

# THE HOWEY POLITICAL REPORT



## The Weekly Briefing On Indiana Politics

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## “QUOTE” OF THE WEEK

“The realist in us says this is the end of this....”

-Colleen Dykes, spokeswoman for NICE, the Northwest Indiana group trying to lure the Chicago Bears to Gary after the Lake County Council rejected the plan

# 2nd looks for Lugar in volatile Iowa

### Unstable political atmosphere pervades

**HPR Presidential Forecast:** The free-fall of Bob Dole in the polls, an increasing skepticism of Steve Forbes' flat tax, Phil Gramm's Louisiana caucus loss, and a near-universal revulsion to the din of negative advertising has created a dramatically unstable political climate in the Iowa caucuses. Keep your eye on the Alexander and Lugar campaigns next Monday night. Both candidates are getting a hard second look from thousands of voters.

DES MOINES - Radio Iowa reporter O. Kay Henderson has an interesting vantage point from her newsroom here: that of Steve Forbes' presidential headquarters across the street.

“Our parking lot has a lot of Forbes volunteers,” Henderson said. “Some are paid volunteers. Nonetheless, they're making an effort.”

What Forbes is doing is creating a presidential campaign to compete in the Iowa caucuses here backwards. He started with a multi-million dollar advertising blitz - much of it negative attack ads - and is now trying to put an organization together at the last minute to get his share of the 150,000 voters expected to show.

The riddle facing U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar lies in the failure of Forbes' neophyte organization and the continued faltering of U.S. Sen. Bob Dole. If Forbes can't motivate the folks who are telling pollsters that they're in his camp, it creates an atmosphere of instability and one that will either return to Dole, or stun the gullable pundits with somebody like Lugar or Lamar Alexander down in the pack.

“I've been at Dole, Forbes and Alexander events in the last few days and people are shopping around,” Henderson said. “I'd say one in five haven't made up their mind.”

Henderson has seen polling data that indicates there is movement toward former Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander.

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# TICKER T A P E

**PLAY OF THE WEEK:** Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith re-emphasized why he is the frontrunner Monday night. His "Govern-Aire" bash at the Federal Express hangar brought in \$600,000, which several observers told HPR is probably a Hoosier record.



**CLARIFICATION:** Due to a layout error, a Ticker Tape item concerning Clerk of Courts John Okeson in the Feb. 2 edition of the HPR ended abruptly. It should have read some Republicans on the State Committee were pushing Okeson for the attorney general's nomination. Okeson has been mentioned as a possible lieutenant governor nominee.

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## Lugar's problem: He's everyone's second choice

From page 1

Indiana Republican Chairman Mike McDaniel said the Lugar camp has seen tracking numbers go from 2.7 percent to 7 percent in a 10-day period. Two stories in Tuesday's *Chicago Tribune* recount how a number of Iowans are searching for a new candidate. Michael Tackett's and Thomas Hardy's story tells of Donald Fuller, a retired veterinarian who is for Dole, "but is also considering Lugar."

The second *Tribune* story by Flynn McRoberts notes how the "often-muffled voices of moderation" have yet to show up in Lugar and Alexander's camps. His focus was on grain farmer Warren Loudon and thousands like him. "Although Sen. Bob Dole ... is in good standing here, there appears to be enough Warren Loudons around Iowa to give several candidates, including Alexander and Lugar, a shot at making a good showing and keeping their hopes alive," McRoberts reported.

McDaniel met recently with Brian Kennedy, who heads the Iowa Young Republicans. "He told me that Lugar's problem in Iowa is that he's most people's second choice."

Two intriguing factors are at play in Lugar's dynamic. One is the historic farm bill

that was defeated in the Senate by one vote, with Gramm missing the call due to his campaigning. A good farm economy to date has taken the accent off the fears of this historic legislation, allowing Lugar to campaign that he has come closest to delivering on the Republican Revolution. It was Dole and Gramm who took

# LUGAR WATCH

the heat in Tuesday's *Des Moines Register* for failing to get the bill out of the Senate in a state that counts 20 percent of its gross profits from farming.

"My own view is that he (Gramm) should have been here and voting on a very important piece of legislation to the country - certainly for Iowa," Lugar said, adding, "which is where I would be right now if I were not here managing the farm bill."

The second is an almost universal revulsion to a din of negative advertising that everyone - except Lugar - has engaged in. "There is such a glut from all the advertising," said Henderson. "People are turning it all off and they're tuning out."

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Lugar appeared on ABC's *Nightline* Monday night as one of pack of contenders who tried to explain the rise of Forbes. Lugar told host Ted Koppel that while voters may be intrigued with a new "outsider" personality, ultimately what Forbes has done is create the biggest negative campaign advertizing blitz in the history of American politics.

Henderson was with Forbes when he took calls on a radio talk show in Sioux City. "The flat tax is flagging," she said of the heat Forbes has been taking and polling data she's seen. "On that talk show, people were asking very pointed questions about the flat tax. Farmers are worried about not being reimbursed for operating expenses. And homeowners are worried about the loss of the mortgage deduction."

**Ken Bode**, host of the PBS *Washington Week in Review* program, told the Indianapolis Economics Club Tuesday that both Dole and Forbes have stumbled. Bode called Dole's response to President Clinton's State of the Union address a "classic blunder" because it accented his age and his message was written two days before Clinton gave his speech.

As for Forbes, Bode recalled asking the millionaire candidate on his PBS series on the candidates, "When were you tested in life?" He said Forbes responded that it occurred "When I went off alone to prep school."

And Bode related there was a question as to how Forbes would do financially under his proposed flat tax. "He said, 'It wouldn't be enough to buy a race horse.' I can relate to that, can't you?"

**Dole's free fall**, Forbes taking the heat on the flat tax, Gramm's missed vote on the farm bill and his Louisiana caucus loss, and a backlash against negative advertising has thus created an "anything can happen" scenario.

WISH-TV's Jim Shella reported Monday that Lugar had hoped to feed off a 15 percent poll of undecided voters during the last weekend. That number stood at 40 percent on Tuesday. "We have to sway the undecided voter," Mike Day, Lugar's Iowa campaign manager, told Shella.

Campaign spokesman Terry Holt acknowledged "the high number of undecideds.

Some are turning off saying they may not participate."

Bode indicated his surprise that Lugar hasn't fared better in the polls to date. "I thought Iowa would be a good place for Lugar," he said, noting that it was like Indiana with its small communities and farm-based economy.

He added, "Dick Lugar is a victim of the anti-Washington strain" that can be traced to the rise of talk radio. Lugar's record of accomplishment has been treated like a liability.

Radio Iowa's Henderson pointed to the nuclear terrorism ads Lugar ran in December.

**LUGAR WATCH** "They ran during the holidays and people were taken aback," she said, adding that a second

commercial noting Lugar's support of the 1994 assault weapons ban "did not appeal to the traditional GOP caucus goer."

Holt attempted to establish the campaign's level of expectations. "Iowa doesn't select presidents," he said, "it winnows the field. Not many national reporters are waiting around for Lugar to get 25 percent of the vote. If we get into double digits, it shows we're in the game."

**Said Bode of Lugar**, "It doesn't look good, but I wouldn't write him off. If Forbes wounds Dole, it could come down to anyone."

As for a backlash of negative advertising, Lugar is standing alone on the high road, possibly out of voice range of the masses who say they hate it. Or at least they say that to pollsters.

McDaniel is skeptical. "People always say they're against negative advertising. Yet, if you look at the Super Bowl, the ads were full of Coke versus Pepsi; Burger King versus McDonald's. What seemed to turn people on the most was when the Coke and Pepsi drivers were fighting it out on the floor of that diner."



*HPR editor and publisher Brian Howey will present a special edition next week following the Iowa caucuses and previewing the New Hampshire primary.*

## TICKER T A P E

Last week, *Nuvo News Weekly* reported that the Goldsmith administration is under an FBI investigation over allegations of ghost employment. Indianapolis FBI office supervisor *Doug Garrison* told HPR that he could neither "confirm or deny the accuracy of that report." The story has not been reported in the mainstream media, although several print and broadcast reporters are aware of the report. Two elements are working on this story. One is that timing of the story is conspicuous on the part of the alleged "whistleblowers." Second, many reporters feel that *Nuvo* has had a vendetta against the Goldsmith administration.

*Goldsmith* said at his announcement press conference at his Indianapolis headquarters that he feels "a little beat up" by the tenor of the campaign. Not only have supporters of Rex Early bottled up the mayor's legislation in the Indiana General Assembly, but Democratic City-County Council members held press conferences around the state on Monday denouncing the mayor for running for governor after winning a second mayoral term last November.

Fort Wayne Mayor *Paul Helmke* introduced Goldsmith at his airport press conference there.

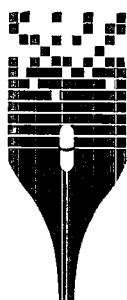
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# George Witwer, Indiana's happy warrior, sees a victory scenario

## HPR INTERVIEW

**"If we raise a few hundred thousand dollars, we will have enough money to have a breakthrough message come Election Day...."**

**- George Witwer**



**BLUFFTON** - Last week, Republican gubernatorial hopeful George Witwer went from being a candidate with only \$15,000 cash on hand to coming within one point of defeating Rex Early in the Lake County straw poll.

This comes at a time when many observers see the GOP nomination fight between Indianapolis Mayor Goldsmith and Early. HPR caught up with Witwer several days after his 220-219 near-miss at Merrillville to learn what his strategy is between now and the May 7 primary.

**HPR:** What did your near-victory in the Lake County Republican straw poll last week do for your campaign?

**Witwer:** It's turning out to be one of the most important political events for the campaign to date. Maybe the most important. I think it really showed people that the grassroots campaign that I had been working on was bearing lots of fruit. People are responding to my message all over the state. In fact that we bused people in on three buses and the enthusiasm they showed really opened up people's eyes to how I can win this race.

**HPR:** Will it help in your fundraising?

**Witwer:** We have a lot of things working on the fundraising side. We have people helping me come up with the budget I need to become competitive. They were so excited by the results. There were a lot of congratulations and pats on the back. People are smelling victory here.

**HPR:** Was your busing strategy something in the works for some time, or did you just see an opening lately?

**Witwer:** It was a situation where we let our coordinators know there was a straw poll and that it was open to anyone who paid and wanted to go. We started hearing back from people everywhere that they wanted to go. We didn't like the idea of them all driving up there alone and in their cars. It was much more favorable to have them ride in buses. It was a pretty spontaneous thing.

**HPR:** How many people did you bus in?

**Witwer:** I believe it was right around 100 people.

**HPR:** You had mentioned prior to the straw poll that you might surprise people. Did you get the surprise you were looking for? Or did Rex Early surprise you with his "Reagan Democrats"?

**Witwer:** We had heard from rumors that this (Early's Reaganites) might happen. So in that sense I wasn't surprised. Surely you can mobilize a whole lot of labor union folks if you want. In the Lake County area, labor unions are very, very strong. So I wasn't at all surprised that he could orchestrate 100 or so folks to come at the last minute. From our standpoint, though, we just are thrilled by the Republican grassroots support that turned out. If you were just to look at the Lake County vote - take out the people we brought and the union guys that Rex had - I think there's no question that we won the local vote. When people have an opportunity to hear my message, we do extremely well.

**HPR:** You have \$15,000 cash on hand, compared to \$1.1 million for Early and \$3.6 million for Goldsmith.

**Witwer:** Amazing, isn't it?

**HPR:** Yeah. Lay out the scenario for George Witwer to win the primary.

**Witwer:** The scenario is if we keep growing our grassroots support and we keep growing from a few hundred hard-working volunteers to a few thousands, come Election Day, and they're spreading the word to neighbors and their churches and in their community groups, that word of mouth is very potent in the primaries. You combine that with a media buy at the end of the campaign, so that everyone really knows who I am, what I stand for, what I look like. If we can combine those two successfully, along with the power of my message of reform, it will carry me to victory.

**HPR:** WANE-TV's Steve Roggie refers to Mark Souder's 1994 4th CD primary win as a "subterranean effort." And John Hostettler equally surprised people with his primary win in the 8th CD by mobilizing a Christian-oriented movement. Do you really believe that kind of strategy can be carried out on a statewide basis?

**Witwer:** It may be becoming that. It's much more difficult to accomplish what they accomplished at the Congressional level when you're running statewide because people want to see you, touch you and meet you. You just can't be everywhere. The state's too big. I think it will be a different dynamic. But the basic elements of a grassroots campaign combined with a media buy are the same when you look at Souder's win or Hostettler's win or how I'm approaching it. So, yeah, I think the formula is pretty much the same. It's different in that there won't be as much personal time by me.

**HPR:** How do you make up for that lack of personal time, particularly in the face of a media blitz that Goldsmith and Early will unleash?

**Witwer:** That's the challenge. It's a big challenge. That's what we're going to find out in this campaign. Can you make that up or not. Can the enthusiasm for the message carry that forward, even though you have less personal time. But I've got to tell you, most of the people, it seemed like most ... a large majority of the people at the straw poll who had traveled in had never met me before. They had heard about what I stood for; they had heard my message. They read the literature and they became enthused by that. So I think it's very possible we can pull it off. It will be interesting to see how it will unfold.

**HPR:** It seems like your issues are within the realm of what Eric Miller's Citizens Concerned for the Constitution would want, yet his group is backing Goldsmith. And when Goldsmith announced, he acknowledged that you might cut into some of his support.

**Witwer:** Eric had his followers. Technically his organization has to be neutral. Eric as a citizen has made his support (of Goldsmith) clear. I think there's a lot of pro-family, pro-life people who are attracted to my campaign looking for someone who is not apart of the system, someone not a part of the Indianapolis political establishment. Someone who's attracted to my message for fundamental change and standing strongly on principles. There's a lot of overlap in the values between the three candidates for governor. In terms of whose support I'm pulling from, I don't know. I don't know what the polls are saying. I think

my numbers, pollwise, are so small it would be hard to tell who I'm pulling from. I think I'm in a unique situation. I'm the only candidate who is not from Indianapolis. I think my message is unique, as well. My message is focusing in on three basic conservative changes. People who want to see those three changes happen are being attracted to my campaign.

**HPR:** How much money are you going to have to raise to become competitive?

**Witwer:** I'm sure it will be several hundred thousand dollars. If we can do that, we can buy some media at the end that will put us in position to win. But an awful lot of what happens will depend on the environment. I think the \$3 million that Goldsmith has, he could conceivably spend so much money that no one hears my message. I don't frankly think that's going to happen. If we raise a few hundred thousand dollars, we will have enough money to have a breakthrough message come Election Day. People will know who I am and what I stand for.

**HPR:** Is there a scenario that if Early and Goldsmith savage each other so much that you will try to present yourself as an alternative?

**Witwer:** I don't think my success depends on that. I think my success depends on people having a real opportunity to know who I am and if they decide they like what I stand for. However, if they do, people may be more inclined to look for an alternative. But my campaign is based on putting out a principled message and letting that message move mountains. We've seen people like David McIntosh win races they weren't supposed to.

**HPR:** Is it tough to pick up the *Indianapolis Star* and see Evan Bayh polling better Republican numbers than you are?

**Witwer:** It's interesting because Evan Bayh sounds like Ronald Reagan plus Dan Quayle in his State of the State address. Maybe he should switch parties. These poll numbers are really thrilling to me because I understand it. I'm thrilled because the last poll I saw published showed that I was around 2 percent and they had me at 6.5 percent. Rex was at 16 percent and this put him at 13.5 percent, and Goldsmith was at 44 percent and this put him at 38 percent. So I'm going up, the undecideds are up and my opponents are softening a bit.

# TICKER T A P E

Helmke is considered to be a possible lieutenant governor nominee if Goldsmith is nominated. Helmke has not endorsed a candidate.

At the South Bend stop, St. Joseph County GOP Chairman Carl Baxmeyer turned out for the mayor's announcement. Someone slapped a "Goldsmith Governor" sticker on him. Asked if that was an endorsement, Baxmeyer responded, "No, no, no."

The *South Bend Tribune's* Jack Colwell said Goldsmith campaign staffers emphasized to him that South Bend was a crucial primary target area.

"Is there something about his career that Bill Kristol would rather forget?" asks the *Boston Globe*. In a promotional mailing for the *Weekly Standard*, Kristol is described only as "the former chief of staff to Secretary of Education William Bennett." That job ended in 1988. Missing was Kristol's stint as chief of staff for former Vice President Dan Quayle. Asked the *Globe*, "Is that now considered a liability in conservative circles?"

Chris Herrell has been chosen as Republican Chairman for Miami County. He replaces John Marburger, who resigned in January.

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# TICKER T A P E

**State Rep. Rick McConnell** holds a \$30,000 to \$17,300 fundraising advantage over **Jonathan Weinzapfel** in the 8th CD. The two other candidates, **Vanderburgh County Prosecutor Stan Levco** and **Shelburn Clerk-Treasurer Jay Southwood** did not make a report because they were under \$5,000.

Both the **Evansville Press** and **Evansville Courier** reported that the **Vanderburgh County Democratic Central Committee** has chosen an 8th CD candidate to endorse during a slating convention set for Feb. 17. That brought a plea from **Weinzapfel**. "I believe that, if such an endorsement is to have any value at all, it must be the result of a fair and open vote of precinct representatives at a formal slating convention," he said. "This decision reeks of the kind of old-time, closed-door, smoke-filled room dealmaking that has soured so many Americans on the political process."

**U.S. Rep. David McIntosh** raised \$468,486 in 1995 and finished the year with \$360,320 cash on hand. Campaign spokeswoman **Linda Gilcrest** said that \$267,542 of that came from individual contributors, with 85 percent of that amount coming from Indiana.

## Blankenbaker's billboard puts Hudnut's homecoming on a residency defensive

INDIANAPOLIS - It was just one billboard. Catching the arctic breezes plaguing our state, the huge Downtown sign simply read, "Welcome back from Chicago, Bill!"

It was paid for by the Virginia Blankenbaker for Congress campaign. In the weeks leading up to former Mayor Bill Hudnut's announcement that he would run against Blankenbaker and Marvin Scott for the 10th CD Republican nomination, the former state senator's campaign ruminated on how to make Hudnut's residency a question.

The answer was one billboard, unveiled in late January at a sidewalk press conference. The campaign announced it was having a little "fun." It turned out to be a shrewd little bit of electioneering. When Hudnut arrived to announce his candidacy, the residency question yapped at his heels like an annoying mutt. It dogged him at every meeting with the press.

One Indianapolis TV station caught Hudnut outside of the Columbia Club and spent almost the entire live shot inquiring of Hudnut about his home. The reporter mentioned that Hudnut had been out of the city for four years.

No, Hudnut corrected. "Two years."

It did little good. As the same reporter signed off, he mentioned that Hudnut was back in Indy once again after four years.

### Early steals a little thunder

INDIANAPOLIS - Last week, HPR exclusively reported on how GOP gubernatorial candidate Rex Early had ruined George Witwer's straw poll ambush in Merrillville when 100 "Reagan Democrats" turned up to vote at the last minute. Early won the vote, 220-219.

Early again revealed his shrewdness last Monday, the much-awaited day Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith announced his candidacy. Early chose that day to officially file with the Secretary of State's office. And it earned him equal billing on the 6 o'clock news.

WISH-TV's Neal Moore led off with Early's filing prior to his Goldsmith segment. WTHR-TV followed its Goldsmith lead with

Early filing. Both stations used the phrase that Early "had stolen a little thunder" from Goldsmith.

Early is also stealing a little thunder in the legislature. So far, almost all of Goldsmith's small legislative agenda has been defeated. In his announcement press conference, Goldsmith blamed it on State Rep. Mike Young, Early's

## 1996 WATCH

campaign manager. "My opponents made a political opportunity out of every piece of legislation,"

Goldsmith pointed out matter-of-factly.

### Hellman ponders 7th CD run

INDIANAPOLIS - This year's hot prospect for filing at the last minute of the Feb. 23 deadline is State Sen. Bob Hellman.

Hellman is pondering a run for the 7th CD Democratic nomination. In fact, he appears to be the lone hope for Democrats to put up a credible challenger. "I'm looking to see if people are motivated, what kind of money will be committed if there's a lot of money on the other side," the Terre Haute Democrat said.

But Hellman made this comment: "I've spent 16 years here (at the Indiana General Assembly) and I missed my kids growing up. Now I have a grandchild on the way and I have to decide if I want to miss that."

### Smith joins GOP field

BLOOMINGTON - Former Monroe County GOP Chairman John Lee Smith has entered the 7th CD race. Observers compare his style of political networking to that of U.S. Rep. John Hostettler, who stunned a six-candidate field in the 8th CD in 1992 to win the primary with a solid Christian vote. Smith joins State Sen. Dick Thompson, State Rep. Dan Pool, former State Rep. Ed Pease and attorney Jeff Baldwin as serious contenders for this open seat.

# COLUMNISTS ON INDIANA

**Scott Lehigh**, *Boston Globe* - The Greek philosopher Heraclitus should have been a pundit. A man's character is his fate, he said, and though he wrote that back around 500 BC, his observation is apt when it comes to the 1996 New Hampshire presidential primary. It helps explain why Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole is now in a tailspin and why magazine heir Steve Forbes, a political newcomer, has surged to the front of the Republican field, while more experienced candidates, such as Lamar Alexander, Phil Gramm, Richard Lugar or Pat Buchanan, have yet to catch fire. Lugar ... has a clearer idea of the personal qualities people want in a president. "I believe people are looking for a president they can trust, a person who tells the truth, who has produced on his promises, who comes to the table in good faith, with conviction, but likewise as a good listener, as one who is able to entertain other ideas and pull together the best of them," he said. But in politics, to think is not necessarily to be. Lugar clearly hurt himself with some voters by running a TV ad raising the specter of a nuclear terrorist attack. And for others, the folksy Midwestern senator doesn't convey the requisite sense of strength for the job.

**Mike Leonard**, *Bloomington Herald-Times* - Consider such names as Joe Ely, Steve Earle, Richard Thompson, Townes Van Zant, Sandy Denny, Kate and Anna McGarrigle. Then ponder the fortunes of John Anderson, Bruce Babbitt and Paul Tsongas. The first group represents singer-songwriters who the critics absolutely love and revere. The second group includes the people known as the news media's favorite presidential candidates in the presidential primaries of 1980, 1988 and 1992. None came within a light year of the American presidency. These examples might serve to cast a pall, then, over the Richard Lugar for president campaign. Despite the senior Indiana senator's relatively low showing in the polls, he consistently garners the highest praise and respect from the nation's news media.

**Jack Colwell**, *South Bend Tribune* - If Steve Forbes hadn't bought second place, Dick Lugar could have been the one on covers of news magazines and portrayed in the national news media as the guy who could pick up the pieces after any Dole debacle. But Americans have this strange attraction for gazillionaires who offer simplistic solutions and spend whatever it takes to get the attention they crave. Like the other example who wanted to turn the White House grounds into a Ross Garden, Forbes may well fade before his ambition is fulfilled. The question is whether the bursting of the Forbes balloon will come soon enough to enable Lugar to stay in and move up in the race.

**David Rohn**, *Indianapolis News* - Unless Dole regains his footing or Forbes runs away with it - both doubtful prospects - the GOP presidential nomination appears to be a donnybrook that may not be decided until the convention. Lugar was not a quick sell, even here in his own state of Indiana. Remember, he lost his first statewide Senate race. He is a long-distance runner. And if he can afford to stay in it, the longer this contest drags on without a winner, the better his chances of a long-shot victory.

**William Safire**, *New York Times* - When Anonymous writes his or her novel about the 1996 Dole campaign, the first dramatic chapter will be the fortnight that three forces converge to enliven what would otherwise be the "Primary Colorless." The first force is the Pundit-Pollster-Strategist Complex, bored stiff by one-horse domination of the Republican race. Feeding this frenzy are liberal and White House spinmeisters, eager to knock off the nationally known candidate most likely to oust Bill Clinton in the fall. Finally, capitalizing on the movement to stop the frontrunner are his Republican opponents - the Gang of Four Plus Lugar - who mindlessly join the PPSC and Clintonites to bring down the leader they will most likely have to unite behind.

## TICKER T A P E

*U.S. Rep. Mark Souder* appeared with First Lady Hillary Clinton on a panel discussion of children's issues during a National School Board's Association conference in Washington.

The *Washington Post* released a public opinion study last week that revealed that 75 percent of Americans "no longer trust the government in Washington to do the right thing most of the time." That contrasts with 24 percent who said the same thing in 1964.

This week's *Indianapolis Star-News/WTHR* poll showing Gov. Evan Bayh placing second in the Republican primary brings about the question of who is really paying attention. Or, perhaps, folks take seriously the pundits' claim that Bayh really is a Republican. One Statehouse reporter asked Bayh about that. The governor answered something to the effect that it would be better to be called a Republican than a lunatic. To which the reporter responded, "They call you that, too." Bayh reacted with a stony face, but press spokesman Fred Nation reportedly cracked up.

The *Star-News/WTHR* Poll had Goldsmith leading Lt. Gov. Frank O'Bannon by a 38.7 to 35.9 percent margin in a head-to-head of registered voters (+/-3.2 percent).

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# TICKER T A P E

HPR's Brian Howey appears on WNDY-TV's *Mike Pence Show* at 11:30 p.m. Saturday.

Indiana Republican Chairman *Mike McDaniel* said his party will consider holding a presidential caucus for future elections to allow Hoosiers to participate in the choosing of a president. Purdue University assistant political science professor James McCann suggested that Indiana bump up its primary to mid-March, when other Midwestern states such as Illinois, Ohio and Michigan have primaries (Michigan City News-Dispatch).

# PERHAPS... WE WANDER

By Brian Howey

INDIANAPOLIS - I've always been fascinated at the way politicians play the press.

Former U.S. Rep. Jill Long would always have an aide along during interviews. The aide would sit passively as the interview began. But when we closed in on the designated closure, the aide would begin looking at her watch, clearing her voice, etc.

I used to try and prolong the interviews with Long, just to see how much body language the aide could muster before she would verbally state the obvious.

Gov. Bayh has a different style. His watch-watchers are usually more up front, with a verbal, "It's time to go, governor." But if the governor is the midst of making a point, he isn't beyond waving them off, or telling them to get lost for a few minutes.

Other candidates will have an aide break in with a "two more questions" comment.

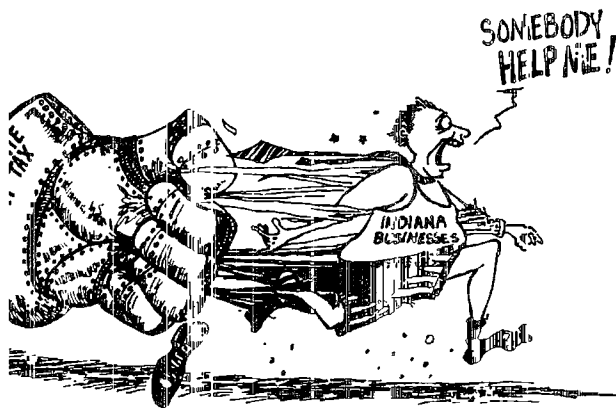
A couple of weeks ago, State Sen. Potch Wheeler (my favorite name in the legislature) sponsored legislation that would require the

state to make news organizations (including NewsLink, publisher of the HPR and a syndicated newspaper column) pay for press shacks in the Statehouse. In fact, NewsLink has budgeted press shack rent anticipating a bill like Wheeler's. This one was defeated in the Senate, 27-21, with the bill's opponents reasoning that media coverage should be encouraged, not made more difficult.

After the vote, Wheeler declared, "This just goes to show you the power of the press."

Which was an ironic observation. During this session, two long-time Hoosier newspapers - *The Fort Wayne News-Sentinel* and, as of the end of this week, the *Evansville Press* - aren't staffing the legislature any more. The *Press*' Dan Bernard is leaving for a job in Duluth. Kevin Corcoran left the *News-Sentinel* for the *Munster Times*. These papers, both afternoon dailies in an era of declining PM circulation, haven't been real clear on whether they will return.

Well, Senator, the fact is the power of the press is in decline, rent or not.



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