said. "Yet we have a congressman who thinks he should have the luxury to skip hearings on veteran services at military hospitals because he wants to see his? All the reports indicate that the conditions at Walter Reed are pathetic, and our troops deserve much better. I still believe it is inexcusable for Burton to have missed the meeting, because we need to address the problems as quickly as possible." Can Burton be defeated? "The only thing I can say is I'm always well-prepared for my opponents. Sure [McGoff] is starting early, but I think he'll find us even better prepared than anytime before," Burton told WTHR-

2008 Congressional

Congressional District 5: Republican:

U.S. Rep. Dan Burton, Dr. John McGoff. **Geography:** **Media Market:** Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, South Bend.

People: Urban/rural 73/27%; median income \$40,381; Poverty 9.5%; Race 84% white, 8% black; 5 Hispanic; Blue/white collar: 34/50%. 2006 Republican Primary Result: Burton 61,150, Alfred 6,869, Wakley 4,822. **2006 General Result:** Burton (R) 133,118, Carr (D) 64,362, Sharlow (L) 7,431, Miller (I) 18. **2008 Forecast:** HPR believes that **Burton** could be in real danger of an upset. In **Dr. McGoff**, he is facing his first significant primary challenge since 1982 when he came out of a crowded field and upset GOP Chairman Bruce Melchert. Burton hasn't had to sweat a credible general election battle since taking what is considered one of the most Republican seats in the nation. But McGoff appears to be raising money and he has put Burton on the defensive over missed hearings and votes. After being plagued all week with questions about why he missed a congressional panel hearing on substandard conditions for wounded U.S. troops recovering at Walter Reed Medical Center, Burton was quoted in the Indianapolis Star saying, "I've got this new lady I want to have some life with, and I can't even see her." He defended himself at a youth leadership conference in Kokomo, explaining to students the reason he missed a hearing last Monday in Washington was because he spent the weekend in Indiana. "And I talked to the chairman, because I couldn't get back for that hearing that quickly and so I asked him to give me a complete report on the hearing," explained Burton. It would be an understatement to say that the Burton congressional operation is not primed in crisis communication and if that doesn't change, he could be headed for the political graveyard that has claimed State Sens. Bob Garton and Larry Borst during the last two primary cycles. This lack of communication comes from the top - Burton himself - who was in denial over how potent an issue this could become. "Who wouldn't want to spend more time with their family rather than going to work?" McGoff responded. "In the emergency department at the hospital, I work a strange schedule that sometimes requires me to work at nights, weekend and holidays. That cuts into the time I get to see my wife and daughter, but I've never skipped a shift to do so because there are sick and injured people that need me to be there for them. But can you imagine what our military would be like if soldiers went AWOL because they wanted to go home for a few days to see their wives?" McGoff said. "Yet we have a congressman who thinks he should have the luxury to skip hearings on veteran services at military hospitals because he wants to see his? All the reports indicate that the conditions at Walter Reed are pathetic, and our troops deserve much better. I still believe it is inexcusable for Burton to have missed the meeting, because we need to address the problems as quickly as possible." Can Burton be defeated? "The only thing I can say is I'm always well-prepared for my opponents. Sure [McGoff] is starting early, but I think he'll find us even better prepared than anytime before," Burton told WTHR-



TV. While he says he will be prepared, given the anti-Washington climate these days, we believe this could be a close race and Rep. Burton is highly vulnerable.

Primary Status: Leans Burton

2007 Legislative Caucus

Senate District 8: Democrat: Jim Arnold,

Lake County Deputy Prosecutor Rob Neary, Robin Os-hinski, Lynne Kaser, LaPorte County Councilman Mark Yagelski, Debra Birkholtz, Michigan City School Board President Jeff Jones. **2007 Caucus Forecast:** Follow-ing Tuesday's School Board meeting, Board President Jeff Jones distributed a press release to announce his candidacy for the seat left vacant after the death of State Sen. Anita Bowser. Jones, 53, is an assistant vice chancellor at Purdue University-North Central. He said he has been interested in the senate seat for several years. Arnold, the former LaPorte County sheriff, spent the early part of the week tamping down rumors that he was preparing to unseat the late Sen. Bowser. Yagel-ski suggested that Bowser wanted him to succeed her. Neary's father, Dennis, held the seat from 1976 to 1992. Birkholtz, retired president of the office and technical workers union at NIPSCO, appears to be favored by sev-eral party leaders. The caucus will take place on March 25 in LaPorte with 2nd CD Chairman Butch Morgan presiding. **Caucus Status:** TOSSUP.

2007 Mayoral

Fort Wayne: Republican: Allen County Com-missioner Nelson Peters, Matthew Kelty, Ivan Hood, Wil-ber "Duke" Brown. Democrat: Tom Henry, Fred Steinke, Tom Cook. **2003 Results:** Richard (D) 27,251, Buskirk (R) 19,701. **2007 Forecast:** Allen County Commis-sioner Nelson Peters opened up the 2007 TV ad campaign wars this week as he seeks the Fort Wayne Republican mayoral nomination. "There's a lot of things you can call Nelson Peters," the ad says, including successful small businessman, father, principled conservative and proven tax fighter. The ad says, "There's only one thing you can call him: Mayor." The ad ends by saying Peters is "guided by principle, proven by results." Peters is in a primary battle with architect Matt Kelty, a former aide to U.S. Sens. Dick Lugar and Dan Coats. **Primary Status:** LEANS PETERS; SAFE HENRY.

Gary: Democrats: Mayor Rudy Clay, Karen Freeman-Wilson, Chuck Hughes, Darren Washington, John Henry Hall, Larry Anderson, Ulysses (Lish) Burnett, Larry Evans, Norman L. Roby, Pierre Strickland, Theresa

Moses Sturdivant. Republican: Jayson Reeves, Charles R. Smith Jr. **2003 Results:** King (D) 10,028, Smith (R) 1,201.

2007 Forecast: Freeman-Wilson has called for an audit of Gary finances and for debates. **Status:** LIKELY CLAY

Jeffersonville: Mayor Rob Waiz. Tom Galligan.

Republican: **2003 Democratic Primary:** Waiz 2,187, Galligan 1,708, Muncy 252, Ogden 166. **2003 General Results:** Waiz (D) 3,711, Raymond (R) 2,354, Fisher (L) 118. **2007 Forecast:** Jeffersonville's Board of Ethics will investigate whether the campaign of Mayor Waiz violated the city's ethics ordinance when it bought several Internet addresses likely to be used by the campaign of former Mayor Tom Galligan (**Louisville Courier--Journal**). Both are running in the May Democratic primary. The investi-gation would be the first for the Ethics Board, which was appointed last fall. Ethics Board member Rachel Browne said she wants to know if Roger Hardy, Jeffersonville's director of information technology and the Waiz campaign's computer consultant, bought the site names on city time or using city computers. Either action would violate the ethics ordinance. "I want to know if (Hardy) felt he was required to do this to keep his (city) job," Browne said. **Primary Status:** LEANS WAIZ.

New Albany: Democrat: Mayor James Gar-ner, Doug England. Republican: Randy Hubbard. **2003 Democratic Primary Results:** Garner 2,512, Scharlow 814, Clemons 714, Goldberg 552, Kersey 68, Tuttle 48.

2003 General Results: Garner (D) 5,971, Overton (R) 3,893, Hughes (L) 196. **2007 Forecast:**



GARNER

The audience sat in stunned silence as the New Albany City Council meeting ended last week, a few of them shaking their heads (**Louisville Courier-Journal**). A "fact sheet" made public at Monday's meeting by councilman Jack Messer criticized Fire Chief Ron Toran on how he runs the department, angering Toran and Mayor James Garner. Among other things, the document said, firefighters were not being trained so they could work on the ambulance and reduce the overtime needed to run the service. "Many of our firefighters," the two-page report continued, want to "take a vote of compe-tency on Chief Toran." That was too much for Garner, who strode into the room and shouted that the report was "a lot of bull" and was politically based. "Get over it, Jack," Gar-ner shouted to Messer, who has acknowledged he supports someone else in the May 8 Democratic primary for mayor. During the past three years, other angry moments have led to tense relations between the Democratic mayor and the council, made up of eight Democrats and one Republican. But the latest eruption could further strain matters, espe-cially with the primary looming. **Primary Status:** LEANS ENGLAND. ❖



THE BOAR'S NEST

CAP Council up for sale

By **BEVERLY PHILLIPS**

While driving by the UAW CAP Council's three-acre campus near 30th and Emerson, HPR recalled a recent conversation that we should be on watch for a "for sale" sign on the front lawn. Though no sign was in place as of HPR deadline on Thursday, we're told this longtime rallying point and phone bank central for Marion County Democrats will soon be on the market. Why? Apparently membership is dwindling and tough choices had to be made. It came down to two undesirable options – lose the building or permanently let go of staff.

Officials Dot Parade Landscape

The Indy Sports Foundation board that includes **Jack Moriarty**, **Michael O'Connor** and **Bob Welch**, finish up a year's worth of planning St. Patrick's Day festivities that take place tomorrow in Indy. Their two-hour parade begins Friday at 11:30 a.m. Expected to participate are state officials Secretary of State **Todd Rokita**, Attorney General **Steve Carter**, Treasurer **Richard Mourdock** and Auditor **Tim Berry**. That's a solid Republican lineup; Marion County officials participating, with the exception of Prosecutor **Carl Brizzi**, are solid Democrats, including Sheriff **Frank Anderson**, Public Safety Director **Earl Morgan**, Center Township Trustee **Carl Drummer**, Recorder **Julie Voorhies**, Auditor **Billie Beaux** and Clerk **Beth White**. According to event director **Bryan Apolskis**, the new epicenter of bipartisan St. Pat fun and networking will be a tent party from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Vermont Street, smack in the middle of the parade route. For a complete schedule of the day's events, including the 6:50 a.m. greening of the downtown canal by Mayor **Bart Peterson**, go to www.indystpats.com.

LaBrecque Resigns at Medicaid

Jeanne LaBrecque has resigned as Indiana Medicaid director. "It's a hard job and she had done it for two years," said FSSA Director **Mitch Roob** in confirming her resignation. "She accomplished a lot of the agenda she had set out to do." That included moving 600,000 Hoosiers to a different risk-based management system. Roob said that with a number of large projects, including the governor's health care initiative, looming, "this was prob-

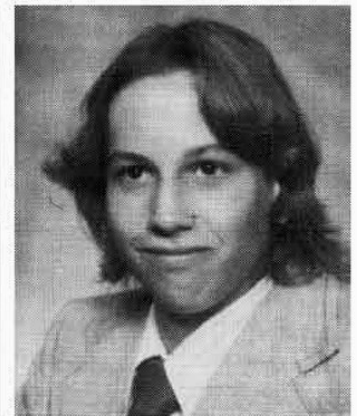
ably as good a time as any" for the change. Roob said that LaBrecque had also been dealing with health and family issues. "It's been a very stressful 6 to 8 months for her," Roob said. "She did a nice job. We'll miss her."

Commissioner Bodle's new job

St. Joseph County Commissioner **Cynthia Bodle** has resigned to become deputy county auditor.

Mary Godsey's final bar exam

Mary Place Godsey, the long-time director of the Indiana Board of Law Examiners, will direct her final bar exam this July. "Mary Godsey has been a marvelous rock of stability and character amid the ever changing challenges facing attorney testing and accreditation," said Chief Justice **Randall Shepard**.



Last week we showed you a North Central HS photo of Gov. Mitch Daniels (left) dating to 1967. He is co-hosting the Washington Township MSD's Legacy gala on Saturday with Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson, shown at right in 1976. It was only fair to show the mayor in his younger form.

Skillman's Little Red Corvette

Lt. Gov. **Becky Skillman** regaled Student Leadership Summit conferees in Kokomo by saying, "it never occurred to me I couldn't - or shouldn't - seek public office." Recalling her own high school days, Skillman talked of her love for drag racing. "My first car was a 1964, cherry red, Corvette Stingray, and I knew how to drive it," Skillman was quoted in the **Kokomo Tribune**. "The boys I raced never expected me to leave them in the dust, but many times I did." ❖

Got a tip for the Boar's Nest?

Send it to: phillipscgroup@comcast.net



Rich James, Post-Tribune - Mitch, you've got a problem. No, I'm not talking about the lease of the Indiana Toll Road to that Aussie firm. If Indiana University can name an Australian as its president, who's going to worry about who runs a road? And I'm not talking about the proposed Illiana Expressway. It's a fine idea as long as the proper route is selected. And I'm not talking about plans to lease the Indiana Lottery, although I think I must part company with you on that one. What I'm talking about is one of those in your flock -- that gaggle of Republicans you'll need to get re-elected. I'm talking about Secretary of State Todd Rokita and his Schererville sidekick, Dan Dumezich, the former state representative who funnels megabucks into the GOP treasury, largely because he hopes one day to be more important than he thinks he is now. It was Rokita and Dumezich, with help from Klein, who engineered Niemeyer's effort to oust John Curley as county GOP chairman a year or so ago. I tell you, Mitch, the last thing the Lake GOP needs is more division. One other thing, Mitch. The people attending this thing, for the most part, will be the same old names who attended earlier Rokita-Dumezich functions at up to \$2,500 a ticket. The other problem, Mitch, is that this is a wine-tasting gala. If you want to build the Republican Party in Lake County, try beer and brats at \$5 a head. ❖



tion of conventional weapons and to help detect and interdict weapons of mass destruction. That's a significant piece of legislation, patterned after the successful Nunn-Lugar program to get rid of nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union that once were aimed at us. Praise for Lugar is profuse in Obama's bestseller, "The Audacity of Hope." Obama cites the bipartisan cooperation of Lugar and former Sen. Sam Nunn, a Georgia Democrat, to confront danger of loose nukes as an example of working together "before crisis strikes" and providing "one of the most important investments we could have made to protect ourselves from catastrophe." ❖

William Greider, The Nation - Considering the formidable advantages Hillary Clinton has assembled for 2008, why should anyone feel sorry for her? Because the Senator is in a trap, and many of her assets have swiftly turned into liabilities. Clinton's great vulnerability was captured brilliantly by Barack Obama in a single sentence, without a mention of her name. "It's time to turn the page..." People are looking forward, not back, he declares. People long for a promising new generation in politics. Let's not turn back to old fights, the acrimony of decades past. Nothing personal. But Hillary Clinton is the past. ❖

Gary Gerard, Warsaw Times-Union - Now, I know that Ann Coulter, a syndicated columnist that we carry in this newspaper, is no stranger to controversy. And I also know that she really likes to stir things up. But honestly, her use of a gay slur to describe U.S. Senator John Edwards was just a bit unnecessary. Now don't get me wrong. As a strong proponent of freedom of speech and expression, I would heartily defend her use of whatever language she wants, but I guess I just don't really see the need to be quite that offensive. What's she trying to do, give conservatives a bad name? Trust me, conservatives don't need any help with that these days. And as off-the-wall as the comment was, the forum in which it was made - the Conservative Political Action Conference - made things even worse. When you're speaking at a shindig like that, there's this perceived tacit approval of your views by the group you're addressing. So she sort of drags all conservatives down the same snotty little path. ❖

Stuart Rothenberg, Roll Call - Each presidential election cycle is unique, but you can count on certain developments every time. There are candidate boomlets, questions about the frontrunners, talk of deadlocked conventions and multiple scenarios of various credibility. Scenarios are a lot like opinions or blogs -- pretty much everybody has one. The Republican race has me totally flummoxed. Arizona Sen. John McCain should be the favorite and the frontrunner in the race for his party's nomination. I certainly thought he was, but I'm not sure right now. McCain earned the right to be regarded as the next Republican hopeful in line for his party's nomination, and in the past 50 years or so that's been a very good predictor of the nomination. He ran well in the 2000 GOP battle, and since then he has been supportive of the man who beat him, George W. Bush. A number of important Bush political operatives and fundraisers have signed on with McCain, and the Senator has the experience, stature, demonstrated fundraising ability and personal story to be the clear leader for his party's nomination. Instead, McCain is having trouble being accepted by conservatives, who see him as neither entirely dependable nor entirely conservative. Even though he is a nationally known political figure who has run for president, McCain trails a liberal former New York City mayor for the GOP nomination in national polls. And he trails him consistently. The margin isn't all that close. ❖

Jack Colwell, South Bend Tribune - President Bush wouldn't listen to Sen. Dick Lugar when the Indiana Republican urged administration focus on what to do in Iraq after the troops reached Baghdad. But if Sen. Barack Obama wins the presidency, the situation could be different, with a Democratic president holding Lugar's advice in higher regard than Bush did. Names of the two senators are affixed to the Lugar-Obama initiative to curb prolifera-



Ligonier mayoral candidate booted off primary ballot

ALBION - The Noble County Election Board voted 3-0 Tuesday night to remove Donald R. Magnus from the ballot in the upcoming Ligonier Republican mayoral primary (**Kendallville News-Sun**).

The decision came after a 35-minute hearing during which the three-person board heard charges against Magnus levied by the other two Republican candidates: incumbent Mayor Gary Bishop and Ligonier businesswoman Patty Fisel. Bishop and Fisel cited three objections to Magnus' candidacy, and in the end, the deciding factor used to remove him from the ballot surprised some observers, including Magnus, who vowed to appeal the board's ruling in Noble County Circuit Court. The challenges were based on the location and zoning status of Magnus' residence; his length of time living in Ligonier; and his voting history as a Republican.



Smokers protest against cigarette tax

INDIANAPOLIS - Southern Indiana opponents of a proposed cigarette-tax increase went to the Statehouse yesterday with hand-lettered signs searching for lawmakers. About 100 people boarded buses to Indianapolis to try to counter a strong lobby in favor of Gov. Mitch Daniels' plan to boost the tax by at least 25 cents a pack and use the revenue for health programs.

Ivy Tech search consumed in politics, trustee says

INDIANAPOLIS - An Ivy Tech Community College trustee said Wednesday that she wants to halt the

search for a new president, a process that has been disrupted by complaints of secrecy and political backbiting. Trustee Kaye Whitehead, a Delaware County farmer and the county's Republican Party chairman, criticized the search committee's failure to forward its official list of finalists to trustees, who are expected to vote for a new president next week (**Muncie Star Press**). "I'm very dismayed by the fact that the only way I've found out who the final candidates are is through the rumor mill," Whitehead said. "At this point in time, there is no way we should move forward. This decision is too big, and not just for Ivy Tech. It's a big decision for the state of Indiana." Members of the presidential search committee this week confirmed the names of two finalists: Thomas J. Snyder, chairman of Flagship Energy Systems Center in Anderson, and Air Force Col. Thomas D. Klinkar. Missing from the list was Carol D'Amico, the school's high-profile No. 2 administrator. D'Amico, a former aide to President Bush, had been viewed as a likely replacement since President Gerald Lamkin announced his retirement plans last fall. Search committee members have declined to say why D'Amico, an early contender for the presidency, was left off the short list. But Ivy Tech supporters point to a political clash between the committee and the board of trustees.

Stilwell seeks new mine safety standards

INDIANAPOLIS - If the Sago Mine disaster in West Virginia had happened in Indiana, it would have been an "embarrassment" for the state because of Indiana's infrequent mine-safety inspections, state Rep. Russ Stilwell told a Senate committee Wednesday (**Evansville Courier & Press**). The committee approved Stilwell's bill requiring Indiana to adopt new federal coal mining safety standards. To get their mining certifications, miners also would have to be proficient in English. Communicating

underground during a mine rescue is difficult enough without miners being unable to understand each other, Stilwell told senators. Stilwell, D-Boonville, worked as a coal miner for many years. His legislation, House Bill 1335, would create a dual level of safety by having Indiana adopt federal regulations.

Governor's Council lauds free St. Pat's Day rides

INDIANAPOLIS - Eastside Collision Center and Budget Rental Car are offering free rides this Saturday for those who drink too much green beer (**HPR**). The Center has provided a similar ride program for New Year's Eve the past three years and averages about 800 rides each year. Partygoers can arrange for transportation to and from their homes between the hours of 6 p.m. on Saturday through 5:00 a.m. on Sunday. Three shuttles staffed by volunteer employees will travel anywhere within Marion County. "This is a way for us to give back to the community. If we can save one life or prevent a serious injury it's worth the time and effort we put into it," said Eastside Collision Center owner Chuck Alley. The Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving lauded Alley for his designated driver program at a mid-morning news conference. Call 899-5307 to reserve a ride.

Daniels says 84% of contracts go to state firms

INDIANAPOLIS - State government has made sweeping advances in its commitment to Buy Indiana, Governor Mitch Daniels said today, and he challenged Indiana's businesses and other public entities to do the same. The governor today released the 2007 Buy Indiana Progress Report that shows 84 percent of the state's contracting dollars are now going to firms defined as Indiana companies. Before Buy Indiana, an estimated 60 percent of contract dollars were going to Indiana businesses. ❖