



# Legislature a shallow talent pool

*Oxley's painful fall underscores shift away from Statehouse for gubernatorial timber*

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - The sad story about the fall of 2008 Democratic lieutenant governor nominee Dennie Oxley II since February under-



scores an emerging trend when it comes to power politics: The Indiana General Assembly is losing its station as a breeding ground for gubernatorial tickets.

When Democratic gubernatorial nominee Jill Long Thompson won the primary in May 2008, it was the eighth time out of the last 10 nomination slots that went to an individual who didn't have roots in the Indiana General Assembly. The two exceptions occurred when Lt. Gov. John Mutz in 1988 and Frank O'Bannon in



Former Gov. Edgar Whitcomb (left) and U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh at the Statehouse during Gov. Frank O'Bannon's funeral in 2003. The two represent contrasting eras when the Indiana General Assembly was a gubernatorial breeding ground. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

1996 won the nominations, with roots going back to the Indiana Senate. In that time frame, the two major parties have relied on two mayors, a congressman, a former congress-

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# Kenny Rogers session

By **DAVE KITCHELL**

LOGANSPOUT - Collectively, 151 people played out their hands last Tuesday in the Indiana Statehouse.

In the end, they all left with something, which after all is the goal of any card player when they leave the table.



Gov. Mitch Daniels left with \$1 billion in reserves he wanted. House Speaker Pat Bauer left with more K-12 and higher education funding than Daniels proposed. Senate President David Long of Fort Wayne left with the reputation of being able to pull off a special session compromise at the 11th hour.

Along with 148 other officials, they



“I’m looking forward to maybe riding a motorcycle by Harley-Davidson in New Delhi.”

- **TIM ROEMER**, *envoy to India designate, to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee*



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all virtually sang the Kenny Rogers standard, "The Gambler." They knew when to hold the line on the budget priorities. They knew when to fold when it became apparent a two-year budget was going to overrule calls for a realistic one-year budget. They knew when to walk away when the clock was ticking in April in the final days of the long session when the revenue forecast was not optimistic.

And in the final days when it became apparent a government shutdown was a stark reality that could cost many of their jobs, they knew when to run.

Now, as Rogers crooned, we can count our money because the dealing's done. The winner in this session was K-12 education, the largest piece of the Indiana budget pie. Increased funding is coming, but at a rate less than inflation unless a trigger kicks in next year, given an economy that emerges from a recession.

The questions Hoosiers have to be asking are these:

**1. Had Indiana not had the federal stimulus billions** and the Major Moves transportation funds, how bad would the next biennial budget have been for Indiana? The answer: It probably would have been the worst case scenario, with layoffs, shutdowns and state bonding and borrowing.

**2. Was it all about party labels?** The answer, to some degree yes, but party labels carry meaning, and it was clear Daniels and the Indiana Senate were not on the same page.

**3. Is this budget good enough?** The answer is, for now it will have to be, and by now, I mean

two years.

**4. Did anybody get what they wanted?** The answer is yes and no. Everyone got something, but no one got it all, and that may lead to calls to reopen the budget next year, which probably won't happen.

**5. Was the Capital Improvement Board saga too much of a distraction?** The answer is yes. Future legislatures may explore ways of allowing Indianapolis more flexibility in establishing its own taxing authorities. Under Unigov, it's unclear why state officials even have to be involved.

**6. Will this cost anyone a career?** The answer is probably not, unless you're one of the state employees who will lose a job because there isn't enough money.



**7. Will Indiana have to rely on more gambling revenue in the future?** The answer is, for now, the issue is moot because of the new Hollywood Casino docked in Lawrenceburg which should hike state revenue all by its lonesome. That beats raising taxes on bingo games in Bluffton and Bean Blossom.

**8. Can we expect more contentious sessions in 2011?**

**The answer:** With redistricting and a budget to deal with, are you kidding? Place your chips on a special session then as a farewell gift to Gov. Daniels. ❖

**Kitchell teachers journalism at Ball State University.**





## Legislature, from page 1

woman, an attorney general, a secretary of state and a White House budget director to fill their gubernatorial nomination.

Contrasting that is the period between 1948 and 1972 when seven of the eight gubernatorial nominees hailed from the legislature. Between 1964 and 2004, five of the seven lieutenant governors came from the Indiana Senate.

The legislature is also a breeding ground for Congress, having produced people like Ed Pease and Julia Carson, but out of Indiana's 11 Members, only Reps. Baron Hill and Dan Burton have General Assembly backgrounds.

When Thompson nominated Oxley a year ago, we asked a number of old Statehouse hands this question: Do you see Oxley as a potential governor? The answer was a resounding "no." And this was before his two legal episodes, the latest occurring in June when he sought legislative "immunity" after police found him with an unconscious female intern in an alley behind a gas station. Essentially, Oxley was fished out of a low pool after Evansville Mayor Weinzapfel, former House Speaker John Gregg and others reportedly turned down Thompson's offer to join the ticket.

Now take a look at the emerging 2012 gubernatorial field and it is dominated by potential candidates outside of the legislature. On the Democratic side, Evansville Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel served several terms in the Indiana House, as Rep. Hill. But both of those potential candidates have burnished their recent statewide political reputations in Congress and city hall. U.S. Rep. Brad Ellsworth, former Indianapolis mayor Bart Peterson, Lake County Sheriff Roy Dominguez and Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. have no legislative experience.

On the Republican side, Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman, House Minority Leader Brian Bosma, and Senate President Pro Tempore David Long have made their careers in the

legislature. But with the possible exception of Skillman, none is considered a lock for the 2012 nomination. Doc Bowen in 1972 was the last Republican to emerge from the House. In 1996, Senate President Pro Tem Bob Garton sought the governorship, but his campaign didn't last long. If a Senate president's gubernatorial campaign doesn't clear the field and falter, it's an easy consolation prize to return to Senate power.

If Skillman passes on a run, as Lt. Gov. Richard Folz did in 1972, the odds are that it would be U.S. Rep. Mike Pence who becomes the frontrunner if he chose to run statewide, although Secretary of State Todd Rokita, Treasurer Richard Mourdock, former attorney general Steve Carter and possibly U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer might also take a look.

The last time a GOP nominee presented legislative credentials was 1988 when Lt. Gov. John Mutz was nominated and lost. Since then, it's been Attorney General Linley Pearson, Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith, U.S. Rep. David McIntosh and White House Budget Director Mitch Daniels who have secured nominations. Between 1988 and 1993, the party's lieutenant governor nominees came from outside the legislature.

The last two nominees are instructive. In 1999, Republican legislators rallied in Muncie in a successful attempt to convince McIntosh to seek the governorship. In 2003, Daniels returned from Washington and quickly

muscled State Sens. Murray Clark and Luke Kenley (along with McIntosh) out of the nomination race, with wide blessing from the party's establishment.

Are there other legislators who are potential gubernatorial or LG candidates? Certainly Long and Bosma belong on that list, though Long has made no utterances about interest in a gubernatorial run. We'd add Senate Minority Leader Vi Simpson, who ran for governor briefly in 2003, though she doesn't appear to be looking at 2012. State Sen. Marlin Stutzman is only 32 years old and is gear-

### Daniels' Iraq calculus

By SHAW R. FRIEDMAN  
LAPORTE - How could he have gotten it so wrong? How could Mitch Daniels have failed to properly advise his President and his country on the true costs of war? Yes, volumes have been written on how nearly "All the President's Men" gave him bad advice in the lead-up to war and trimmed and tailored their views to suit the President's inclination to wage a war of choice. But how could the man with ultimate responsibility for our federal budget - Mitch Daniels - have gotten war cost estimates so wrong when he was White House budget director? Shouldn't that



"I don't think it's going to be that big a distraction. It's not new; it's old news by now."  
- Glenna Jehl, on managing the Matt Kely campaign that ended with a loss and 9 indictments



did



In 2004 Indiana Democrats went with a “city ticket” that included former Indianapolis controller Kathy Davis and former South Bend mayor Joe Kernan. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

ing up for a challenge to U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh without having to give up his seat, so he has a chance to roll up some statewide exposure.

While they’ve shown no interest in a statewide run, we would view Republican State Rep. Randy Borrer in that credible light as well as Democratic State Reps. Trent Van Haaften, Steven Stemler, Ed DeLaney and Peggy Welch as having ticket potential. In the Senate, there are Republican State Sens. Connie Lawson and outgoing Sen. Teresa Lubbers along with Democrats Tim Lanane and Connie Sipes.

The question is, then, why has the General Assembly become a shallow talent pool for statewide office and Congress?

First, legislators have small districts and their exposure to large segments of voters is limited. It’s tough for them to build a credible base.

For those who emerge as leaders, there is the taint that comes with legislative sausage making. A look at the July 1 edition of the Indianapolis Star is instructive. Columnist Matt Tully observed, “After 175 days and enough child’s play to put a Chuck E. Cheese’s to shame, is the Indiana General Assembly finally ready to call it a year? Success would mean the end of one of the most frustrating, pointless and disappointing legislative sessions in years.”

That kind of analysis is commonplace on editorial pages, political cartoons, blogs, newspaper columns and TV public affairs shows. Leadership rarely comes from the General Assembly. It is a pool of followers and when leadership is old school in the form of public servants like Speaker B. Patrick Bauer or Garton, the hump is tougher for ambitious young pols to overcome.

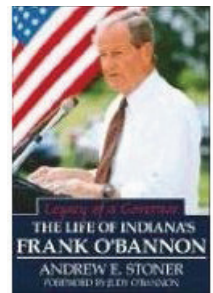
Many potential rising stars drink the legisla-

## **Governors**

- 1948 Gov. Henry Shricker, lieutenant governor, Indiana Senate
- 1952 Gov. George N. Craig, American Legion
- 1956 Gov. Harold Handley, lieutenant governor, Indiana Senate
- 1960 Gov. Matt Welsh, Indiana Senate, House, district attorney
- 1964 Gov. Roger Branigin, Lafayette lawyer
- 1968 Gov. Edgar D. Whitcomb, sec. of state, Indiana Senate
- 1972 Gov. Otis Bowen, House Speaker
- 1980 Gov. Robert D. Orr, Indiana Senate
- 1988 Gov. Evan Bayh, secretary of state
- 1996 Gov. Frank O’Banon, lieutenant governor, Indiana Senate
- 2003 Gov. Joe Kernan, lieutenant governor, South Bend mayor
- 2004 Gov. Mitch Daniels, White House budget director, Eli Lilly, Hudson Institute

## **Lieutenant Governors**

- 1964 Anderson Mayor Robert L. Rock
- 1968 State Sen. Richard Folz
- 1972 State Sen. Robert D. Orr
- 1980 State Sen. John Mutz
- 1988 State Sen. Frank O’Bannon
- 1996 South Bend Mayor Joe Kernan
- 2004 State Sen. Becky Skillman



## **Governor Nominees**

- 1964 Lt. Gov. Richard O. Ristine (R), Indiana Senate
- 1968 Lt. Gov. Robert L. Rock (D), Anderson mayor
- 1972 Former Gov. Matt Welsh (D), Indiana Senate
- 1976 Secretary of State Larry Conrad (D), staff of Sen. Birch Bayh
- 1980 John Hillenbrand II (D), Batesville industrialist
- 1984 State Sen. Wayne Townsend (right)
- 1988 Lt. Gov. John Mutz (R), Indiana Senate
- 1992 Attorney Gen. Linley Pearson (R)
- 1996 Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith (R)
- 2000 U.S. Rep. David McIntosh (R)
- 2004 Gov. Joe Kernan (D)
- 2008 Jill Long Thompson (D), former congresswoman



## **Lieutenant Governor Nominees**

- 1972 State Sen. Dick Bodine (D)
- 1976 State Sen. Tom Teague (D)
- 1980 State Sen. Robert Peterson (D)
- 1984 Ann DeLaney (D), Democratic chairwoman
- 1988 Stephen Goldsmith (R), Marion County prosecutor
- 1992 Robert Green (R), Vincennes businessman
- 1996 George Witwer (R), Bluffton newspaper executive
- 2000 State Sen. J. Murray Clark (R)
- 2004 Lt. Gov. Kathy Davis, (D) Indianapolis controller
- 2008 State Rep. Dennie Oxley II (D)





tive Kool-Aid and fall into line. They run continuing battles with mayors and city councilmen and women over home rule. They find it politically necessary to defend inert and calcified stratas like township government and county offices like elected coroners, recorders and surveyors. They tend to be anti-reform, which is an element that can catapult a candidate into the limelight if he or she can capture the fancy of the people.

I can count on two hands the number of times over the past 20 years that state party chairmen have shaken their heads in amazement and disappointment at the antics of the General Assembly, many times with leadership of their own parties. Republican Chairman Al Hubbard once had to rush over to the Senate in 1993 to convince them to derail a tax increase. GOP Chairman Jim Kittle Jr. openly encouraged HPI to pursue the health care for life scheme that helped spell the primary defeats of Garton and Senate Finance Chairman Larry Borst.

There are candidate recruitment problems. The legislature is dominated by middle-aged and older men (though this has dramatically changed in the Senate since 2006) where leaders like Simpson, Lubbers and Lawson have emerged, poisoning them for statewide office. Many young, reform-minded thinkers would find the legislature repressive and we've witnessed a steady stream of young legislators (Luke Messer, Bob Kuzman, Matt Whetstone come to mind) who decided their futures were elsewhere.

Both parties face a challenge in enhancing the caliber of legislative candidates. Indianapolis Democrats did that with DeLaney, Mary Ann Sullivan and John Barnes in 2008. Their various calls for reform brought about a hostile response within the Democratic caucus, multiple sources tell HPI.

Innovation is more apt to come in the

cities, on Washington staffs, or the private sector.

Yes, my daughter (or son), you can be governor of Indiana. Just think twice about doing it through the General Assembly. ❖



In the old days, a ticket was likely to be pure legislature, as when House Speaker Doc Bowen (upper photo, right) and Sen. Bob Orr ran. In the lower photo, Mitch Daniels muscled senators Murray Clark (center) and Luke Kenley from the 2004 field



## The adventures of Gov. Sarah Palin

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

**NORTH WEBSTER** - It was about a year ago with rampant speculation on an Obama-Clinton ticket that I started scouting the Internet for the Republican "Hillary."

There were the obvious ones: Kay Bailey Hutchison, Christine Todd Whitman, and Condi Rice, and ... not many others. This is the party of white, middle-aged men; where only 35 national convention delegates were African-American; where alienating the Latino vote in 2006 became a GOP bloodsport (memo to John Hostettler and Chris Chocola: Latinos reproduce and vote much more profusely than gays).

I had heard about the governor from Alaska and checked out the state website. There I found Gov. Sarah Palin and First Dude Todd. Very attractive woman. Nice looking family. She seemed like a progressive, having run in 2006 against entrenched Republicans on a reform movement that brought her to power in a stunning upset.

There were problems like Alaska's 3 Electoral College votes which were virtually guaranteed to go Republican. She was unknown, like Bill Miller was in 1964 when Barry Goldwater fished him out of a convention hat. I mentioned Palin in HPI last June and then filed her away until about 12 hours after Barack Obama's Democratic acceptance speech.

There she was: John McCain's running mate. The first female Republican ascending to the ticket. David Gergen was stunned: "You could knock me over with a feather," he said of McCain's choice.

**The story line was this:** Obama had passed on gender for talkative Joe Biden. McCain had wanted to make a different kind of history and bring estranged Democrat Sen. Joe Lieberman on to the ticket. But social Republicans were promising a floor revolt, so McCain broke the glass case and pulled out the feather, with Palin soaring to Dayton as Gergen lay prone on the pundit floor.

It was a gutsy move, I thought. McCain eclipsed Obama's speech in front of 75,000 Democrats in a football stadium as well as a huge national audience. Palin's unveiling was promising. She had the looks, spunk, and gumption. Here was a success story from one of America's last frontiers. Hoosier Republicans at the GOP convention promptly labeled her one "hot chick."

And then came September.

**This was the month of disaster.** For America, it was the collapse of Lehman Brothers and the Wall Street meltdown. We began getting the first indicators that the Detroit 3 were on the brink. People began throwing the "trillions" word around and there was talk of the "D-word." It began dawning on people that America was potentially headed for an economic catastrophe.

**It was at this moment** that the real Sarah Palin emerged. Her network interviews with Katie Couric and Charlie Gibson were disasters. She had trouble with simple questions. These anchors weren't playing "gotcha." They were playing "getting to know you." And Sarah Palin flunked. She failed as she stood with the oldest presidential nominee in history, with actuaries noting that there was a 20 percent chance he wouldn't live to finish a first term.

This crystalized on NBC's Saturday Night Live when Tina Fey didn't even have to make up satire: she used Palin's answers verbatim. Americans laughed and howled. And winced.

By the time Sarah Palin came to Indiana in October, she was the darling of the social conservatives who already hated and distrusted the news media, which by this point was also sinking into an economic swamp. Palin didn't have to convince them. She didn't have to act or sound smart. She just had to play the victim card. Nearly 20,000 people endured a rush hour traffic jam to see her at Verizon Music Center at Noblesville. A similar crowd showed up at Jeffersonville a few weeks later.

**During this time,** there were tell-tale signs from the Hoosier Republican establishment that Palin was a problem. There were no congratulatory press releases from from Sen. Dick Lugar or

any of the Hoosier congressmen or Gov. Mitch Daniels, an early supporter of McCain. Lugar over the past generation had worked to train females to enter the process through his Public Excellence Series and after watching the Palin show over the past 10 months, there are some Lugar Series graduates (Sen. Teresa Lubbers comes to mind) probably better qualified than Palin. Daniels was "too busy" to appear with her at Verizon (even though his last scheduled event took place more than two hours before her



Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin in prayer at Verizon Music Center at Noblesville prior to her first political rally in Indiana. (HPI Photo by David McChesney)





scheduled appearance). At her second Indiana event, Gov. Daniels showed up in the parking lot to greet supporters, but didn't appear with his gubernatorial colleague.

Numerous polls showed Hoosiers and Americans were skeptical that Palin was prepared to lead. In late October, Palin appeared on SNL dancing with a moose.

After Palin's attempt at an election night speech was spurned by McCain's henchmen, many of us thought she'd go back to Alaska, study up, and lead. She could finish out her term, move down to the lower 48 and set up a presidential campaign HQ in Boise, and, perhaps, she could polish herself up to pass as a credible candidate.

Instead, Palin and her family became tabloid fodder. They battled with the teenage father of her grandson Tripp. She continued to play the victim card. When she returned and met with legislative leaders for the first time, they lauded her and asked what her plans were. She responded, "You guys are always trying to put me on the spot." She did a press interview "pardoning" a Thanksgiving Turkey as turkey heads were being lopped off in the background (nice staff work there). She had a disastrous session with the Alaska General Assembly, which for the first time in history refused to seat a cabinet nominee.

Still, Sarah Palin was hot property. When she appeared at a Right to Life dinner in Evansville last April, thousands of Hoosiers showed up to see her, to listen to her. The Associated Press reported Republican National Chairman Michael Steele saying that Palin is among a crowd of GOP standard bearers that includes fellow governors Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota and Mark Sanford of South Carolina.

**Her 30-minute speech** was "folksy and full of digressions," as described by AOL columnist Melinda Henneberger, but also "surprisingly confessional," and she went into some detail about initially panicking after learning, 13 weeks into her pregnancy that her son would be born with Down syndrome: "That blew me away, it rocked my world... It was a time I asked myself, was I going to walk the walk?" she asked.

She was on a trip out of state at the time, Palin said, and "just for a fleeting moment I thought, 'No one knows me here; no one would ever know.' ... My amniocen-

tesis came back and then I understood why some people would think they could change their circumstances, just take care of it. Todd didn't even know" the results of the prenatal testing yet, so "no one would know."

"Plus, I was old," she continued. "And I thought, 'Very funny, God. My name's Sarah, but my husband's not Abraham, he's Todd.'"

**Therein lies Palin's** power with the social conservatives. She knows how to touch them and when she does, they feel it personally. When Palin finished speaking, many Hoosiers rushed to her and told her to run for president.

Last Friday, as Americans prepared to celebrate Independence Day, Gov. Palin quit. Instead of buckling down, working on compromise and finishing out her term, she bugged out. "As I thought about this announcement that I would not seek re-election, I thought about how much fun other governors have as lame ducks: They maybe travel around their state, travel to other

states, maybe take their overseas international trade missions," Palin said in another rambling speech. "I'm not going to put Alaskans through that. I promised efficiencies and effectiveness. That's not how I'm wired. I'm not wired to operate under the same old politics as usual."

**Instead, she talked of a** "higher calling" and did nothing to tamp down talk that a 2012 presidential run was coming.

Can you imagine the look Davids named Axelrod and Plouffe might have shared over this one? In their minds, Palin would make a mighty fine re-election opponent for boss Obama.

And yet, for all her quirkiness and victimization, you have to wonder whether some how, some way Palin might be able to pull it off. This is a place where Harvard educated people I've talked to seriously told me that Palin was fit for a heartbeat away.

This is a country that rewards style over substance; where Michael Jackson's death can end a popular revolution in Iran by sucking the media juice right out of it.

As for Sarah Palin, my friend Rick Wilkerson noted on his Facebook page that she may have just decided to resign to assume the throne of the King of Pop. ❖





## Few clues on '12 gov race at GOP dinner

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - If you were looking for any early clues at the Indiana Republican State Dinner Wednesday night on how the 2012 gubernatorial race might be shaping up, well there weren't many.



Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman spoke for about 10 minutes, but her remarks were confined to lauding the recently passed state biennial budget. Skillman noted that the state still has a surplus and no tax increase. Skillman also accented the need for Republicans to retake

the Indiana House next year, so it can control redistricting.

Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele urged Hoosier Republicans not be ashamed of their values, but to "speak truth to power" when combating the agenda of President Barack Obama. "Barack Obama is a drum major and he's leading a parade," said Steele.

"Lift your heads," Steele told the 800 Republicans. "I'm so sick and tired of Republicans whining and moaning and complaining. You lost, get over it. Wake up and pay attention and focus on the fact that our country is being taken apart bit by bit. The parade has started. I need you in it, and I need you to take the baton away from that drum major."

Steele praised the leadership of Gov. Mitch Daniels, noting his conservative style of leadership provides a nice contrast to Obama's at a national level.

"We will share the story of Indiana with the country, because it is a great story," said Steele, later adding, "President Obama could learn a thing or two or three or four from Gov. Mitch Daniels." Daniels was vacationing in West Virginia and did not attend.



Republican National Chairman Michael Steele told Indiana Republicans to "lift your heads" and quit "whining." (Indiana Republican Party Photo)

Indiana Republican Chairman Murray Clark said Hoosier Republicans have much to be proud of. "President Obama and Democrats in Washington are spending your money faster than it can be printed and they're running up the deficit faster than it can be calculated," Clark said. "But in Indiana, Republicans just passed a responsible budget that doesn't spend us into oblivion. Governor Daniels and your Republican legislators served us well."

### McIntosh returns, but ...

Former congressman David McIntosh, the party's 2000 gubernatorial nominee, returned to Indianapolis today with him and his wife Ruthie hosting a hospitality suite at this weekend's Young Republicans convention. Are there any tea leaves to read with that?

"No," McIntosh said as he walked through Indianapolis International Airport. "Right now my role in politics is to help other people. We've been asked to help on the policy front."

Indiana has some very special leadership attracting attention on a national level, he said.

McIntosh mentioned Gov. Daniels and his good friend, U.S. Rep. Mike Pence, Secretary of State Todd Rokita and Treasurer Richard Mourdock. McIntosh said that Rokita and Mourdock have done well nationally on issues such as election reform and opposing the Chrysler/Fiat merger.

As for whether Pence will seek the governorship in 2012, McIntosh said that Pence "is focused on the job he is doing and has not closed any doors for 2012."

There has been some speculation that if Pence were to pass on a gubernatorial race McIntosh might consider. While McIntosh wouldn't flatly rule out that scenario, and noted that he comes back to Indiana about once a month, he characterized this weekend's visit as "just staying in touch."

### McGoff on MacAllister

Fifth CD Challenger Dr. John McGoff has rejected a suggestion of culling the field made in June by P.E. MacAllister. In a letter dated July 5, McGoff noted that the American Revolution occurred so that people could "free themselves" from "a small group of elite insiders."

McGoff added, "It is obvious that many of the leaders of the Republican Party still don't get it. Voters are tired of backroom deals like this one. Is it any wonder that less than 25 percent of the nation now identifies themselves as Republicans? We have become a party without message and one that appears to exclude, rather than include. This scheme seeks to do just that, exclude voters." ❖





## Lincoln and Dillinger

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

**NORTH WEBSTER** - The two historical Hoosiers who have been omnipresent in my life since the earliest years have been Lincoln and Dillinger. They represent the best and worst of Hoosier boyhood.

President Lincoln's portrait gazed across more than one elementary school classroom I attended, usually in tandem with President Washington. John Dillinger was present on the playground when the games of cops and robbers took place.

Indiana placed an indelible stamp to both. Carl Sandburg noted of Lincoln, "At the Pigeon Creek Settlement, while the structure of his bones, the build and hang of his torso and limbs, took shape, other elements invisible yet permanent, traced their lines in the tissues of his head and heart."

While Indiana produced greatness, it also was the breeding grounds for notorious characters like Dillinger and little Charlie Manson.

In the places I lived - Michigan City, Peru, Warsaw, Elkhart, Indianapolis - the stories and legends of Dillinger were only 30 or 40 years removed from when they actually happened. He robbed the police stations in Peru, Auburn and Warsaw, which, when you think of it, were thoroughly audacious stunts. The Johnny Depp movie "Public Enemies" opens at the Indiana State Penitentiary at Michigan City where Dillinger pulled off a daring escape. And on the lawn of the Elkhart County courthouse in Goshen, there was a Depression era reinforced structure on the southeast corner where armed cops could protect the three banks on the other corners from Dillinger's thugs.

**When I lived near Warsaw**, I heard the stories of how gangsters like Al Capone and Dillinger would escape the gathering heat in the cities and roost back in the lakes, where it was easy to get lost in what was then largely undeveloped paradise. Last weekend, my father-in-law Willard Phillips motored me through the Barbee Lakes chain on his bass boat. There by the channel between Little Barbee and Irish lakes was the old Barbee Hotel and several older cabins close to the lake shore. This was a Dillinger redoubt.

There are alleged Dillinger fired bullet holes still evident in the walls at the Slippery Noodle Inn in Indy.

I saw "Public Enemies" when it opened a week ago Wednesday and I liked it immensely. Michael Mann pre-

sented a starker Indiana that was ravaged by murderous gangs like Dillingers, forcing President Roosevelt to create the FBI. The movie has a great sound track and used edgy digital techniques such as hand-held video cams. The Dillinger stories are well known, but this flick fleshed them out with Depp, the Brando of our generation.

**According to the Tru TV Crime Library**, Dillinger had decided to launch a bank robbery terror campaign that began in Greencastle. One thing they needed was the very best in guns, ammunition and bullet-proof vests. A week after breaking out of the Lima, Ohio jail, they robbed the Peru Police Department. A month earlier, Dillinger and Homer Van Meter posed as tourists there and

asked what the local policemen had in the way of fire power if the Dillinger Gang ever showed up in those parts. The officers proudly showed the two 'tourists' the kinds of weapons they would use against the Terror Gang.

Late on the evening of Oct. 20, 1933, Pierpont and Dillinger entered the arsenal, subdued three lawmen and made off with several loads of machine guns, sawed-off shotguns, ammunition and bullet-proof vests. When this loot was added to the guns and ammunition they had stolen earlier from an Auburn, Ind., police station, they were ready for business.

Yet, Hoosiers saw Dillinger in almost Robin Hood terms, particularly with when he would often let stunned Hoosiers keep their meager withdrawals while standing in terror at assaulted teller windows. Jay Robert Nash tells the story of the farmer standing at the teller's cage with a stack of bills in front of him. Dillinger saw the money and asked, "that your money or the bank's?"

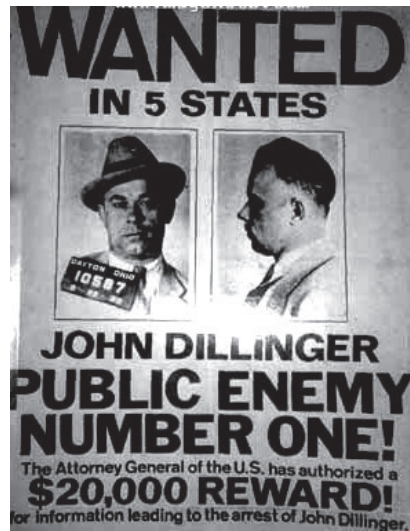
"Mine," the farmer told him.

"Keep it. We only want the bank's."

And there was another bizarre scene in "Public Enemies." Public Enemy No. 1 finds himself in front of the Chicago Police Department and walks into the "Dillinger" office.

**Depp explained**, "He actually did walk through what was called then the Dillinger Squad. He pulled his car out up front and walked into the Dillinger Squad and wandered through all of these cops. His photograph was everywhere. That's all true. He had an enormous amount of, for lack of a better word, chutzpah. To have gotten so far and to have become that kind of really existentialist hero, every day was his last. He had made peace with that. He was fine with that. Yesterday doesn't exist. He just kept moving forward. There is something admirable about that."

Well, definitely not as admirable as Lincoln's contributions performed in an even more violent time with death always lurking around the next corner. Just far more daring, and 75 years removed, far more entertaining. ❖

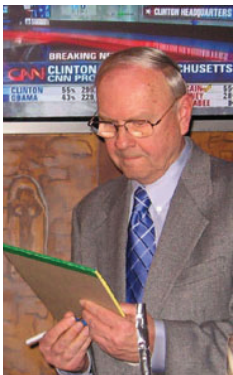




## Chicken Little ducks the special session

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND - Chicken Little clucking about impending doom has ceased. The sky didn't fall. Indiana has no shutdown of vital state services.



As always was virtually certain at the deadline for passing a new state budget, a compromise was reached, with legislators and the governor getting whatever they could force without going over the brink.

It's not as though shutdowns are common in Indiana. There hasn't been one for a few years. Quite a few. The last was in 1887.

Gov. Mitch Daniels played hardball, threatening that if there was no state budget by the July 1 start of the fiscal year, he would shut down even casinos and the lottery, thus hurting

the state revenue situation even more, and blame it all on House Speaker B. Patrick Bauer.

Bauer, who also knows hardball politics, said the special session could just keep going on until a suitable compromise was reached. But the South Bend Democrat, who had bested the governor in a number of battles during the regular session, knew full well that Democrats could not come out ahead in a shutdown that would be blamed on legislative failure to pass a budget. He had to seek the best compromise Democrats could get at the deadline.

Democrats did get more for education, their main concern, obtaining flat-lining rather than the cut the governor sought for universities, some bonding for university construction and more for public schools.

The governor got more of what he wanted in the special session, more of a state surplus to keep the state solvent if economic woes worsen and a bailout for deficit-ridden Indianapolis sports facilities.

**Despite the traditional** deadline bluster, neither Daniels nor Bauer was going to let the state go over the brink. After all, each wants what is best for the state, even if they don't have the same definition of "best." Both knew a shutdown would be bad, very bad.

Also, budget negotiators were not that far apart. Actually, there was budget agreement between conferees for the Senate Republican majority and the House Democratic majority at the close of the regular session. That budget passed easily in the Senate. But the governor and House Republicans decided they could get a better deal in

a special session. House Democrats actually approved it by a single vote on their side and would have supported it more heavily if there had been some GOP support. But House Republicans voted unanimously to kill it.

The House Republicans and the governor were right about getting more in a special session.

**Bauer conceded that** the compromise finally reached was "a Republican-flavored budget." He also contended that "the bad taste has been watered down a little bit."

The speaker said the compromise shifted \$54 million more to funding public schools, enough to provide a 1.1 percent increase in total state school funding in 2010 and 0.3 percent more in 2011.

For some urban districts, however, especially Indianapolis and Gary, there will be big cuts, and cuts will come in numerous smaller districts as well. Legislators from those areas are furious, claiming that those cuts and Republican initiatives in the budget for charter schools added up to an attack on public education.

The funds for the Indianapolis sports facilities and authority for tax hikes for the bailout brought angry denunciations as well from legislators believing that their areas were short-changed.

All in all, the budget was perhaps the best compromise that could have been hammered out without going over the brink into shutdown chaos.

Federal stimulus money kept things from becoming more painful and could help to spur the economy in ways to bring in more revenue and curtail unemployment expenses.

**There was some bipartisanship**, votes in the two legislative chambers weren't even close and there was no minute-to-midnight drama.

The Republican-controlled Senate approved the budget 34-16, with four Democrats and 30 of the 33 Republicans voting for it.

The Democratic-controlled House, where the regular session budget had failed, approved it 62-37, with 14 of the 52 Democrats and all 48 Republicans voting "yes."

Chicken Little was wrong. Neither Daniels nor Bauer is a dumb cluck. Neither was going to scuttle whatever compromises they could reach on the brink at the deadline. ❖

**Colwell has covered Indiana politics over five decades for the South Bend Tribune.**





## If not taxes, user fees

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS - "Most people hate to pay taxes," Gregory Goad said. "They don't appreciate the services taxes support, they don't understand why taxes are necessary, or they don't like to help people in need."

"That's a sweeping condemnation of most people," I said.

"Exactly" Greg said. "People see taxes as compulsory payments unrelated to the use of government services. That's why government needs to move to user fees. Charge people for the services they use and increase fines. Take some of the mystery and softness out of government."



Morton Marcus  
Column

"Charge people for police and fire service?" I asked. "Charge for schooling children?"

"No," Greg replied. "Charge for 'non-essential' services currently provided 'free' and increase fines for anti-social behavior."

"Such as?" I opened the door.

"School transportation is currently financed from taxes. If people choose to live beyond walking distance from a school, if they choose to live where there are no sidewalks, let them pay for transporting their children to school."

"That's insane," I objected. "Free school transportation is built into the fabric of our society. Rich and poor alike have access to it. If you charge for it, more parents will be obliged to drive their children to school."

"**Free school transport** was started to enable farm kids to attend school more readily. Now it is nothing more than an enabler of urban sprawl and poor land use. As for poor children, we could provide vouchers for those who are eligible for free lunch programs and live beyond certain grade-adjusted distances from school."

"Parents will have to weigh paying for busing versus the inconvenience of driving. It's a simple calculation."

"Right now," Greg continued, "people think the school bus is free, but it is actually included in the property tax. I can see paying for the education of children in my community, but why subsidize the foolish location decisions of their parents?"

"It's a good thing you're not running for the school board," I said.

"**Oh, there is so much more,**" he said. "We have to stop giving away 'free' parking. User fees for parking on public and private land make sense. That means, if you park on the street in front of your home, in a parking lot at school, work or while shopping, you pay for that privilege."

"How would you do that?" I asked.

"Nothing to it," he said. "Every car registered in the state pays a parking fee based on the square footage of the vehicle. Smaller cars pay less than larger cars. The fee is remitted by the state to the place of residence of the owner. All parking providers, government or commercial, pay a square footage fee. This approach helps encourage public transit as employers will try to recoup this fee from workers and businesses will try to raise prices for customers."

"Alternatively, we use technology to charge for parking as we charge for toll roads. Or we could have every driver swipe a parking meter with an electronic card as they do in casinos."

"You're an irrational radical," I said.

"No," he replied, "My proposals are very consistent with conservative economic reasoning."

"For example, use electronic devices such as now employed on the Indiana Toll Road on all interstate highways. You want to drive a premium road, you pay a premium price. We could make highly congested intersections subject to tolls at certain times of the day. These are all feasible with today's technology."

"**Plus, put stiff fines on noise,** throwing trash from cars, and engaging in other forms of pollution."

"Makes me wonder," I said, "if it would be best to cut government spending rather than go in this direction."

"OK," said Greg. "Just find agreement on what to cut." ❖

**Mr. Marcus is an independent economist, speaker, and writer formerly with IU's Kelley School of Business.**

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**Doug Ross, Times of Northwest Indiana:** Cross your fingers and hope Gary gets the \$24.7 million in federal stimulus money it needs to raze 1,124 abandoned, derelict buildings. And take this issue as a reminder of the power of civic engagement to bring about positive change for your community. All it takes is one person to create the spark that can bring about positive change. Are you up to the challenge? You already know about U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh touring Gary on Tuesday with Ron Sims, deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Gary Mayor Rudy Clay. Usually, mayors like to put the best light possible on their city when dignitaries visit. Not so this time. Clay took Bayh and Sims to a bad neighborhood to show what can happen when blight grows. First one property goes into decline, then neighboring properties do, then the whole neighborhood spirals into neglect. City revenues drop, which means there's less money available to revitalize the neighborhood. On their tour in Gary's Emerson neighborhood, Bayh, Sims and Clay saw everything from burned houses to a caved-in street. It wasn't a pretty sight. But let me take you now on a behind-the-scenes tour of events that led up to this week's visit. Clay had the brilliant idea of asking the National Guard to bring in bulldozers and raze some of these abandoned, derelict structures. The city doesn't have enough money to do the work itself, and these decrepit buildings are a major public safety issue. These rundown, falling-apart buildings are a magnet for crime. They're also a deterrent to economic development. Move in next to a building that looks like a bomb went off inside it? No thanks! The National Guard idea was marvelous, but it wouldn't work because the National Guard is using that equipment overseas, fighting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Clay told The Times editorial board last year. So when the editorial board met with Bayh last December, a CFL light bulb went off in my head. Bayh, as governor, sent in state troopers to help Gary gets its runaway crime problem under control, so he would be a good choice to bring help to the city again. How about steering some of that federal stimulus money toward the city to tear down some of those abandoned buildings? Bayh liked the idea. Had anyone from the city asked him about it? No, Bayh said.

**Sylvia Smith, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette:** Lucky, lucky Dan Burton. The 14-term suburban Indianapolis congressman is looking at a robust Republican primary next year, at least measured by the number of names on the ballot. His opponents are not flakes; there's a state representative, an emergency room doctor, the former executive director of the state Republican Party, a PR executive. All have been candidates (some successfully), know how to raise money, have established GOP connections,

understand complicated issues, can express their ideas and are not likely to make the kind of mistakes neophyte politicians usually stumble on. They're starting early, have some degree of campaign operations and are generating buzz in some Republican circles. Any one of them would be a credible head-to-head opponent to Burton. That makes Burton lucky, how? The four candidates share a common purpose: Get rid of Burton. Burton is on none-too-solid ground with the electorate. He turned in a lackluster 52 percent in last year's GOP primary, putting him in the danger zone for any incumbent and piquing the interest of the four who have announced their candidacies for 2010. But Burton is lucky because Luke Messer, Mike Murphy, Brose McVey and John McGoff will compete for the same volunteers, the same money, the same endorsements, the same air time, the same anti-incumbent sentiment, the same let's-give-Burton-a-retirement-party eagerness. No matter how strong those elements are, there's not enough to go around, and the value of Burton's incumbency will be magnified.



**Gary Gerard, Warsaw Times-Union:** On the topic of "any form of tax increase" let's talk about a town meeting that President Obama held this week. In it, he said he would not rule out a tax on employer-provided health care benefits to fund his health care plan. OK, now wait a minute here. I seem to remember a candidate Obama vilifying a candidate McCain for the very same thing. Obama's campaign spent tens of millions of dollars on ads skewering McCain's supposedly reckless idea. Here are relevant quotes from the ads. You remember, "I'm Barack Obama and I approve this message." "On health care, John McCain promises a tax credit. But here's what he won't tell you. McCain would impose a new tax on health benefits. Taxing your health care for the first time ever. It's a multi-trillion tax hike. Can you afford it?" In October, Obama called McCain's proposal to tax health care benefits, "so radical, so out of touch with what you're facing, and so out of line with our basic values." Frankly, I wasn't a fan of McCain's plan either. I agreed with candidate Obama. Taxing health care benefits is a dumb idea. Here's why. Most workers who have employer-provided health insurance pay a portion of their health care premiums and the employer pays the rest. The government's going to increase how much employees have to pay for their health care, while at the same time offering a government plan for the uninsured. Workers are going to do the math. My guess is it will save many workers money to dump their employer-provided health insurance and go with the government plan. Of course, that reduces the amount of revenue being siphoned out of the private sector to fund government health insurance. It's self-defeating. ❖





## **Roemer nomination to full Senate**

WASHINGTON - The nomination of former Hoosier congressman Tim Roemer to be ambassador to India was sent to the full Senate on Wednesday by the Foreign Relations Committee, which recommended Roemer be confirmed (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). The Senate could vote as early as today or Friday. At a breakfast Wednesday, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton told a group of lawmakers, including Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., that she'd like Roemer to be on the job when she arrives in India next week. Clinton, speaking to reporters Tuesday, described India as "an emerging global power" whose relationship with the U.S. "has improved considerably over the last 15 years." Relations between the two countries have sometimes been strained over nuclear weapons, Iran, import fees on U.S. goods and the conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. Clinton said she hopes to be able to announce during that trip that the U.S. and India "will be cooperating and working together across the broadest range of concerns that our two governments have ever engaged on."



## **Green company looking at Kokomo**

KOKOMO - Local officials and community members packed the Kokomo Council chambers Wednesday night to hear John T. Pitre present a plan that could bring a new "green" business to Kokomo (Jackson, Kokomo Tribune). Pitre is CEO of the Houston-based Variety Global Business Group. The business manufactures biode-

gradable institutional and consumer products out of cornstalks and other stalk-waste byproducts. During the community forum — which was well attended by local politicians, community activists, and area residents — Pitre said he was pleased with the all-day presentation Kokomo officials gave his organization, and more than that, with the "workforce I found." "Ninety days ago I probably wouldn't have cared less," he said. "I didn't know there were so many engineers here. I've met with your politicians, and your city does a great job in presenting itself. We think outside the box and so does your city. "The [U.S.] government has \$40 billion in the stimulus package for green and environmentally friendly businesses.

## **Lake makes \$15m in budget cuts**

CROWN POINT - Lake County Council members spoke with pride Wednesday of having cut a total of \$15 million from this year's county government spending without having to pass a local income tax (Times of Northwest Indiana). They spoke with concern about having to cut another \$1.6 million from the budget before year's end because of diminished tax collections. Council President Larry Blanchard, R-Crown Point, said no decisions will be made now, but one suggestion included furlough days for nonessential workers -- in essence a pay cut. "We are experiencing the same thing the private sector is experiencing," Blanchard said. County government's austerity is being forced on it by property tax caps that reduce the amount of property taxes local government can collect to pay for services. The council convinced other county elected officials last year to reduce their payrolls by 112 positions. "We reduced property taxes and didn't need an income tax," Councilman Ted Bilski, D-Hobart, said.

## **Luecke outlines cuts without income tax**

SOUTH BEND - Mayor Stephen Luecke would recommend laying off 19 police officers and 45 firefighters, closing various parks facilities, and would consider shuttering the zoo next year if city and county leaders don't pass a proposed income tax hike by the end of the month, the mayor announced Wednesday (South Bend Tribune). Across all city departments, the administration proposes cutting more than 200 employees, or more than 15 percent of its work force. The South Bend Common Council is expected Monday night to consider three resolutions that, combined, would increase local income taxes by .95 percent. The money would help offset about \$22.7 million in property tax revenue the city has lost since last year, a 27 percent decrease, because of state-enacted property tax cuts.

## **Schererville cuts 3**

SCHERERVILLE - A Schererville employee with 16 years of experience with the town is among those being cut from the payroll (Times of Northwest Indiana). Ed Malinowski, director of building and planning for Schererville, said he had no comment about the Town Council's 3-2 vote Wednesday to eliminate his job and three others. Another position was reduced to part time.

## **Kokomo foreclosures still going up**

KOKOMO - With every passing month, more Kokomo area homeowners have had to turn their house keys back over to the banks because they could not pay their mortgages (Kokomo Tribune). The Howard County Sheriff Department has handled an average of about 67.5 home foreclosures per month so far this year. That is about 10 percent more than last year's average ❖