



Act 2 awaits Rep. Andre Carson

Orentlicher, Mays & Myers cue up for May primary

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**
INDIANAPOLIS -

The Carson political dynasty was extended an additional eight-plus months on Tuesday with a 54-43 percent victory by Andre Carson as the young Democrat was able to successfully activate his grandmother's political machine with an impressive 45,598 votes. But less than 12 hours after the 33-year-old Indianapolis councilman declared victory, former Indiana health commissioner Woody Myers was running TV ads and State Rep. David Orentlicher kicked off his challenge at the Kennedy-King Memorial. The coming challenges to the grandson of the late U.S. Rep. Julia Carson



As of 2 p.m. today it will be U.S. Rep. Andre Carson after he won an impressive 11 percent victory over State Rep. Jon Elrod on Tuesday. But Carson will have no time to rest as the May 6 primary race kicks in. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

will be of an intellectual nature from the two Democrats with the "doctor" prefix on their names. When the Indianapolis Star endorsed State Rep. Jon Elrod over Carson last week, the editorial noted that Carson had trouble dealing with issues beyond "talking points." Joining them will be State Rep. Carolene Mays, who publishes the Indianapolis Recorder newspaper, and a couple of lesser known candidates.

What Carson brings to the table is the family legacy that his grandmother began in the Indiana House three decades ago before extending it to the Indiana Senate, the Center

Obama vs. Big 10

By **MARK CURRY**

WASHINGTON - Some Hoosier Democrats may find themselves in a quandary on Saturday as Barack Obama intends to visit Plainfield High School at 12:30 p.m. for a town hall meeting on the same day that Purdue and Indiana could potentially meet in the semi-finals of the Big Ten basketball tournament at Conseco Fieldhouse. The Illinois senator's campaign had yet to release any details of the visit by HPI's deadline, but it's a fair bet that not even Obamania can



"We agree to eventually agree."

- House Speaker B. Patrick Bauer on the coming tax reform deal. At HPI deadline, Ways & Means Chairman Bill Crawford was signalling a deal had been completed on HB1001



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compete with the possibility of a hard-court rematch between the two state universities. Still, should the Democratic front-runner host an open forum he would be expected to attract large crowds, as he has since the campaign began in earnest earlier this year. "I think Hoosiers generally, and Hoosier Democrats in particular, are in for a very, very exciting period," Joe Hogsett, state chair for the Hillary Clinton campaign, told HPI late yesterday. "The country's eyes will be focused on Indiana."

News of Obama's visit arrived via a campaign announcement yesterday and reports began to crop up on the internet by mid-afternoon, more or less launching the 2008 Indiana Democratic presidential primary which culminates at the polls May 6. The state is expected to host a

hotly contested skirmish in the epoch battle between Obama and Clinton. Right now Pennsylvania is the center of attention. The latest polls indicate the New York senator maintains a sizable lead in the run-up to the next primary on the Democratic agenda. The Keystone State's 188 delegate are up for grabs April 22. Both candidates are expected to spend a considerable amount of time and treasure as they woo Pennsylvania's voters over the next several weeks.

Much is at stake for the Democratic party and every contest could be critical from now through June 3, when South Dakota and Montana are slated to host the last matches on the party's schedule. It's

possible the competition will extend later into June as Michigan and Florida party officials consider conducting re-votes in their states. The national party has flatly refused to seat either state's delegates to the convention in Denver this August because they held elections earlier than party rules allowed. However, national officials have indicated they would allow the two state's delegates to participate should there be a re-vote. News accounts released this morning suggested both are weighing a mail-in vote, with ballots going out perhaps sometime in early May in Florida or as late as June

in Michigan. As it stands now, Obama leads in the delegate count 1,641 to 1,487, according to Real Clear Politics, which includes superdelegate tallies. Neither candidate will earn the 2,025 delegates required to secure the Democratic

nomination before the convention.

Indiana's 72 delegates and North Carolina's 115 will be on the table May 6. Sen. Obama leads handily in North Carolina and is expected to continue to do well there. A Howey-Gauge poll of Indiana voters conducted Feb. 17-18 found Obama with a 15-point advantage, but representatives of both campaigns have said they expect Indiana to be a pitched battle. Bill Dolan of Northwest Times of Indiana reported that Gary Mayor Rudy Clay, an Obama supporter, said the candidate's staff will open a campaign office in Gary later this month. "Then he can come home to Indiana. Come home to Gary," Clay told the Times. Obama will face a Clinton organization





Obama, from page 1

fortified by the support of Indiana's premier Democrat, Sen. Evan Bayh, who can be expected to campaign tirelessly on her behalf. Bayh stated yesterday that he believes Clinton will win the Hoosier state. "I think she will do as well in our state as she did in Ohio. We are a working class Midwestern state, a place we are going to need to do well in if we are going to win the fall campaign," Bayh said, according to an account in the Times.

Sen. Obama's Indiana advisers enter the fray with eyes open. "The senator believes Indiana is going to be a very competitive state and he's taking it very seriously," Obama Indiana Coordinator Kip Tew told WTHR. "We've got a statewide network of supporters already ready to go." Yesterday evening, Obama's national campaign solicited supporters for donations in an e-mail that described the upcoming elections in Indiana and elsewhere as "a two-front battle."

HPI contacted the Illinois senator's national campaign press office in a failed attempt to learn details of Saturday's visit. Shannon Gilson, an Obama spokeswoman, said they were "firming up the schedule... as soon as we have that information finalized I'll be happy to get it to you." She indicated she expected details to be released by this morning at the latest. "We have energized supporters on the ground in Indiana," Gilson told HPI. "In the coming days we will be setting up our ground operations in the state and look forward to working with our supporters and volunteers to reach out to people across the state of Indiana." When asked to describe the message the senator might bring to Hoosier voters, Gilson said, "Sen. Obama wants to make sure that we end the war in Iraq, take care of affordable health care for all Americans and keep our community safe."

Hogsett told HPI he expected Sen. Clinton to visit the state at least a couple of times before Pennsylvania's vote and extensively in the two weeks preceding Indiana's primary. We asked Hogsett for his take on what Indiana Democrats might be hearing from Clinton over the next several weeks. "I think she clearly has articulated in the course of the previous primaries and other contests the importance of national security and re-establishing American preeminence abroad, but in cooperative and mutually beneficial ways," he said. "On issues of national security and her service on the Armed Services Committee, the background and the experience that she brings, I think Indiana voters will want to hear how she intends to lead the country in very dangerous times."

Hogsett also touted her comprehensive universal health care plan, explaining, "it's not the kind of program that the special interests try to characterize... in essence

what she is suggesting is if you like your health care, if you have good health care, if it's reasonable, there's no change. She has just simply put forward ideas and proposals that would cover those who currently are not covered or provide additional coverage that is affordable for those who are underserved." The Hoosier Democrat said he thinks the state's voters will also want to hear about Clinton's economic policies. "Everybody is worried... the country is perhaps slipping into recession." For this weekend, at least, more Hoosiers will probably be worried about the prospects of their favorite college basketball team than the outcome of a primary election several weeks away. But come the end of April and early May, Indiana voters will have center court tickets for one of the most memorable presidential campaigns in a generation.

Note: The Obama campaign is signalling Saturday's 12:30 p.m. town hall at Plainfield HS will be open to the public, but you'll need a ticket which can be obtained by going to the candidate's website.

Circle Dyngus Day, March 24, as a day when Clinton and Obama could end up in South Bend/Mishawaka. Democrats in Michiana still talk about the 1968 Dyngus Day event when Sen. Robert F. Kennedy appeared at the West Side Democratic Club and led revelers in a Polish anthem. Also, watch the April 4 date when there will be an observance of the 40th anniversary of Kennedy's speech in Indianapolis when he informed a crowd that Dr. Martin Luther King had been assassinated. There is speculation that the Democratic presidential candidates may be coming. ❖

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Township trustee's office, and finally Congress, beginning in 1996. Carson will attempt to trump the intellectual nature of his coming challenge with the political forces accumulating behind him as former Congressman Andy Jacobs Jr., Marion County Democratic Chairman Michael O'Connor, Indiana Democratic Chairman Dan Parker, and the DCCC align with the young Democrat.

The old Carson machine began falling in behind Andre last fall when his grandmother took sick leave from Congress. With Jacobs denying that she faced a life-threatening illness, the "I Love Julia" signs began springing up on Center Township thoroughfares. After Rep. Carson's terminal lung cancer was publicly acknowledged last Thanksgiving, it was Jacobs who floated the notion of the family dynasty, which he began, in heart and mind despite the lack of bloodlines, when he went to Congress in 1964. Even before Julia Carson's 2008 re-election was officially scrapped, it was Jacobs who said if his "sister" couldn't run, then he would be for the grandson.

Carson was the beneficiary of a successful coordinated campaign with massive help from the DCCC. He had a 5-to-1 money advantage over Elrod, began airing ads two weeks before a Howey-Gauge Poll on Feb. 17-18 revealed he had a 54-36 percent lead. Elrod was able to shave 7 percent off that margin by a last week direct mail and TV ad campaign as well as assistance from the political organization of U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar, who tried to stoke GOP absentees and ran an extensive phone bank. Carson had the help of U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh, U.S. Reps. Baron Hill and Brad Ellsworth, former 9/11 Commissioner Tim Roemer, and former Democratic state chairman Robin Winston. Carson's victorious campaign was run off the DCCC's Washington-based template. When the Indianapolis Star's exit polling revealed "property taxes" as a motivating factor, the Carson campaign utilized an old Democratic standby, protecting Social Security. Elrod, poised to vote for Gov. Mitch Daniels' property tax reforms late this week, missed out on exploiting that key issue. Going into Tuesday's special, there was speculation as to whether Carson would reactivate his grandmother's machine. He won with 45,598 to 36,322 for Elrod. A couple of weeks ago, the idea of Elrod getting over 35,000 votes would have had the Republicans

predicting victory. The Democrats were able to surpass the GOP on absentee balloting, a component the Lugar organization had hoped to win. So the answer is, yes, Carson was able to seize the machine part of the legacy. As one Republican observer noted, "When Evan Bayh won his first race, he was known, but he wasn't really known. Carson was

known, but he wasn't really known." Bayh had been able to capitalize on his father's name ID after three terms in the U.S. Senate that ended six years earlier. Carson was able to do the same on Tuesday.

Rep. Orentlicher tried to carve into Carson's Center Township power base at noon Wednesday. In the shadows of the Robert F. Kennedy-Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial in Indianapolis, Orentlicher kicked off his campaign. The three-term legislator noted how Dr. King had a legacy of "building bridges across racial and socio-economic lines" and

promised to do the same. "Our national leaders talk instead of act and exploit divisions for political gain instead of solving the problems that confront us," Orentlicher said as Dr. King's nephew, Dr. Derek King of Martin University, looked on. "That is not a game I want to play. I am not a finger pointer. I am a problem solver. I want to move this country forward."

Orentlicher said that Carson's 54 percent "under performed" the baseline set in the district in 2004 by presidential nominee John Kerry, who won 58 percent. "If you look at the numbers, this is a district that ran 58 percent when John Kerry ran and the congressman won with 54 percent even though vastly out-spending his opponent. It shows us that we have a wide-open primary and the voters are ready to see a competitive field. We look forward to taking our message and giving the voters a real choice." Others challenging Carson for the May 6 primary are State Rep. Carolene Mays and former Indiana health commission Woody Myers, who kicked off a TV biographical campaign Wednesday. Told that the DCCC and Chairman O'Connor have said they intend to support Carson, Orentlicher said, "I think that the important thing is this is a decision for voters and the extent of the party to interfere with that is unfortunate. Up until now we haven't really given the



State Rep. David Orentlicher kicked off his campaign Wednesday at the Kennedy-King Memorial where he appeared with Dr. King's nephew, Dr. Derek King of Martin University (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)



voters a chance to have a say and that's what May 6 is about." Orentlicher said he expects to spend \$500,000 and "we're well on our way to that now." The winner will face State Rep. Jon Elrod, who was defeated by Carson on Tuesday.

Carson will be sworn in today, though he promised not to miss a vote while spending much time in Indiana. "We're cranking this machine up 25 notches," Carson told WISH-TV. "We're just going to stay focused and be humbled."

Bayh spokesman Jonathan Swain told HPI on Wednesday that Bayh's endorsement of Carson was for the special election only. "Bayh has indicated he is not endorsing in the primary," Swain said.

Myers is signaling that he will be a force. He began a TV ad campaign with a biography ad. Like Orentlicher, he is promising a campaign based on health care issues. "I was privileged to be responsible for over 2,800 Indiana state employees with a budget greater than \$235 million," Myers said. "During my years as Indiana state health commissioner there were a number of memorable and difficult events, but there was no more challenging crisis than the one we faced when young Ryan White wanted to go to school and his school district said 'no.' Finding both public and practical solutions to that crisis was very hard in the 1980s, "but we did it, and Indiana emerged as a leader in AIDS education." Myers said that as health commissioner, he worked in the Wishard Hospital Emergency Room "where I saw firsthand the effects of the lack of universal health care. I took care of our injured, our brave public servants, our poor and our incarcerated. My experience at Wishard was far more than medical and it was clear to me that I needed to do much more." Myers helped implement Ford Motor Company's employee health and safety programs around the world and



Dr. Woodrow Myers (top) at his February campaign kickoff and State Rep. Carolene Mays who ignited her campaign today. (Photos courtesy of

then served as WellPoint Inc. chief medical officer.

Like Orentlicher, Rep. Mays has a constituency in HD94. The Indianapolis Recorder publisher kicked off her campaign this morning at For God So Loved The World Ministries is a drug counseling and rehabilitation ministry that also provides housing to homeless individuals. "There are so many issues that impact us in Indianapolis and globally," Mays said. "As Congresswoman, I will work for all people to address issues such as healthcare, education, economic conditions and the war. I will also focus on conditions that specifically affect our neighborhoods including crime, housing and jobs.

"It will take proven, trusted leadership to resolve these concerns. I vow to use my background as a legislator, business leader, and community advocate to serve in a highly effective manner and be a strong voice."

Conventional wisdom going into the primary is that the three African-American candidates, Carson, Mays and Myers, will split the minority vote. HPI is not buying that notion. We see the three main challengers fighting for the anti-Carson vote, if there is one. In the February Howey-Gauge Poll, Carson had a 57-15 percent favorable/unfavorable rating among Democrats. In the crosstabs, the lone red flag was a 23/33 fav/unfav among Hillary Clinton supporters (compared to 52/33 among Barack Obama supporters). And Carson's Muslim faith didn't appear to have much of a bearing on this race.

This means that the 7th CD Democratic primary will likely be resolved on the content of the character (and campaign platforms) of the assembled candidates. ❖



2008 Indiana Governor: Schellinger TV ads begin

Governor 2008: Republican: Gov. Mitch Daniels, Democrat: Jim Schellinger, Jill Long Thompson. **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, Horn- ing (L) 38,686. **2004 Results:** Daniels (R) 1,302,912, Kernan (D) 1,113,900, Gividen (L) 31,644. **2008 Forecast:** The Schellinger campaign began its T V ad campaign with a bio ad that began running on Wednesday. It tells the story the candidate has been talking about for a year now: growing up in a working class South Bend neighborhood, working nights at a tool & die shop and "creating jobs" as a successful architect. Schellinger promises to "grow jobs for the middle class" and the ad claims he is "like us." [private] The ad has one aspect that you might not have noticed: as Schellinger is shown chatting in a diner, a hearse can be seen rolling by on the street outside. Schellinger campaign manager Tim Jeffers said the buy is in the South Bend and Indianapolis markets "and will likely continue" through the primary. "It's introductory, but we'll be rolling out some issue positions some time next week," Jeffers said. "Our goal is to get move up Jim's name ID."



Democratic gubernatorial candidate Jim Schellinger was the first to start his TV advertising campaign on Wednesday. Gov. Daniels is expected to start his shortly after sine die. (Schellinger campaign photo)

The Thompson campaign is currently back loading its TV buys due to the fact that the Obama and Clinton presidential campaigns as well as at least four candidates in the 7th CD primary along with the governor will be buying up time in late April and early May. Chris Sautter of the Thompson campaign explained, "We're going up in time to protect her lead and build on it." It is widely assumed that Schellinger has maintained his lead over Thompson, though the former congresswoman has received \$200,000 from EMILY'S List since the beginning of the year.

The Daniels re-election campaign has reserved

time for a "marching orders" ad that could be aired as early as Monday, depending on whether the Indiana General Assembly adjourns on Friday. The buy in South Bend, Fort Wayne and Indianapolis appears to be between \$800,000 and \$1 million. Asked if the campaign will stay up on the air through the primary, campaign spokesman Cam Savage responded, "Could be." HPI expects the governor will be up through the primary.

Thompson campaign manager Travis Lowe wrote a letter to the Schellinger campaign seeking Democratic Party-sponsored debates with Schellinger between April 1 and May 1 in Northwest Indiana, Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, Southeast Indiana and Evansville. Jeffers of the Schellinger campaign said he had tried to work with the newly established Indiana Debate Commission. "They are not quite up and running," Jeffers said. "We're proposing town hall forums. I know they proposed five, but we're committed to at least three in the north, central and south part of the state."

Schellinger did weigh in on the property tax reform issue. In a press release we found on the GOP-oriented Frugal Hoosiers blog, the candidate "urged lawmakers to find a way to compromise on the issue of immediate relief" but (and we're not making this up) "wait until next year's budget session to take up the issue of long-term local government reform."

From Daniels' perspective, the first thing that must happen is sine die at the Indiana General Assembly. House Speaker B. Patrick Bauer appeared to indicate on Wednesday that a deal was getting closer. Once that happens, the governor's re-elect kicks into high gear. Look for not only the TV ads, but far

more campaign stops as the governor touts his "historic" tax reforms. **Primary Status: Tossup. General Status: Leans Daniels**

2008 Indiana Legislature

HD 3: The state Election Commission invalidated George Rogge's Democratic candidacy for the 3rd District state House of Representatives seat Wednesday because of his ties to the Republican Party (**Post-Tribune**). The com-



mission upheld complaints by district residents Aaron Allen Sr. and Robert Farag, who challenged Rogge's Democratic bona fides. After a lifetime as a Republican, Rogge received permission to become a Democrat from Lake County Democratic Chairman Rudy Clay in July 2007. Rogge filed this February to run against longtime in-cumbent State Rep. Charlie Brown, D-Gary, in the Democratic primary. Democratic Election Commission member Anthony Long said Rogge should not have continued serving as a Republican appointee to the Lake County Sheriff's Merit Board after Clay certified his switch to the Dems. "Sure, you can have a change of heart, but then you can't keep your position on the merit board, because one member, it's a prerequisite you're a Republican and one member, it's a prerequisite you're a Democrat," Long said. Rogge said he stayed on until December because there was business pending before the merit board and he thought it was his duty to finish. **Primary Status: SAFE BROWN**

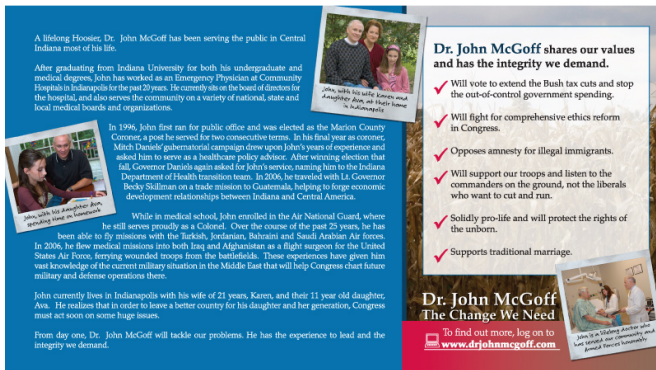
SD21 Caucus: With the coming resignation of State Sen. Jeff Drozda, the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce has endorsed State Rep. Jim Buck, according to Howard County Republican Chairman Craig Dunn. **Status: LIKELY BUCK**

HD30: Howard County Republican Chairman Craig Dunn tells HPI that State Rep. Ron Herrell will not get a pass. "Contrary to popular belief and spin, we are not throwing in the towel," Dunn said. "We are taking a very careful and premeditated approach to our candidate selection. We polled and have determined that Herrell is vulnerable to the right candidate. We had that candidate. However, the man is a current elected official with two years remaining on his term and he strongly believes that the voters elected him to serve his entire four year term. Disappointing, but refreshing! Unfortunately, his final decision was not made until the Thursday before the filing deadline. I did not want to rush the decision just to have a warm body on the ballot. We have two other good prospects that we believe would give Herrell all he can handle. At the appropriate time we will make them known."

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:** The McGoff campaign has launched the www.wheresdanburton.com website. It's similar to the web work we saw during the 2006 Carl Brizzi race for Marion County prosecutor. McGoff is also putting out direct mail. McGoff isn't the only candidate pumping out direct mail. Over the past couple of months HPI has received four different four-color mailers from Burton's congressional office apparently paid for by taxpayers.



Primary Status: Leans Burton

Congressional District 7: Republican: State

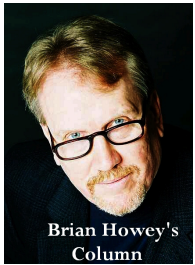
Rep. Jon Elrod. **Democrat:** Indianapolis Councilman Andre Carson, State Rep. Carolene Mays, State Rep. David Orentlicher, Dr. Woodrow Myers, Joseph Stockett III, Frances Nelson Williams, Pierre Pullins, Larry Ledford. **2006 Results:** Carson 121,303, Horning (R) 97,491, Campbell (L) 4,381. **2008 Forecast:** We believe this primary race is Rep. Carson's to lose. An 11-percent victory is impressive for just about anyone. But Carson must really bone up on the issues - as Tim Roemer and I recalled while lunching with Carson a couple weeks ago at the Chatham Tap. When I covered Roemer's 1990 campaign against U.S. Rep. John Hiler, my M.O. as an Elkhart Truth reporter was to confront any issues "four questions deep." It drove Roemer crazy but the notion ended up serving him well. Carson is going to have to think like that while campaigning against Drs. Myers and Orentlicher. **Primary Status: LEANS CARSON** ❖



What we learned from first two '08 elections

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

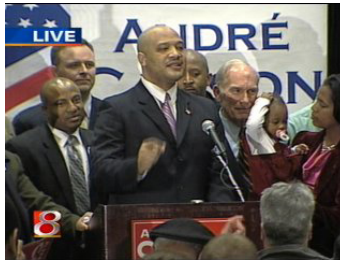
INDIANAPOLIS – There were two elections in the past week, one in Illinois and one in Indiana. What should we have learned from these early 2008 ballot tests? In Illinois' 14th Congressional District, held for more than two decades by former Republican House Speaker Dennis Hastert, a Democrat named Bill Foster won. What is intriguing about this is that it is a reliably Republican district where the Republican underperformed the party's base by 7 percent. President George W. Bush carried it by double digit margins in 2000 and 2004. For it to fall into the hands of the Democrats is one sign that 2008 could be a



Brian Howey's Column

Democratic year. An analysis by Chris Cillizza of the Washington Post found that if this trend continues, an additional 51 Republican House seats thought to be safe could come into play.

In Indiana's 7th CD, U.S. Rep. Julia Carson passed away last December. That set the stage for the continuation of what has become another Democratic family dynasty. There are, of course, the Bayhs and the O'Bannons. Now there is U.S. Rep. Andre Carson, the grandson, who won the special election by a 54-43 percent margin over State Rep. Jon Elrod. The old Carson machine began falling in behind Andre last fall when his grandmother took sick leave from Congress. With former congressman Andy Jacobs Jr. denying that she faced a life-threatening illness, the "I Love Julia" signs began springing up on Center Township thoroughfares. After Rep. Carson's terminal lung cancer was publicly acknowledged last Thanksgiving, it was Jacobs who floated the notion of the family dynasty. Even before Julia Carson's 2008 re-election was officially scrapped, it was Jacobs who said if his "sister" couldn't run, then he would be for the grandson. Carson was the beneficiary of a successful coordinated campaign with massive help from the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. He had a 5-to-1 money advantage over Elrod. The campaign began airing ads two weeks before a Howey-Gauge Poll on Feb. 17-18 revealed he had a 54-36 percent lead. Elrod was able to shave 7 percent off that margin by a last minute direct mail and TV ad campaigns. The political organization of U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar tried to stoke GOP absentees and ran an extensive phone bank.



Going into Tuesday's special, there was

speculation as to whether Carson would reactivate his grandmother's machine. He won with 45,598 to 36,322 for Elrod. A couple of weeks ago, the idea of Elrod getting over 35,000 votes would have had the Republicans predicting victory. But this result offered up different signals as to a national dynamic. Carson won with 54 percent, which was actually 4 percent lower than the 58 percent that Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry carried the district in 2004. The Kerry campaign didn't spend a dime in the 7th CD; Carson spent over a quarter of a million dollars. State Rep. David Orentlicher, one of several Democrats who will now challenge Rep. Andre Carson in the May 6 primary, says that he "underperformed." One thing Carson talked about a great deal, though not in much detail, is the need for the U.S. to pull out of the Iraq War.

But **The Politico** reported that late February polling conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 53 percent of Americans now believe "the U.S. will ultimately succeed in achieving its goals" in Iraq, up from 42 percent last September. So perceptions of the war are in flux. Carson becomes the second Muslim to be elected to Congress in U.S. history. Elrod and the Republicans never touched the issue, but there were several news stories and a YouTube video showing National of Islam Rev. Louis Farrakhan endorsing Carson along with several clips of Farrakhan talking about race in a controversial fashion.

The Carson election brings into the mainstream more minority officeholders, which has been relatively rare in modern Hoosier history. We've now had three African-American members of Congress (the Carsons and Katie Hall), four mayors (Gary's Richard Hatcher, Thomas Barnes and now Rudy Clay and LaPorte's Elmo Gonzalez), and three sheriffs (Marion County's Frank Anderson, former Grant County Sheriff Oatess Archey, both African-Americans, and Lake County Sheriff Roy Dominguez). When Rep. Orentlicher kicked off his challenge to Carson on Wednesday at the memorial site where Sen. Robert F. Kennedy broke the news of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination 40 years ago, race – or lack thereof – was present. The three-term legislator noted how Dr. King had a legacy of "building bridges across racial and socio-economic lines" and promised to do the same. "Our national leaders talk instead of act and exploit divisions for political gain instead of solving the problems that confront us," Orentlicher said as Dr. King's nephew, Dr. Derek King of Martin University, looked on. It will be fascinating to watch this dynamic in the coming weeks as the Democratic presidential campaign arrives in Indiana featuring Sens. Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton.

Machine-style politics and family dynasties aside, perhaps we've reached a point in Indiana where the content of character means more than skin color. ❖



Gov. Daniels gets his priorities right with academic proposal

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS - Mitch Daniels has done many controversial things as governor of Indiana. He leased the Indiana Toll Road. He got rid of the state employees' union. He switched the state to daylight saving time. He proposed a property tax package that has many popular features. He also has advanced various ideas, some good, and some less good that went nowhere.



Morton Marcus
Column

Now our governor has come forth with the most positive and important initiative of his administration: awards for academic

excellence.

As the governor said, "Every spring, we celebrate with excitement the selection of Mr. and Miss Basketball. It's past time that we hold academic achievement in the same esteem and emphasize the decisive importance that ability in math and science will play in Indiana's future." Not all the credit should go to the governor. "The award was developed with input from the Indiana Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (I-STEM) Network, the Hoosier Association of Science Teachers, Inc. (HASTI), the Indiana Council of Teachers of Mathematics (ICTM) and the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents."

But the governor has made it his own and he deserves credit for doing that. This is not a new idea. For years critics of Hoosier education have bemoaned the excessive emphasis on high school sports. Just look in most newspapers for evidence of this obsession. Look at the trophies in our high school corridors for our misplaced sense of importance. Good high schools are not those that win state tournaments. Good high schools graduate students with good skills that prepare them for living a good life as contributing citizens. How fast you can swim is not as important as how fast you can think. How far you can throw a ball is not as consequential

as how well you can propel an idea.

But to this point Indiana has given little recognition to these skills. Now the governor has focused attention on math and science skills. The idea is for students, teachers, councilors and administrators to nominate the best and a committee will pick the state champions. But why shouldn't we have champions from each school? Let's give our best the opportunity to be recognized locally, to have their pictures in the school corridors and community newspapers. We don't want to cheapen the state awards.

So let's make the granting of these awards into an event, a dinner that raises funds for our schools that becomes the place to be seen. Regional dinners could recognize regional winners, but the really big event might be black tie at the Indiana Convention Center.

While we are at it, let's think about broadening the awards to include other competencies beyond math and science. Students who achieve excellence in music, history, literature, and yea, even unto the social sciences could be honored. If we can support the insufferable Indiana High School Athletics Association, why can't we find ways to honor those who will help our state's progress?

High schools are the most important aspect of Indiana's economic infrastructure. People want to live in places with good high schools. Students in good high schools are role models for their younger brothers and sisters. They become the heart of the local work force. The governor's new program is worthy of extensive support. For more details go to <https://secure.in.gov/apps/math-scienceawards/>



Gov. Mitch Daniels as a student at North Central High School in Indianapolis

Mr. Marcus is an independent economist formerly with the IU's Kelley School of Business.





John Fund, Wall Street Journal: John Fund, Wall Street Journal: Republicans did better than expected in last night's special election to fill the House seat vacated by the death of Democratic Rep. Julia Carson of Indiana. Her Indianapolis district leans left -- as evidenced by John Kerry's 58% showing in 2004. But Andre Carson, the 33-year-old grandson of the deceased incumbent and a local city council member, eked out only a 54% victory, hardly a barnburner for Democrats. He now becomes the second Muslim serving in Congress. "I'm an Indy 500 Hoosier, I'm a Covered Bridge Festival Hoosier... I just happen to be a Hoosier of the Muslim faith," he said at his victory celebration. [Julia May Carson] Defeated was Republican Jon Elrod, who will almost certainly be the GOP standard-bearer when the seat is again up for grabs in November. Mr. Elrod in 2006 pulled off the rare feat of knocking off an incumbent Democrat in the state legislature. But who will he face in November? Despite yesterday's win, the new incumbent Mr. Carson will face serious competition in the May 5 Democratic primary. State Reps. David Orentlicher and Carolene Mays, and former state Health Commissioner Woodrow Myers are all well-financed and claim Mr. Carson only won the Democratic nod for the special election by pulling strings with the local party machinery. In any event, Mr. Elrod's showing should be of some cheer to Republicans. He performed a full four points better than the GOP "base" vote in the 2004 presidential race. That's certainly better than the seven-point loss in their base vote that Illinois Republicans suffered in surrendering the House seat of former Speaker Denny Hastert on Saturday. Clearly, the GOP has trouble heading into the fall election but the Indiana results aren't pointing to anything like a meltdown.

Mike Smith, Associated Press: Republican lawmakers might have scored some style points last week when they packed a Statehouse stairway and announced to the media that they were united behind a newly refined property tax reform plan. But politics is a combination of style and substance, and the way Republicans presented their stand last Thursday seemed heavy on the style. Instead of a step forward toward a property tax compromise with Democrats, it appeared to be a step back. The public Republican event insulted Democrats with just days left in the legislative session. Regardless of whether their reaction was justified or not, Democrats control the House, and no plan can pass without some of their support. During their stairway news conference, Republicans said their modified proposal would provide immediate and lasting property tax relief and restructuring. The event provided good television visuals and front-page newspaper photos. It allowed House Republicans, outnumbered by just 51-49 in an election year, to share some of the spotlight with majority Senate

Republicans as the session nears a Friday deadline for adjournment. Republican Gov. Mitch Daniels got gobs of media coverage a few hours later by proclaiming the plan a sincere compromise offer that House Democrats should accept. But after fielding a few questions, he put it much more boldly than that. "I honestly believe that anybody who cannot agree with this ultimately is not prepared to protect taxpayers and to cap their exposure to property taxes," he said.



Rich James, Post-Tribune: There are lots of reasons why property taxes have been rising. Among them are reassessment, huge tax breaks for the oil and steel industries, the elimination of the inventory tax and the state shifting some costs to property taxes. None of those causes, one should note, is a result of action or inaction by officials in Lake County -- on the municipal, county or township levels. There's all this talk about waste in government here. Some people who believe just about everything they hear seem to think if we eliminated all the waste in government that our property taxes would plummet. Nope. Tax bills would come down a buck or two or three -- but nothing appreciable. The above-mentioned outside forces are responsible for rising property taxes, not the forces within local government. It's not that we have too many people within local government. It's a matter of having too much local government. Gov. Mitch Daniels was right in his State of the State address when he said Indiana has too much government because it failed to modernize over the last century. So cutting a job out of the Merrillville Street Department or the county auditor's office or the Highland Police Department isn't the answer to our property tax plight. Daniels knows that as well. What Daniels is hinting at, and rightly so, is that we have to eliminate governments -- like townships and towns and cities. It is difficult for the government to legislate lower taxes. But if they legislate less government, that will lower taxes. Do we need 18 municipalities in Lake County? Of course not. If you read between the lines, Daniels is saying Lake County probably could cut those 18 municipalities in half. Do we need a Schererville, a Dyer and a St. John? I can't imagine there's a good reason why we do. Dissolve the three towns and form one. It's a natural.

Sylvia Smith, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette: For the sheer enjoyment of watching a presidential primary up close, nothing could make Hoosier political junkies happier than Hillary Rodham Clinton's victories in Texas and Ohio -- even if they're McCainiacs or Obama partisans. Clinton's performance Tuesday means the Democratic Party will not have a nominee before the August convention, and that means Indiana will get the TV ads, the candidate visits and the national media attention. ❖



Crawford says deal reached on tax reform

INDIANAPOLIS - Lawmakers at the Indiana Statehouse have reached an agreement on property tax reform (WTHR-TV). House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Crawford said lawmakers have reached an agreement on House Bill 1001 "in principle." He did not go into details. State Sen. Luke Kenley said Wednesday that conversations between negotiators were friendlier than they had been (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). "We're getting down to trying to wrap this up," he said. "There are several points to work out, but we're making pretty good progress. "I think that the end of the session is near and people are starting to have the will to just kind of settle their differences, but it looks good." Bauer said Wednesday that House Democrats were "reviewing the governor's caps" again during negotiations, seeing if their impact could be softened further, and said that Republicans were working with them. Kenley and Bauer both said negotiators were working off the revised GOP plan. That plan would provide taxpayers with \$700 million in additional homestead credits this year, with most of that money coming from a proposed 1 point increase in the sales tax. That would cut homeowners' tax bills this year by about 30 percent on average from what they otherwise would be, Republicans say. The plan would have the state take over remaining school operating costs and four levies that pay for child welfare services. The state would also pay money that local governments owe for pre-1977 pension plans for police and firefighters, and school pension bond debt.



Election Board leaves McCain, Waltz on ballot

INDIANAPOLIS - The Indiana Election Commission rejected a blogger's challenge to including Sen. John McCain's name on Indiana's primary ballot, finding that the Republican presidential nominee has enough petition signatures to appear on the ballot. In a 4-0 vote Wednesday, the commission denied the challenge filed last month by Indiana University student Thomas Cook, who runs the liberal blog Blue Indiana. Cook contended that McCain's campaign had collected only 498 petition signatures in the state's 4th District, two fewer than what's needed in each of the state's congressional districts. He also argued that 47 of those signatures were not valid. The panel rejected his challenge after accepting two staff tallies of the 4th District signatures. One showed 511 signatures and the other, 514 signatures. The election commission also dismissed a residency challenge lodged against state Sen. Brent Waltz, R-Greenwood. Waltz's opponent in the Republican primary, Mike Beeles, alleged that Waltz does not live in the Greenwood condominium that he lists as his legal address, and claimed that he instead resides outside Senate District 36. The commission ruled against Beeles, meaning Waltz can remain a candidate on the ballot in the Republican primary.

Carroll County faces financial collapse

DELPHI - To say that budget cuts in Carroll County are a matter of life and death isn't a stretch (**Lafayette Journal & Courier**). Cutting emergency medical services to two ambulances is still an option, and some officials believe that could leave people without needed medical services in emergencies. Right now, the county has three ambulances. A

year ago, it had four. "I just don't see how you can go down to two ambulances. We just can't do it," said Mike Durr, Carroll County director of emergency medical services. "We routinely, and I would say at least three times a week, have three ambulances going at one time ... sometimes four at the same time. "It's not if somebody will die -- somebody will die because of this decision." Carroll County is in dire financial straits. Commissioner Bill Brown said a lack of industry, jobs or any economic growth has dried up revenue for the county. That's caused the state Department of Local Government Finance to require the county to cut \$1.8 million from its \$6.8 million budget, more than a quarter of the budget.

Supt. Bennett calls for job cuts

NEW ALBANY Plans to cut \$2.5 million from the Greater Clark Schools' \$74 million general fund budget will require the elimination of 30 to 35 jobs, Superintendent Tony Bennett has told the school board (Louisville Courier-Journal). And so far, Bennett said, he knows of only 13 of the system's 1,512 employees who plan to retire at the end of the school year, meaning layoffs are possible if others don't retire or leave. "Our hope is that it can be done through attrition," Bennett said at Tuesday night's board meeting.

DePey not slated

HAMMOND - Longtime Hammond political heavyweight Fran DuPey not only failed to win the Hammond Democrat precinct organization's endorsement for another term but came in second during a run-off Tuesday with East Chicago Marina Director Richard Novak (**Times of Northwest Indiana**). Novak bested DuPey 40-32.