

THE HOWEY POLITICAL REPORT



The Weekly Briefing On Indiana Politics

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Oklahoma atrocity accents Lugar's theme

Loss of national TV coverage pales compared with big picture

INDIANAPOLIS - The hundreds of red, white and blue balloons at City Market Wednesday noon created a visual facade of happiness as thin as the inflated rubber itself.

This was to have been Sen. Richard Lugar's day in the Hoosier sun, a day when the CNN cameras would blink red from Indianapolis, and give this beloved politician unfiltered nationwide access in a presidential race.

But word went through the crowd quickly that was to overshadow the day - a bombing at a federal building in Oklahoma City had killed and wounded scores of men, women and children.

A few miles away, Mark Helmke's pager beeped as Lugar's communications director and state campaign director Kevin Shaw Kellems went over the final details of the rally around 9:30. "Turn on CNN," the message read, and almost immediately the two were confronted with the Oklahoma atrocity.

Helmke informed the senator and the two of them watched the disaster unfold from Lugar's hotel room.

No one in the Lugar presidential campaign even breathed a word of disappointment that this disaster had pre-empted his day in the TV sun. In fact, he quieted the cheering crowd shortly after he took the stage at noon, urging a moment of silence for the victims.

And from that silence blares forth the very underpinnings of the Lugar campaign. He has said since the beginning of his campaign in February that the office he seeks has "two major tasks" that are "unique to the presidency."

"One is clearly our national security. The other is our fiscal sanity," Lugar said in a forceful, blunt speech in Manchester, N.H., two months ago. By ignoring security, Lugar stressed, "We are fated to live

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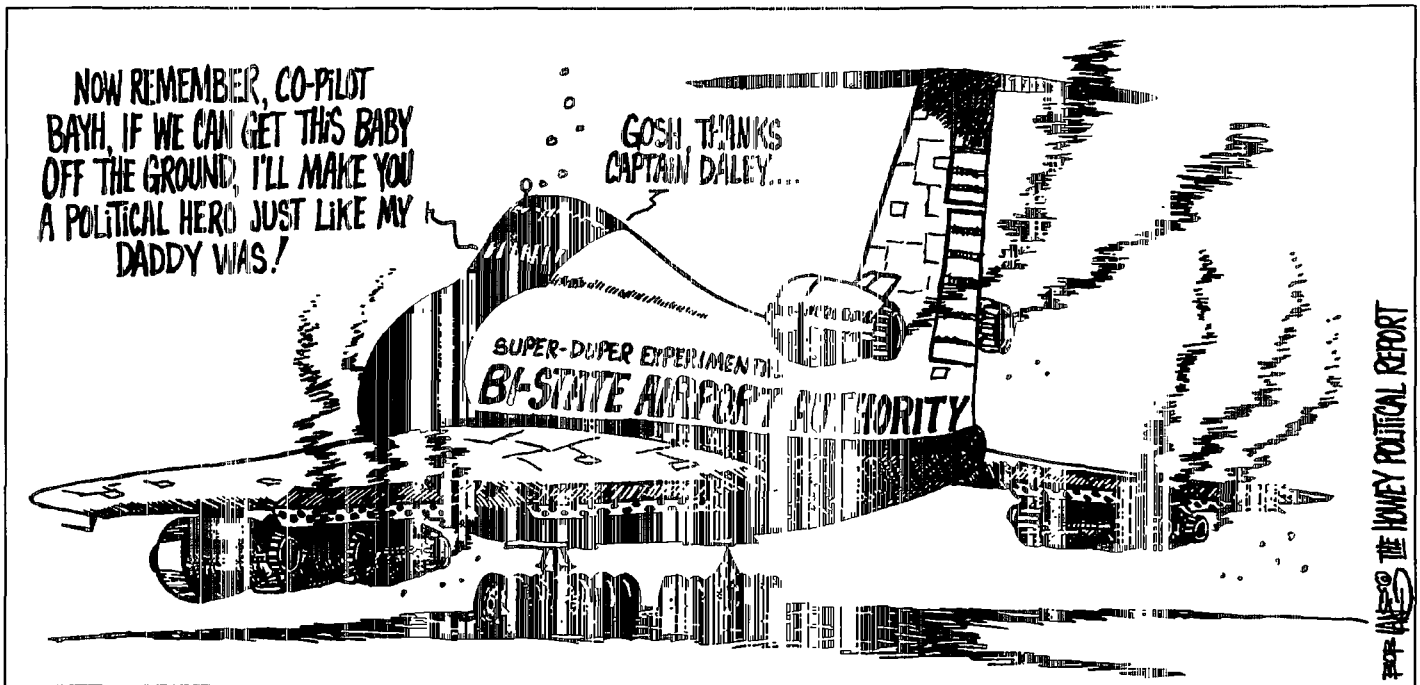
"QUOTE" OF THE WEEK

"I've learned after 22 years of marriage that you don't speak for your wife...."

- Dan Quayle, on C-Span, on whether Marilyn Quayle will run for governor

INSIDE FEATURES

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HUMOR

M I L L

Wendellisms

by Wendell Trogdon
Indianapolis News

Indiana's freshman congressmen are back home for the Easter recess...having not yet learned how to travel abroad at taxpayers' expense.

It's a record year for road repairs. Lock for new signs at the border: welcome to Indiana. Now under construction.



Devil's Dictionary, by Ambrose Bierce

Publish, *n.* In literary affairs, to become the fundamental element in a cone of critics.

Oppose, *v.* To assist with obstructions and objections.

Bayh picks up a big IOU from Daley

HAMMOND - The sensational political news in Lake County isn't Sen. Sandy Dempsey's flip-flops or displaced Frank Mrvan running for a council seat.

It was a shrewd agreement Chicago Mayor Richard Daley struck with Gov. Evan Bayh and Gary Mayor Thomas Barnes that created the Chicago-Gary Regional Airport Authority. It was a stunning effort to deprive Republicans in the Illinois legislature (who hold both houses for the first time this century) of seizing Chicago's two major airports and \$90 million annually in airline passenger fees.

Bayh paid a visit to Daley three and a half weeks ago when the idea was first raised. Bayh assigned Curt Wiley and Bill Moreau, who had negotiated the Indiana portion of the Lake Calumet Third Airport site, to set up the deal.

And what a sweetheart it was. Gary Regional Airport got \$1.2 million up front (the check has already arrived) for improvements, plus \$1.4 million annually, enough, says the Chicago Tribune, to "double the annual operating budget."

Daley gets to tell Illinois GOP legislators to stick it, but not without a cost, as the Tribune's Thomas Hardy writes. "The effect of Daley's in-your-face move against Republican-

led suburban interests could be to isolate City Hall from the increasingly powerful suburbs, their legislative leaders and the General Assembly."

What's in it for Gov. Bayh? Lots.

"There was no downside to it," explained Bayh press aide Fred Nation. "It keeps Indiana at the table for any decision that will be made" on a third Chicago airport. Illinois Republicans were looking at the green grass Peotone site, which Nation said "would have a minimal impact for Indiana."

Politically, there was a Mayor Daley in 1960 who helped deliver Illinois (with help from many cemetery precincts) to Sen. John F. Kennedy in the wee morning hours in his dramatic presidential race against Richard Nixon.

The current Mayor Daley was instrumental in propelling Bill Clinton to an Illinois primary victory in 1992 that clinched the Democratic presidential nomination.

Bayh can probably pick up a huge IOU from Daley should he decide to run for president, or in a big-bucks showdown with Sen. Dan Coats in 1998.

Said Nation, "Any Democrat from Indiana would like to have Mayor Daley as a friend."

Helmke boosted by Shine, Lugar, Souder

It helps to have friends in high places, right Paul Helmke? Horse Race was the first to diagnose publicly that the Fort Wayne Republican might have his hands full with a race against little known John Widmann.

HORSE RACE

Prior to the Allen County Republican Lincoln Day dinner, Helmke was telling supporters he needed money and volunteers. But by the time the speakers had concluded under a huge banner bearing his name, Helmke had collected ringing endorsements from Steve Shine, Dick Lugar and Mark Souder. Things are looking up for the mayor

LEANING HELMKE

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ELKHART

McDowell v. Bentley (R) - This was supposed to have been an easy nomination for Councilwoman Carol McDowell. That's until former Elkhart County Commissioner John Bentley joined the race. He's got many big name Republicans backing him publicly, along with some active help from Jack Donis, the GOP nominee in 1991 and 1987.

TOSSUP

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TERRE HAUTE

Chalos v. Jenkins (D) - Mayor Pete Chalos is facing a severe challenge from former Vigo County Sheriff Jim Jenkins, who has made a political career bucking the Democratic machine. That's the same machine still smarting from the loss of three legislative seats last fall and a mere 1,000 vote Chalos victory in 1991. Vigo prosecutor is investigating mail forgery involving a campaign letter Jenkins says he didn't sign or authorize Upset brewing.

TOSSUP

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KOKOMO

Lushin v. Kennedy (D) - Kokomo Tribune's Steve Jackson notes that after two months of quiet "sparks have been flying." Mike Kennedy has challenged Jean Lushin to a debate, alleging he has been avoiding issues. Kennedy promises in letter to PD/FD "I will maintain the effort to make you the highest paid employees in the state of Indiana." Chairman D.J. Bolinger, trying to nurse a fractured party back to health, says "don't get too nasty or personal."

TOSS UP

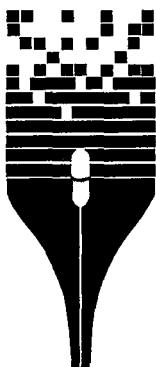
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MUNCIE

Carey v. Donati v. Richmond (D) - Carey seeks to reclaim his old job and observers are saying he probably has the inside track.

LEANING CAREY



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TICKER T A P E

Former **Sen. Birch Bayh** began his presidential campaigns in 1972 and 1976 at the family farm in Shirkieville. In '76, it was followed by a rally in the Indiana House and then a trip to Bloomington where his son, **Evan**, was attending Indiana University.

Sen. Bayh withdrew from the 1972 race early after his wife, **Marvella**, was diagnosed with cancer. In 1976, Bayh finished second to **Jimmy Carter** in Iowa and third to Carter in New Hampshire. Bayh ran out of money prior to the New York primary where he had expected to do well until the Carter juggernaut took place.

Sen. Dick Lugar had originally wanted to hold the announcement rally on Monument Circle. While weather concerns was the official reason for moving it to City Market, **Fred Nation** explains that there is a state statute which disallows the monument's use for political purposes. But that didn't stop **President Lyndon Johnson** from having a rally there in 1964, in part, Nation said, because **Gene Pulliam** backed him.

Michael Tackett of the *Chicago Tribune* has covered the presidential announcements of **Sens. Bob Dole** and **Phil Gramm** so far this year. How did Lugar's stack up? "This one was every bit as good if not better," said Tackett, a 1980 I.U. grad. "It helps to be outdoors."

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TICKER T A P E

U.S. Rep. Mark Souder will sponsor **Sen. Arlen Specter's** flat tax proposal in the U.S. House

Souder told constituents at a town meeting in Kendallville and the Allen County Lincoln Day dinner guests that the "revolution" must continue in 1996 - in the U.S. Senate.

Protesters against the prevailing wage law showed up at the Allen County Lincoln Day dinner. **Souder** told Republicans, "I know I'll do my job when the protesters show up."

Gov. Evan Bayh had major concerns with three bills awaiting his signature: fair share, informed consent and tort reform. "He has a problem with all three," said press aide **Fred Nation**. His major concerns with informed consent was that its restrictions "seem cruel" to victims of rape and incest and that led him to veto it. On tort reform, Bayh told **Network Indiana** that the system has worked well to date with "judges and juries."

Senate **President Pro Tem Bob Garton** seems to be making Page 1 - for all the wrong reasons. On Wednesday, *The Indianapolis Star* wrote of Garton entertaining lobbyists at a \$500-a-plate fete at the Columbia Club. **State Sen. Bob Hellman** chided the timing noting that the Senate was to consider campaign finance reform on Friday.

Fort Wayne GOP council candidate **David Roach** called **Chairman Steve Shine** "an evil little troll."

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Quayle finally withdraws from the '96 race; Vargus tabs Early as the current "front runner"

Danny, we hardly knew ye. As a gubernatorial candidate, that is. With Dan Quayle finally deciding to remain a private citizen this week, the speculation centered on who would benefit the most.

John Ketzenberger of the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette quoted Brian Vargus of the Indiana University Public Opinion Laboratory as anointing Rex Early the frontrunner.

"The early line on Early is he would be the favorite," Vargus said. "Nobody knows what Goldsmith is going to do." (Psst...he's running.)

As for the remaining potential field, Vargus rates the odds at 100-1 for George Witwer, 75-1 for Bob Garton, and 50-1 for Pat Rooney.

Witwer was on to the Quayle withdrawal rumor Monday night. He told HPR that it would be necessary for him to seize the moment. He did it with an April 18 press release. "With Dan Quayle out of the race, there is a

need for a candidate who will truly fight for the conservative ideals shared by all Hoosiers," Witwer said, insisting he was in the race for good.

Early simply seemed relieved, acknowledging in Fort Wayne Wednesday night that Quayle would have mauled any other Republican in the race - "including Goldsmith."

The most awkward timing came with Rooney, who dodged thunderstorms in a Tuesday fly-around to officially announce his candidacy after a \$200,000 TV buy. The Quayle story pre-empted some of Rooney's thunder, with the Golden Rule executive telling reporters that he had been on a four-hour flight with Quayle recently and the subject never came up.

Quayle, who had kept campaign staff on, continued his dodging of the Indiana media, much like he did after he withdrew from the presidential race. His first comments on his withdrawal came Tuesday morning on C-Span.

SPECULATIONS THOUGHTS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

By Morton J. Marcus

Among the egregious bills in this year's legislature is the direct attack on local urban governments. This appears as an attempt to stop annexations by Elkhart and Fort Wayne, but it is part of a long-standing hostility to cities in Indiana.

The city-country split is a matter of the past, except in the minds of Hoosiers who will not recognize the realities of this century. The rural non-farm population of Indiana depends on the cities and towns for jobs and services. Where once people lived on farms and were self-sufficient, today's "rural lifestyle" is an extension of city life.

Affluent country "folk" are often city people not willing to pay city taxes, subsidized

and dependent on those still residing in the city. Subdivisions built across the city line and businesses lying just outside the city's taxing boundaries are able to avoid civic fiscal and political responsibilities.

Annexation, following due process, is the logical way of keeping urban sprawl from becoming an epidemic. We need look only to the nearest Indiana city, to the decay of central retail and residential areas, to see the blight that unfettered expansion has caused. Prompt annexation, before development, may be the way to keep the country and the city desirable places to live. Limitations on annexation tend to sustain and nurture the costly disease of urban disintegration.

COLUMNISTS ON INDIANA

John Krull, Indianapolis News - Pat Rooney wants to be governor. In a story by David Haase, The News reported that Rooney and a Golden Rule board member had violated federal election law by contributing more than the maximum \$25,000. Rooney, in fact, wasn't even close to complying with the law. In 1994, he dropped \$38,520. That's an "error" of more than 50 percent. Rooney trotted out Golden Rule employee Brian McManus to speak for him. McManus offered this blithe explanation of Golden Rule's massive immersion in campaign spending. "Actually, I'm surprised we didn't give more," McManus said. Let's hope, if Pat Rooney is elected governor, that his concentration has improved by the time he speaks the oath of office - particularly the part that talks about upholding the law.

Phillip Amerson, Bloomington Herald-Times - Recently a questionnaire crossed my desk from the Christian Coalition of Monroe County. It was directed to our current candidates for the office of mayor and city council. The coalition is putting together a "scorecard," presumably to measure the "Christian acceptability" of various candidates. I looked over the survey our would-be city leaders were to answer and found it very troubling. There were 12 questions, from "Do you support legislation that gives special rights and special protection to people based on sexual orientation" to "Would you agree that a direct link exists between pornography and sexually violent crimes?" Questions were worded in a way that made the one "proper" response obvious. Can a person's Christianity be based on whether one can pass such an exam? How ironic it is that such groups, groups which divide and encourage negativity, call themselves "Christian."

Jack Colwell, South Bend Tribune - Politicians are people, too. Sometimes we forget. State Rep. Gary Cook fled the Statehouse in tears last week. He was distraught over a vote on a bill to keep teacher's unions from requiring that nonmembers pay dues. Cook held the fate of the bill in his hands. Then he held his head in his hands,

trying to decide what to do. "My wife and I have both prayed very hard about this to the point that I just emotionally did myself in," Cook explained. "I wanted to do the right thing, but that's been tough." Cook couldn't look at it just in those political terms. He wanted to decide if Republicans were right on the issue, whether motivated or not by political vindictiveness, or if Democrats were right on principle, whether motivated or not by campaign fund principal.

Dick Robinson, Terre Haute Tribune-Star - After years of battling drunks, criminals and other bad actors, former Sullivan County Sheriff John Waterman, now a state senator, easily stood his ground to oppose a controversial bill. Waterman serves on the corrections committee, and he was the lone GOP committeeman to oppose a tort reform bill backed by powerful business interests. Republican Waterman told the GOP-dominated committee the bill would harm his constituents. His vote against tort reform stopped the bill in its tracks, sending shock waves through the Statehouse. A senator anxious to have tort reform passed explained to Waterman before the second vote that it gets easier, with time, to vote for bad bills. Really? Something must be wrong with a system that makes it easier to support a bad idea rather than do the people's work.

Harrison Ullman, Nuvo - Imagine you are mad at the Indianapolis Star and want to sue the bastards because they turned your mother into a Republican. You are angry because you have lost her companionship in intelligent conversation. You are scared because she has been accessorizing at Don's Guns. You are embarrassed because The Star has turned her into a Quaylude. So, now you want the newspaper company to give you some money for your mom. You can sue, because anybody can sue anyone for anything. But you'll probably have to sue The Star without a lawyer's help. Lawyers usually take torts to court for contingency fees. I would be grateful if America's worst state legislature would leave my torts alone. I like my torts just the way they are.

Thursday, April 20, 1995

TICKER TAPE

Elkhart Republican mayoral candidates **John Bentley** and **Carol McDowell** were to debate this week. So, what's unusual about that? The group sponsoring the debate, the **Business and Professional Forum**, is one of three local groups linked to the **John Birch Society (Martin DeAgostino, South Bend Tribune)**. A group leader, Al Foreman, bluntly insists, "We believe in the conspiratorial view of history."

U.S. Rep. Tim Roemer is vowing to continue his fight against the Pokagon Indian casino in northern Indiana. "I'm all for helping the Pokagons in the area of education and housing, but I'm not for hurting the interests of other individuals," said Roemer (**Hentry Lange, Michigan City News-Dispatch**).

The big political issue in Bloomington this month is whether police had the right to pat down young people in People's Park on March 24. At an April 15 rally, protestors expressed their anger at the police action, demanded the removal of **Police Chief Steve Sharp** and the legalization of marijuana. And local attorney **David Schalk** spoke of a citizen's right to bear arms while "flaunting two of his own revolvers" (**Jennifer Jill Fowler, Bloomington Herald-Times**).

More Democrats are weighing a challenge to **U.S. Rep. John Hostettler**. They include Vanderburgh County **Commissioner Rick Borries, State Sen. Lindel Hume, State Rep. Rick McConnell** and former **State Sen. Maurice Doll**.

Buyer sees Congress returning as a deliberative, democratic body

HPR INTERVIEW

"Moving from the minority to the majority is like comparing Groundhog's Day to Christmas"
Steve Buyer

"The Senate has advanced degrees in watching the paint dry..."

Steve Buyer

Mark Souder, David McIntosh and John Hostettler are known as the "infantry" in Newt Gingrich's revolution and all won last fall running on his "Contract With America," but U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer is a lieutenant in the battle and was present at the earliest discussions about the Contract.

HPR sat down with Buyer over pie and coffee following his tour of the VA Medical Center in Fort Wayne earlier this week and talked about his views on the "revolution."

HPR: You've spent two years in the minority and now you'll spend your next two years in the majority. Give us an overview to the first 100 days of the 104th Congress.

Buyer: I entered the 103rd Congress at a time when the system was at its absolute worst. Congress had become a closed, mismanaged and undemocratic system. Power was held in the hands of a very few, and they were very arrogant in how they exercised their power. The Congress and the committee system was filled with theater as opposed to being a deliberative body. At times we would go through the motions, realizing the power of using the Rules Committee and the procedure predetermined the substance of policy. I got to see the 103rd Congress had matured to the point where it became a failed system. Part of that failed system added to the trust deficit between the American people and their Congress. They became upset with Congress because they saw Congress as being non-responsive to them.

HPR: How much different is the 104th Congress?

Buyer: Congress has been transformed to an open, deliberative, dynamic and democratic system. The comparison between the two is like night and day. Moving from the minority to the majority is like comparing Groundhog's Day to Christmas.

HPR: After you were first elected, did the thought ever cross your mind that you would be another John Myers, serving for 20-some years in the minority?

Buyer: No. It had to break. The turnover in the Congress had become too great. There were too many young people coming into Congress who didn't have political experience. When you do that, you introduce a new perspective into a political body. Business practice and principle should not be a radical idea for the federal government. A lot of businessmen were coming in and saying, "Excuse me, these systems are not working. What are we doing here?"

HPR: I rode with Newt Gingrich and John Hiler to a Lincoln dinner in 1990 and Gingrich was predicting a Republican takeover of Congress in 1992 or 1994.

Buyer: I saw it happening in '96. I served on the Republican Policy Committee during the last Congress, putting together the Contract With America. It was a process of evolution, it wasn't just something we woke up with one day. We had met in 1993 in Salisbury, Maryland, 173 of us, at 10 o'clock on a Saturday night. It was the first time we all met in one room, just us, the membership, no staffers. It was an interesting meeting because it was the first time the old pols and the young members had met. There was a maturing process we had to go through. We had to get through this in order to grow as a body. I was the second speaker, and the patience of members is about 45 to 60 seconds for listening skills. If you can't say it in one minute, you better sit down and shut up. We had a lot of people get up and give their little one minute speeches and it was just fascinating to see. I told them Republicans would always be in the minority until we proved to the American people we could lead. That theme was echoed by many. I had no interest in going into Congress and serving in the permanent minority. I didn't think it was going to happen in 1994, but when you added the Clinton factor to it, that's what accelerated it.

HPR: When you gathered on the Capitol steps, did you see the contract becoming the successful political tool that it became?

Buyer: Yes, because it was a plus-plus

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when you can utilize policy as a stand-alone tool but also as a political tool. So we had the Contract With America coupled with an ideology. The brilliance of the contract wasn't as much as was there when we talked about it on the Policy Committee. We took a lot of issues and narrowed it down to ten. Do you think that's easy? No, that's very difficult to do. So we narrowed it down and Newt made the final choices. The magnificence and the brilliance of the contract was that when we gained the majority, we had a focused majority, focused on a specific agenda.

HPR: Give us a feel for what some of the major disagreements were in developing the contract and how it finally coalesced.

Buyer: There were two major disagreements within the conference and the Policy Committee. One was school prayer and the other was the assault weapons ban. Those were the two I remember specifically. A congressman from Oklahoma really advocated the school prayer issue and while I support a moment of silence, to place that as one of the top ten would have opened ourselves to criticism and allowed local media and local politicians to exploit that against our vision for the first 100 days. It would have been no different than what gays in the military did for President Clinton. That was the argument I made.

HPR: During the final weeks of the campaign, the national Republican campaign committee urged candidates such as Mark Souder to back away from the contract. Were you aware of that?

Buyer: That perhaps happened on a district-by-district basis. I don't judge America through the dimension of my own congressional district. If I did that, I'd get in trouble. I have a rural district. Kokomo is our largest city. I do recall Congresswoman Jill Long was campaigning against the contract, saying it was going to cut Social Security and there was a lot of fear mongering. There's always an unknown ingredient in politics as to how much fear mongering people believe, and that can be scary when it's used against you. I am continually amazed that from September of '94 to even after having fulfilled the contract, critics have looked for failure whenever possible. Gephardt never got it. Byrd doesn't get it. They view the contract as a static document. That's because legislation

had always been static. Things were always worked out in the back room before legislation came out. An open deliberative process should not be a radical idea in Congress. We do that at our city councils. And if it's not open, the media crucifies us for not having an open, public meeting. I don't think the people of America ever realized that Congress had become a closed system.

HPR: Tell me about the first 100 days.

Buyer: The emotion. It's intensified my workload. Sixty percent of the contract went through committees that I sit on. Not only did I wear myself out, I wore my staff out. I think they were looking forward to this spring break. The good thing was we were able to show the American people that when you have a group of politicians who say they're going to do something they actually fulfill their commitment. That should not be surprising to people, but it is today. More importantly, look at all we achieved in 100 days. If Bill Clinton had come to Washington and said, "I campaigned to end welfare as we know it. I want you, Speaker Tom Foley, to give me a welfare reform bill within 100 days, you would have heard squawking and squealing from the Democratic-controlled Congress. They would have said, "It can't be done." He couldn't even get a bill in two years. We didn't just do welfare reform. We did a whole lot of bills. So this means that when we opened up the system, we blew out the pipes in the system. We've added much pressure to the Senate. The Senate is becoming very uncomfortable. The Senate has advanced degrees in watching the paint dry.

HPR: Give me your early assessment of Indiana's three freshman congressmen.

Buyer: Not one is alike. Mark came with a lot of institutional knowledge, since he came from the Senate. He understands a lot of the micro systems and is going through an adjustment of moving to macro systems analysis. He'll grow into that. McIntosh is having fun. When he headed up the Competitiveness Council, he had a lot of liberal Democrats stick it in his ear. I think he now as subcommittee chairman is having some fun. John Hostettler impresses me. He moves methodically - very deliberative. I think it's the engineer in him. He's an excellent, accurate listener. He surrounded himself with a lot of quality people.

TICKER

T A P E

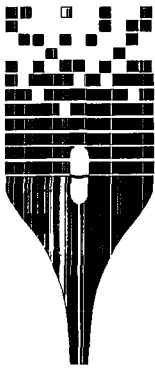
U.S. Rep. David McIntosh is borrowing a page from **U.S. Rep. Mark Souder**. McIntosh will host weekly radio shows on WBST in Muncie and WHUB in Anderson, as well as local access cable shows in Richmond, Columbus, Muncie and Anderson.

McIntosh will appear on the **McNeile-Lehrer** show on Friday night. CNN has taped an interview with McIntosh for its Earth Day coverage.

Education Week's Washington editor **Mark Pitsch** traveled with Souder Monday and Tuesday for a story on what GOP revolutionaries are hearing from their constituents.

Ron Guyer, a former administrative assistant to **U.S. Rep. Phil Sharp**, recently penned a letter to the editor that appeared in the *Muncie Star*, the *Shelbyville News* and the *Winchester News-Gazette*, taking issue with McIntosh over environmental regulations. The letter is fueling speculation that Guyer will seek the Democratic nomination in 1996.

Sources say **U.S. Rep. John Myers** intends to have between \$300,000 and \$500,000 in the bank by year's end, in part to discourage a serious challenge, particularly in the Republican primary. Myers, who is conducting a heavy fund-raising schedule during the Easter break, typically has not announced his intentions until January or February.



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- Indianapolis News*
- Kendallville News-Sun*
- Kokomo Herald*
- Muncie Evening Press*
- Michigan City News-Dispatch*
- New Castle Courier-Times*
- Newton County Enterprise*
- Peru Tribune*
- Shelbyville News*
- Sullivan Daily Times*
- Wabash Plain Dealer*

Tragedy underscores Lugar theme

from page 1
 in a world and bequeath to our children problems of nuclear terrorism, nuclear blackmail — a very different sort of world. A world that will not be normal."

On Wednesday, Lugar told the crowd, "I've been told that my campaign for president is at a disadvantage because many believe I have the most experience and expertise in leading, national security and foreign policy, subjects in which supposedly there is little voter interest."

Little interest, perhaps, until Wednesday morning.

By the time Lugar appeared at a Lincoln Day dinner in Fort Wayne Wednesday night, he found what should have been a vibrant crowd basking in his limelight, flat and subdued. A bombing at the World Trade Center, a gassing in the subways in Tokyo and Yokohama, or a riot in Los Angeles are part of the coastal chaos. Midwesterners tend to view with amazement, disdain and pity. Midwest rubble is usually caused by tornadoes and plane crashes.

But Oklahoma City is not unlike an Indianapolis or Fort Wayne. It's in the heartland, supposedly insulated from the crazier manias that can torch the flesh off the angels of our nature.

It is a tragedy that plays right into Lugar's central theme. The fact that it pre-empted live coverage on CNN that presidential campaigns thirst for pales into insignificance by the fact that it bluntly accents Lugar's reasons for aspiring to the White House.

By day's end, Hoosier TV crews were peppering Lugar with questions about the bombing.

"You react to the questions," Killens said of any change in the campaign strategy. "People want to hear from a leader. They want reassurances that someone has a steady hand."

Or as Lugar said in his noon speech, "Americans understand that their president must know what he is doing on national security. Otherwise he'll find himself making it up as he goes along, bouncing from one crisis to the next."

Those words and themes had to resonate with these people at the rally as they

returned to their homes Wednesday night to find the ghastly images of a shattered building and thoughts of hundreds of families coming to grips with an almost inconceivable tragedy.

I've long said that a presidential race is a crapshoot. A candidate can position himself, strike the themes, establish credibility, and hope that the bulk of the electorate shifts into that sphere when the primary season opens up.

There's a good chance that Americans were shocked into Lugar's themes on Wednesday, because no one else running for president has expressed any aptitude for reacting to an assault on America's heartland.

■ **LUGAR NOTES:** Lugar's New Hampshire team was in Indianapolis for the official announcement. That includes Hoosier operative Terry Holt and James McKay, who worked on Gov. Steve Merrill's 1992 campaign. Holt calls New Hampshire "perfect for Lugar" because he has a detailed message. "You can give the same speech over and over again in Indiana and no one will bitch, but not in New Hampshire. That's why Tsongas did so well."

■ Indianapolis Mayor Steve Goldsmith got a plug in for himself while introducing Lugar. "We have the smallest government of any big city," Goldsmith said before adding that it was Lugar "who brought Indianapolis from a sleepy town."

■ Because of the Oklahoma City bombing atrocity, CNN has rescheduled a couple of Lugar segments. His announcement ceremony will be shown at 9 a.m. Friday. His "Inside Politics" segment will air at 3 p.m. Thursday.

■ The Lugar campaign booked an hour of satellite time at Channel 20 following his announcement, did the CNN "Inside Politics" interview and live show for TV stations in Iowa and New Hampshire.

■ Doug Sword of the Evansville Courier in a Page 1 Sunday story notes that the "second line" on Lugar's candidacy is that he is positioning himself for "his dream job - secretary of state." Sword also quotes political analyst Stuart Rothenberg as saying, "The three pillars of a campaign are money, organization and message. Right now, he's one-for-three."