

# OPINION

DAILY JOURNAL

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"The Daily Journal is dedicated to community service, to defense of individual rights and to providing those checks upon government which no constitution can ensure."

SCOTT ALEXANDER  
founding editor, 1963

## AT ISSUE

The Indianapolis Colts' football season ended Sunday in a disappointing loss.

## OUR POINT

Fans learned from Coach Tony Dungy that there are issues more important than the games and that a winner isn't measured by scores.

# Colts coach a champion despite loss in playoffs

The Daily Journal

Colts fever turned to blue flu Sunday.

Through a combination of erratic defense, sputtering offense and a wayward field-goal kick, the Indianapolis Colts lost to the Pittsburgh Steelers in the NFL playoffs.

The loss tarnished what had been a stellar season to that point. The team won 13 straight games and finished the regular season 14-2, its best record ever.

Quarterback Peyton Manning continued to show his brilliance at quarterback, and his corps of receivers was the recipient of his talent.

The defense, a weak link for the team in the past, was much stronger. It showed grit and a physical style that won fans on its own terms.

So the 21-18 loss to the Steelers was especially hard to swallow. And a last-minute drive that nearly tied the game, while adding to the excitement, didn't diminish the heartache.

But the season cannot be labeled a failure, not because the team did so well in the regular season. Rather, it was a success because the public learned the most valuable lesson of all.

Coach Tony Dungy taught everyone what a true champion is.

Late in the season, Dungy's 18-year-old son James died. It's one of parenthood's worst nightmares, yet Dungy acted with dignity, reaching out to others even as they sought to comfort him in a trying time.

After the funeral, he told people to value the time they have with loved ones, to give their kids a hug.

On Monday, the day after the Colts' playoff loss, Dungy spoke to reporters at the team's headquarters.

He said, "One of maybe the blessings in my son's situation (is that it) really puts everything in perspective. You lose a game, and I'm sure I'll get over this a lot faster than I'll get over my son. ...

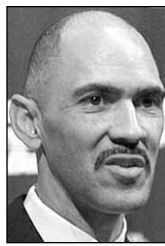
"It's our job, and it's football, and it's disappointing, and you want to play well; but it's certainly not the end of the world, and it's certainly not the biggest story of the day in the world that we lost the game.

"It's tough. It's tough to deal with, but there are other things that certainly are a lot more important in the whole scope of the universe than us not winning the Super Bowl."

So for the second time in just a few months, Dungy offers a lesson in life.

Football is a game. Winning is nice. And losing hurts. But it's still a game.

Dungy has again shown us what a true champion looks like.



DUNGY

## Focus: SUVs

Bigger doesn't necessarily mean safer

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

It appears the safety factor of SUVs was oversold.

Even though the monster sport utility vehicles are known gas guzzlers, people widely use them as the family car in the belief that bigger is better when it comes to safety. A new study in the journal *Pediatrics* dashes that perception in a comparison study with cars.

While the heft of some SUVs may indeed provide more protection in accidents than smaller passenger cars, research shows the protective effect of the big vehicles is actually offset by their propensity to flip over. "Contrary to public perception, SUVs do not provide superior protection to child occupants, compared with passenger cars," concluded the lead author, Dr. Lauren Daly of A.I. Dupont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Del.

The child safety researchers based their study on crashes involving 3,922 occupants between newborn and age 15 from March 2000 to the end of 2003, in SUVs or passenger cars that were model year 1998 or newer. The injuries sustained ranged from concussions, fractures and lacerations to critical brain, spinal cord and internal organ damage.

The highest odds of injury occurred among children riding unbelted in SUVs that rolled over. The study found that kids who were not properly restrained in SUVs were 25 times more likely to suffer serious injury in a rollover crash than those in a car seat or safety belt.

And federal traffic statistics cited by the researchers found SUVs are about four times as likely to roll over than passenger cars. Even though federal data says rollovers represent only 3 percent of accidents, they still account for more than a third of annual highway deaths.

"There's no net advantage for kids in SUVs than kids in passenger cars," said Dr. Dennis Durbin, who co-authored the study. "I suspect that will run counter to most peoples' assumptions," said the emergency physician and epidemiologist at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Automakers say they are making progress in preventing rollovers with the introduction of new safety technologies over the past several model years, and Congress is prodding the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to reduce the rate of rollovers through a variety of mandated safety measures.

But the problem of vehicle stability still remains in SUVs based on several factors, from height to width between tires and weight distribution.

Of course, how they're driven affects risk as well. Despite popular belief when it comes to sport utility vehicles, bigger isn't necessarily better when it comes to protecting children.



## YOUR VIEWS

### Drastic tax measures needed to curb smoking

To the editor:

The American Lung Association of Indiana seeks to improve Hoosiers' overall health and lower our state's tobacco health-care costs by preventing youths from smoking, helping smokers to quit and reducing everyone's exposure to tobacco toxins from secondhand smoke.

One effective way to achieve these goals is with a "health toll" in the form of increased cigarette taxes.

There is overwhelming evidence showing that a sizable cigarette tax will deter youth smoking. Gov. Mitch Daniels suggested a tax increase of at least 25 cents per pack; however, the American Lung Association of Indiana recommends an increase of at least 50 cents.

Based on the experiences of other states, the increased tax on cigarettes will cause 90 million fewer packs of cigarettes to be sold annually in Indiana, resulting in a 9.2 percent decline in youth smoking and a 2.1 percent decline in adult smokers with an overall long-term health savings that will exceed \$1 billion over five years.

A National Academy of Sciences report concluded that increased taxation of cigarettes is the most effective way to deter teens from becoming addicts.

The National Cancer Policy Board believes the single most direct and reliable method for reducing consumption is to increase the price of tobacco products, thus encouraging smokers to stop and nonsmokers not to start.

Raising the cigarette tax is a proven method to reduce smoking, reduce smoking-related illnesses and improve the health of Hoosiers.

The greatest benefit from increasing the cigarette tax is that young people are much less likely to ever start smoking, avoiding devastating, chronic, smoking-related illnesses and death.

Raising Indiana's cigarette tax by 50 cents per pack means that about 52,000 youth who might have taken up smoking won't. American Lung Association of Indiana is committed to a health

### WRITE A LETTER

The Daily Journal invites readers to submit letters, opinion columns and e-mail comments for the opinion page.

#### GUIDELINES

- Letters published in the Daily Journal must contain the writer's name and city or town.
- Letters sent to the Daily Journal must be signed and must include a daytime telephone number for verification to be considered for publication.
- Letters should be kept as brief as possible.

#### SEND IT

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Letters to the editor  
The Daily Journal  
P. O. Box 699  
Franklin, IN 46131

##### E-mail

letters@thejournalnet.com

##### Drop-off

2575 N. Morton St. (U.S. 31), Franklin

toll as a key component in a comprehensive smoking prevention and cessation program. It is our mission to prevent lung disease and promote lung health.

Out of concern for the long-term health benefits to Indiana's young people, I hope our political leaders eagerly embrace an increase in our cigarette tax.

Not only will we have a healthier society but a stronger economy. The reduction in tobacco use resulting from an increase in the cigarette tax, a health toll, would be a tremendous step toward saving the lives of Hoosiers, one breath at a time.

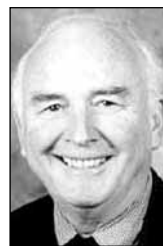
##### Nancy Turner

President and Chief Executive Officer  
American Lung Association of Indiana

### Way to get cigarettes out of teens' hands: leadership

To the editor:

There is no greater need right now than to improve the health of Indiana, and it will take strong leadership.



Dan K. Thomasson

Senate Judiciary Committee members to handle. What has made Alito's answers unusual in this process is that he has not tried to back away from youthful positions on *Roe v. Wade* and other controversial questions but has promised that his mind is open to new interpretations. He reassured senators that judges shouldn't carry their personal agendas into their decision-making process.

Mainly, however, he responded as most other nominees have since the Senate began taking the confirmation process seriously decades ago and requiring candidates for the court to appear in these lengthy, often stultifying sessions where senatorial mugging for the television cameras has become as important as interrogating the witness.

It is difficult to understand what is to be gained by this process, other than to give individual senators their moment in the TV sun by asking over and over again what is going to be answered only in the most general way. Yet, in hearing after hearing, this rather absurd dance is repeated for the benefit of a relative few Americans. The great majority couldn't care less. Only when Clarence Thomas was confronted with Hill's

We have that leadership in Gov. Mitch Daniels, who has proposed to increase the cigarette tax by at least 25 cents. This increase will lead Indiana to having 26,100 fewer future smokers. Ultimately, it will improve the health of our state, as well as lowering the \$1.9 billion in health-care costs that Indiana faces today, which are a barrier to attracting the types of jobs Indiana needs in the future.

Compelling research shows us that increasing the price of cigarettes can prevent youth from trying them and becoming daily smokers. I read in a newspaper that Bridgett McDaniels started smoking at age 12. If the cigarette tax had been higher when she was 12, her chance of smoking would have been less. I am very happy Bridgett quit smoking. By doing so, she has increased her chances of living a longer, healthier life. However, I wish even more that she had never started.

Smoking is the number one preventable cause of disease and death. It not only causes lung cancer but also cancer of the mouth, throat, kidneys, pancreas and cervix. Smoking does not just stain teeth, raise blood pressure and cause higher rates of respiratory illnesses like colds, bronchitis and pneumonia. It also increases the risk of heart attacks and stroke, contributes to kidney failure and can block the blood flow to the legs.

I have cared for patients who developed gangrene and had to have their legs amputated because they smoked. It also greatly increases the risk of a miscarriage and the delivery of lower-birth-weight babies. With rare exception, my patients tell me they wish they had never tried that first cigarette.

Every adult needs to ask if they want their children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews to start smoking.

If you would like to help 12-year-olds avoid the addiction of cigarettes and untimely disease, please contact your legislators and ask them to be strong leaders and do what is right for Indiana's health.

##### Dr. Judy Monroe

Indiana State Health Commissioner  
Chair, Executive Board, Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation



Marya Jo Butler

# Prayer vital to majority

Throughout its history, Indiana has done a lot of good. However, there have been some disappointments in addition to the wonderful things that have been done for those of us who are Hoosiers from birth.

We have elected people who have focused on taking care of our state. But others have been elected who do just what they want to do for personal gain, as opposed to taking care of those who have concerns and needs.

Unfortunately, we are experiencing something like that right now.

I have known Brian Bosma for several years because I taught with his mother-in-law. I was so happy when he was elected to the legislature, and I'm still supportive of what he is doing as the speaker of the House.

No one was concerned about the opening prayers in the House until just recently. The prayers, according to what I have heard, had been going on for more than 100 years, and most everyone was pleased to know that the prayers began the days for those who had been elected to serve the state.

Suddenly, the blessings were opposed because certain pastors used the name of Jesus in their prayers. How could that have happened?

As soon as possible, that became a court battle. Of course, the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana is always ready to challenge those of us who are loving and caring people.

We believe that, as our nation was created, we are in a majority. Those who are not in the majority of our state and nation want things to be done their way as opposed to what has been accepted by most of us.

How many times throughout our lives have we accepted those who were from other countries and who came here because of the positive way to live in the United States? When people come from other nations or those who have different beliefs, they must understand that they might have to accept certain things that they see and hear.

The sad news is that this kind of action goes beyond Indiana to the rest of our nation.

Some don't want the words "under God" to be in the pledge. There is a disagreement about having the words "In God we trust" on our coins. Those are on the negative list that is supposed to be taken away from us.

However, I like that Woody Burton wants to get "In God we trust" on our license plates in the state of Indiana. And, of course, I like that Brian Bosma is not giving up on our prayers in the legislature.

Many of us thank Brian Bosma for his belief in God and all that he does for the state of Indiana.

He is open to hearing our suggestions but he knows what is important for the state, too. We have to do what Brian does, and that is to keep focused on the things that we believe and do for others.

We are blessed in Indiana in many ways, so this is a good place to live. We are Hoosiers, and we are supportive of those who help us.

God bless the state of Indiana.

Daily Journal Board of Contributors columnist Marya Jo Butler is a former teacher and counselor. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

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Johnson County, Indiana

#### THE QUESTION

Should the state legislature increase the tax on cigarettes by 25 cents to try to reduce youth smoking?

#### PICK AN ANSWER

- Yes
- No

#### HOW TO VOTE

Vote and offer comments on the Daily Journal's Internet edition at www.thejournalnet.com. This is an unscientific poll. Readers who don't have access to the Internet are welcome to mail or fax comments.

Write: Daily Journal, P.O. Box 699, Franklin, IN 46131.

Fax: 736-2766.

Dan K. Thomasson, a Hoosier native and Franklin College trustee, is former editor of the *Scripps Howard News Service*. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.