



HOWEY

Political Report

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6,000 frozen doughnuts on Election Eve ...

The life & times of Bill Colbert ... and a coming book

By BRIAN A. HOWEY in Indianapolis

There we sat, at the deathbed of Bill Colbert, on a gray and gloomy late September Friday morning.

It was the opening interview on the book Jeff Lewis and I are just beginning to research. Here was Bill Colbert, a political operative whose career spanned Birch Bayh and Larry Conrad to Doc Bowen, to L. Keith Bulen and Bob Garton. Along the way, there were the youngsters, a senator's son named Evan and a young volunteer on the 1968 Senate campaign of Bill Ruckleshaus named Mitch.

And Lewis prompted Colbert. Tell 'em about the Dailey campaign.

Colbert lit up one of the dozen or so cigarettes he smoked over the last interview of his life.

"Bob Dailey was a real asshole," Colbert prefaced the story that took place in 1986. It was a legendary campaign because House Speaker J. Roberts Dailey was upset by Democrat Marc Carmichael. Most attributed the defeat to Dailey's refusal to hear the lottery bill, and his blocking of banking reforms.

"He called me to help run his campaign," Colbert explained. "They decided they would deliver coffee and doughnuts to all the precinct committeemen and the people who came in to vote. We bought 6,000 doughnuts and we bought 'em from Morris Mills. And we picked them up the day before the election. They bring up 6,000 doughnuts in a truck. The m----f---ers are frozen. This is the night before the election. I brought up I don't know how much coffee. And then they were supposed to have 88 volunteers. About 40 of them showed up. We closed all the windows in this woman's house. Everything. It was cold outside. We stacked 6,000 doughnuts in her house ... and thawed them out. And the only people we fed were the ISTA people."

This was a delicious story. The idea of 6,000 glazed doughnuts thawing on every counter top, table, window sill, TV top ... on the ironing board ... the coffee table ... on bowling balls and in every crevice and cornice ... was just a vividly funny image. Turn up the heat to 85! We've got to thaw the damn doughnuts.

As we left the house of Colbert's son where the interview took place, I turned to Lewis and said, Bill Colbert just gave us the title of our book: *"6,000 Frozen Doughnuts on Election Eve (& Other Great Hoosier Political Stories)."*

Jeff Lewis, the HPR pollster from TeleResearch, and I decided to write a book



"Some of us thought we should pay for the big cost of Hurricane Katrina by cutting big government."

— U.S. Rep. Mike

Pence, to Robert Novak of the *Chicago Sun-Times*

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capturing some of the great Hoosier political stories that stand to be lost if not recorded. To get Lewis wound up over his political escapades with Birch Bayh, Larry Conrad, Vance Hartke and big Jim Carey in Muncie is to set yourself up for a busted gut.

The Democrats at the Indiana Democratic Editorial Association have a story telling night that, by unwritten rule, I never quote. We've decided that some of this history should be preserved. The logical starting place was Bill Colbert.

As September wore on, Lewis warned: "We'd better do that interview with Bill Colbert." We got there with about a week to spare.

Colbert started out as a Channel 13 reporter. Birch Bayh hired him in 1962 for a 15 percent commission on every TV ad that aired, even though he was a Republican. He entered the political arena at a time when television was becoming a communicating force and the likes of people like Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy were assisting Bayh's challenge to U.S. Sen. Homer Capehart.

"Bill had a very lengthy public life, both being involved with elected officials and being around the Statehouse," Don Blinzinger of BoseTrecacy explained. "Like many who have longevity, he knew thousands of people. He knew thousands of stories. He was one of those characters. The fact is, those characters are fairly few and far between."

Little wonder, when pressed, that Colbert said Roger D. Branigin was the best governor of his lifetime. Branigin once told a reporter, "I don't do plans, I do people."

Colbert was all about people.

Color and memory

Pat Kiely of the Indiana Manufacturer's Association observed, "Bill was part of the color and institutional memory of the place. At times a 'real' insider but always knew what was going on regardless of party. He understood the value of personal relationships and most of the time in politics that's more important than being an expert in your subject area. He was straight forward, sometimes to the point of being abrasive to some."

While it may have seemed that times have passed people like Colbert by, there are other aspects where time seemed to come back around. "We did a two-hour show in Fort Wayne," he said of the first Birch Bayh Senate campaign. "They shut off the *Mickey Mouse Club* and their switchboard lit up."

"They did not let Evan appear on any of them," Colbert said, "until the last one. That was probably a pretty good idea. Marvella (Bayh) laid the law down." The lengthy TV shows were replicated in the 2004 campaign by Mitch

We're looking for stories

Over the next year, HPR's Brian Howey and Jeff Lewis of TeleResearch will be compiling great Indiana political stories.

If you've got some campaign trail war stories, or an inside view of governors, senators, mayors or congressmen, contact us at: 317-506-0883 or 317-573-5330.

Or send us your contributions to:

brianhowey@howeypolitics.com

or

teleresearch@aol.com

Daniels and Mark Lubbers.

During the 1962 Bayh campaign, Larry Conrad sent Colbert down to Clark County to put up campaign posters. "I stopped and I was putting posters on telephone poles and this goddammed deputy sheriff shows up and says, 'What are you doing?'"

"I said, 'I'm putting posters up.' He says, 'It's against the law.'"

"I said, 'Officer how can it be against the law when I can't even find a place to tack 'em up?'"

"You're under arrest," the officer said. He hauled Colbert down to jail. Given a phone call, Colbert tried to call Conrad and was informed that he was too busy. After two hours in the slammer, he was released and Colbert made a beeline back to Indianapolis. When Colbert arrived at the campaign headquarters, he was greeted with laughter. He had been set up.

"James Carville reminds me of Larry Conrad," Colbert said. "The way they acted, the way they responded."

Colbert said it became apparent to him that Bayh would upset Capehart about three weeks before the election, during the Cuban Missile Crisis. While most members of Congress returned to Washington, D.C., Capehart returned to his farm near Washington, Ind., where a photo was taken of him "standing with his hogs."

Homer Capehart "did a commercial standing in the backseat of a convertible," Colbert said. "He drove by the Buick dealership at 11th and Meridian waving and there was nobody in the audience."

Inside the Bulen machine

Colbert found himself with an inside view of the beginnings of the Republican machine put together by L.



Keith Bulen. "Bulen probably had the best organized mind in this state," Colbert said of his challenge to Marion County GOP Chairman Dale Brown. "He knew how to go out and talk to precinct guys. He put on a hell of an advertising campaign. They had letterhead, they had everything materialized they needed. He put together two all-day schools at Indiana Central (University). He was good at getting rid of people who were just dead weight. And he took care of a lot of people. He locked himself up in the Columbia Club for three days and he built himself a slate."

Prior to the 1968 campaign, Colbert said he put together a private rail trip to New York City where Bulen and John Snyder could meet Richard M. Nixon. An Indianapolis newspaper reporter was sent along to cover the event.

Colbert got a call from an exasperated Bulen, who was in Buffalo. "The reporter's drunk," Bulen said. "What do I do?"

Colbert said, "Put the bastard in bed."

Still drunk when Bulen met with Nixon and Ed Meese, Colbert helped the reporter pound out the story. "I wrote enough to get him a start."

Colbert said in the 1970 race between U.S. Sen. Vance Hartke and U.S. Rep. Richard Roudebush, Bulen was actually pulling for Hartke. "Down underneath, Bulen was for Vance." He said fliers were made up showing Hartke with Coretta Scott King. "We sent them to Seth Denbo and he burned them all," Colbert said.

Prior to 1968, Colbert went with Bill Ruckleshaus to get Seth Denbo's support. "We literally went and ended up sitting on the feed store steps," Colbert said. He said Denbo told Ruckleshaus, "I'd rather have two county commissioners than a U.S. senator."

It was the '68 campaign where Colbert met a young Mitch Daniels and Ray Rizzo. "Both those young guys wrote a lot of stuff," Colbert said. "They became very ingrained and close to him."

When he saw the young Daniels, did he see a future governor?

"Oh, yeah, top notch," Colbert said. "But some of the s--- he's doing now just doesn't fit Mitch Daniels. He's a different person, altogether. He grew up underneath the political system. Politics is a business. He's gotten off that track. He wants to sell the forests. C'mon. That's not Mitch Daniels. He's cutting off the guys who will tell him no."

"I told Birch at a luncheon last December, 'The legislature is owned by the big law firms,'" Colbert declared.

Making reporters cry

By the time I got to know Bill Colbert, he had the reputation of eating reporters, or at least making them cry (literal-

ly) at the Indianapolis Press Club, a beleaguered organization he couldn't save.

Colbert worked for the REMCs. He became one of the old-timers in the hallways.

Blinzinger recalled how Colbert had a tough time with the new smoking rules.

"Most of us accepted it for what it was," Blinzinger said. "We went outside. Bill, being a single-minded individual, wasn't about to do that. After prohibition, one of those closed-in phone booths on the third floor was where he'd go to smoke. It was not unusual to walk by there in the heat of the battle and be jolted to reality with smoke pouring out of one of those phone booths."

Epilogue

The night before the funeral, Gov. Daniels stopped by to pay his respects.

True to his MO to the very end, Colbert wrote his own eulogy for his funeral service last week at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church on Indianapolis' north side. He demanded the repayment of a cribbage debt. Colbert's last words were delivered by his longtime friend, Kent Howard.

Bill Colbert was a major fixture in every statewide campaign from 1960 through 1980. He worked as media director for Republicans during those years, with the notable exception when he served Birch Bayh's 1962 Senatorial campaign as Media and Public Relations director. His eight pall bearers included former Democrat state legislators Dale Sturtz and Bob Kovach, and current Senate Pro-tem Bob Garton, who whom Colbert attributed his longevity at the helm there by saying, "You can trust him."

It's probably safe to say we'll not see this kind of political Hoosier - spewing smoke and glazed doughnuts and profanity - that came in the unique human casing of Bill Colbert.

And the stories he told will not die.





Coats expresses confidence in Miers' confirmation

By MARK SCHOEFF JR.
The Howey Political Report

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Dan Coats is confident that senators, and the American public, will come to the same conclusion that he has about Supreme Court nominee Harriet Miers--the better they know her, the more they'll like her.

"They will learn what I'm learning--and that's that she is fully qualified to be on the court," said the former Hoosier Republican senator in an HPR interview this week.

Coats, a leading social conservative during his 1989-99 tenure in the Senate, was selected by the White House to serve as Miers' sherpa in the nomination process shortly after President Bush tapped her on Oct. 3 to replace retiring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

One of the biggest challenges facing Coats is to quell a right-wing backlash against Miers. Her nomination was greeted with strong protests from many conservatives, who questioned her commitment to fighting abortion and lamented her lack of judicial and constitutional law experience.

Although Miers' opponents are vocal and prominent, Coats downplayed the rebellion and said that she is gaining traction on the right. "Many expressed support for her, and that support is growing," he said. "I'm quite confident that she'll be confirmed."

Nomination hearings in the Senate Judiciary Committee are expected to start before Thanksgiving.

Miers has been White House counsel since February after previously serving in a number of administration positions. A longtime Bush confidant, Miers has been director of the Texas Lottery Commission and a member of the Dallas City Council. She became the first female president of a Dallas law firm and the first female president of the Texas bar.

Although she is an evangelical Christian, she has never been a judge and has no record of jurisprudence on issues like abortion. Many in the conservative movement saw O'Connor's departure as a sterling opportunity to move the court decisively to the right because she was often the swing vote in 5-4 decisions.

Miers Presents Tabula Rasa

Rather than nominating a well-known conservative judge who might have stoked fierce Democratic opposition, Bush is offering someone who is in many ways a blank slate.

"We'd like to know a lot more about Harriet Miers," said Mike Fichter, executive director of Indiana Right to Life. "At the end of the day, we don't know whether she'll be a conservative or a liberal vote until she is on the bench. The specter of David Souter is in the back of everyone's mind."

Souter, a justice selected by Bush's father, has disappointed conservatives. Coats understands conservative worries that the court oversteps its bounds. "We've seen an activist court in the past," he said.

But he asserts that Miers believes the court should limit itself to adjudicating rather than making law. "She grounded her philosophy in that fundamental principle," Coats said. "It's probably the most important principle."

Coats Touts Life Story

For now, conservatives will have to take Coats' word on Miers' judicial philosophy because she has no experience on the bench. People from all walks of life have ascended to the nation's highest court--including late Chief Justice William Rehnquist, who was an assistant U.S. attorney. They "brought great credit to the court," said Coats, a former ambassador to Germany who is now a lawyer

in Washington.

Coats argues that Miers' background is her strongest asset, and it's emphasized in Capitol Hill meetings. "My role is to open the door, introduce her to the senator, and let Harriet Miers be Harriet Miers," he said.

The session usually involves a discussion of her life narrative, which includes growing up in a household of modest means, financing her undergraduate degree from Southern Methodist University through a work-study program after her father suffered a stroke and then earning a law degree from the school.

"It's a very compelling story," said Coats, who adds that Miers "has been a trail-blazing woman in the legal profession."

Coats dismisses criticism that Miers lacks the academic credentials required for the Supreme Court. "Harriet Miers



Former U.S. Sen. Dan Coats will guide the Harriet Miers nomination. (HPR Photo)



has demonstrated through her educational accomplishments, through her life experience, through the significant recognition she's been granted by her peers, that she has the full intellectual capability to be a justice," he said.

Indiana Right Offers Mixed Reaction

It remains to be seen whether conservatives will rally behind Miers. She has the backing of at least one from Indiana -- former Rep. David McIntosh.

"I trust the president completely on a lot of the personnel issues, so I think she'll make a good justice," he said. A former White House staffer in the Reagan administration, McIntosh never worked with Miers but has heard her praised by her colleagues.

But other members of the conservative Federalist Society are holding back on their judgment. "A lot of them are taking a wait-and-see position," said McIntosh, who belongs to the organization.

Rep. Mark Souder (R-3rd CD) also is undecided. "I

think having Dan Coats as the leader of her team is a wise choice," he said in a statement e-mailed to HPR while he was traveling to a field hearing in Arizona about the national park system. "He can't fix the inherent problems of her weaknesses, but with conservative, moderate and liberal senators, he will make the strongest case possible. If he can't get her confirmed, no one could."

U.S. Rep. Dan Burton told the *Wabash Plain Dealer*, "She could be a very fine justice," he said. "A lot of people think if you're not a judge in a lower court, you're not qualified, but 43 of the last 108 Supreme Court justices were not judges." U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer told HPR and other Indianapolis reporters that he has an open mind about Miers.

Fichter also endorses Coats' role in the nomination, which was suggested to the White House by Sen. Richard Lugar. "The selection of Senator Coats is, perhaps more than anything else, a direct signal to conservatives that, in fact, Harriet Miers will be a conservative judge," he said. ❖

Capt. Jeffers surveys the war

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

Capt. Tim Jeffers of the Army Reserves appeared on WXNT-AM's *Abdul in the Morning Show* and said the United States didn't fully grasp the dynamics leading to the Iraq insurgency. Jeffers, shown here with NBC anchor Brian Williams, recently returned from the Green Zone in Iraq as a public affairs aide to Gen. Petraeus after serving there from Dec. 24, 2004 through September.

Jeffers said Iraq is not "black and white. It is the most complex, both religious and political, set of dynamics I have ever observed. It amazes me that maybe we should have had a little better grasp on those dynamics." Jeffers said the insurgency is made up of jihadists, Baathists party folks, foreign fighters, "and, frankly, of criminals." He said many who bomb convoys or fire on troops are in it for the money. "There was a monetary incentive," Jeffers said. "There are shortages of water, electricity. Life is very difficult, though it's getting better. It's difficult when security isn't there when you need it."

As for the status of Iraqi forces, Jeffers said, "It's the \$100 million question. Last count, there were 119 battalions between police and military, or 200,000 have been

trained. But they are at different levels of capability. I think the goal was 270,000. After the election in December, there will be some level of stability that we can draw down our troops. I hope that can happen."

But, Jeffers said, "We ought to do all we can to protect our strategic oil interests there and then draw down our troops. We have done a fantastic job of preparing them under circumstances. But you don't build an army over night. You have a certain level of corruption that is systemic to the culture. You have to work through that."

Jeffers said Iraqis are struggling with the notion of democracy. "We don't always do government well here," Jeffers said. "To think they will do that well in Iraq is misguided." Jeffers told host Abdul Hakim Shabazz that there is a possibility that Iraq could split up. "If they can't bring it together, some have suggested three regional governments, in the end maybe that's something we look at.

"At some point we have to let them do this. In our revolution, the French supported us, but it was Americans who decided. It's up to them to make this work. We've allowed them to get to this point."

❖



Jeffers with NBC anchor Brian Williams in the Green Zone.



Why the Chicago White Sox will win the World Series

INDIANAPOLIS - I used to be a sportswriter. And I'm here to tell you one thing: The Chicago White Sox are going to win the World Series. This year. You can put it on the board yes!

I reached this epiphany about 9:45 p.m. Wednesday night. At 9:30 p.m., I was convinced they were going to lose the American League Championship Series 4-0 to the Los Angeles Angels.

But, as most of you have heard, Sox catcher A.J. Pierzynski struck out on what would have been the third out in the 9th inning. The score was tied 1-1.

The Fox announcers noted that with no one warming up in the Sox bullpen, ace pitcher Mark Buerhle would be the first pitcher since ... Britt Burns in 1983 ... to pitch 10 innings in a playoff game.

This factoid sent a shudder down the spine of every long-suffering White Sox fan everywhere. It freaked me out because I was in the stands at Old Comiskey Park to watch the Burns pitching masterpiece go into the 10th inning with the score 0-0 against the Baltimore Orioles. It was then that a reserve Oriole player - Tito Landrum - homered, ruining a chance for the Sox to make their first World Series since 1959. Sox fans knew if Burns had won the game, the virtually unstoppable LaMarr Hoyt would have been pitching the clincher the next day.

The other cursed event that occurred in that 1983 game was reserve infielder Jerry Dybzinski killing the Sox's best scoring chance in the sixth inning. "The Dibber" rounded second base with his head down and steamed towards Vance Law who had been held up at third by coach Jim Leyland -- a force out that killed the Chicago rally.

Roll forward to Wednesday night when, in the the seventh inning, third baseman Joe Crede doubled and then ruined the inning when he was picked off second base on Juan Uribe's liner to Anderson in left. That, along with a base running error that allowed Aaron Rowand to be thrown out at home plate in the second, and, as I explained to my sons, "Oh my God, the Dibber Effect has returned. We're doomed!"

I buried my head in the pillow and sobbed.

By the 9th inning, it appeared clear that that White Sox could no longer hit. When Pierzynski swung at a low ball for the final strikeout, the Dibber Effect appeared to be more lethal than an avian flu virus.

But out of that strikeout came redemption and the slaying of the curse. Catcher Josh Paul scooped the ball up and tossed it to the mound, but Pierzynski ran to first and was declared safe. A steal and then a long hit to left by Crede produced the 2-1 victory. Instead of heading to California down 2-0, the Sox and Angels are now tied at 1-1.

Across large swathes of Indiana, the Chicago baseball curse has left a terrible legacy. The Sox haven't been to the World Series since 1959; the Cubs since 1945. The Sox last won a World Series in 1917 (compared to the Cubs last Series victory in 1908). During this time span, more than 50 teams from New York have gone to the World Series. The Yankees have won more than 25 titles.

Chicago, the city of broad shoulders, maintains two of the biggest loser franchises in professional sports history. There have been curses brought on by Billy Goats and Bartmen, of sudsy Sultans of the Swat pointing into the stands and depositing homers. Chicago is the place of baseball players wearing shorts, the 1919 scandal, exploding scoreboards, Disco Demolitions, showers in the outfield and where the TV announcers were drunk by the 6th inning.

I once referred to Gov. Joe Kernan as "a Sox fan" (confused, perhaps by the former South Bend White Sox). Kernan called me up and left me a message: "Brian, you can call me a lot of things, but don't you ever call me a Sox fan."

The culture of defeat is so pervasive. I was watching that Cubs playoff game a few years ago when that kid Bartman deflected a foul ball with the Cubs just two innings away from a World Series. My friend, Kevin McShane, was watching the game with me at the Chatterbox Tavern. After that play, McShane turned to me and said, "They're going to lose."

And they did!

I had the pleasure of buying a round of drinks for all the forlorn Cub fans in the gloomy bar.

Cub fans had to be gloating when Pierzynski struck out in the 9th last night.

And then ... a miracle!

The strikeout became a baserunner at first and a second chance. Followed by an adroit steal of second by Pablo Ozuna ... and then Crede's Dibber redemption.

The curse has been slain. The Chicago White Sox will win the 2005 World Series. I guarantee it. You heard it here first. ❖





Jack Colwell, *South Bend Tribune* - Selling rights to operate the Indiana Toll Road for five decades or so is such a good idea that other state property should be included as well in major moves to get cash now. Why not also lease the Statehouse? Don't laugh. This could bring in additional up-front money that politicians could spend right now. Long-range problems? That's for future generations to worry about. It's kind of like the national debt. Don't worry. Spend happy. The Statehouse could be attractive to some private interests, maybe that Australian-Spanish consortium that bought rights to operate the Chicago Skyway for 99 years. There's big money in this for the operators. Skyway tolls went up right away from \$2 to \$2.50 for autos. And the privateers can hike it to \$5 in a dozen years. Chicago Mayor Richard Daley got \$1.8 billion up front to spend right now. To spend happy, claiming it costs the taxpayers nothing. And with no need to worry about future generations paying skyrocketing tolls and lack of any Skyway revenue for almost a century. If it's good for their man Rich, it's good for our man Mitch. What tolls could there be at the Statehouse? A toll for entering the big, old limestone building, of course. Lest you think I'm joking about Statehouse tolls, let me stress that it is no more of a bad joke than leasing the Toll Road. ❖

Leslie Stedman Weidenbener, *Louisville Courier-Journal* - Republican Mitch Daniels waged a campaign for change, for action and for a new direction as he toured the state last year in his recreational vehicle seeking the job as governor. Voters, seemingly, decided that's just what they wanted, granting him a decisive win over incumbent Democrat Joe Kernan. And so nine months into his term, there are signs of change everywhere. The state is: Closing license branches. Hiring a private company from Florida to run a prison. Considering a plan to sell off its mental-health hospitals. Proposing to lease highways to private contractors. Joining the rest of the nation in daylight-saving time. But many of the changes are more subtle. And last week Daniels let on about another change in his approach. For years the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission has pushed lawmakers to give it more authority to oversee mergers among power, natural gas, telecommunications and other companies. It's a power that regulators in at least 26 states already possess. And O'Bannon, in particular, believed it to be an essential missing tool for regulators. It works like this: The company offers up incentives like employment guarantees in exchange for approval. But Daniels said last week he's not interested. "I

don't think it's necessary," he said. "I think the state has plenty enough power and authority right now and the direction of our administration will be to look for ways to remove the hand of regulation." ❖

Robert Novak, *Chicago Sun-Times*) - House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert is an old wrestler, and last Thursday night he used a classic move of his sport by quickly reversing positions (Novak, *Chicago Sun-Times*). On behalf of the Republican leadership, Hastert went before his colleagues to embrace essentially the same package of spending that two weeks earlier he had scoured conservative House members for proposing. The change was a matter of necessity rather than choice. It was required to quell the first really serious split in House Republican ranks since the GOP took control of the chamber a decade ago. But the rancor was not limited to Capitol Hill. As House Republicans convened their closed-door conference at 7 p.m. Thursday, 1,000 conservatives were in a foul mood eight blocks away at a black-tie dinner celebrating the 50th anniversary of National Review magazine. They were outraged by the nomination of Harriet Miers to the Supreme Court, viewing it less as an aberration by President Bush than a last straw. In that climate, it was a bare minimum for Republican leaders to back away from their scandalous browbeating two weeks ago of the conservative Republican Study Committee (RSC) for proposing Operation Offset. RSC members approached Thursday night's meeting fearing another mindless performance by party leaders. At a Sept. 21 closed-door conference, Republican leaders made clear they would not tolerate criticism of their spending. Rep. Mike Pence, the RSC chairman, said not a word. He had been battered personally the night before by Hastert and other GOP leaders. Consequently, what happened Thursday was a most pleasant surprise to rank-and-file members. On the floor of the House Friday, Pence issued a polite victory statement. "Some of us thought we should pay for the big cost of Hurricane Katrina by cutting big government," he said, adding that "we're beginning to do just that." However, speaking "on behalf of House conservatives," he said, "we are pleased but not content, we are encouraged but not satisfied" because the actual cutting will be harder than winning the debate. Pence sounded a little like Ronald Reagan's "trust but verify" reaction to Mikhail Gorbachev. ❖





NBC pegs Bush at 39 percent; right track/wrong track 28/59%; Cong generic 48D/39R

TRENDLINE: On *NBC Nightly News* last night, Washington bureau chief Tim Russert, said the latest NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll is "not good news for George W. Bush's second term thus far." Only 39% of Americans approve of his job, 54% disapproval. That 39% approval is the lowest in the five years of his Presidency. Only 2% of African-Americans in the United States approve of George Bush's handling of the Presidency, the lowest we have ever seen in that particular measurement," Russert said. On the right track/wrong way question, "59%, nearly 6 in 10 Americans feel we are on the wrong track. And look at this, worst still ahead: 69% of Americans think energy prices are going to get worse; 61% think gas prices are going to get worse. And in terms of Iraq, the economy and Katrina -- a vast majority believe we have a long way to go to fix those problems."



FINEMAN SEES CONSERVATIVE CRACKUP:

Political reporter Howard Fineman writes in a web-exclusive at the website of *Newsweek*, "President George W. Bush may have no military exit strategy for Iraq, but the 'necons' who convinced him to go to war there have developed one of their own -- a political one: Blame the Administration. ... The flight of the neocons...is one of only many indications that the long-predicted 'conservative crackup' is at hand." Fineman relates, "By the time Bush was in his second term as governor, laying the groundwork for his presidential run, he and" Karl Rove "had gathered all of the often competing and sometimes contradictory strains of conservatism into one light beam. You could tell by the people they brought to Austin. To tie down the religious conservatives, they nudged John Ashcroft out of the race and conducted a literal laying on of hands at the governor's mansion with leaders such as James Dobson. For the libertarian anti-tax crowd, they brought in certified supply-sider Larry Lindsey as the top economic advisor. For the traditional war hawks they brought in Paul Wolfowitz, among others, go get Bush up to speed on the world. For the traditional corporate types -- well, Bush had that taken care of on his own. But now all the constituent parts are -- for various reasons -- going their own way."

Indiana 2006 Congressional

Congressional District 6: Republican: U.S. Rep.

Mike Pence, George Holland. Democrat: Barry Allen Welsh.

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 Results: Pence 182,529, Fox (D) 85,123, Roots (L) 4,397. **2006 Outlook:** Welsh announced he will challenge Pence. Welsh (www.barrywelsh.org) said his campaign theme will be "People before profits." He said in a statement, "I am announcing now because I see wrong, and feel I

must stand up and try to make it right. To me, that is Christian. I am running to protect Social Security, to stand up against corruption and cronyism, to stand for the troops and against an unjust war, to fight the oil-men and outrageous gas prices, and since I am one of you, to represent all of you."



Rep. Pence

Welsh is pastor of the Laurel United Methodist Church and is an on-air radio personality on WIFE-FM in Connersville under the name "Allen Berry." He ran unsuccessfully against State Sen. Robert Jackman in 2004.

He has taught at New Palestine High School and coaches at Knightstown High School. "The corruption displayed by the radical Neo Conservative Republicans, the investigations of Karl Rove, Scooter Libby, Sen. Bill Frist, Jack Abramoff, Tom Delay and the list goes on and on and will continue to grow," Welsh said. "The practice of cronyism ... has people appointed to positions for which they are unqualified. Let me be clear, this is not partisan, this is potentially deadly. Crony appointments to Homeland Security and FEMA end up getting people killed. I am running because there are major differences between Congressman Pence and myself, and it will be easy for the voters to choose, should he survive his primary challenger." Does Pence have anything to worry about?



Probably not. He is still adored by conservatives, who see him in almost heroic terms, standing up to the current House leadership on the post-Katrina offsets (*See Columnists, Page 9*). His name is being bandied about as a potential House Majority Leader in the wake of the Tom DeLay indictment. Bill Smith, Pence's campaign manager and chief of staff, declined to respond to Welsh's campaign rhetoric until after the May primary (Yencer, *Muncie Star Press*). "We never take anything for granted," Smith added. Pence, who has easily raised \$1 million in previous elections, already had \$373,500 in cash on hand last summer, and had several fundraising events recently for the 2006 campaign. Having said that, the only reason this race is in the "Likely" category as opposed to the "Safe" is if a national tidal wave develops. In that kind of national dynamic, some of Pence's published comments on the Iraq War, weapons of mass destruction, and his quote from last summer that we are "winning the war" and that Iraqi oil production is at pre-war levels (it isn't) could come back to haunt him. Even in a national GOP washout, it is hard to believe that Pence could be defeated. The Welsh candidacy, if he can acquire the credibility of a candidate, could be interesting. As a pastor, it will be interesting to see what kind of dialogue he can produce with Pence and whether that can eat into the congressman's strong Christian base. The *Daily Kos* reported, "Pence is the head of the Hand Maids Tail-like RSC, and is a Delay defense fund contributor who opens his meetings with prayer. Should be interesting to see a man of God call Pence out on his core schtick." Pence probably returns, possibly as House Minority Leader if Democrats can pick up 15 seats nationally. Given today's NBC poll, that is no longer a stretch. And if this race somehow tightens up, then you know a tsunami is taking shape. **Status: LIKELY PENCE**

Congressional District 8: Republican: U.S. Rep. John Hostettler. Democrat: Vanderburgh County Sheriff Brad Ellsworth. **Geography:** Evansville, Terre Haute, Greencastle; Posey, Vanderburgh, Warrick, Gibson, Pike, Martin, Daviess, Knox, Sullivan, Greene, Owen, Clay, Vigo, Vermillion, Parke, Putnam, Warren and part of Fountain counties. **Media Market:** Evansville, Terre Haute, Indianapolis. Lafayette. **People:** Urban/rural 58/42%; median income \$36,732; poverty 10.7%; race white 93.7%, black 3.7%, Hispanic .9%; blue/white collar: 32/52%. **2000 Presidential:** Bush 56%, Gore 42%; Cook Partisan Voting Index: R+8. **2002 Results:** Hostettler 98,952 (51%), Hartke 88,763 (46%), **2004 Results:** Hostettler 145,576, Jennings (D) 121,522, Garvin (Green) 5,680. **2006 Forecast:** University of Virginia's Larry Sabato's Crystal Ball has ranked IN-08 a "toss-up," one of only seven in the country. Here's Sabato's take on Ellsworth: "Over the years, Democrats have thrown a wide variety of

candidates at Hostettler, only to come up just short. But perhaps they have never fielded a candidate with quite as strong a profile as Vanderburgh County Sheriff Brad Ellsworth, whose law-and-order background, roots in the district, and base in the population center of the district are major assets Democrats have lacked in past cycles. Add to the mix the criticism Hostettler has received at home recently for his lonely House vote against \$51 billion in relief for victims of Hurricane Katrina, and it's clear that Hostettler could face his closest race yet in 2006." And in drawing conclusions about how '06 will play out for Republicans, he specifically mentions Hostettler: "As long as Democrats can keep issues of the GOP's ethics foibles afloat and



Ellsworth

President Bush's approval ratings fail to bounce back in time, the minority party will be poised to gain a substantial number of House seats in 2006, especially in districts where hard-line conservatives such as Colorado's Marilyn Musgrave or Indiana's John Hostettler continue to align themselves closely with President Bush and the Republican leadership in Congress." We agree with Sabato's rating of this race.

Status: TOSS-UP

2006 State Races

House District 55: Republican: State Rep. Bob Hoffman. Democrat: Open. **2004 Results:** Hoffman 17,410, McGlothen (D) 6,864, Marcum (L) 800. **2006 Forecast:** We reported that Barry Welsh would challenge Hoffman, and we were wrong. Welsh is going to challenge U.S. Rep. Mike Pence. But there are persistent rumors that a local elected official from Union County is going to challenge Rep. Hoffman, though we have been unable to confirm. **Status: LIKELY R.**





Bayh headed back to New Hampshire

MANCHESTER, N.H. - A "Granite Status" column in the *New Hampshire Union Leader* (10/13, DiStaso) reports, "After speaking to state Democrats at a party fundraiser on Oct. 29, Indiana Sen. Evan Bayh will visit New England College on Oct. 30 for a town hall-style meeting."



Bush coming to Indianapolis Jan. 9

INDIANAPOLIS - President Bush is slated to speak Jan. 7 at the Murat Theatre during the centennial convention of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (*Indianapolis Star*). The speech is listed on the convention schedule for an upcoming NCAA committee meeting, but the association has not made a formal announcement.

Legislative panel blinks on BMV closings

INDIANAPOLIS - For all of the anger and bluster over license branch closings, a state legislative committee has decided to do little to change the way the Bureau of Motor Vehicles operates (*Indianapolis Star*). The committee finished its work Wednesday by endorsing two proposals that would require more license branches to open on Election Day and require better notice of public hearings on potential permanent branch closures. "I don't think it substantially changes the BMV," said Sen. Earline Rogers, D-Gary, a member of the committee, who has fought a branch closing in her city. The committee didn't take any action to reopen any branches or restrict the agency's power to close more. The committee couldn't even

muster a motion to consider its most significant proposal -- one that would require a license branch in every county seat. "It was a venting session," said Republican Rep. Thomas Saunders of Lewisville, whose eastern Indiana district includes three branches that have been closed this year (*Associated Press*).

52nd Hoosier killed in Iraq

PAXTON - Matt Kimmell was the paper boy who always delivered on time. He was the diligent sheriff's deputy known for his professionalism. And ultimately, he was the American soldier who gave his life serving in Iraq (*Terre Haute Tribune-Star*). The country boy who once sat on his grandfather's knee, listening to World War II stories, died Tuesday. He was killed north of Baghdad, when an improvised explosive device exploded near a military vehicle in which he was riding. "I think it still hasn't hit me yet," said Sgt. Rick Pace with the Vanderburgh County Sheriff's Department, who described Kimmell as the little brother he never had. Kimmell is the 52nd person from Indiana to have died after being sent to the Mideast since the buildup for the invasion of Iraq began in 2003 (*Associated Press*). Larry Kimmell, Paxton, the soldier's father, said Army personnel told him that two soldiers who were with his son were injured in the attack. "He was very closed-mouthed about what he did," said Larry Kimmell, the pastor of Bibleview Baptist Church in Sullivan. "He always told me, 'I want to be the kind of guy who walks the walk. Let some other guy talk the talk.' And that's what he did."

Legislators cool to seatbelt law changes

INDIANAPOLIS - State officials might be searching for hundreds of millions in needed money for road con-

struction, but that doesn't mean they are itching to capture \$15 million in federal highway dollars by changing Indiana's seat-belt law (Kelly, *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*). "I've never favored it," said Rep. Marlin Stutzman, R-Howe. "With a rural constituency in my district there are a lot of people who don't like that law to begin with, especially if we force it on pickups." Stutzman chairs the House Public Policy Committee, where the legislation has met its demise the last two legislative sessions. He didn't say it wouldn't get a hearing, but noted those against the bill are very passionate.

Jeffersonville to debate anti-smoking ordinance

JEFFERSONVILLE - Smoking would be banned in all Jeffersonville restaurants, retail stores and most places of employment under an ordinance proposed by a City Council member (*Louisville Courier-Journal*). The ordinance is on the agenda for Monday's council meeting, although several members said it is unlikely to come to a vote before more detailed discussion and perhaps a public forum.

Vectren predicts heating bills to increase by third

INDIANAPOLIS - Vectren Energy's natural gas customers should expect heating bills that are about a third higher than last winter, company officials said yesterday (*Louisville Courier-Journal*). That means a typical family in the Vectren territory, which includes Clark, Floyd and Jefferson counties, could pay a total of \$1,020 from November through March, up from \$770 last winter. "Prices are going to be up very substantially," said Vectren President Niel Ellerbrook. "It's an increase of about \$50 a month or \$250 for the heating season."

